



# Teen Leadership

An older youth 4-H project designed for development of leadership skills

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## Teen Leadership

A Teen Leader has completed the 9th grade and is interested in organizing, planning for, and teaching younger youth in a 4-H Club.

Being a Teen Leader is what you make of it. It can be not only fun, but a learning experience. It can give you motivation for learning and an opportunity for skill development. And, it can build your self-confidence.

As a Teen Leader you will have the opportunity to:

- Recruit 4-H members.
- Organize and serve as a leader of a 4-H Club.
- Plan learning experiences for 4-H members.
- Share skills and knowledge with younger children.
- Create a desirable learning atmosphere.



- Help each member grow and develop within his or her readiness and capability for learning.
- Share in the responses of boys and girls as they react to the personal attention of your leadership.
- Gain valuable teaching and leadership experience.
- Gain knowledge and confidence from your association with an adult advisor.
- Attend 4-H leader meetings as appropriate.
- Participate in older 4-H member activities, events, and awards programs for which you qualify.
- Plan older 4-H member activities, events, and awards programs.

To be a Teen Leader you must have completed at least the 9th grade. You may or may not have had previous 4-H experience. You need to have time to consult with an adult advisor, attend training meetings, prepare for and supervise club meetings, and, as needed, assist individual members.

You must be approved for Teen Leadership by the Teen Leader advisor, community coordinator, or county Extension agent.

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## Teen Leadership Project

The 4-H Teen Leadership Project offers young people an opportunity to develop skills and abilities through practice of leadership under the guidance of an adult advisor, working in the club environment.

As a Teen Leader you'll concentrate on developing your abilities to work with individuals in various ways and situations, helping young members, cooperating with adult leaders, and

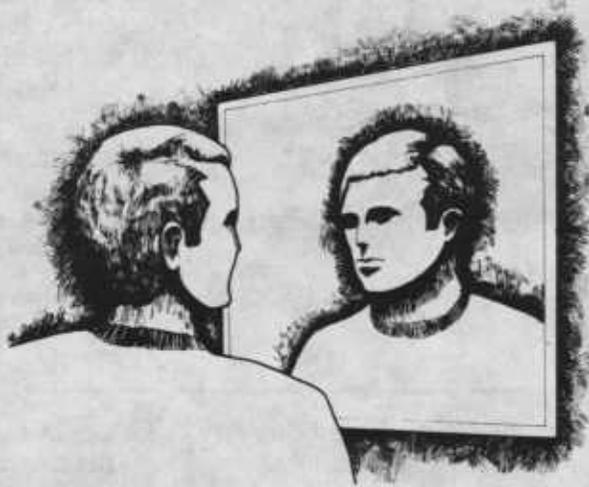
beginning to get acquainted with parents. Working with others requires recognition of what individuals know, what they are able to do, and what is important to them. You need to understand some key principles that help to explain people's behavior, then you'll learn to apply these principles to your own actions as a basis for understanding the actions of others.



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## Understanding Yourself

How well do you know the teenager you see in the mirror each morning? You are the most fascinating subject there is for you to study! Understanding yourself is the first step toward understanding others. To help you see yourself, try asking yourself the



questions listed below. Add others of your own to help complete the picture of yourself.

How good is my knowledge? Do I recognize good standards of work? Can I accept and use new ideas? Do I plan and use my time well?

What skills do I have? Am I able to tell others about my ideas? Can I do many tasks well? Can I work with other people? Do I learn from others?

Are my attitudes acceptable? Do I really care about other people or do I use them to get ahead myself? Am I sensitive to the needs, abilities, and reactions of others?

Can I give responsibility to others instead of trying to do everything myself? Can I find pride and satisfaction in helping others to do things without being "front and center" myself? Can I accept suggestions gracefully?

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## Working With Young Members

Most Teen Leaders will be working with younger members. Here are some guidelines you need to learn and remember as you work with these youth.

**Young members need to belong.** Every boy and girl needs to feel accepted by others in their group. Each child is different, so accept a member for what he or she is and guide that member in the direction of his or her abilities. A point to remember is that each member must gain a place of importance in the group and have a feeling of "belonging."

**Young members need to develop skills.** For younger members, skills are exciting and all-important. They need a chance to learn how to do many things successfully. Accomplishment must come frequently and quite soon after joining.

**Young members need responsibilities.** They are able to make only a few choices and can accept limited responsibility. Very young members have about all they can

handle if they learn to be responsible for their project, records, or some participation in club meetings. You can, however, help each member add a few responsibilities as he or she goes along in 4-H.

**Young members need to achieve.** Each member needs the opportunity to achieve, but all members will not look for achievement in the same way. Some will receive their achievement by finishing their projects. Others may want to share an idea or a technique with the other club members. Know your younger members so that you can help them find some level of achievement within the club.

**Young members want limits or guidelines.** Each younger member needs guidance, direction, and definite limits, preferably those that he or she has set for him/herself. Your job is to guide and direct the younger members to do what they want to do as long as it is within their program, their ability, and the spirit of 4-H.

