

## Developing New Junior Leaders

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*Junior leaders in 4-H need leadership education to be most effective. Ulrich describes a four-meeting seminar that has been adopted in several Ohio counties for first-year junior leaders. Topics such as: What Is Junior Leadership?, What Is Leadership?, Understanding and Teaching Younger Members, and Responsibilities in the Local Club are included in the series. Fourteen Ohio counties used the leadership education series in 1970 and reported an average increase of 11 percent in junior leader enrollment. State-wide increase was two percent in the same period.*

Involvement is a key word in working with today's youth. They want to be involved, but often don't know how to be. By taking advantage of the junior leadership project, the Extension educator can encourage those 14 and older to become involved.

Young people aren't "future" leaders . . . they're leaders *now* within their own groups. This project can help youth channel their energies toward greater responsibility now and in the future.

The challenge to Extension is to help both advisers and junior leaders learn how they can work together.

### What Is a Junior Leader?

A junior leader is an older, more experienced, more mature

member who wants to share with others the experience and knowledge he has gained in 4-H. Usually 14 years of age or older, the junior leader is an important cog in the local club and countywide leadership team as he helps teach project work, conducts activities, and plans programs.

### Why a Planned Program?

Planned leadership education for new junior leaders helps eliminate confusion on their leadership development journey. As educators, we know that leadership skills are learned and earned.<sup>1</sup> A seminar series can help members and advisers see new ways to work together and also ways to eliminate confusion about what's expected of the new junior leader. This leads to effective in-

volvement in the 4-H program, and encourages these members to stay in 4-H because they know they're needed. Also, the base of available leadership is greatly expanded.

Junior leaders have a right to expect training for their job. They should be willing to attend discussions to receive this training. What better place to start than with leadership education!

Educating the new junior leader has taken many forms—county junior leadership club meetings, guidance by 4-H advisers and county Extension agents, reading projects and other reference materials, and working with experienced junior leaders. Unfortunately, because of the many tasks available, junior leaders may be confused about what's expected of them, what they should do first, where they should start. Much of this confusion is eliminated when new junior leaders know what experiences will be most helpful and which ones they should experience the first year.

A planned approach to leadership education for first-year junior leaders helps these youth make the transition to effective leadership. This approach can be a series of meetings conducted on a county or local basis by the agent or other interested adult or by a team of adults and older junior leaders. Other approaches could be a correspondence course or individual help by designated adults or advisers.

— Important to the success of the program is the fact that every older 4-H member has the chance to

make *his own decision* about becoming a junior leader. Everyone interested in a leadership experience should have the opportunity to participate.

### The Seminar Approach

Several Ohio counties have adopted a four-meeting seminar approach to leadership education for first-year junior leaders.

New junior leaders must participate in the leadership education seminars. Thus, it has become an honor to be a junior leader because the members feel more qualified to do the job because of the special education they've received.

A graduation and welcome ceremony into the countywide junior leadership club is held when the members complete the series.

The leadership education series coincides with 4-H enrollment emphasis so that junior leaders become involved at the beginning of the year. Direct mail has been one way of informing eligible members, age 14 and older, about the junior leadership program.

The seminars are designed to supplement projects and practical knowledge the members already have. But remember, this is only one way of accomplishing leadership education.

First Meeting: What Is Junior Leadership?

Several experienced junior leaders are asked to help welcome

the others, lead games and recreation, and conduct discussion groups. Noisy activity helps break down the fears of the new junior leader.

The teaching plan of the first meeting calls for the agent to discuss the junior leadership project—what is expected of a junior leader, what opportunities lie ahead for him. Most of the time is spent in small discussion groups, led by older junior leaders. Here the participants discuss questions about their responsibilities as junior leaders. A report back to the total group and general discussion led by the agent concludes the first meeting.

#### Second Meeting: What Is Leadership?

Several experienced junior leaders are used to lead the discussion of "What Is a Leader?" Small discussion groups then consider a number of leadership situations. A discussion topic might be: "If members don't listen to instructions, they should be punished." Discussion of such agree-disagree statements helps reveal pertinent and desirable leadership traits. Following this, a report to a discussion session of the total group gives additional depth and understanding.

#### Third Meeting: Understanding and Teaching Younger Members

A variety of teaching methods makes this an effective learning seminar. Role playing helps show

that knowledge and experience are important in effective learning.

A discussion about what younger members are like helps establish additional understanding. Defining education, learning, and teaching, and pointing out what senses are most used in learning completes a rapid review of pertinent material.

