Celebrate Your Family Through 4-H

Every family has inner strengths and every family can grow stronger. "Celebrate Your Family Through 4-H" is an exciting way to strengthen families.

Your 4-H club is a group. If all members have an interest in or commitment to the group as a whole, then the club will flourish and grow. You and others work hard to make the club interesting and fun. If members of your 4-H group begin to lose their commitment and interest, it is difficult to keep the club alive.

The family, like your 4-H club, is a group. Family members must work to make the family grow and become stronger. Interest in and commitment to your family doesn't just happen, any more than it does in your 4-H club — it takes work!

Remember: your 4-H'ers are members of families. Talk with them about the importance of their families and give them ideas of how they can help strengthen their families. You also can lead activities in the club program to help strengthen the 4-H'ers families.

Start a 4-H club tradition by planning a family program as part of the club meeting. Invite and encourage entire families to participate. You might begin with a pot-luck supper or simply have the 4-H'ers conduct their ordinary meeting. After the business part of the meeting, do a Family Strength Builder activity. It may be advisable to shorten the meeting a little if younger children are present.

FAMILY STRENGTH BUILDER 1.
Make a family name tag.

Have colored construction paper, markers, scissors and straight pins available. The leader, teen leader, or 4-H member instructs each family group to design a simple family name tag that reflects its individuality. The tag might resemble the family house or some activity the family likes to do together, like horseback riding or gardening. Once the family has decided on a design, each family member duplicates the name tag and prints his or her name on it.

After all name tags have been made, instruct all family members to sit in a circle. If more than 20 or 25 are in the group, you may want to form two circles. Have family members introduce themselves and talk about how or why they decided on their name tag design.

FAMILY STRENGTH BUILDER 2.
Family skit.

Choose a theme, such as the 4th of July, freedom, summer, distant places, etc. Instruct each family to develop a short (5-minute) skit. Insist that all family members take part. Preparing the skit will take about 30 minutes. Emphasize that the purpose of the family skit is fun. No one is expected to have acting ability or experience!

After the skits are prepared, each family presents its skit to the other families. You may ask each family why their theme was presented as it was.
FAMILY STRENGTH BUILDER 3.
Involve 4-H’ers families.

There are many opportunities to involve 4-H’er families. Some families need encouragement; others simply need an invitation. As a 4-H leader, you can encourage and invite entire families to participate in 4-H activities.
- Take a survey of future 4-H activities, such as Roundup, demonstrations, etc. Choose one activity and consider how entire families might become involved.
- Talk to the club members. Ask them “How can you (or we) get your entire family involved in Roundup?”
- Talk also to the families of the 4-H members. Stress the importance of family participation. Ask them how they see themselves becoming involved.

FAMILY STRENGTH BUILDER 4.
Draw a family tree.

A fun and rewarding activity that can be started during a 4-H meeting and completed at home is drawing a family tree. Provide 4-H’ers with papers and pencils and instruct them to draw a tree (see illustration). The 4-H’er should fill in as many names as possible. Each child will become stumped at some branch or level of the family tree. Children should be instructed to complete the family tree at home and return it at the next 4-H meeting. The family tree activity will get families involved and give the young member a sense of his or her background.

Families living in today’s world experience many demands on their time and energies. All too often these competing forces do not support the family or encourage individual members to be committed to their families.

The 4-H leader plays an important role in the lives of 4-H members. Leaders can support the family as well as encourage commitment and interest in the family as a group. The 4-H leader can help club members celebrate their family through 4-H.

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