

# Adding Variety to Club Meetings

*Try at least one of these ideas at your first club meeting of the year or include ideas of your own to engage your 4-H members and families.*



## Parent Information

Distribute parent information packets if you haven't done it already. These packets should include:

- Enrollment instructions
- Letter to parents
- Set of definitions –
  - 4-H Extension agents (name them)
  - Volunteer leaders
  - Demonstration
  - Exhibit
  - Progress report
  - Speech
  - Officers (list them)
  - Club meetings - Time and Location
  - County 4-H activities
  - District 4-H activities
  - State 4-H activities
  - 4-H opportunities (list some big ones)
- Club Calendar for the year –
  - Theme for each meeting
  - Contests and activities for each meeting
  - Things to bring to each meeting
  - Out-of-club activities
  - Include County, District and State Events
- An opportunity for parents to say they can help –
  - with transportation
  - with financial records
  - with refreshments
  - by teaching special classes as a project leader

## Plan for Variety

Provide officers with guidance to vary the program each month. For instance, on a planning sheet, list learning activities like panels, speakers, contests, workshops, videos, skits, etc., on one side of the page. Let officers list important topics (with suggestions from you, of course) on the other side of the page. Referring to Extension's resources, school resources and personal contacts, help them match a topic to a learning activity.

## Skit

Ask one or more teens to write a short skit, introducing new members to 4-H at the first meeting. The skit could be handed out a few days before the meeting; or if it's simple enough, it could just be handed out a few minutes before the meeting. (See the "Celebration" section for a fact sheet about a new member initiation ceremony.)

## Suggestion Box

Use a suggestion box and bring it to every meeting for any suggestions people want to make. Leave the suggestions with the vice presidents after each meeting so committees can work on plans for presentations at later meetings.

## Community Involvement

Involve your 4-H club with all the other clubs and organizations in your community by taking part in their activities, using individuals from the adult clubs as resource persons and getting 4-H members opportunities to speak or perform before these groups. When they see 4-H in action, they will become excited about 4-H. By involving the community in your plans and programs, you will gain support for the 4-H program.

## Learn by Doing

Remember your purpose. We all learn more by doing than by listening. Take every chance to involve youngsters in active learning. The more interaction with the information, the more they learn. Have volunteers help conduct short workshops during the meeting where 4-H'ers can make or do something.

## Committees

Use your club committees. Committees could help plan program segments, service projects or even club award ceremonies.

## Promotion

Let a 4-H member develop a promotional kit on 4-H activities. Camps, state O-Rama, fairs and individuals working in their 4-H project areas would make good topics for the kit.

## Vary All Variables

There's no excuse for monotonous meetings. Divide programs or meetings into shorter, well-defined segments. Vary the group structure and teaching methods for each segment when possible.

## Ways to Increase Interest

Some suggestions to increase interest of members and at the same time increase attendance are:

1. Provide a well-planned program.
2. Accomplish something.
3. Provide for group participation.
4. Allow several people to have a part on the program.
5. Socialize – Have fun and fellowship!
6. Run the meeting in a businesslike manner
7. Celebrate accomplishments.

