

Vanessa Spero-Swingle, 4-H Youth Development

FS# 6170

## Getting to Know the Four H's

**Materials:** Green Graduation Cap (**HEAD**)      Doctor Play Set (**HEALTH**)  
Squeezable Heart (**HEART**)      White Hand Clapper (**HANDS**)  
Copy of 4-H Pledge  
Optional: paper/pencil or flip chart/marker to write down ideas

**Introduction:** This activity is a way to introduce 4-H to a new audience or start the new 4-H year. It can serve as an icebreaker activity or fulfill the educational portion of a club meeting. Teaching the 4-H pledge is more than reciting words. Youth should understand that the 4-H pledge identifies the core values and principles that 4-H teaches. This activity will help youth understand the pledge in depth. It can also serve as an activity to get youth brainstorming on how they may want to plan their year out based on each H.

**Objectives:** To help youth understand what the 4-H pledge means and how 4-H helps them to grow and succeed.

**Preps:** Have materials ready

### Activities (DO):

- There are different variations to this activity and it may depend on the size of your group and their ages which suits the needs of the club best:
  - Divide the club into four groups and give each group one item (best for larger groups with more than 10)
  - Bring up four volunteers from the club and give them each one item (best for groups of 6-12)
  - Give the entire group all the items (best for smaller groups less than 8)
- Ask youth to identify the object they have been given. Have them brainstorm what it is and what it represents to them. If they have paper or flipchart paper, have them write their ideas down (This could also be a good first activity for the Secretary of the club to start recording what is stated).
- Have the groups share what they have come up with.
- Recite the 4-H pledge. After you have recited the 4-H pledge have youth identify how the items relate to the 4-H pledge. Solicit responses by asking questions such as:
  - Why did you join 4-H?
  - What would you like to learn in 4-H?
  - What does community service mean to you?
  - How can you be a healthier person?

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- Add to what the youth have come up with by providing the following background information where necessary:
  - **Head to clearer thinking (Green Graduation Cap):** 4-H is an educational program. The head symbolizes learning. The brain resides in the head and also represents learning. A graduation cap represents school and illustrates scholarly work. Youth learn skills in problem solving, communication, decision making.
  - **Heart to greater loyalty (Squeezable Heart):** 4-H is an optional program to participate in (in most cases). Youth should love and want to be a part of 4-H. In most cases it is a choice for them. By participating in 4-H they grow stronger. Youth become part of something bigger than themselves: they become part of a team and teams have heart. Youth learn skills in relationship and character building, respecting self and others.
  - **Hands to larger service (White Hand Clapper):** 4-H is about community service and giving back. It teaches youth how to support their community. It is also a hands-on, vocational, learn by doing approach to engaging youth. Frequently the hands are what accomplishes tasks in the program, such as, gardening programs, cooking programs, animal care, etc. Youth learn skills in serving others, career preparation, hands-on learning.
  - **Health to better living (Doctor Play Set):** 4-H brings emotional and physical gains to youth. Studies show youth are healthier when engaged with positive role models other than their parents and teachers. Youth learn how to form healthy habits, manage stress and adapt to change.

### Reflect

- **Share:** Ask youth the following questions to help youth reflect upon what they did.
  - Did you understand what the 4 H's meant before this activity?
  - Give one example of what one H means to you.
  - What is your favorite definition, thought, remark, etc. for an H that someone else shared?
- **Process:** Allow youth to think about how the activity was conducted in order to process what they have learned.
  - What does the pledge mean to you after this activity?
  - Can you share one thing you would like to do this year that relates to the pledge?
- **Generalize:** Allow youth to discuss, on a more personal level, the experience of learning about the pledge by asking the following questions.
  - Do you think by participating in 4-H you have some of these qualities that we went over in this activity (happier, healthier, learning, etc.)?
  - If you were to tell a friend about 4-H and what the pledge means, how would you share that?

**Apply:** Ask the youth the following questions to help direct them towards what they have learned to apply to their own lives.

- If someone asked you what 4-H means to you how would you respond?
- If someone asked you what the 4-H pledge means, how would you respond?