

NEW * LEADERS

Letter 3: Planning and Conducting 4-H Club Meetings

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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.

Club officers and committees

Club officers are an important part of the leadership team in the 4-H club. Being an officer gives the member an opportunity to develop and practice leadership skills and responsibility. The following 4-H officers are usually elected in each club:

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Reporter
Recreation Leader

Some other officers the club may want to elect include photographer, historian, and coordinators for the scrapbook, clean-up and field trips.

There are special instruction sheets and materials for each of the primary offices. These sheets are included in the publication *Helping You Help Officers and Committees* (90410) which can be ordered through your local University of Illinois Extension unit office.

Because one of the goals of 4-H is to develop leadership skills, all members should have an opportunity to be an officer or committee chair. Some large clubs have members fill an office or committee chair for half the year. Others have junior and senior officers. Both approaches give more members an opportunity for formal leadership.

Committees can be used to help the 4-H club function smoothly as well as to provide opportunities for more people to be involved. Committee membership need not be limited to club members. Club leaders and parents are encouraged to become involved in assisting 4-H'ers with planning and supervising various club activities, but members should be involved in decisions and carry them out.



Teaching the 4-H pledge and motto

It helps members and adults to understand 4-H better if the leader presents the 4-H pledge and motto to the group early in the club year. They should then be used regularly in meetings, ceremonies, etc. Both the pledge and motto, as well as other symbols and traditions, are described in the publication *Helping You Help Youth: Introduction to 4-H* (L90501a).

The 4-H Pledge along with the corresponding motions is given below:

I pledge:

My Head to clearer thinking,



(Right hand points to forehead)

(Right hand over heart)



My Heart to greater loyalty,

My hands to larger service, and



(Arms bent, palms up)

(Arms at sides)



My Health to better living,

for my club,

my community,

my country,

and my world.

The 4-H motto is "To make the best better." The leader may find it helpful to make a poster of the 4-H pledge and motto to use at each meeting so members can read and memorize them. After the first meeting, each member can take a turn leading the Pledge of Allegiance and the 4-H pledge to open the meetings. Many clubs close meetings with the 4-H motto recited in unison. Extension units may provide small 4-H flag sets for new clubs. Flag sets and other club meeting aids are also available from the *National 4-H*

Source Book. Your local Extension office has copies of this catalog or view on the web at: <http://www.4-hmall.org>.

Setting goals with your 4-H club

It's helpful for you and your 4-H members to set a few basic goals for your club each year. These goals are statements of what the members would like to accomplish as a club. The goals should help the club meet the needs and interests of the individual members. Examples of goals a club could set are:

- to provide a service to the community
- to introduce others to 4-H
- to learn more about nutrition (or some other subject)
- to involve family members in 4-H activities

As a leader, you will want to set goals for yourself and to encourage your 4-H members to set individual goals. These can be goals to achieve in leadership roles, in their projects, or in their personal development.

Planning a 4-H club calendar and program plan

After the club's goals have been established, use these goals to design a year-long program plan and club calendar. The calendar will tell you what the club is doing when, and who is responsible for it. A plan will help direct the club's activities toward its goals.

Be sure to involve your 4-H members and their parents in developing the club calendar and program plan. Allow all members to contribute their ideas and interests before choosing the activities for the year. When selecting an activity, refer to your club's goals to see if the activity will help attain those goals. The calendar and plan should include a variety of activities to stimulate the club members' interest and enthusiasm. There can be educational presentations, for which a speaker or program is brought in to the meeting as well as presentations by members. Project meetings can

be scheduled to help members set goals for their projects, to provide information and ideas, to work on projects, and to prepare for contests and fairs. Your club can plan a "club show" to share what members have done during the year with fellow members and others in the community. Social activities can be planned throughout the year to which family, friends and other 4-H clubs can be invited.

Extension educators are a good source of ideas for club activities. You can contact your unit staff to find out what the unit and state calendars include, especially the dates of events, contests, fairs, etc. that are of interest to your members.

Possible agenda items for a 4-H club meeting

Meeting suggestions are included in the publication *Helping You Help Officers and Committees* (90410). A recommended business order follows:

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. 4-H Pledge
4. Roll call
5. Minutes of last meeting
6. Approval of minutes
7. Treasurer's report
8. Officer and committee reports
9. Unfinished business
10. New business
11. Meeting adjourned

Usually, the program begins after the formal business meeting is adjourned. Recreation and refreshments can also follow the meeting. Some clubs use refreshments and recreation before the meeting as welcome activities. There are endless agenda variations, and variety certainly helps make the meeting more interesting and lively.



An approach some clubs prefer is to alternate business meetings with project meetings, or to have short informal business sessions at some point during project meetings. You might consider trying a variety of methods to determine which works best with your members' age groups, your club's size, and your project areas.

Involving parents with your club

Successful 4-H membership usually requires a great deal of parental support. There are a variety of methods for getting parents involved. The "classic" reason for becoming a leader is to provide an opportunity for a son or daughter to join 4-H. It is logical to encourage parents to be leaders, assist committees, or contribute to the club in other ways. Don't hesitate to ask parents to help the club.

Many clubs strongly encourage parents to attend all meetings with their children. Parents may be asked to chaperon a club activity, host a meeting, teach a special skill, or share a particular interest. If they are sharing information with the club, it doesn't necessarily have to be related to a project. It could be regarding citizenship, leadership, community service, careers, or other topics. The publication *Helping You Help Youth: Others Can Help* (L90501g), and other resources available through your local Extension office.

Tours, activity days, field trips, etc.

Your club members will enjoy a variety of field trips, tours, and special activity days.

Sometimes you teach them more in a well-planned field trip than in a regular club meeting. These special activities can involve a variety of experience. They can be related to specific projects that club members are involved in. They can involve community service or be

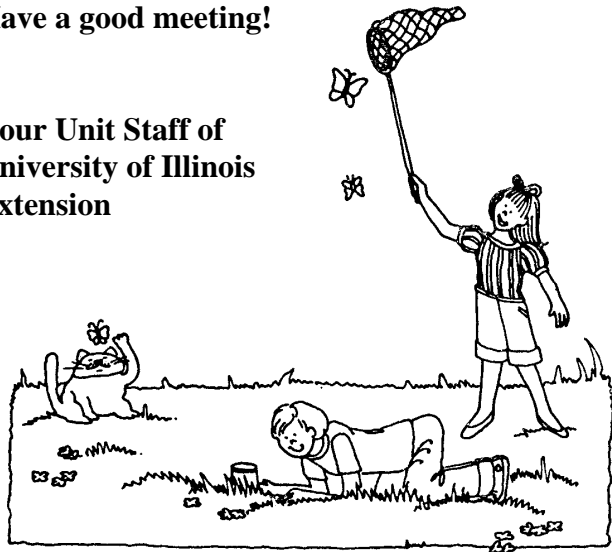
historical. Other 4-H leaders are an excellent source of ideas for field trips for your club.

Your 4-H members will enjoy planning and organizing these special events. They may even want to invite another club to join them for the trip.

If you have further questions or concerns, contact your University of Illinois Extension unit staff or another volunteer leader. Extension staff can provide leader training on club meetings if requested. We want to help you succeed.

Have a good meeting!

**Your Unit Staff of
University of Illinois
Extension**



How can I use the information in this letter?

1. New ideas to use in our club:
2. Other people who could help us and how they might help:
3. Questions to ask University of Illinois Extension staff and other leaders: