

*So you are*  
**RECREATION**  
**LEADER**  
*of your club . . .*



### A Recreation Leader Should

1. Be sensitive to group and individual needs and feelings.
2. Make it easy to participate.
3. Be creative and flexible.
4. Have a sense of humor.
5. Have fun!

Congratulations! Now that your club has chosen you as the recreation leader, you, and all other officers of your 4-H club are representatives. As a 4-H officer, you represent not only your club, but also the 4-H program throughout the state. Your skills and abilities, standards and ideals, grooming, speech and even smiles represent Kansas 4-H members. Representing others is one of your most important responsibilities because it exists at all times — not just while you are at 4-H events.

## Recreation Leader Job Description

- Make recreation an important part of your club's meetings.
- Prepare games/activities for each meeting and lead them.
- Serve as chairperson of the recreation committee, if your club has one. If not, it is a good idea to talk to your leader about organizing one at the beginning of the 4-H year.
- Teach your fellow club members how to learn from teamwork activities.
- Encourage everyone to participate.
- Be sure all members have FUN!

## Guidelines for Recreation Leaders

### Why do we have recreation?

- Put fun in a club program.
- Build interest in club meetings.
- Learn cooperation.
- Provide a healthy outlet for competition.
- Provide mental stimulation.
- Physical development.
- Develop social skills.
- Practice leadership.

### Planning hints:

Fun is the first priority of club recreation. If the activity is not fun, all the other benefits may be lost in the hassle to get the activity done. When planning recreation, the leader should consider many things. Some of these are:

- The type of event and the group it involves.

- The number of people involved.
- Age, gender, experience, and dress of expected participants.
- The physical setting and equipment available for use.
- Time of day and time of year of the event.
- Amount of time available.
- What, if any, leadership assistance will be needed.

### Leadership hints:

- Plan the activities in a logical flow, taking into account physical activity and excitement levels; provide transitions to the next activity. Make a written list.
- Practice the activity to be sure of the rules and anticipate any problems.
- Have all the equipment you need ready before starting.
- Make sure you have the attention of the group before starting.
- Explain the activity clearly and concisely but do not spend too much time explaining.
- Use demonstrations whenever possible.
- Try to involve everyone.
- Have fun, but do not make fun of others. Respect the feelings of every participant.
- Stop at the top: Stop the activity when everyone is having the most fun.
- Evaluate the activity. Did the group enjoy it? Were my directions clear?

Source: Rod Buchele, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development, SW Area

## Guidelines for Your Recreation Committee

- Be sure to include:
  - An adult volunteer leader
  - Younger members
  - Older members
  - Someone who can lead activities in your absence
- Put together a recreation kit:
  - Idea file:** You can use a file box or notebook with dividers to keep a record of the names of games and instructions. Identify books at the library that have games in them. Your extension agent is also a good source for fun club games. Also check out [www.Kansas4-H.org](http://www.Kansas4-H.org), click on Resources, and then click on Officer Resources.
  - Equipment:** Include items that you may need for a variety of games and activities. This could include string, drinking straws, spoons, toothpicks, beanbags, or paper and pencils. You may be able to get other equipment from your extension office, such as a spandex band, large wooden blocks, or foam noodles.
  - Be sure your kit is easy to bring to meetings and is organized.
- Activity planning:
  - At the beginning of the 4-H year, meet with the recreation committee to decide which activities you want to do at each club meeting.
  - Plan activities that will build teamwork.
  - If your meetings have themes, try to plan activities that match the theme.
  - Plan activities for members to participate in before the meeting in addition to during recreation time.

## Good Sportsmanship

It is important for all members to be good sports at all times. Your fellow club members may be naturally competitive, but this does not mean that they can't be good sports.

There are six important points to remember when encouraging good sportsmanship. You can teach these to your club at the first 4-H meeting after you are elected.

1. **Conduct:** Others base opinions of you on your personal behavior. Remember that you represent your club, your county/district and all of Kansas 4-H.
2. **Fairness:** Learn and follow the rules. Apply the rules to all in the same way.
3. **Honesty:** Never cheat. Be truthful, fair, and honest in everything you do.
4. **Competition:** Understand that competition involves rivalries between contestants. Encourage members to remember they are playing for fun and fellowship, not just to win.
5. **Courtesy:** Be respectful, thoughtful, considerate, cooperative, friendly, and cheerful in your attitude and behavior regardless of whether you win or lose. Even if you are upset, keep your emotions under control.
6. **Graceful Acceptance of the Rules:** Take judges' decisions and the results with a positive outlook. Congratulate the winner if you lose, and when you win, don't brag about your victory. Always thank everyone who helped you, regardless of the outcome.



*“Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.”*

*~Abraham Lincoln*



## Board Games

One way to tailor your recreation to many different age levels is to use board games. Board games can add variety to club meetings and are a great bad-weather alternative if your plans include outdoor recreation. Ask each member of the recreation committee and each adult leader to bring his or her favorite board game. By doing this, you will have a variety of board games without having to use club funds. Additionally, members may like a break from team-building activities and welcome some competition.

# Activity Ideas for Meetings

## Before the meeting

Set up a guessing game station for members who arrive early to the meeting.

- A glass jar of jellybeans (How many?)
- An orange (How many seeds?)
- A picture of an animal (How old?)
- A carton of juice (How much?)
- Part of a deck of cards (How many aces?)

