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15 Minute Volunteer Lessons and Activities





Introduction

This is for 4-H professionals to use to introduce volunteer development into every volunteer meeting. Often, starting a business meeting with shared learning and exploration can create a healthy environment. Each of these lessons should take about 15 minutes and include a key element and expectation we have for our 4-H volunteers. Volunteers will hopefully feel supported in their roles and responsibilities, as well as walking away with more tools for them to use when working with 4-H Youth.

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Common Links as 4-H Volunteers

Supplies Needed

- » Deck of cards or matching game

Preparation for Activity

- » Count number of individuals participating, you will need an even number of individuals for this activity, so depending on your room, you may need to include yourself in the count.
- » If you use a deck of cards, you will need to prepare by matching by number and colors (2 of hearts & 2 of diamonds, 4 of spades, 4 of clubs, etc.). If you use a matching game, you will only need to pair up the images.

Activity

- » Distribute the number of cards or tiles at random across the room. Everyone will need one card or tile.
- » Give verbal instructions:
 - “Today we are going to do an activity that helps remind us of the things that we have in common as 4-H volunteers. Each of you is to find your match in the room and come up with 5 things that you have in common with one another. This should be more deep than ‘I like food or I like to eat.’ What specifically do you like to eat? What specific activities do you both enjoy. Once you are complete please raise your hand or find a seat”
- » Allow 3-4 minutes for everyone to find their match and discuss what they have in common.
- » Verbal instructions:
 - “Okay, now find another pair, making a group of four and find three things that you all have in common. Once you’ve done that, please make your way back to your seats.”
- » Allow 3-4 minutes for everyone to discuss and make their way back to their seats.
- » Reflection:
 - “Did anyone learn anything about a fellow volunteer they didn’t know before?”
- » Following that, discuss the volunteer lesson and take aways by sharing the South Dakota 4-H Mission, South Dakota 4-H Vision, and highlights of why its important that volunteers remember why they are there. It is for the 4-H members, not for our own adult agendas or our adult ideas.

Volunteer Lesson

- » South Dakota 4-H Mission Share
- » South Dakota 4-H Vision Share
- » The importance of remembering what we all have in common as volunteers, parents, and caregivers to the youth we serve. Even in the moments where we may disagree, it is important that we all show a united front for best of the 4-H program.

Ages and Stages of Development

Activity

- » Matching game with different stages

Supplies Needed

- » Print out of “Ages and Stages” cards
- » Scissors

Preparation for Activity

- » Cut-out Ages and Stages activity cards. If you are working with a large group, you may need more than one set and split the group into teams.
 - You may also opt to laminate or borrow a set of these from the 4-H Volunteer Development Field Specialist.
- » Set-up room with plenty of tables space to spread out cards and so individuals have space to move around.

Activity

- » Split-up volunteers into groups of 3-6.
- » Distribute packets of Ages and Stages Cards.
- » Give Verbal Instructions:
 - “As you all know, 4-H encompasses educational experiences for ages 5 through 18. Many different developmental milestones and changes happen throughout this period of time. As a 4-H volunteer it's important for us to be familiar with the different developmental physical, social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics.
 - Physical Development refers to growth of the body and development of motor skills.
 - Social Development refers to how youth interact with others and respond in social settings.
 - Emotional Development refers to dealing with feelings including recognizing, expressing, and handling feelings.
 - Cognitive Development or intellectual development refers to how children learn including thinking, reasoning, and memory concepts.
 - In front of you, you have several different cards. Look at each of these and correctly match them with the correct age group.
- » Give the group 10 minutes to complete the activity
- » Go through each of the clues and share the correct place for each.
- » Reflection:
 - What did you find challenging about this activity?
 - Why is it important to know these different developmental milestones?
 - How can we adjust 4-H Activities for these different areas?
 - You may pick a particular local 4-H activity and talk through how it could look different for each of the different developmental groups.

Wrap- Up

- » Wrap-up with sharing additional resources and references on the Ages and Stages of Youth within the 4-H Program
 - SDSU Extension Ages and Stages of Youth Development
 - <https://extension.sdstate.edu/ages-and-stages-youth-development>
 - NDSU Extension Understanding and Working with Youth
 - <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/publications/understanding-and-working-youth>

Youth Appreciation and the 5 Different Languages

Activity

- » Paint the 4-H Clover

Supplies Needed

- » Printed “5 Languages of Youth Appreciation Guide” and Appreciation Planning Sheet
 - <https://extension.sdstate.edu/5-languages-youth-appreciation>

Preparation for Activity

- » Copies for each of the volunteers of resources that will be shared.

Activity

- » Introduce the game called ‘Paint the Clover’. In this game individuals will use an imaginary paintbrush to ‘paint a clover’ (pretend to paint something in the sky). There will be a trick that each person must do to successfully paint the clover , and you will let them know if they were successful or not. There is only one imaginary paintbrush, so only one person can try and paint the clover at a time.
 - The ‘trick’ that each person must do is they must say thank you when they are handed the paintbrush. If they don’t say thank you, they cannot successfully paint the clover. If students are having a hard time picking up on the trick, demonstrate painting the clover yourself and add emphasis when you say thank you.

