4-H Presentations

I. WHY YOU SHOULD DO A 4-H PRESENTATION

Haven't you found that it is easier to learn something if someone shows you how, instead of just telling you how? A 4-H presentation is a way to put words into action. 4-H presentations can help you in many ways. You can learn:

• to develop poise and the ability to speak in front of a group

• to gather information and supplies necessary for showing and telling how to do something.

• the skill of organizing subject matter into an organized presentation that works well with the "how-to" approach

• to develop an ability in teaching and showing others improved methods, thus helping others.

Of course, you will learn a lot about your subject, but even more than that, you will have the experience of showing others how to do something. This experience will help you in many ways throughout your life, as you increase in self-confidence and the ability to speak in front of a group.

II. WHAT A 4-H PRESENTATION IS

A 4-H presentation is a way to show others how to do something. While you are showing how, you are telling the why's and how's of what you are doing. A first-time 4-H presentation will be easier for you if you actually do something with your hands. You will have a finished product to show and be proud of.

III. HOW TO CHOOSE A 4-H PRESENTATION

The most important point is to choose a subject that interests you, if you are interested in the subject, a good place to get ideas is the 4-H projects in which you are working or have worked. Try to keep the subject broad enough so you will have enough material for your presentation, but try to limit the subject to one theme or idea, such as "How to Sew a Winter Parka" or "How to Make a First-rate Quiche."

IV. PLANNING A 4-H PRESENTATION

4-H presentations require planning in advance. The planning for a 4-H presentation can be as much fun as it is a learning experience. As you are planning your 4-H presentation, ask yourself these questions and plan to answer them in your presentation:

1. What will your 4-H presentation show? 2. Why do you want to know about it? 3. Why do you want others to know about it?

There are other questions you need to know the answers to before you do your presentation. The answers to these questions will make your presentation go more successfully and enjoyably for your audience:

1. For whom are you going to give your 4-H presentation?

2. Where will it be given? 3. How can you make the subject appealing? 4. What title can you think of that adds some "spice" to the presentation?

As you work on your 4-H presentation, you will find it a great help to learn as much about your subject as you can, even if you think it is more information than you can use in your presentation. This will give you the security that you are a lot more of an "expert" on your subject than is your audience. You can get information about your subject from your 4-H project book, your 4-H leader, an encyclopedia, the library, or by a phone call or visit to someone who is knowledgeable about your topic.

V. ORGANIZING YOUR 4-H PRESENTATION

Even though you know your subject and can actually do the steps necessary to show someone how to do it, you will need to think of a 4-H presentation in three parts:

The Introduction -- which is the interest-getter. Make your audience feel that your subject is worth your time to present and worth their time to listen and watch. You may tell why you feel this skill or subject is important. Keep your introduction brief, and allow it to lead into the next part.

The Body -- This is the "action" part of your presentation. In the body, you will take the audience through the skill you are demonstrating one step at a time. As you do each step, tell what you are doing and why you are doing it. (If you finish a step and have already finished talking about what you are doing and why, give extra information about the materials or equipment.)

Practice will help you fill the time with the right amount of material. Use your own words, and don't worry about trying to shout over a loud engine or drill. It is alright to have a few seconds of silence, but do try to spread your information almost continuously throughout your presentation.

Concentrate on keeping your action-part simple and neat. This will be the longest of the three parts of your 4-H presentation.

Some presentations could present possible problems, such as cooking presentations without cooking facilities or electrical presentations without electrical outlets. For this reason it is important to know what your location has and does not have. You may need to adjust your 4-H presentation to suit the situation. An example of a problem you can adjust to is making bread which requires a lot more time than you would probably have allotted to you. You could show the bread at different stages, which you would have prepared ahead of time, and use your presentation time for showing proper kneading technique. You may even have a finished product waiting to bring out at the end to delight your audience.

The Summary -- which is your last chance to sell your ideas and repeat your key points. This summary should be very brief. You would show your finished product and encourage your audience to use the information or method. You would then make a closing statement so that the audience knows you are finished. At this point, thank your audience for their attention and ask for any questions.

To help you in organizing your 4-H presentation, use the presentation outline planning aid that follows:

1. INTRODUCTION

Attention-Getter:

Introduce Your Topic (why worthwhile):

2. BODY:

What I'll Do Equipment and Supplies I'll Need What I'll Say

3. SUMMARY

Main Points:

Closing Statement

Thank audience and ask for questions.

SUGGESTION: On the outline, list extra talking material, in case you have any "dead air" while you are doing your steps. This material could include facts, data, suggestions, alternative solutions to problems.

