Program Planning & Reflection Activities

DESIGN IT TOGETHER
A Plan for 4-H Success

2010 Volunteer Training
Planning Activities: Goals Sculpture

Planning
What: Involve all group members in creating a sculpture out of foam core board which showcases each person’s interests or goals for the 4-H year ahead!

Supplies Needed: Sharpie or other permanent markers of all colors, odd shaped pieces of foam core-1 per person, hot glue gun and glue sticks, extension cord, board approx. 6”x12 “or larger OR box for base of sculpture.

Do Ahead: 1. Cut foam core into odd shaped pieces, using a box cutter type utensil. Pieces should be 4-8 inches wide/high—there is no set size but larger pieces make for more impressive sculptures. You will want a variety of shapes/sizes. 2. Obtain wood or cardboard base for the sculpture. It needs to be sturdy enough or the sculpture will tip over.

Directions: Leader explains that in order to make this a successful year in our 4-H club/group, we need to know what members want to do and learn, and what our goals are as a group. We are going to create a sculpture of what you’d like to learn and do this year.
Members (and family members if desired) choose a piece of foam core. Ask everyone to think about 2 things: 1) Things I like to do or am interested in learning about and 2) a goal I have for this 4-H year (for yourself or for the club). Use the markers to draw your name on one side of the foam core, along with pictures or designs showing your interests and things you like to do. One the other side, write or draw a picture to represent your goal for the year. It works best if the artists use a lot of color on their piece! When members finish, invite them to come up to the base board/gluing area and add their piece to the sculpture! Gluing: An adult or older teen should help at this station. Put a heavy amount of hot glue along one edge of the foam core piece then place it on the board. The member can help hold it in place for a few minutes so that it doesn’t tip. A few pieces get glued to the board, with the rest getting glued onto the other edges of those pieces, slowly building a sculpture that juts out in all different directions.

Share and Reflect: At the end of the building time have each member share some interests and their goal with the group. Talk about all the things it takes to “build” a successful year for all members and families!

Adapted by Anne Stevenson, Extension Educator, Center for Youth Development, University of Minnesota

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Adapted by Anne Stevenson, Extension Educator, Center for Youth Development, University of Minnesota
Pipe Dreams

Planning
An exercise for setting realistic goals and reaching them.
Size: 5 – 50 Time: 15 minutes
Supplies: a pipe cleaner (or chenille stem) for each person in the group

Directions:
Discuss the idea of setting personal goals. Goals are dreams with deadlines. If we write down our goals we’ll have a better chance of achieving them.
Goals don’t work unless they are “SMART” goals, an acronym for these characteristics:
- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Responsibility
- Timeline

Give examples.
- If I want to be an Olympic gymnast and I’m thirty years old, that is not a very SMART goal.
- If I want to attend the gymnastic finals at the next Olympics, that is as SMART goal because it is realistic and attainable if I do some planning.

Give each member a pipe cleaner.
Tell them to decide on a goal that they would like to accomplish this school year…by the end of this retreat…by next week…before this class is over. (Give them the specific time frame.)
Make sure they apply the SMART philosophy to it. Have them write is out if you’d like.
Have them form a symbol out of the pipe cleaner that will remind them of their goal.
Each person should share his or her goal with the group. The group can challenge the SMART aspects of the goal to help each member clarify what they hope to achieve.

Adapted by Anne Stevenson, Extension Educator, Center for Youth Development, University of Minnesota
Chat With Your Neighbor

Reflection

1. Turn to the person next to you so that you have a partner. Each takes a turn and shares your answer to this question. (Allow a minute or so for each person to answer)

   Name one new thing you learned in this workshop

2. Next turn to the person on the other side of you so that you have a new partner and share your answer to this question. (Allow a minute or so for each person to answer)

   Where and how could you use something you learned today? This could be in school, at work, in your family, with another group, in your personal decisions, etc

3. In a large group ask if anyone would like to share to the whole group something from their “Chat with their Neighbor”?

Note: Reflection is all about giving time to think about what was just experienced and wonder about how to apply the learning.

Adapted by Barb Piehl, Extension Educator, Center for Youth Development, University of Minnesota
The Talking Stick

Reflection
Materials needed: a stick, ball, stuffed animal or another item easy to hold

Participants sit in a circle and use the “the talking stick” item to designate who can speak. Only the person who is holding the object may speak. The role of the others in the circle is to listen. It is the role of the group leader to ensure that no one else speaks when the person with the talking stick is speaking. It is important to ensure that each person’s opinion or reflection is listened to and respected. This may take a little time the first few times a group engages in a talking circle, but once established and honored, this process can be very effective for individuals to share what is on their mind or heart. When the person is done speaking, they pass the talking stick to someone else. (Pass the talking stick to the next person or hand it across to another in the circle.)

