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Tours - A Teaching Tool -- A 4-H Leaders' Guide

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BOYS AND GIRLS like action. They like to go places, see things, meet people, and have new experiences. What they see and do is better understood and remembered longer than what they hear or read. A well-planned educational tour can be a very effective teaching tool and can provide good learning experiences.

How Does a Tour Teach?

New experiences arouse attention and interest. One who is there in person can use several or all of his five senses—seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. Actual use of the senses is much more effective than hearing or reading about something. Written and spoken words are but symbols that stand for something else and often need to be reinforced with the real thing to be meaningful.

Tours supplement what the boy or girl does in 4-H projects or in school, thus providing in many ways a broadened experience for learning. Seeing new enterprises and methods is a valuable way of introducing new interests.

Participants stimulate each other by asking questions and showing interest. Club members

like to do things together. Parents can often be included on tours and can reinforce member learning. Adults learn, too, on a 4-H tour.

Preparing one's project for inspection and explaining it to a group on a club tour is an excellent learning experience.

Kinds of Tours

- A club tour to the homes of the members to see their projects. This type of tour is especially appropriate for livestock, poultry, crops, garden, tractor, and home improvement clubs. Each member prepares his project for inspection and serves as host and tour leader.
- A project tour to a farm, market, processing plant, or other business related to the members' projects.



- A general interest tour to stimulate and broaden interests, to emphasize the value of natural resources and the importance of conservation, and to open the door to career possibilities.

- An overnight tour or campout is especially appropriate for forestry, wildlife, geology and outdoor cookery clubs. The camping experience can provide an additional opportunity for learning.

Suggested places to go

Production

General farm
Cattle feed lot
Dairy farm
Poultry farm
Hatchery
Greenhouse
Nursery
Orchard
Apiary
Fish hatchery
Electric power plant
Tree farm
Logging operation

Marketing

Livestock
Fruit and vegetable
Grain
Fish
Poultry and egg

Processing Plants

Fruits and vegetables
Meats
Poultry and eggs
Dairy products
Flour mill
Sawmill

Manufacturing

Woolen goods
Furniture
Cabinet shop
Pulp and paper
Plywood

Saddlery
Bakery
Timber structures
Machine shop

Retail Stores

Cloth and clothing
Food
Appliances
Furniture
Garden supplies
Farm machinery
Flowers
Building materials

Transportation

Public docks
Railroads and trucking
Bus station
Airport

Services

Veterinary hospital
Clothes cleaners
Photo processing
Police station
Bank
Architect
Fire station

Research and Education

4-H projects
School or university
Experiment station
Result demonstration
Library
Museum
Zoo
Newspaper or printing press
Radio or TV station
Insect collections
Rock and mineral collections

Recreation and Conservation

State or national park
Lake or ocean beach
Forest lookout or
guard station
Geologic formations
Soil conservation

The three "P's" of a successful tour are preparation, participation, and postscript.

I. Preparation

Is this tour necessary? Does it have a purpose? Why are we going? What do we hope to gain? A tour is a method of teaching—an opportunity to learn. A tour that results from a desire to see and do and learn is most effective. A 4-H tour should help accomplish the objectives of the club.

Many clubs include one or more tours in their annual program. It is a real advantage to have a tour scheduled and planned well in advance.

Who plans a 4-H tour? For a club of junior (9- to 11-year-old) members, the leader may do much of the planning and make most of the arrangements. The plan should, however, be discussed with the members. Interest and learning result from involvement.

Intermediate and senior members (12 to 14 years and older) can, with guidance, do the planning and make most of the arrangements. For a large club, or if several clubs are included, a tour committee will be most effective. Subcommittees to plan and arrange for transportation, food, recreation, publicity, etc., can involve most of the members and provide excellent learning experiences for all.

Things to consider

What do we want to see and learn?

Where can this be accomplished?

When? Dates and time of day in relation to school, other activities, convenience of hosts, weather, and transportation.

