Reflection Ideas for 4-H Leaders

As a youth development activity, 4-Her’s reflection and application of their experiences is critical. When youth are assisted to “think about their thinking”, they gain insight into themselves, their club and their community. The ideas below are to help 4-H leaders and volunteers effectively lead reflection as part of the 4-H Experiential Learning Model.

KWL Charts
KWL are charts are used to organize learning and evaluate what the youth already know and are interested in learning more about. KWL charts are also good method for evaluating what the youth learned during an activity.

The first section of the chart is for listing what the youth already Know about a topic. The second section is used for listing what the youth Want to learn. Youth can discuss this as a whole group or within small groups. The third section is for listing what the youth Learned by doing the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know</th>
<th>Want to Know</th>
<th>Learned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worms are brown.</td>
<td>How do worms see?</td>
<td>Worms do not have eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worms are good for the garden.</td>
<td>Do worms have teeth?</td>
<td>Worms help the plant roots get water and air by digging tunnels in the soil.</td>
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Brainstorming
Brainstorming is an effective way to generate many ideas on a specific issue. Brainstorming can be done as a whole group, in small groups, or individually but is done best in small groups of 8-10. Brainstorming ideas helps youth to stretch their thinking and come up with more creative ideas.

The club leader is the facilitator during a brainstorming activity and begins the activity by defining the problem or task at hand. For example, the problem may be defined by a question such as, “What are some ways that we can raise money to go on a camping trip?” The youth then shout out their ideas while the leader writes them down on a large piece of paper, white board, etc., large enough so everyone can see. One of the rules of brainstorming is that there should be no criticizing of ideas. All ideas should be written down.

Sometimes we use brainstorming to help a group make a decision. In this case, continue generating ideas until the group is satisfied with the number of variety of ideas they have.
created. Then work together to pick the top five choices. List the top choices on the paper/board and then discuss the pro’s and con’s of each. During this discussion, four of the five choices should be weeded out as impractical, impossible, etc. The most feasible choice should be left.

**Guided Discussion**
Unlike directly lecturing youth on a specific topic, guided discussion can be used by the leader. Guided discussion is facilitated by the leader using specific questions to gain an understanding of what the youth know about a specific topic. Guided discussion has many benefits including: use of higher-level thinking skills, exposure to viewpoints other than one’s own, and practice in speaking in front of others.

Guided Discussion Example:
- Does anyone remember before there were cell phones? When do you first remember people carrying them?
- How have cell phones changed businesses?
- How do you think cell phones have changed relationships?
- Some people think cell phones have caused people to be less independent. What do you think about this idea?
- Sometimes we see signs for “cell phone etiquette” hanging in places of business. Why do you think businesses need to do this? Why don’t people “just know”?
- How has technology like this changed what we see as “acceptable” in our society?

**Bumper Stickers**
People often put bumper stickers on their vehicles to promote an idea, an insight, a belief or a world view. Some are intended to be serious, while others are intended to be thought-provoking. In either case, the graphics and text of a bumper sticker give us information about the vehicle’s driver.

Following a learning experience, guest speaker, field trip or activity, give youth art supplies and ask them to create bumper stickers that illustrate their “take away” message from the learning experience. Don’t be surprised if 4-Hers’ “take home message” is not the same as yours. Examples of “take home” messages that youth might have following a learning activity are:
- I like kids, but I don’t want any.
- Leadership is not easy.
- There is no whining at work.
- I need to study hard in school so I don’t have to lift things when I am a grown up.
- If you put junk in, you get junk out.

Ask youth to share their bumper sticker with a partner or with the group. Be sure to inquire about what led them to this as a “take home” message.

**Puzzle Put Togethers**
One fun way to reflect about an issue, idea or task is to use puzzle pieces. The internet has many images of puzzle templates. Print one puzzle template for each group of three-four 4-Hers. (It is helpful to put each puzzle on a different colored piece of paper or cardstock so they are easily separated from one another.) Cut apart each puzzle and place each puzzle in a separate envelope.