Some potential questions you could use include:
1. One thing I learned from this activity is______.
2. Something I really enjoyed about this activity was______.
3. Something new I got to try was______.
4. Something that surprised you about yourself______.
5. Something I’d do differently next time is______.
6. Something I wondered about was______

Adapted by Anne Stevenson, Extension Educator, Center for Youth Development, University of Minnesota
Reflection Questions

Reflection

Taking time to think back on an experience is an important part of learning by doing in 4-H! Leaders can help young people stop and take a quiet moment to think, ponder, process and wonder. The following are sample questions that can be used with a group or individuals to reflect on an experience. When done in a group, it is important that the leader set a tone of respect so that participants feel comfortable sharing out loud. Youth can also be asked to reflect in their head, without needing to share their response.

1. Tell about a new skill you learned.
2. Tell one thing that surprised you during this event/project.
3. Something I worked hard for is....
4. Something I wonder about is....
5. I took a risk when I......
6. Something I really like about how this group works together is....
7. One thing I’d really like to see us accomplish this year is...
8. As a group, we need...
9. What ideas worked well and did any of your ideas not work so well?
10. One thing I would personally like to get out of being involved in this group is....

(Additional questions continue on next page)

Compiled by Anne Stevenson, Extension Educator, Center for Youth Development, University of Minnesota
Reflection Questions (Continued)

Reflection

11. I am proud that I keep healthy by...
12. What is something you are proud of about this experience?
13. What great idea did you get from another person today?
14. What skills did you use in this activity that you could use as part of a team in real life?
15. What challenges did you have?
16. How do you help other team members when they are struggling?
17. One of my favorite activities today/this month/this year was.....
18. Something new I learned (or was reminded of) about myself was ..... 
19. What is one thing you learned about listening today?
20. What was it like working with a partner? What things are easier with a partner? What things are harder with a partner?
21. What did you learn about leadership today?

Compiled by Anne Stevenson, Extension Educator, Center for Youth Development, University of Minnesota
Rotation Brainstorm

Materials Needed: easel paper/butcher paper markers

In small groups (or individually), young people start brainstorming on a piece of butcher paper that is headed with a topic or concept. It’s typically good to have each group select a person to scribe. After some period of time the facilitator plays a sound (e.g. slide whistle, tambourine, etc.), calls “Switch,” and each group moves to the next station to continue brainstorming where the previous group left off. At the end, make sure to provide time for participants to read all the sheets. If you have enough wall space, you can place the sheets side by side where everyone can see them, and facilitate a large group reflection.

For example, tape three easel sheets up to different walls and label each as follows: Places we could hold our fundraiser; Entertainment at fundraiser; and, Food possibilities. Divide into three groups. Have one group go to each station and start brainstorming. Say, “Please have one person list all the ideas your group comes up with—and go as quickly as possible!” After three minutes, ring a bell and say, “Rotate clockwise.” Help groups move clockwise to the next station, where they add to the brainstorm list of the previous group. After three rotations, ask participants to walk around and read over the three sheets.

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Round Robin

Planning  Reflection

Materials Needed: None

Round robin is simply the name for taking turns—having one person talk, then the next, and so on around the circle or room. This is often an effective technique to use because it gives everyone a turn. With a volunteer technique like Popcorn style, louder or more confident youth may speak a lot and eclipse quieter youth. You can always tell young people they have the option to “pass” when it’s their turn. With round robin, you will want to manage the time, perhaps by giving each person a set amount of time to talk. For example, say, “We’re going to go around the room and answer a simple question: What is your goal for this week? Who would like to answer first?” Kate raises her hand. “OK, we’ll start with Kate, then continue to her left.” Each youth takes a turn answering the question.

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Have young people create visual representations to depict what they will do, or did, in a particular project or activity.

**Some planning examples:**

- Before a gardening workshop, have young people go through gardening magazines and cut out pictures they like. They then assemble those pictures into a collage about how they may envision the garden they will help create.
- Have young people draw a diagram of a boat they will construct out of cardboard boxes, plastic bags, and duct tape.

**Some reflection examples:**

- Using watercolors, have young people draw abstract representations about how they felt about their mentoring projects at the elementary school.
- Have individuals draw symbolic representations of what they saw on the field trip and have peers guess what the pictures represent.

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Mill to Music

Planning  Reflection

Materials Needed:  Music

This is similar to the popular children’s game ‘musical chairs.’ Play music either with a musical instrument or recording (upbeat music without words tends to work well). While the music plays, have young people move around the room—they don’t have to dance or even move to the beat; they simply mill about. When the music stops, ask them to form pairs with those to whom they’re standing closest. Give young people a question to respond to with the person who is closest to them. Pairs take a few minutes to ask and answer the question to each other. Start the music again and participants “mill” again. You can repeat this through several rounds.

For example, play South American dance music and ask young people to mill about. After participants move around for several seconds, stop the music. Say, “Find a partner close to you.” Once they have done this, say, “Ok, share with your partner what you did over the weekend.” After a minute or two, play the music again and do the procedure again with a different question.

