

4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

Demonstrations and Presentations

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As a leader of a 4-H group, you are a teacher and a friend. You help members work together in a friendly and cooperative way. You can use the 4-H project work to help them develop poise and self-confidence. They begin to feel that:

- "I'm in" . . . the fun of belonging to a group.
- "I can do" . . . confidence in his or her abilities.
- "I can get and give help" . . . a feeling of security.
- "What I say and do counts" . . . a sense of being needed.
- "I'm growing up" . . . solid growth toward independence.

When explaining new information and skills to others, demonstrating is one of the best teaching techniques. You may wish to present demonstrations to your club members. Not only will they learn the ideas you share, but they will be able to use your demonstrations and talks as models when they plan their own.

Purpose of Presentations

Demonstrations and talks will help the members:

- Acquire and relate subject matter knowledge.

- Learn to organize their ideas in a clear manner.
- Develop self-confidence about their abilities and skills.
- Develop and display physical skills.
- Develop specific public speaking skills.
- Build records for project competitions.

Method Demonstrations Vs. Illustrated Talks

Method demonstrations actually show and tell someone how to do something and tell why it's done.

Illustrated talks tell how a process is done with the use of visual aids to clarify important points.

Both are oral and visual presentations of how and why something can and should be done. When a good demonstration or talk is given, the individual accepts the idea or practice.

The ABCs of Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks

Presenting a demonstration or a talk the first time is frightening for many young people. As 4-H'ers gain



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experience giving demonstrations, they develop greater self-confidence. Younger members will need more help from the leader or older 4-H'ers. Remind the young people that "show and tell" at school is demonstrating.

As you work with 4-H'ers in preparing demonstrations or talks, there are certain steps to follow that will help:

1. **Pick a topic** – This should be something the 4-H'er has had experience doing. You can get ideas from project manuals, Extension publications, current magazines and other aids. For beginning members, it may be easier to ask them to copy presentations you have given in an earlier meeting.
2. **Organize your information** – Write the points you wish to discuss on note cards. If a 4-H'er is planning a demonstration or talk for competition, consider the time limitations for each age group. The time limitations are juniors – 2-5 minutes; seniors – 5-8 minutes.
3. **Preparation** – The demonstration or talk should include three main parts:
 - The INTRODUCTION, which gets the attention of the audience. It introduces the presenter, tells what you are going to do, why it is needed and why you selected this subject.
 - The BODY, which presents what you have chosen to show. For an effective presentation, you will need to do the following:
 - a. Outline in order the steps necessary to do the method.
 - b. As you demonstrate, tell the what, how and why of this method.
 - c. Make the words fit your actions and visuals.

- The SUMMARY tells the main points and/or shows the finished product. It may include getting a commitment from the audience to try and use what you have shown them. Allow time for the audience to ask questions about the demonstration or talk.

4. **Use visuals** – A visual is something the audience can look at that will help them understand what you are explaining. Examples you might use are:

- Actual objects – a camera, a kite, a plant.
- A model of the object you are discussing if the actual object is difficult to bring.
- Posters with drawings of key points you will demonstrate or explain.

5. **Practice** – A talk or demonstration worth giving is one worth rehearsing before it is given. Rehearse your talk or demonstration with all props and in front of a mirror if possible. Remember, 4-H'ers will be using your demonstrations and talks as guides in preparing the talks they give.

In working with 4-H'ers, encourage them to rehearse as well. This will build their confidence and prepare them for the actual presentation. 4-H'ers should rehearse:

- Out loud, around six times.
- Their entire speech.
- Into a tape recorder if possible; even better, have a friend videotape.
- With their props.
- In front of a mirror.
- Questions and answers.

Remember: PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT, NOT PERFECT.

6. **Presentation** – Stand up, speak clearly and smile. Plan a catchy introduction and show enthusiasm for the subject. Organize the visual aids so that the oral presentation can be dovetailed into actions. Don't assume the audience knows anything about the subject; explain it carefully.

Presentations for Younger Members

For younger members, the emphasis should be on gaining self-confidence and sharing it with others. Their first experiences should be in their own age group, which will be less threatening. Encourage participation; don't push. Let them see it is fun. At first it will build confidence to repeat demonstrations which you, the leader, present to the group. When the members are interested, help them develop their own demonstrations. At first, it will be necessary to lead them through the steps in preparing a demonstration or talk.

Have young members answer these questions when selecting a topic:

- Can I do it in two to five minutes?
- Am I interested in it?
- Is it a part of my project work?
- Is it useful to others?
- Can visuals be effectively used?
- Can I do it well?

Presentations for Teenage Members

When 4-H'ers are in their teens, you need to find different ways of working with them and helping them mature. Teenagers will require almost total

freedom to plan their presentations. Help should always be available and given gladly, when it is requested. Be aware that inexperienced older members will need more support and encouragement which does not embarrass them in the group.

There are several types of presentations suitable for teens. The older 4-H member could show a key step in an involved process, demonstrate complicated procedures or show advantages and disadvantages of different methods. Members might rely on illustrated talks to compress a job that took weeks or even months to complete. The visuals may show why they planned the job, how it was carried out and the results.

Teens should broaden their sources of information beyond project materials. In addition to the county Extension Service, you might suggest regional libraries, state or national associations, business people, research publications, etc. Teens may use presentations as a community service activity to inform the public or show how to solve a problem. Presentations offer teens a way to reach larger audiences as their abilities increase.

Making Their Best Better

If members are going to develop self-confidence, they need your support and encouragement. It is important to let them know how pleased you are with their work. Make suggestions for changes and improvements only after you have given several good points about the presentation.

Members should be encouraged to evaluate their own work, especially in relation to how much they have improved from earlier efforts. Members with different abilities and experiences should not be judged against each other. Let other members offer suggestions, but first establish standards, such as: "Let's tell John what we liked best about his demonstration. Then we will offer suggestions for the next time he gives it." One or two suggestions may be enough. Cut off any criticism which tears down the feeling of achievement and acceptance.

Ask your county Extension agent for a copy of the score sheet for method demonstrations-illustrated talks that judges use in competitive 4-H activities. Before members give demonstrations or talks, they may want to check their presentations against the points listed on the score sheet.

The Audience

4-H members can use the local club or project group as a proving ground for their presentation. When members feel they are ready, they should

present the demonstration or talk to a wider audience which might include county 4-H audiences, civic clubs or school and community groups. Each time 4-H members give presentations, they will improve and grow as public speakers and community leaders.

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