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**Young members need values.** Opportunities to put the heart "H" into practice are important to young members. They will try hard to live up to the ideas of the 4-H Pledge. They will look to you as a living example of those



ideals. You can help them by remembering to:

- Set standards of good sportsmanship.
- Always be willing to help out whether or not you are in charge or will get credit.
- Show enthusiasm for 4-H.
- Set an example by your own attitude, good project work, and full participation in the program.
- Speak well about others. Find good things to praise, not weaknesses to criticize. Any criticism must be constructive, not destructive.

*In other words, work in harmony with all members.*

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## **First-Year Members Are Special**

Your work as a Teen Leader is concerned largely with the new and the younger 4-H members. You will be able to help them have a satisfactory experience in 4-H. All young people in the process of growing up have a desire for a sense of personal worth, attention, prestige, and achievement. They need to have a feeling of accomplishment and a continuing sense of personal security.

Some tips for meetings these needs:

- 1 Make each member feel important when he or she joins, during the year, and at the end of the year
- 2 See that each 1st-year member has a special duty in carrying out the club activities.
- 3 Make certain that each 1st-year member has the necessary information, supplies, and help to complete his or her project.
- 4 Plan some special ways for parents of new members to know about and be interested in your 4-H Club.
- 5 Create situations that will give the opportunity for 4-H members to receive recognition.
- 6 Help new members take part in some community activity that attracts favorable notice and gives them prestige.

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## **Working With Your Advisor**

The relationship between you and your advisor is the key to your personal development and contribution to the 4-H program. You are trying to become less dependent on the adults close to you, yet at the same time you are learning to cooperate with them in

the adult world. It is not an easy task to accomplish, but a most important step in your growing-up process. Some guidelines to help you reach a good relationship are suggested here. You might want to add others of your own.

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Adults like recognition, acceptance, and consideration as much as you do. Show genuine interest in your adult advisor. Discuss your plans, new ideas, and suggestions with him or her before acting on them. Learn to give



and accept suggestions graciously. And gain the confidence of your advisor by being dependable for following through on planned jobs.

It's also important to promote understanding between your advisor and the members of your club. Try to see and feel the situation through the adult's eyes. Try walking in his or her shoes to understand how he or she is feeling.

Your advisor will be a qualified adult who's available for advice and counsel whenever you want help. He or she will not attend your club meetings unless invited. It will be your responsibility to arrange for visits with your advisor and keep him or her informed on the progress of your club.

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## Working With a Group

Groups are made up of people; therefore, you will discover that many of the same attitudes and methods used in working with the individual members in a group are also important in working with the entire group. As you have an opportunity to learn the leadership skills of group dynamics, you'll want to practice some of the new skills with your club group.

Ways of living and working together are a part of democracy. It doesn't just happen—we each have to learn how to live democratically with other people. The democratic way of life requires work by everyone. When people meet in groups they must adjust to one another. Your 4-H club has a part to play in helping members learn to feel and act as good democratic citizens.

By working together in 4-H meetings and activities you can help members learn to trust and respect each other. You can develop and use the different abilities of each member. And you learn to make decisions for the benefit of the whole group.

Forming committees or small groups working together to accomplish a definite goal is one

way to reduce the routine of a business meeting. Appointing several committees within a club gives each member a chance to serve and to feel that he or she is an important part of the group. Here are some of the things you can do to help a committee work:

- Create a friendly feeling for exchanging ideas.
- Express a clear definition of the job to be done.
- Have an orderly, planned agenda for starting the job.
- Get each committee member into the act. Make him or her feel that he or she is "in" from the beginning and that you don't have the plans already made.
- Divide responsibilities according to ability, but see that one person doesn't have all the "chores."
- See that each member has a clear idea of his or her duties.
- Follow up on the progress of committee members.

The 4-H club needs to work together as a democratic group. You can help by practicing the principles, developed through research and experience, of working in groups.

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Your understanding of how people act in the group will increase as you help your 4-H members learn to use parliamentary procedure and discussion to carry out the plans in which they are interested.

They will learn to feel individually responsible for taking part in making decisions. Each of us accepts best the actions that he or she helped start. A member who feels that something he or she did, even in a small way, was responsible for action by the group is more willing to accept results.

They need to accept individual differences and abilities and how they contribute to the group, and

to understand that leadership is not always in the hands of the same person. All members may have a part (large or small) in leading certain situations.

- Arrange the meeting place to encourage interaction. Usually this means seated around a table, or with chairs in a circle, so that everyone can see each other.
- Create a meeting atmosphere that is friendly and informal and allows each member to share his ideas and to make mistakes. Remember, both good and bad ideas provide learning experiences.



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### **Other Teen Leaders Working With the Club**

There may be several Teen Leaders working with the same club. Planning should allow each Teen Leader major responsibility. Divide minor jobs as equally as possible.

It is a mark of a good leader to be good follower when another is out in front. Being part of the team means each makes his own contribution to reach the goal, and credit is shared for team work.