## Getting-to-know you activities

### Act it Out

- Have members stand in a circle, an arm's distance apart. Each person must think of an action word that starts with the same letter (or sound) as the person's first name e.g., "Jumping James" or "Clapping Christy."
- Each person does the action and yells out his or her action-name. Everyone then repeats the action and the action-name.
- This requires a high level of leader energy and drama. Really encourage everyone to join in and say the name and action of everyone else.

## Burning Questions

- Have members draw a question from a hat and give them a few minutes to think about their answer.
- Have the member state his or her name, age, and any other information before he or she answers the question.
- Allow plenty of time.
- Adjust the sample questions below to suit your particular group.
  - If you were to choose a new name for yourself, what would it be and why?
  - If you were given an extra \$10 in change at a store, what would you do with it and why?
  - What's the biggest lesson you've learned from your parents?
  - What's one of your worst habits?
  - What was the best day of the past week for you? Why?
  - What are you wearing today that is most reflective of who you are?
  - What is your funniest/most embarrassing 4-H moment?
  - If you could change one thing about your physical appearance, what would it be and why?
  - If you could spend a day with anyone, living or deceased, animated or real, who would it be? Why?
  - If you were given a million dollars and 24 hours to spend it (no depositing it in the bank or investing it), what would you do with it?

## Old-Fashioned Fun and Games

Your recreation can be simple or complex, depending on the amount of time you are allowed and the facility that your meeting is held at. Often, a silly relay or game of freeze tag is the best fit for a club's recreation. Other times it may be best to use team-building activities such as the human knot. Below are just a few suggestions for your club recreation time. All the games can be adapted to suit the needs and characteristics of your club.

### Blindfolded Shoe Shuffle

**Required:** Blindfolds and shoes

**Players:** Medium to large groups.

Everyone puts on blindfolds and takes off their shoes. Throw the shoes into a pile in the middle of the floor. The referee mixes them, then shouts "GO!" The first person to find the correct shoes by touch and smell alone and put them on is the winner.

### 4-H Clover Race

**Required:** Cut out two 5-inch clovers for each team

**Players:** Small to large groups

Set up teams with the first person on each team holding two clovers. On "go" the lead players of the teams place the clovers on the floor in front of them to step across the course. After stepping to the second clover, they pick up the first one while standing on one foot. Then place that one in front and step on it. The object is to go across the course stepping on only the clovers without stepping on the floor. Anyone who steps on the floor must return to the starting line and start again. A variation of the game is to use different shapes during different seasons or for special holidays such as hearts for Valentine's Day or eggs for Easter.

### Frosting Signature

**Required:** Frosting, tables, wax paper and decorating bags

**Players:** Small to large groups

For each team you need cake-decorating bags filled with frosting. Set up tables with wax paper on them and one decorating bag filled with frosting for each team. Individual players on each team race to the table and write their names on the wax paper with the frosting bag. Players may write just first names. To make the game longer, require them to fill the bag at the table. To lengthen the game, writing full names makes it more likely that players will need to fill the bag again. Have a judge make sure that the writing is legible. The first team to finish writing all names wins.

### Drop the Toothpick

**Required:** Toothpicks and 20-oz plastic soft drink bottles

**Players:** Small group

Set up teams. Place a plastic soft drink bottle for each team about 6 yards from each team's starting line. On "GO," one person from each team races to the team's plastic bottle with a box of toothpicks in hand and tries to drop a toothpick into the bottle while standing over it. Once a toothpick goes in, the member races back — without spilling toothpicks — and passes the toothpicks to the next person. Repeat this sequence until the team is finished.

Source: <http://www.funattic.com>

Find more games at [www.Kansas4-H.org](http://www.Kansas4-H.org), click on Resources, and then click on Officer Resources.



# Activity Planning Sheet

To make leading an activity easier, use this planning sheet. Make several copies — enough for each meeting. Decide what game/activity you want to do, and then follow the steps. Be sure to practice leading the activity with your parent/guardian or club leader. Keep each sheet in a notebook to give to the next recreation leader as a record of the games the club knows and how well the members like each. The new recreation leader can add more games to the notebook.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Step 1. Decide on an activity*

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Step 2. Figure out teams/groups, if necessary*

Number of members: \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ Number of members per team: \_\_\_\_\_ = Number of teams needed: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Step 3. Gather necessary equipment*

I need:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## *Step 4. Write down the instructions*

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## *Step 5. Practice giving directions and doing the game/activity*

## *Step 6. Lead the game/activity*

## *Step 7. Evaluate*

Did members enjoy the game? \_\_\_\_\_

Did members understand your instructions? \_\_\_\_\_

Did I stop the game/activity when everyone was still having fun? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the worst and 10 the best, how would you rate the success of this game? \_\_\_\_\_

If you could change anything to make it easier for yourself or members, what would it be? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Practice for Recreation Leaders

*Problem:*

Everyone in your club knows each other, but there are cliques. During recreation, you want each person to interact with someone he or she would not normally choose. Plan the type of activity you would do and how you would encourage members to understand the importance of teamwork.

*Solution:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Problem:*

Your club is much too large for a general getting-to-know-you activity. However, the agenda has built 15 minutes in for just such an activity. What kinds of activities could you have the club do to learn about each other? Do you need to split the club into groups? If yes, how will you split up the club so that the groups have a good mix of members?

*Solution:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Problem:*

Your club usually has recreation in a gymnasium. Before the meeting, when you were going to set up your game/activity, you learned that another group is using the gym. What can you do for recreation instead?

*Solution:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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