Getting Started as a 4-H Project Leader

Project work is at the heart of the 4-H Program. In your role as a volunteer project leader you will mentor young people, teach them new skills and help them master the project subject matter.

Warm Up: Why does a 4-H Member enroll in a specific project?

TIP #1 Start E__________________ and don’t P___________________.

What should I do at the initial project meeting?

• Assess when members are available for additional meetings. You may wish to ask the parents or ask members to bring along their calendars of family/school activities.

• Encourage parents to participate in project meetings, especially the initial meeting.

• Find out what the members want to learn and accomplish in the project. The project literature is an excellent source of ideas.

• Review the safety/risk management practices that members will need to follow.

• Do an introductory activity related to the project so the members get to know one another.

• Have a small project the members can complete and take home.

• Talk about how the project meeting supplies will be paid for. Experienced leaders have often found it easiest to charge a small fee to cover the cost of the expenses.

TIP #2 Schedule an adequate number meetings and amount of time to cover the project subject matter and meet learning goals.

It is recommended that you hold 3-6 meetings that each last 1 ½ to 2 hours in length. Some projects require more meetings or a longer meeting time to accomplish your goals. Some projects, may lend themselves to individual project work as members progress on their projects. In this case, you should hold several introductory meetings for all members and then set up a schedule of time for them to sign up for individual help.

TIP# 3 Focus on the Kansas 4-H Life Skills:

• A positive self-concept
• An inquiring mind
• A concern for the community
• Healthy interpersonal relationships
• Sound decision making
TIP #4 Use the Experiential Learning Model to plan future meetings:

In 4-H, we L_________________ by D______________________

Learners Retain:

- ______% of what we read or hear
- ______% of what we see
- ______% of what we hear and see
- ______% of what we say
- ______% of what we do

The Experiential Learning Model

- Youth do and share what they did during an activity
- Youth reflect about what they did (including what they learned)
- Youth think about how to use what they did and learned, and how they can apply that.

Do – What happened? (Have them describe what happened).

Reflect – So what? (Have them talk about feelings and thoughts).

Apply – Now what? (Have them tell how they can apply what they have learned in the future).

Thanks for your service as a 4-H Project Leader this year!
You make a difference for the young people in your group and their projects can have a lifelong impact.

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Developed by: Beth Hinshaw, SE Area 4-H Youth Development Specialist
Sources: Diane Mack – Essentials for 4-H Project Experiences
        Rod Buchele – Experiential Learning Lesson, FNP
        Shawnee County – I am Project Leader…Now what do I do?

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn.”
-Benjamin Franklin