Following a learning experience, put youth into groups of three-four. Give each of them a pencil and a puzzle envelope. Ask youth to work together to list the most important elements of what they learned, writing one item on each puzzle piece. Then ask each group to put their puzzle together.

When each group has finished, ask them to share with another group what they wrote and how they decided what elements to include as the “most significant” to their learning.

**Candy? Dandy!**

Fill a bowl, basket or large drinking glass with individually wrapped candy (Starburst, Hershey’s Kisses, Jolly Ranchers, etc.) Ask youth to sit in a circle. Ask 4-Hers a question to help them reflect on their learning experience. Examples might include:

- What surprised you the most about what the speaker said?
- What questions do you still have about this topic?
- What was the most important thing you learned from this experience?
- What kinds of skills do you think someone needs in order to be able to do this work well? Where might someone learn these skills?
- If this topic were a paid job that someone had, what would it be? In what situations might someone do this type of task for work?

Pass around the candy. Each 4-Her answers one of the questions asked and then takes a piece of candy. Then he/she passes the candy to the next person. Be sure to acknowledge and value the responses of each youth.

**Values Line-Up**

One way to get youth to think about their learning is to ask them their opinion. This reflection activity allows youth to participate without speaking in front of a group if he/she feels uncomfortable doing so.

First, ask youth “what is an opinion?” Accept answers from the group. Tell youth that an opinion is a personal view or attitude about something. Explain that we all have different ideas about issues and therefore we all have different opinions. We want our club to be a place where everyone’s opinions are respected, so in this activity, think about your own personal opinion. People do not have to agree with their friends’ opinions just because they are friends.

Hang up three signs along one wall. The sign on one end should read “Strongly Agree”, the sign on the opposite end should read “Strongly Disagree” and the sign in the center should read “No Opinion.” Explain to youth that you are going to read some statements and they should stand along the wall in the place that best describes their opinion about that statement. Be sure to
tell youth that sometimes they will “agree” with a statement, but not “strongly agree.” In this case, they would stand in between the “agree” and “no opinion” statement.

Start this reflection activity with a “practice” statement such as “Chocolate ice cream is the best flavor of ice cream.” Then watch 4-Hers think about their opinion and move to the location that indicates their view. Be sure to watch for signs that someone might need more clarification about the instructions.

When you are sure 4-Hers understand, create the some “opinion statements” that relate to the learning experience. For example, if your club has taken a tour of a bakery, you might give a statement such as, “Being a baker is a fun job.” You can ask 4-Hers to help you create these statements before beginning the reflection activity.

As 4-Hers think about their views and find their place along the wall, ask who would like to explain why they chose the location they did. Be sure to acknowledge and value the responses of each youth. Be prepared for youth to have differing opinions. Use this opportunity to reinforce the idea that we all have different views, and that makes us unique and special. It is okay to disagree, as long as we do it respectfully.

**Roll the Dice**

This activity can be facilitated in groups of 4-6. For each group you will need a die and a list of questions 1-6. The questions can be written on a white board or flip chart paper where all groups can see it, or on individual worksheets. Each of the six questions relates to the learning experience in which 4-Hers participated. Examples might be:

1. Tell something you learned from the presentation.
2. In what kind of job/career might someone use the information in this presentation? How/when would they use it?
3. What would you like to know more about on this or a related topic? Where would you learn this information?
4. What did the presenter do to make his/her presentation unique/interesting?
5. Think about how you learn best (by someone telling you, by watching someone else do it, or by doing it yourself). Which type of learners would probably remember the most from this presentation? Why?
6. Choose one of the above.

4-Hers should roll the die one at a time. He/she should answer the question that corresponds to the number he/she rolled. The Scott County Extension office has provided lists of questions to each club for the following types of learning experiences:

- Educational Presentations
- Social Activities
- Service Projects
- Tours/Field Trips
- Business Meetings
- Topics Workshops
- Project Exploration

If you would like additional copies of these worksheets, please contact us.