Develop a schedule that allows ample time to accomplish the objectives of tour and time for driving, parking, and eating.

Get permission of hosts. Explain the purpose of the tour and the ages and interests of the group.

Determine the size of the group. Can everyone see and hear?

Obtain parents' permission; written permission may be desirable.

Take safety precautions. Take a first aid kit and consider insurance (county Extension

agents have information on special group insurance).

Arrange for transportation—private cars or a bus? Buses may be more expensive, but they help keep a large group together and make it easier to give instructions. Plan in advance for parking space.

Make arrangements for food (sack lunches, planned potluck), place to eat, and time involved. Can everyone be served? Prepare for utensils needed and for clean-up. Be certain to check the amount of spending money needed.

Estimate the cost of the tour and collect money from members. Some businesses are happy to furnish refreshments, but they should not be solicited. 4-H members should learn to pay their own way.

Decide if a loud-speaker will be needed. Portable speakers may be available.

Arrange for chaperones. A responsible adult should accompany each group; if girls are to be included on an overnight tour, a woman chaperone should accompany them.

At a meeting prior to the tour, the entire program should be carefully explained. Committee chairmen can do much of this orientation. Club members and parents should know where they are going, what they will see, what they can learn, and how it will apply to them. This stimulates interest and sets the stage for better understanding, appropriate questions, and greater learning.

Review:

- Food plans.
- Travel procedure (who will ride with whom; time schedule; route to be followed). Distribute maps if needed.
- Courtesy; respect for private and public property; health and safety precautions.
- Suitable clothing and foot wear. Consider the weather and conditions.
- Schedule and itinerary for participants and their parents.

Also, before the tour, the leader and/or a small committee should visit each "host" to discuss the purposes of the tour and how they can be accomplished; the age, experience, and interests of the members; the size of the group and the time available; the way the group can best cooperate; and whether safety precautions are needed.

Do not forget publicity before the tour. A news story alerts people to what 4-H is doing and stimulates interest.

II. Participation

Meet at a scheduled time and place. Check to see that everyone is present, comfortable, and has what he needs for the tour. Start on time.

On arrival at each stop, call the group together. Review very briefly what is to be seen. Introduce the host. Help direct the group so that all can see and hear. Keep them together. Check safety. Encourage questions. Handle conduct problems courteously, firmly, and promptly. At the end of the visit, give the host an opportunity to summarize operations and give members a chance to ask questions. Thank the host and keep on schedule.

When visiting a member's home, the club member is the "host" and should be allowed to show and explain his project and to answer questions.

Avoid distractions. People learn best when they are comfortable. Make use of shade and shelter when needed. Allow members to be seated when practical. Locate groups so they will not have to look into the sun. Try to have them down wind from the speaker. Don't forget rest stops at appropriate intervals.

III. Postscript

Review the tour and what was learned at a subsequent 4-H meeting. Encourage club members to tell what they saw and learned and to ask questions. Help them understand the significance of what they saw and how it relates to them.

Send thank-you letters to the "hosts" and those who provided transportation, food, etc. Writing thank-you letters can help club members gain experience in developing the habit of expressing appreciation. Sometimes each member should write to each host. Other times different members can write letters for the club. These may be signed by all members. As club leader, you, too, may want to write letters to each host expressing your appreciation.

Prepare a follow-up news story about the tour. Club members and hosts like to see their names in print. A complimentary news story about a 4-H visit to a business is good publicity for the business and helps to repay them for their cooperation.

Be sure that all bills are paid and that all property is returned to its owners.

Make a record of the tour, including places visited, number attending, cost, highlights, and problems. This report should be included in the secretary's book, as it will be helpful in planning future tours.

A tour may be defined as taking the participants from where they are to a situation in which they will have a direct, purposeful learning experience. A tour is a teaching tool to be used for specific learning. It can be a most enjoyable and effective way of teaching.

The procedures discussed in this folder will apply in many similar situations for tours planned by schools, church youth groups, and many others.

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