**VI. LENGTH OF TIME**

The length of time for a 4-H presentation should be long enough to make all of your steps clear and easy to follow, but not so long as to bore the audience. In most cases the time range will be:

2-5 minutes for Juniors (9-11 years) 5-10 minutes for Intermediate (12-13 years) 10-15 minutes for Seniors (14- 19 years)

Adequate practice will guarantee your timing will be perfect.

**VII. USING VISUAL AIDS**

Well prepared and properly used visual aids, such as posters, models, charts, and miniatures will add a great deal to your 4-H presentation. They will help your audience learn faster, understand better, and remember your information longer. You may use visuals to introduce your subject, to give a recipe, or to sum up your main points.

Important points to remember about posters and poster use are:

1. Keep your visuals simple and neat. (Limit the amount of material on each poster for easy reading.)

2. Posters should be 22" x 28", to be large enough to be seen.

3. Use simple block letters, as they are easier to read than script or fancy lettering.

4. Use larger letters (2-1/2" to 3") for the title and smaller (1" to 2") for the other print.

5. Stick to two or three colors (too many colors can distract from your ideas.)

6. Dark color letters on a light color background are easier to read than light color letters.

7. Plan your poster carefully (outline letters and figures first in pencil, then go over in ink or markers.

8. Use a ruler for straight lines.

9. Leave even margins on both sides

10. Practice using your posters in your demonstration. Remember, it can be a useful tool to use.

11. Trick--Show the audience your poster, one point at a time, using a blank sheet of poster board to cover the other points. This keeps the audience's attention on your present point instead of jumping ahead.

**VIII. POINTS FOR A GOOD 4-H PRESENTATION**

1. Practice! There is nothing that insures success more than this important step. This is the time to see that all of your steps flow and that your timing is correct. When practicing, use all of the equipment and posters your "real" presentation will need.

2. Check your equipment. Get all of your equipment together in advance and make sure it is all in working order. You may want to list all of your equipment and supplies on a card so you can make sure you have it all for your presentation.

3. Sell yourself. Your audience is buying not only your 4-H presentation, but also you. Make it a neat package. Dress appropriately for the type of presentation you are doing. It's all right and normal to be scared, but try to act like you're not.

4. Start with a smile. There is nothing that will warm an audience up more than having you take a moment at the opening of your demonstration (after you set up) to step back, look at your audience, and smile. This will let them know that you are comfortable and that you are now beginning.

5. Keep your area neat. Use trays to keep your materials together. Clean your work area as you go, if possible. Use a towel or sponge kept nearby to wipe up any unexpected mess or spill. Clean up your area fully at the end of your presentation so the person following you will have a clean area with which to start.

6. Be natural. Use your own words and speaking manner.

7. Be enthusiastic. People will want to learn more about your subject if you appear to like it yourself, by showing your enthusiasm through your voice, expression, and mannerisms.

8. Keep going. If you do make a mistake, such as a forgotten word or thought, act confidently and keep your presentation going. Take a moment to get yourself on track, if necessary, and continue with your topic. Your mistake will appear much less noticeable to your audience if you handle it in this manner.

9. Having samples. Especially in foods demonstrations, nothing speaks to the judges as well as a taste of what the person has prepared. Bring some small paper plates, and plastic ware, so the judges can sample your finished product.

10. Thank the audience. At the conclusion, a simple, sincere thank you tells the audience your presentation is over and that you appreciate their attention.

**IX. SCORING THE 4-H PRESENTATION**

The 4-H member will be scored on many different factors concerning the 4-H presentation.

Basically, the factors are:

1. The 4-H Member (20 points).This includes appearance, voice, poise, and grammar.

2. The 4-H Presentation. (35 points). This includes the introduction, method, verbal presentation, teaching aids, organization, audience view, and the summary.

3. The Subject Matter (45 points). This part includes the selection of the subject (the reason for the choice, did it follow one basic theme, is it practical?), the information presented (is it accurate, is it up-to-date, is it complete, is it appropriate?), and the knowledge of the subject (did the 4-H member understand the principles, information, and practices that he/she was explaining?).

**X. IN CONCLUSION**

Congratulations! You are about to have an opportunity to grow by participating in 4-H presentations. You will find out more information about a 4-H project, and you will teach others about what you have learned. Remember to record in your project record that you have participated in this most important 4-H event. The confidence that you will gain as a result of choosing a topic, researching the subject, following the steps that lead to a logical conclusion, practicing your presentation and finally, teaching the information through a 4-H presentation, will be valuable to you throughout your life. Helping others "to make the best better" actually helps you improve yourself.