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## Planning Your 4-H Club Program

You wouldn't start a trip without a destination in mind or a road map to find the way. In the same way, your club should not start on its trip without a map. Your club will get lost unless you develop a program of meetings and activities for the year in advance. In consultation with the adult advisor, you should plan to take the initiative in this important part of the club's work.

The club must set realistic goals for accomplishment during the year. You can help members by asking them to express their interests: What do you want to learn in 4-H this year? What special ideas do you have for activities and events? What do you think would be the most fun? What would be most beneficial for the club to do? What are your choices on topics if you were asked to show how to do something, or tell about something, at 4-H meeting?

It is important to involve your members in planning so they feel

that the club program is also their program. You should make sure that the club:

- Adopts goals and suggests ways to attain them.
- Decides the time and place for meetings.
- Decides topics for demonstrations or talks and assigns members according to their interests.
- Sees that members serve on some committees.
- Schedules club activities and events.
- Schedules county events to remember.
- Includes year-round activities in the plan, whether or not your club is programmed continuously.
- Presents the proposed program at a club meeting for changes or suggestions by members and parents.
- Prepares a written copy of the program and for each of the families so that the parents become involved.

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## Recruitment: Extending 4-H to Others

As you begin to think about organizing your 4-H club you may also need to recruit the members for your club. Many teenagers who have "grown up" in 4-H feel that more boys and girls should have an opportunity to join. Many young people and adults, too, who live in urban and suburban areas do not realize that they can participate in 4-H. Recruitment and creating awareness of the 4-H program is an important part of a Teen Leadership Project.

The first step in recruitment is to create awareness of the opportunities in 4-H and in your particular 4-H club. You can promote 4-H by:

- 1 Describing 4-H in personal discussions.

- 2 Conducting planned presentations in schools, PTA's, churches, community youth groups, and so on.
- 3 Developing displays for stores, libraries, and public buildings in the community.
- 4 Telling the 4-H story through newspaper articles and on the radio.
- 5 Contacting prospective members in person. Remember, playmates and friends often join together.

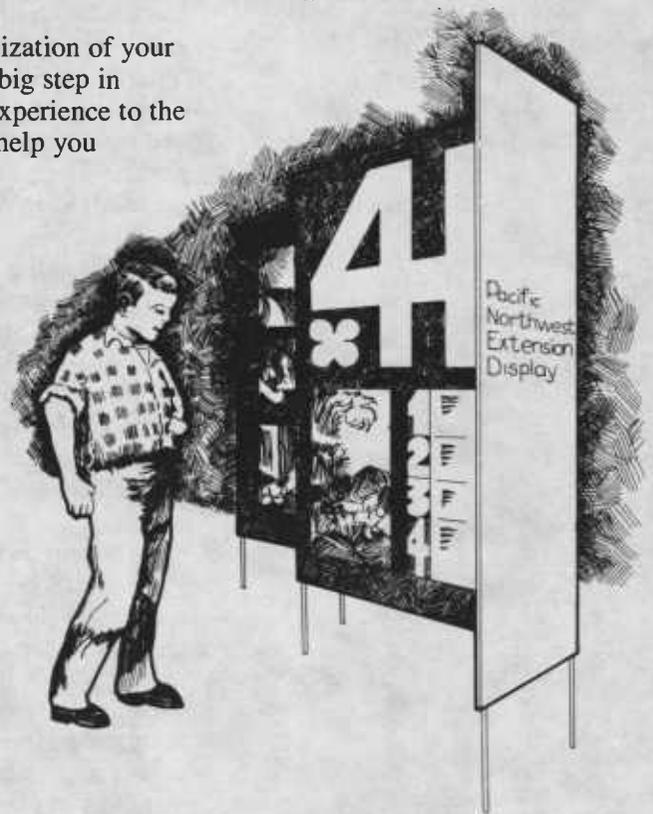
The next important step in the organization is the recruitment of the 4-H members. Recruitment of 4-H members is usually most effectively accomplished by having the members recruit their own friends, by searching out

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youth with special interests, and by talking to teachers and youth groups through the school and the community.

The initial organization of your 4-H club will be a big step in providing a good experience to the 4-H members. To help you

prepare for the organization of the club, you should review your *4-H Club Officer Handbook*, 4-H 035.



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## Recognition in the Teen Leadership Project

Youth who have served in Teen Leadership say the rewards of inner satisfaction and personal growth are more significant than any material award received. Youth have listed this special satisfaction as helping others, receiving recognition of their

achievements by fellow 4-H members and by their parents, gaining the expressed appreciation and approval of their advisor and other leaders, and being recognized by the adults in the community for their leadership.

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## Materials

Teen Leaders should use adult leader guides. Obtain a copy of *Organizing a 4-H Club* (4-H 0242L), *Planning a 4-H Club Program* (4-H 0240L), enrollment forms, organizational materials, and sample copies of project materials from your county Extension office. Do this before you organize your club.

Oregon Junior Leadership has valuable tips on leadership. The Junior Leadership Record is also available as a tool to help you evaluate your effectiveness as a leader.

Teen Leadership does not require a 4-H record. Teen Leadership should be included on *My Permanent Record*, 4-H 033R.

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