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Letters to New Leaders

Letter 3



Planning and Conducting 4-H Club Meetings

In this letter you'll find:

- Setting goals with your 4-H club
- Planning a yearly 4-H club calendar
- Club officers and committees
- Teaching the 4-H pledge, motto and symbols
- Possible agenda items for a 4-H club meeting
- Involving parents in your club
- Tours, activity days, etc.

Dear Leader,

By now you may have questions about planning and conducting your 4-H club meetings. This letter includes information about the basic, everyday ingredients of a successful 4-H meeting.

Setting goals with your 4-H club

It's helpful for you, together with your 4-H members, to set a few basic goals for your club's first year. The Louisiana 4-H Youth Development Guide, "Planning A 4-H Club Program," has lots of good ideas. (Refer to pages 2 and 3 "Special Program Ideas." You may not be able to include everything from the guide in your club meetings, but you can pick out some activities to include.

Encourage 4-H members to set personal goals. You may want to do this for yourself also. You've heard the saying, "How do you know if you've gotten there if you don't know where you're going?"

Planning a yearly 4-H club calendar

As soon as goals have been selected by your club, it is really helpful to plan a yearly calendar of activities. Be sure to involve your 4-H members and their parents in developing this plan. There are many excellent club program ideas in the publication, "Making 4-H Meetings Exciting." You and your club may want to refer to this while developing your plan. Be sure to include activities from your parish 4-H calendar also. Another good source is Planning a 4-H Club Program, which includes a form for listing all your meetings and activities.

Club officers and committees

Election of officers gives the members an opportunity to develop leadership skills and responsibility.

Suggested 4-H club officers are:

- President**
- Vice-president**
- Secretary**
- Treasurer**
- Club reporter (for publicity reports)**

Other possible officers or committees are scrapbook coordinator, telephone committee, meeting host or hostess, field trip committee, entertainment (or recreation) committee, cleanup committee, etc. There are special instruction sheets and materials for presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries and club reporters at your parish office. Your 4-H agent may have other materials available also.

The officers and committee chairs can serve as the planning committee to develop the yearly calendar of activities for your club.

If your club decides it is necessary to have a fund-raising activity to establish a treasury, be sure to check with your parish office about guidelines and policies. To set up a club bank account, you must use the 4-H Internal Revenue Service Federal Identification number. This can be obtained from your 4-H





agent. You also must submit an annual financial report to your parish 4-H office.

Teaching the 4-H pledge, motto and symbols

It helps members and adults to understand 4-H better if the leader presents the 4-H pledge, motto and symbols to the group early in the club year. They are all described on the last two pages of the publication, "Facts About 4-H." The hand motions to use with the pledges are explained there. You may find it helpful to make a poster to use at each meeting, showing the 4-H pledge and the 4-H motto, so members can read it while memorizing it. After the first meeting, each member can take turns leading the flag salute and the 4-H pledge. Some members may want to give a short talk on the meaning of the 4-H symbols. Some parishes provide small 4-H flag sets for new clubs. If none are available in your parish, ask for a copy of the National 4-H Source Book, from which you can order a flag set for a small charge. Other club meeting aids are available in the source book.

Possible agenda items for a 4-H club meeting

Following is a suggested agenda for a 4-H club meeting.

- **Pre-meeting activity**
- **Call to order**
- **Pledge of Allegiance to United States Flag**
- **4-H pledge**
- **Roll call**
- **Minutes of last meeting**
- **Old or Unfinished business**
- **New business**
- **Educational Program**; presentation by 4-H agent, member, resource leader or special guest
- **Special feature, project learning or member presentation, or educational program**
- **Recreation**, if time permits, songs or other social activity (also could be at the beginning or end of the meeting)
- **Refreshments** (if appropriate or provided)
- **Meeting adjourned**

There are endless variations of this agenda, and variety certainly helps to make the meeting more interesting and lively. Ask your parish 4-H agent for some suggestions of learning games or other fun activities.

Involving parents with your club

There are a variety of methods for getting parents involved. In fact, successful 4-H membership usually includes a great deal of parental support. A common reason for becoming a leader is because a son or daughter wants to join 4-H. It is logical to encourage other parents to be project leaders, assistant leaders, resource leaders or special activities leaders. Invite parents, resource leaders or friends with a special skill to teach that skill at one of your regular meetings. Don't hesitate to ask for help.

Some clubs encourage parents to attend meetings with their children. Parents may be asked to chaperone club activities, provide transportation or share a particular interest. If they are sharing information with the club, it doesn't necessarily have to be related to the project. It could be about citizenship, leadership, community service or other topics.

Tours, activity days, etc.

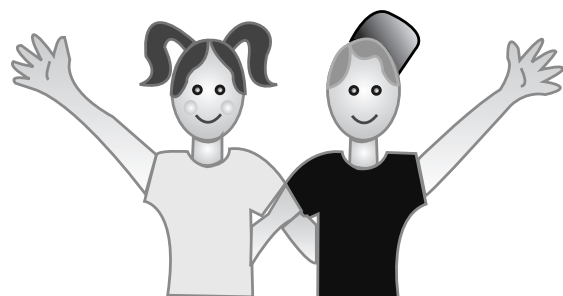
Your club members will really enjoy opportunities for field trips, tours and special activity days. Sometimes you teach them more in a well-planned field trip than in a regular club meeting.

Have your 4-H members do some of the planning for special activities. They may even want to invite another club to join them for the event.

A special activity day is an excellent teaching tool. If you have further questions or concerns, contact your parish 4-H agent or another volunteer leader. We all want to help you succeed.

This is what 4-H is all about: the personal development of the boy and girl.

Welcome to the world of 4-H!
4-H volunteer leaders are lay faculty of the
LSU AgCenter and Southern University



Reference materials

- Planning Your 4-H Club Program (#2862)
- Making 4-H Meetings Exciting (2869)
- 4-H Leaders Handbook for Growth (#2157)
- Facts About 4-H (#2860)

How I can use the information in this letter: _____

New activities to plan into our club program: _____

Other people who could help us and how they might help: _____

Questions to ask LSU AgCenter Extension staff and other leaders: _____

