



MEETINGS THE 4-H WAY

Have you thought of your 4-H club or group as a small democracy? A democracy is a form of government in which the people have a say in making the decisions that affect them. Members of your club need to have a part in the decision making in the same way decisions are made in a democracy.

Ask yourself: Does everyone take part in your club or group activities? Do some people sit back and let others do what needs to be done? Are members having fun? Do they like to come to meetings? Do members get “charged up” at meetings?

Everyone has a part to play in the club or group. Each member can be on a committee, run for an office, make a motion or do countless other things. Group or club members can participate in good citizenship through 4-H. Citizenship is learning how to work with others and how to make decisions.

Why Hold Meetings?

Meetings give people a chance to think and act together, and plan and do things together. Working on all your 4-H projects alone or planning or holding a party by yourself wouldn't be very much fun. You need other club or group members thinking and acting together to really get things done.

How Can You Have Better Meetings?

- Elect officers who can and will do the job.
- Be sure officers and members know their responsibilities and carry them out.
- Know and understand “Meetings the 4-H Way.” Everyone needs to do his or her share, pull together and use basic parliamentary procedures to govern business meetings.
- Plan for business, education and recreation at most meetings. Interesting meetings start and stop on time.
- Give everyone in your club or group a chance to be on the program sometime during the year.

Planning the Club or Group Program

In most 4-H clubs or groups, annual goals, monthly meeting plans and special activities are determined at the beginning of the 4-H year. A committee of members, leaders and parents needs to meet to plan the program for the year and set group goals that show the interest of the total group.

Club or group goals and program plans give direction to the group. The executive committee can refer to the club goals when making decisions about specific programs and activities. Leaders and parents can identify special opportunities and resources so goals can be achieved more easily.

When a group begins a planning session, review the committee's responsibilities and take a quick look at everything the club or group is going to do during the year. Include as many parents as possible in the planning session. As the group plans for the year, try to include all parents in the program sometime during the year. Parents might assist by hosting the club, providing transportation, assisting with activities, etc.

Effective club or group programs:

- Provide an opportunity for members, parents and leaders to be actively involved
- Are preplanned to include a balance of business, education and recreation
- Provide an opportunity for each member to be involved in the program as often as possible
- Stimulate interest in individual and group projects
- Include community service opportunities
- Meet the needs of members and their families
- Provide for parent involvement



What Are Club or Group Goals?

Goals are statements that provide direction to the club's or group's program. They tell what the group plans to do, and to what extent and when. Many groups plan only two or three goals each year.

Examples – Our group's goals are:

- Use basic parliamentary procedure rules each meeting
- Provide recognition for each member, parent and leader at least once during the year

As you plan your club or group program, remember to involve every member in the program as often as possible. Members can be involved by giving demonstrations or illustrated talks, serving as a host or hostess, serving on a committee or serving any other way that fits the activities of your club or group. Assign demonstrations or talks

according to age level and interest of the member. Most beginning members need to attend a few meetings before they are given a program assignment.

Plan meetings so they can be finished in two hours or less. Most meetings need three parts: business, education and recreation. A suggested guide is business, 15 to 20 minutes; program, 30 to 45 minutes; and recreation, 20 to 25 minutes. The parts of the meeting can be planned in any sequence that fits your club or group interest and needs.

Meetings seem to go better if each meeting or program is centered around one area of study. For example, the talks, demonstration and roll call might be about health. Cover a variety of topics during the year. A variety of teaching methods (videos, demonstrations, outside speakers, etc.) help make meetings more interesting. A presentation by a member, leader, teen leader or a resource person should be a part of each meeting.

The plan for the year needs to include the following whenever appropriate at each meeting:

date of meeting	education program
host or hostess	topics (demonstration, etc.)
place of meeting	recreation
roll call topic	other items
business	

Some plans may change or more details may be added as you go through the club year, but you do need a basic plan from which to work.

Preparing for Meetings

A club or group that gets things done, enjoys being together and plans things carefully has officers and leaders who accept their responsibilities. For clubs or groups to work together, they must do two things:

- Know enough about the members so the officers and leaders are aware of talents and skills of each member
- Use group discussions so that each member can have some part in decisions that are made

Group atmosphere is very important. Plan for a friendly and informal atmosphere that helps every member feel welcome and secure. Members need to be allowed to express their ideas without hurting others' feelings. Club or group members need to feel free to participate, make suggestions and sometimes disagree with others. To form a strong club or group, everyone needs to feel he or she is a part of the group.

The room also needs to be comfortable. Check to see that it is not too hot or cold. Try to provide a seat for everyone. Arrange the room so that everyone can be seen and heard. Chairs arranged in a circle or semicircle work well for small groups. The president and secretary need to see the total group.

Meetings are important to clubs and groups. The officers and leaders need to plan the details before each meeting. Begin planning early so that every person on the program is notified and has plenty of time to prepare. If possible, give every person who attends a copy of the agenda or put it on a poster, large sheet of heavy paper or a chalkboard.

The following outline could be used for your club or group to follow in planning a program for the next meeting:

Possible Meeting Outline

Call to order – President

Pledge of allegiance, 4-H pledge, singing
(optional)

Roll Call – Secretary

Introduction of visitors – President

Minutes of previous meeting read and approved –
Secretary

Reading of correspondence, if any

Treasurer's report

Reports of officers and leaders – list reports to
be presented

Committee reports – Used to streamline business
meetings and keep members involved

Old Business (taken from minutes of previous
meeting – business acted upon through motions,
seconds and voting)

New Business

Announcements – Announce the place, date
and program topic for the next meeting

Adjournment of business meeting

Education

Study lesson
Talk
Demonstration

Project discussion

Recreation

Games, singing, etc.

*Good planning is a key to a successful
business meeting.*