

Making the Best 4-H Clubs Better

Intended Audience

- 4-H club members

Lesson Objectives

Club members and parents will:

- Learn the importance of making meetings fun
- These materials will provide useful activities that will allow volunteers and members to strengthen their 4-H club meetings along with making them fun and inviting.

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment and supplies

- Activity 1
 - Toothpicks
 - Scissors
 - Markers
 - Large marshmallows
 - Long pipe cleaners
- Activity 2
 - Cones or chairs
 - Balloons (at least one per member)

Do ahead

- Review lesson
- Gather equipment and supplies
- Prepare volunteers or teen leaders to teach activities

Making Meetings Fun

BACKGROUND

Even though 4-H club meetings need to be informative and educational, they also need to be fun! In order to keep members engaged, different types of activities need to be used to help members:

- Make new friends.
- Share ideas.
- Acquire new knowledge.
- Enjoy recreational activities.
- Develop self-confidence and leadership skills.

Innovative clubs provide opportunities for youth to have new experiences that add to their project knowledge and develop their leadership, social interaction, and organizational skills. The activities that follow are just two of the myriad of activities you could use to keep your meetings fun and your members engaged.

WHAT TO DO

Activity 1 (Cloverbuds): ANTatomy - Create your own ANT! Ants are a type of insect that have six legs, two antennae, and three body sections. The three body sections are the head, thorax and abdomen.

Ants live in colonies made up of queens, males, and workers. They are amazing creatures that come in different colors, with black being the most common. Ants can carry up to 27 times their body weight!

- Where do you see ants?
- What color ants have you seen before?
- How many antennae do ants have? _
- Can you name the three body sections of an ant?
- How many legs do ants have?

Sources

- Julie A Chapin, Program Leader Michigan State 4-H Youth Development. "Group - Building Ideas for 4-H Club and Group Meetings", August 2004. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/236/67551/4-HGroupBuildingIdeas2.pdf>
- Kim Drolshagen, Michelle Grimm and Michelle Schroeder, University of Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development. "4-H Cloverbud Activity Book A," 2010. <https://taylor.extension.wisc.edu/files/2010/12/Cloverbud-Activity-Book-A.pdf>

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Time to make your ant! Materials: three large marshmallows, 4 large pipe cleaners cut in half, two toothpicks, scissors and markers.

Procedure:

1. Use the 3 large marshmallows as the body sections and connect them using toothpicks.
2. Cut 4 large pipe cleaners in half to make 8 pieces.
3. Use 6 for the legs and insert 2 for the antennae.
4. Decorate your ant using markers.

Activity 2 (Older Members): Balloon Train - Split the group into teams with even numbers on each team. This is a relay race-type event. You will need a starting line and cones or chairs that the teams will move around on their way back to the starting line. Members will blow up balloons that will be used as spacers between themselves and the persons in front of them. Note: Be aware of any latex allergies, and purchase balloons accordingly.

On the "go" command, the teams move ahead, keeping the filled balloons positioned between themselves. (Team members may place their hands at their sides, on each other's shoulders or waists, but may not hold the balloon in place with their hands.) If a balloon drops, the whole train must stop, reposition, and then continue.

What were some of the difficulties playing this game? Was it better to try and go fast or slow? How did you know if your teammates behind you were having trouble?

By using teambuilding activities, volunteers and members become comfortable working and learning together. Such activities help members accomplish their goals and provide opportunities to build group spirit and cooperation. Such activities can be used at the start, middle, or end of a meeting to help get things off to a fun start or to break up a long business meeting.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- Are your club meetings fun?
- Do your members feel comfortable at your meetings?
- After doing the activities, how did the members react?

Apply:

- Bring a topic or game to your club meeting that is educational and fun for all members.
- After each meeting, discuss the activities used. Were they fun? Did they hold the interest of members? Would you use the same activity again?