



4-H Project Leader Training

By: Mindy Denny, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist



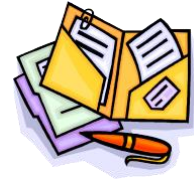
The Project Leader's Role

The major role is that of a teacher, but not as in the traditional classroom. Teachers help members “learn by doing”. For example, under the leader’s guidance, members in the Sports Fishing project will learn how to tie a hook on the line, to bait a hook, to cast and to clean a fish. In the Baking Project, they might learn to read a recipe, measure, mix, and set the oven. The classroom is wherever the member must be in order to learn. It may be the home, a meeting room, in the yard, at the lake, in the neighborhood or on a field trip. Project work should allow members to be involved actively in the learning process. It is helpful to have some knowledge of the project that is led, but **THIS IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT**. Many leaders are effective teachers that learn along with the members. The leader helps to make project work meaningful for 4-H members.

Primary Responsibilities

- **To enroll members in projects**

Each member must be enrolled in a project and needs to fill out an **enrollment form**. This is available from your County Extension Agent or club leader. They may enroll through their club, but you need to remind them to enroll in the specific project you are working on.



- **To secure project literature**

Leader’s guides are available for some 4-H projects. Project record forms are available for all projects. The leader is responsible for getting the project materials from the County Extension Agent and distributing them at the first meeting. Materials are ordered by request. As a leader, you may need to request a few additional copies for members that may add late. Do not request a copy for every member, unless you know they have not requested a copy for themselves. Every copy ordered is billed to your County Extension Office. Some counties may require members pay for all or part of their publications.

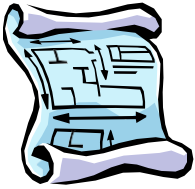


- **To organize and hold project meetings**

Starting and ending dates for a project, as well as dates of all project meetings and activities, are arranged at the convenience of the project leader and the members. Frequent and regular meetings keep the interest of members better than infrequent and irregular meetings. If possible, schedule project meetings weekly or bi-weekly until the work has been completed. Most of the teaching takes place during the project meeting, but parents need to be supportive as some project work will need to be done at home. Be familiar with the content of the project and make definite plans for each meeting (An outline for planning the project meeting is included.) Pre-planning is necessary for a smooth running and productive meeting.



- **To teach the members**



The primary responsibility is to teach the members. Members and parents must know what is expected and what materials are needed to insure a successfully completed project. Successful 4-H project work depends on involving youth in the “doing” aspect of learning. The leader will want to use a variety of appropriate teaching methods that involve the members in discussions, demonstrations, exhibits, and educational outings.

- **To assist members in planning, conducting and completing a project**

Each member should use a Project Record to plan a project, to keep records of what is done and to summarize what was learned and accomplished. Members plan their project goals and activities at the first or second meeting, participate in activities at home or at project meetings, record these activities as they are completed and complete their project record at the last meeting.



- **To help members participate in 4-H events**



A 4-H member who participates actively in project meetings and other club events usually maintains greater interest than one who does not. It is important to involve members in planning and carrying out meetings and special events. Plan to help members participate in county 4-H events. The County Extension Agent will supply a list of events that may interest the members. The County Extension Agent can advise and counsel you about the local 4-H structure.

Planning Project Meetings

Most projects have a guide. Study the guide and adapt it to the situation. For each meeting, plan what is to be accomplished, the information to be provided, the materials needed, and how to involve the members in a learning activity. Plan meetings so that members will have enough time and enough help to finish their work. Give each member a definite responsibility as often as possible and try to fit the responsibility to the member’s abilities and interests. A model for conducting project meetings has been worked out through the years. Although the meeting may not follow this exact format, it can be used as a general outline.

Part One — Arrival

It is important that, as members arrive, there is something for them to do. The arrival activity could be planned and led by a member of the group who arrives 10 or 15 minutes early, or by a teen or junior leader. Examples of arrival activities are get-acquainted games, mixer games and learning activities. The activity could also relate to the subject that will be discussed during the meeting. At a photography meeting, for instance, camera equipment might be placed on a table, with members given a sheet of paper and asked to identify the different pieces of equipment or different parts of the camera. You can use an ID activity with any project.





Suggested Activities

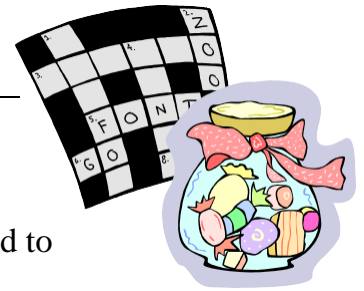
Guess How Many – Use a jar, basket, etc. Fill with an item related to your project (or gum, candy, etc.) Have members guess how many there are. Give a prize for the closest guess.

