

# Preparing Youth for 4-H Conference Judging

So, it's time for the county fair, and you have to take part in this thing called conference judging. Don't think "I can't do this". Really, it's quite simple and with a little advance planning, you'll do just fine!

## **What is conference judging?**

A 4-H member sits down with the judge at the fair and talks with them about the 4-H exhibit. Judges will award ribbons and placings according to the exhibitor's knowledge about the exhibit and the quality of the exhibit.

## **How do you prepare for conference judging?**

Before the county fair, sit down and answer the following questions about your exhibit(s). It's okay to have a parent, brother, or sister help you and it's good practice. Be sure to practice talking loudly and clearly so you can be understood.

## **What will the judge ask?**

Questions a judge will usually ask are:

- What is your name?
- How many years have you been in this project and in 4-H?

Next the judge will ask a series of questions about your exhibit, but not necessarily these exact questions. These sample questions are meant to help you prepare. Also, some judges may simply say "tell me about your project" and expect you to tell them all about the exhibit without asking specific questions.

## **Sample Questions for Static Exhibits:**

- Why did you choose this idea/item as your exhibit?
- Where did you get the idea to make this exhibit?
- What steps did you use to make this exhibit?
- How much time did it take you to make the exhibit?
- How much of the work did you do? Who helped you?
- What do you like about your exhibit?
- What was your favorite/least favorite part of making the exhibit?
- What did you learn?

## **Sample Questions for Fashion Revue:**

- Why did you choose this outfit?
- What is your outfit made of?
- How do you take care of your outfit?
- Where did you get your outfit?
- What accessories did you choose?
- What do you like most about your outfit?

## **Sample Questions for Livestock:**

- What breed is your animal?
- How much does it weigh?
- When was it born?
- How do you take care of your animal?

## Preparing Parents for Conference Judging

How can parents help their children prepare for conference judging? One of the best places to start is by asking your children if they understand *why* they did the steps and procedures they followed in their projects. Answer any questions they may have about their projects. Then practice a conference judging experience with a parent or other adult playing the role of judge. Ask questions such as those on the front of this handout.

On the day of conference judging, parents can help their children feel comfortable with the judge by encouraging them prior to the judging. Parents are often allowed to sit in on conference judging, however, answering the judge's questions for the children will not help them feel more comfortable or help them learn more about the project. This is the 4-H'ers chance to "shine" and be proud of their achievement. After judging, tell your children how proud you are of them. Focus on "What did you learn?" rather than "What ribbon did you get?"

Adapted from a document created by the Judging Task Force of the Center for 4-H Youth Development, University of Minnesota Extension.

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