



## Pre-Meeting Activities: The First Part of Your 4-H Club Meeting

As your 4-H members arrive at each meeting, do things ever seem a bit awkward as kids wait for the meeting to get started? Or perhaps the environment seems chaotic as kids group up and start talking and goofing around as they wait for their fellow members to arrive? Take a moment and think about the newer members in your club. What are they doing prior to the meeting starting? Are they engaged? Are they included? Are they invited into conversations or activities? Or are they disconnected? Are they feeling insecure and left out of the activities?

Pre-meeting activities provides many benefits:

1. It gets kids engaged in fun and/or educational activities the moment they walk in the door.
2. Having the kids engaged in an activity allows the leader to prepare for other items with the meeting.
3. Kids get to learn something while they are working with others.
4. Kids will get to learn more about the other members in their club as they work through activities together.
5. Kids are active right away when they arrive which SHOULD help them sit more calmly during the business meeting.
6. It's a great way for leaders to get youth and parents involved in some club leadership and organization. Parents and youth can be involved with designing activities and helping at the project tables.
7. Some youth may choose to do a working exhibit during this time in order to fulfill their communications for the year.
8. Other kids may quit being late to meetings because they don't want to miss out on the fun!
9. It promotes a sense of **belonging** and **inclusiveness** in the club. This inclusiveness then stems to the other essential elements of mastery, engagement, caring adults, safe environments, and self-determination.

**Have you seen the 4-H Recreation and Activities Guide from North Dakota? Download free at**

[http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/4h/ClubMaterials/FJ825\\_Games\\_Activities.pdf](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/4h/ClubMaterials/FJ825_Games_Activities.pdf)

## Pre-Meeting Activity Starter List

Set up one or several activity tables 15 minutes prior to the start of each meeting. As members arrive they can work through the tables until it is time for the club event to start. Some activity tables should be educational in nature while others can be simply for fun.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Work with others or individually to draw a picture of a penny without looking at one.
- Create 4-H lyrics to “My bologna has a first name. It’s OSCAR...”
- Utilize your members to prepare a working exhibit that they set up for the pre-meeting activity.
- Work individually or in a group to complete an A-Z Scavenger Hunt of items in or around the meeting place.
- Make a variety of thank you note cards that can be used throughout the 4-H year.
- Figure out how many words you can make from your 4-H leaders’ names.
- Write your name backwards and practice its new pronunciation. Introduce yourself using your new name to everyone that enters the room.
- Inject colored water into bananas to practice vaccinating livestock – adult supervision necessary
- Write a thank you note to someone
- Guess who the person is from the photos of their eyes
- Guess how many candy hearts are in the jar
- Draw a still life of a basket of fruit that you have on the table
- Have a 4-H member share their working exhibit—a make and take
- Learn to sew a button on a piece of fabric
- Food and Fitness Craze skill-a-thons
- Make a puppet—sack, sock, other
- Create a collage
- Make a mini-rocket out of straws and paper
- Design a new bedroom plan
- Draw the funniest face you have ever seen
- Face paint another member’s cheek or arm
- Design a scavenger hunt
- Write a paragraph reflecting what you learned during your club’s community service activity
- Set up a breed identification table for any species of animal
- Adapt almost any activity from 4-H project materials

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