Word Search or Other Puzzles – Use Puzzlemaker.com to create puzzles related to your project.

Color Pages – Many websites offer downloadable or printable color pages.

Snack Table – Have a nutritious snack set up that members can fix for themselves. For example: set out several different ingredients and let them make their own trail mix.

Statement Cards – Provide index cards and have members write down something they did in their project since the last meeting.



Part Two — Business Session



Having project club officers is a great way for members to start getting leadership experience. If you have a club, you have business. Some things that you might include in a regular business meeting are:

- Discuss members' participation at club meetings, in county activities and at other events.
- Make plans for tours, exhibits, and other events that add to the progress and interest of project work.
- Announce time and place of next meeting.

Part Three — Instruction

This part of the project meeting is the teaching part. The project leader will want to review subjects talked about at the last meeting as well as present new information. Examples of instruction methods are demonstrations, progress reports by members, discussions, lectures, video tapes, etc. The instruction is usually presented by the project leader. However, instruction may be presented by a resource person or by a teen or junior leader who has had experience and has prepared this part of the meeting. Teaching Techniques are discussed in greater detail later in this publication.



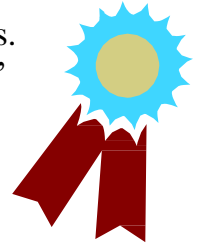
Part Four — Work or Activity

This is the section of the project meeting in which youth actually learn by doing. Based on instructions given, members may prepare a dish, construct a simple garment, work on a craft or judge an animal or article. It is very important that each project meeting have a work or activity period during which 4-H members actually develop their skills and experience performing an activity by themselves. Sometimes the instruction and the work period will be conducted at the same time because it may be more beneficial for each step to be undertaken and completed as instructions for that step are given. Help members have fun and enjoy both learning and completing projects. You can do this by being enthusiastic about the project, keeping the members actively involved in the project meeting and making the project exciting by adding variety and surprises. Above all, enjoy it yourself – and let them know it!



Part Five — Recognition

Youth need recognition. It is important to provide recognition at all project meetings. Recognition may simply be in the form of saying, “John, you are doing a good job,” or “Jane, I appreciate your helping Tom with his project today.” It may be in the form of recognizing the group that did the best job of cleaning up. It may be in the form of talking personally with a project member about his own project and making him feel recognized and important because you care about him. It can also take a more formal form, with recognition for the person who won the game, had the most correct answers, or completed the most project work at the project meetings. Pins or completion certificates can be given at the end of the project. Recognition can also be in the form of asking a member to assume responsibility for an assignment for the next meeting or for another activity.



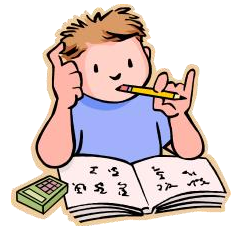
Part Six — Fun Activity



All project meetings should have time for recreation. This can be the first, or arrival activity, it can be made a part of the instruction by including a game, or it can be at the end of the meeting. This is one part of the meeting that can be conducted very easily by one of the project members or by a teen or junior leader.

Part Seven — Assignments

At the end of each project meeting, members should be told what they will be expected to do at home before the next meeting and what the subject of the next meeting will be. Specific assignments can be made for group members to lead parts of the next meeting or to provide refreshments or project equipment.



Teaching Techniques

Young people will be more interested and active learners if a variety of teaching methods is used. How much information a learner retains will vary from method to method. Remember that “learn by doing” is the 4-H slogan, and is often the best way for us to gain knowledge. There are many teaching methods that work well with project groups. Experiment with these and other methods to find what works best for you as a teacher and your group as learners.

Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks

The demonstration is for showing and telling how to do something — showing each step by actually doing it and creating the finished product to display. In an illustrated talk, you illustrate how to do something or show the results by means of charts, drawings, models, flannel boards, chalk boards, pictures, etc. Some subjects do not lend themselves to demonstrations but can be presented through illustrated talks. A demonstration or illustrated talk by the club member helps him to develop a positive self-concept, acquire more self-confidence in front of a group, express his ideas clearly, and acquire subject matter knowledge. The New Mexico State 4-H Office has publications available to assist you in planning or helping youth plan demonstrations and illustrated talks. Request *Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks 200.D-1 (R-2001)* and *Making 4-H Posters 200.D-6 (R-2003)*.



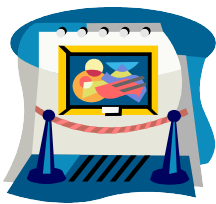
Discussion Groups

Discussion groups make members think and help them understand. They are an excellent means of interaction and help to clarify questions of the club members. The amount of direction needed will depend on the members' ages and abilities. The following suggestions may help:



1. Make sure the topics or questions for the discussion are clearly stated.
2. Keep the list of topics or questions short for younger members. They will lose interest and direction quickly.
3. Differences of opinion will occur. Such conflict is good if the members can discuss their differences and reach some agreement.
4. Try to get everyone to contribute. Avoid having a few members do all the talking.