Mill to music questions can be general, like “How do you feel?” or specific, like “Tell your partner the steps you took to complete your project.” Mill to music can work particularly well in combination with Back-to-back, a grouping strategy.

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Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Give participants two different colored index cards. On one card ask them to write one thing they’ve learned. On the other card they can write a question they (still) have. This can be done with a general statement, such as “What you’ve learned in this after-school enrichment program,” or more specific, “What you’ve learned about viral diseases.”

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
A Rose and a Thorn

Planning    Reflection

Materials Needed: Paper/Pencil

Have participants write one “rose” or good thing that has happened for them and one “thorn” or challenge. Next have them share this in large or small groups. This can refer to time spent during activities or away. For example, to start off the 3rd session of a group that meets weekly, the adult leader may ask young people to say a rose and a thorn for the past week. One youth may say, “A rose was that I got an A on my math test. A thorn was that we lost the basketball game”. Or at the end of the session, the adult may ask young people to say a rose and a thorn that occurred for them during the activity.

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
After young people select a topic in which they are interested in doing research or a hands-on project, have them brainstorm 20 questions about the topic or area. You can then ask them to narrow the questions down to a handful of the most important ones and address these through research or a project. For example, say a small group is putting together a presentation on sexually transmitted infections. Have them brainstorm and list twenty questions they have about STIs. Then have them circle the five to which they’re most interested in learning the answers. They can then begin their research by focusing on answering those five questions.

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Postcards

Planning  Reflection

Materials Needed:  index cards or postcards
markers

This activity is most appropriate at the end or during a day (or more), packed with activities and experiences. Ask young people to mentally review the activities and experiences of the day (or week). You may wish to lead them through a brief guided re-imaging of all of the activities completed (e.g., “On Friday night we arrived and played Name and Motion. Then we had that campfire and many of you roasted marshmallows…”)

Ask participants to take a “mental snapshot” of some experience they had during the sessions that they would “send as a post card” to someone who was not there with them. Ask participants to briefly describe their “post card” to others. You may offer an example to get the group started.

The activity can end with simply talking about their postcard ideas as described above, or you can have young people actually make postcards using art supplies (magazines for cutting out pictures works well). Young people could send their completed postcard to a friend or relative, or you can use this activity in combination with Letter to Myself.

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Backwards Planning

Planning  Reflection

Materials Needed:  Easel paper
  Markers
  Post-It notes

Young people begin by choosing the final outcome of a project or an activity. Using a time line or other visual method, young people then work backward to outline all the necessary steps to reach that outcome. If done with index cards or sticky notes, participants can rearrange steps as they go (See Post-It® Planning).

For example, in a pottery workshop, a small group of young people may decide on a particular type of bowl they’d like to make. They write down “shiny purple soup bowl.” Then, creating a reverse timeline, they write “glaze it, fire it, smooth all bumps away, create shape on wheel, center clump of clay on wheel, get clay.” Once the timeline is in place, young people can begin carrying out the steps, starting at the beginning.

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Matter of Opinion

Planning    Reflection

Materials Needed:  easel paper
                  markers

For this activity, designate corners of the room as: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. You can do this with posters prepared beforehand. Read a statement, and have young people move to a corner of the room that represents their interests or opinions about the topic or statement. Young people then discuss the topic with the like-minded young people in their corner. After some time, each corner can elect a representative to share with the full group what was discussed.

Some example topics:
• “I believe schools should require students to wear uniforms.”
• “I support corporal punishment; that is, I believe the death penalty is necessary in some circumstances.
• “I believe cats are better than dogs.”

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Green Light, Yellow Light, Red Light

Planning    Reflection

Materials Needed: easel paper
 markers

Post a piece of large paper (easel paper works well) or use a whiteboard, and draw three columns labeled
Green Light, Yellow Light, and Red Light. In the Green Light column participants list the things that they
would like to start doing in the group. In the Yellow Light column participants list the things that they would
like to continue doing in the group (with or without modifications). In the Red Light column participants list
all the things they would like to stop doing in the group. This can lead to a discussion about norms, decisions,
and ultimately a plan based on the lists they generated.

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute
Bus Stop

Planning  Reflection

Materials Needed:  easel paper  markers

Post several large sheets of paper around the room, each labeled with a specific statement identifying a particular issue. Ask young people to stand by the station that they most closely identify with or are interested in discussing. Have participants spend some time discussing with others at their station, then facilitate a large group discussion.

For example, if using for planning, the specific stations might read, “My fears about this project,” “My hopes for this project,” “Things I want to make sure are included,” “Things I want to avoid in this project.” An example for reflection might read, “What I will use in the future from this activity,” “What I learned about myself in this activity,” “What I want to learn more about because I did this activity,” “What I learned about others in this activity.”

Adapted from the Quality Matters Toolkit, University of Minnesota, Youth Work Institute