

## What Are the Best Ways to Teach the 4-H Way?

Just like sports players, 4-H members do not want to be seat warmers. They want to be on the playing field. Coach the 4-H game "Learning by Doing" where your members are actively seeing, hearing, sharing and especially doing! Are your 4-H club meetings just for "couch potatoes" or are your members in training for the "4-H Marathon"?

Teaching the 4-H Way allows for learning to take place outside the formal classroom, in member's homes and backyards and at club meetings under the guidance of a caring adult, you or someone else. Select from these [Non-Formal Teaching Methods](#) to engage your members in learning the 4-H Way:

*Put your players in the game as active members seeing, hearing, sharing and doing...the 4-H Way.*

**Actual Project Activities:** Sharing of knowledge begins with the 4-H Project Book and Resource Guides. However, the ultimate 4-H project experience can only come to life through actively participating in project activities, experiments and work. Select meaningful project related activities where:

- Group participation enhances learning outcomes,
- Your knowledge and skills aids member's learning,
- Special equipment or access to resources limits members doing on their own.

**Demonstrations/Illustrated Talks:** Demonstrating a new skill can be the first step to members learning "How to...". Encourage every member to do a demonstration at a club meeting to share their knowledge and skills. What a great way for members to gain self-confidence, improve communication skills, learn to organize ideas and think on their feet. Share these [demonstration ideas](#) to get your members started.

**Field Trips/Tours:** Your club can increase interest in projects, enhance club spirit and commitment, and broaden members' horizons by organizing field trips and tours. Who does not like to meet new people and visit different places? Successful club field trips and tours begin with excellent planning and end with club discussion of the experience. Prepare members for the experience, involve parents as transporters and review [managing risks](#) to maximize your club's field trip experience.

**Group Discussions:** Sharing ideas, hearing different opinions, and club decision making often arise from group discussions. Successful group discussion results when you:

- Select clear topics and/or questions while avoiding yes/no responses;
- Keep discussion short;

- Encourage all members to participate; and
- Summarize differences without taking sides.

Sometimes, you may choose to select a panel of experts to share their viewpoints on a topic. Do not forget the panel could be experienced project members!

**Presentations:** Engage members while presenting new information, ask questions, draw members in by passing out samples, and use live models. Find ways to have members taste, touch, see, hear and feel your presentation. Get close to your audience, move among the learners. Avoid marathon talk sessions or lecturing and use multi-media tools (Videos, DVD's, CD's, or Power Point) to help increase member's attention and interest.

**Role-Playing:** Think of role-playing as "4-H on Stage". Members are the cast and each is free to act out their role. Creativity, problem solving and dramatic interpretation allow members to explore controversial issues and situations. Role-playing teaches sensitivity to others while developing researching, analysis and decision-making skills of participants and observers. Organized skits are a form of role-playing, but with a prepared script.

## What Resources Can Help You Teach the 4-H Way?

Contact your County Extension Educator for a list of teaching resources available for you to use at club meetings and activities. Possibilities include: Skillathon Kits, Teaching Kits on Project Topics or for Cloverbuds, Videos/DVD's, Powerpoint Presentations, Games, and more. Spread your knowledge by sharing successful teaching resources with other 4-H volunteers and your County Extension Educator.