Exhibits



4-H members learn through the preparation of a project or other type of exhibit. They also learn from observing the exhibits of other 4-H members. Exhibits can encourage 4-H members to complete their projects and to improve project quality. The exhibit provides a means for the boys and girls to receive recognition for the work they have done. Project exhibits are held by clubs or project groups and at the county and state level. Sometimes the members will want to create a group exhibit of their work for a club meeting or information event. This gives them an opportunity to work as a group and to experience successful cooperative efforts.

Field Trips and Tours

Well planned and organized field trips will develop more interest in the project work. New experiences are a vital part of each person's development. Young people are always interested in meeting new people and seeing different places. Leaders will probably find that this is a popular teaching technique. Young people like to get out and visit new places. In order to provide a meaningful learning experience, you will need to:

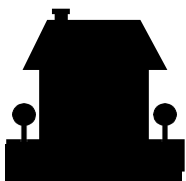
1. Plan carefully; involve the young people.
2. If possible, visit the location or person ahead of time.
3. Provide transportation; this is one way to involve parents.
4. Make sure the purpose of the trip is clear.
5. Tell members enough of what to expect to arouse interest.
6. Encourage them to look for specific things and ask questions.
7. Evaluate the experience with the members soon afterwards.
8. Carry over the learning from the trip into project activities.



Most Project Greentops have suggestions for educational trips and tours.

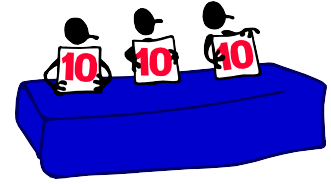
Home Visits

To be of the greatest assistance to members, leaders will find that they need to become well acquainted with them, their parents and their home situations. A home visit provides a good opportunity to observe project work and make recommendations for improvement. Home visits are especially desirable for first year members and members whose interest is lagging. Whenever you have the opportunity, visit with the members about their projects or activities. Check with them by telephone occasionally to see if they have any problems or need any special help.



Judging

Children have judging experiences long before they become involved in 4-H. Their 4-H project work should be one means of further developing their decision-making abilities. Judging is making a decision based on current knowledge, and telling why you made it. For the youngest members, this will involve selecting between only two items. As the youths' skills develop, they will judge more items (generally 4 items are in a class) and become more experienced in stating the reasons for their decisions. The older, more experienced members may choose to participate in judging days at the county level or higher. These special events help members develop and practice their skills in a wider arena. Basic judging can be used to teach any subject, even if there is not a judging contest in that project.



Reading Assignments

Researching and acquiring knowledge from brochures, project guides, magazines, books, etc., can add greatly to the growth experience in 4-H project work. Boys and girls may find two or more articles related to their 4-H project. They can bring them to the project meetings and share ideas with other members. Some will be more interested than others in searching for additional information. Searching the Internet can add interest to a project. Young people will retain approximately 10 percent of what they read. Printed project materials and other literature are important ways to share knowledge, but they should be supplemented with other learning methods. This makes a great take home assignment for youth to bring in and share at the next meeting.



Skits and Role Playing

This activity can be fun and add lots of interest to a not so interesting lesson. Boys and girls can gain additional information about the project by preparing for and participating in skits. Always develop a purpose for the skit to determine what needs to be done and why, based upon what is to be taught. The task includes:

- Listing materials needed.
- Writing out skit in detail.
- Determining who is going to do what.
- Summarizing the points important to learn.



Talks or Lectures



Talks or lectures are perhaps one of the easiest ways to present club members a great deal of information in a short period of time. However, to be effective, the material must be well planned and supplemented with visuals. At some point you will probably need to use lectures in your project, but with planning, other teaching methods may be incorporated to keep everyone focused.

Workshops

This method consists of showing the boys and girls how to do the job, and then having them perform the same job under supervision. This method rates high because it incorporates other methods — talks, demonstrations, judging, and discussions. You may wish to think of all your project meetings as workshops, or plan a special event for those interested in your project area.



References:

Arizona 4-H Management System Project Club Management Guide
Arkansas 4-H Leading a Project Group Series
Colorado 4-H, Arapahoe County 4-H Project Leader Training
Texas 4-H Management System Project Club Management Guide

4-H Project Club Agenda Plan

Date: _____	Time: _____	Place: _____	Person Responsible
Arrival Activity			
Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning• Discussion• Reports• Demonstrations			
Instruction			
Activity or Work			
Recognition			
Fun/Social Activity			
Assignment			