Lesson

- » Youth and adults will feel best when we learn to appreciate them in their preferred language. One of the foundations of the South Dakota 4-H program is the relationships between 4-H youth and their peers. By facilitating a space where youth feel safe both physically and emotionally, the 4-H program creates opportunities for 4-H youth to experience belonging. A sense of belonging will lead to 4-H youth having more positive outcomes in their lives and 4-H experiences. The sense of belonging and positive relationships between 4-H youth can be enhanced through intentionally showing appreciation between each other.
- » While recognition is usually a one-size-fits-all approach to recognizing youth (ie. first place always gets a purple ribbon), appreciation can be modified to fit what “fills the tank” of each 4-H youth best. Dr. Gary Chapman has identified five different “languages” of appreciation. They include:
 - Words of Affirmation
 - Quality Time
 - Acts of Service
 - Tangible Gifts
 - Appropriate Physical Touch
- » The five different languages of appreciation acknowledge that everyone receives appreciation differently and are fulfilled by different things. Identifying these differences and showing appreciation to youth in multiple ways will allow caring adults to better create a positive youth development environment.

Reflection

- » What are some ways that you currently recognize youth and the different ways they receive appreciation? What can we do better as a whole program to address incorporating a more diverse approach to showing youth that we appreciate them and recognize their differences. South Dakota 4-H tends to rely very heavily on tangible or token gifts, but more individuals actually prefer words of affirmation and quality time.

Wrap-Up

- » Wrap-up with sharing the “5 Languages of Youth Appreciation Guide” and going over how to use the planning sheet. The “Paint the Clover” activity can be used with youth at club meetings and is a great way to build understanding of what the word appreciation means.

Experiential Learning Model

Activity

- » Design a 4-H lesson plan that includes all elements of Do-Reflect-Apply

Supplies Needed

- » Paper and writing utensils

Preparation for Activity

- » N/A

Lesson

- » In 4-H, we follow a model of the Experiential Learning Model, because we know that is the best way to engage youth to explore and discover, rather than listen to lectures or read information. The Experiential Learning Model is a teaching method that focuses on creating experiences for youth and take time to process those experiences as a group. The reflection portion of learning encourages young people to apply new like skills in different situations. It shifts the experience from a fun activity to a long-term learning and application. There are five steps to this model.
 - Step 1: Experience. The activity a young person engaged in through hands-on learning.
 - Stage 2: Share. The young person shares results, reactions and observations that occurred throughout the learning experience.
 - Stage 3: Process. A young person recognizes the process they went through to complete the experience and identifies themes problems, and opportunities.
 - Stage 4: Generalize: The young person is asked to connect lessons learned during experience to real-world life experiences and skills.
 - Stage 5: Apply: A young person applies lessons learned to similar or different situations and everyday life.
- » Historically, we have not been great about taking every single experience in 4-H beyond the “Experience” step 1, but we should be planning every experience from project days, to judging schools, livestock shows, and workshops to include ALL elements of the Do-Reflect-Apply Model.
- » A great example is display exhibits, sometimes in 4-H world, we get stuck on doing a huge number of projects, instead of doing a few projects really well and walking 4-H members through the entire learning process. Sometimes, when youth have the opportunity to interact with a really good display exhibit judge, they will be able to reflect back on the project and way that their learning and be applied to other life lessons, but that’s not always the case. Instead, we can build those aspects in at the beginning of making the project.

Activity

- » Introduce activity portion
 - Can distribute a copy of the Experiential Learning graphic for everyone to reference through activity.
 - “Today we are going to practice planning for “Do, Reflect, Apply by creating a lesson plan for one activity we are doing as a club or project committee for the year. Each of you has paper in front of you, so start with the Experience or Do portion. Once you’ve don’t that, complete the other 4 steps and how you will engage youth in each step as part of the activity.”

- Each individual should complete this and you may share after, pending on time and have them give collective feedback. You may also turn to the group if someone is stuck on a portion of the planning. Ask for questions and let the 4-H Volunteer collectively learn from each other how to better engage youth.
- Wrap-up by saying “ Stages 2-5 of the model help you as volunteers check in with youth about how much they have learned. If participants can talk about using the skills in other settings, it is a great indication that they understand the concept.”

Reflection

- » What did we learn from this activity? How can you improve your 4-H activities to create a better experience for our 4-H members?
- » End with always being willing to be a sound board for how to plan and bring together each element of this model.

Wrap-Up

- » Wrap-up with sharing resources: South Dakota 4-H Program Planning guide for additional considerations to have when planning a program with 4-H.
 - <https://extension.sdstate.edu/south-dakota-4-h-program-planning-guide>