In small discussion groups each junior leader may be asked to write about one thing he'll teach during the year and how he'll do this. These ideas are then shared with the entire group.

#### Fourth Meeting: Responsibilities in the Local Club

Planning junior leader responsibilities in the local club can be done in two kinds of meetings: (1) a countywide meeting for new junior leaders and their advisers or (2) local club planning sessions for only the junior leaders and advisers.

Preplanning is important if junior leaders are to be effective. This meeting helps both the adviser and junior leader better understand the interests and responsibilities of each other. It also helps break down a natural hesitancy in adults to pass on some responsibility to young people.

The countywide meeting can start with skits showing how autocratic, laissez-faire, and democratic leaders work with people. Then, an agent or adviser can lead a discussion on junior leader opportunities in the local club. Lists of 4-H Club

jobs in (1) organization, (2) project work, and (3) activities are given to junior leaders to spark additional ideas.

The rest of the meeting may be spent in planning groups consisting of the adviser and junior leader of the same club. After determining what responsibilities the junior leader will have, these can be written in his project book and signed by the adviser and junior leader. *This is commitment—don't omit it.*

## Results

A survey of area 4-H agents in Ohio showed that 14 counties used the leadership education series in 1970. These counties reported an average increase of 11 percent in their junior leadership enrollment. This compares to a statewide increase of two percent for the same period.

However, even more important has been the increase in the total base of knowledgeable leadership available to guide local club and county activities. This has helped eliminate the problem of using just a few people for all the jobs.

The survey also revealed that many new junior leaders had considered joining junior leadership before, but hadn't. The letter from the agent convinced them that they could help in their club and at the county level, particularly since they'd receive help and direction in how to be a leader.

In addition, junior leaders involved in the seminar reported that

they now know what's expected of them. They also have definite and important jobs to perform in the local club. This known responsibility has increased their desire to do the best job possible. These older members also feel their job is a most important one—one they're uniquely suited to fill. Consequently, they're staying in 4-H not only because they feel they're wanted, but because they know they're needed.

Agents report that this new approach has sparked much enthusiasm in their county junior leadership program. The young people involved know they can help because they have learned many of the skills and gained the know-how necessary to assume a leadership position. The new junior leaders overflow with ideas on how to conduct and update existing activities and programs.

Due to this fact, new junior leaders should immediately be involved in planning and helping with many county activities such as safety talks, style revues, demonstration contests, achievement programs, awareness teams, junior fair activities.

Significant changes can occur in other 4-H program areas as a result of this leadership education.

Moser indicates that the break between early and middle adolescence occurs between 14 and 15 years of age.<sup>2</sup> The interests and developmental tasks for each group are different. This first-year educational series for new junior leaders keeps them out of the older group until they are nearing 15 years of

age. Thus, older, experienced junior leaders have their own group, age 15 and over, and programing for this group becomes easier.

Moser also says that early adolescence (ages 12-14) is the heyday of club activity. At this age, approval of friends and conformity to the group standards takes on a new importance.<sup>3</sup> If the youth involved in the first-year junior leader seminars feel that it has been significant, they'll want to continue. This fact alone will mean more older youth in 4-H as well as better programs because of their leadership.

However, these older youth want freedom in program selection.<sup>4</sup> They want to be treated as adults. Campbell says that the style of leadership must vary with the age level you're working with.<sup>5</sup> In other words, younger members expect more guidance while older members want more say in decisions.

Agents report that advisers who have participated in the fourth seminar session are more willing to give additional responsibilities to the junior leaders. This again encourages better local club programs and more older members in 4-H.

### Summary

Youth want to be involved.

The Extension educator, by conducting leadership seminars for new junior leaders can help them obtain the needed skills to fulfill this desire.

Involving these youth in local and countywide 4-H programs and activities will help keep the 4-H program up to date with the needs and interests of today's youth. In addition, the seminars will assure a continued and expanding source of interested and available leadership.

### Footnotes

1. Burton W. Kreitlow, E. W. Aiton, and Andrew P. Torrence, *Leadership for Action in Rural Communities* (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1960), p. 105.
2. Clarence G. Moser, *Toward Understanding Boys and Girls* (Maplewood, New Jersey: R. E. Somme, Publisher, 1965).
3. *Ibid.*
4. Donald G. Ham, "Jasper County Missouri Youth Survey, A Process for Youth Program Development" (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, College of Agriculture, 1965).
5. Frank Campbell, "The Relationship Between Community Service Activities and Adolescent 4-H Club Membership in Wisconsin" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, Illinois, 1962).