Recreation Activities Packet

Compiled by:
Cheryl Newberry
Extension Program Specialist—4-H
P.O. Box 1849
Uvalde, TX 78802-1849
(830) 278-9151
cnewberr@ag.tamu.edu
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WHY RECREATION?

Recreation is an integral part of the 4-H program because it provides an opportunity for youth and adults to gain leadership skills through a fun and exciting experience. Recreation is also important for several other reasons:

- It is the sneakest way to get older youth involved and keep them interested.
- Recreation is a great way to teach life skills to younger kids in a more relaxed atmosphere.
- Recreation is a low-anxiety way to get people to interact.
- It provides opportunity for youth and adults to be creative.
- Recreation can have a profound impact on mental and physical health—it is used in therapy for injuries, illnesses and disabilities. It can be healing, relieving stress and tension.
- Recreation encourages laughter which we often don’t do enough in a positive manner.
- Positive humor can help build positive self-esteem and promotes unity.

The research tells us that people learn in a variety of ways, but the statistics show us that they learn best when they are active. Here are some statistics on how much information is retained through various methods:

- We retain 20% of what we read
- We retain 20% of what we hear
- We retain 30% of what we see
- We retain 50% of what we hear and see
- We retain 70% of what we say
- We retain 90% of what we do

There are many life skills that are cultivated through recreation experiences. Activities can be adapted to teach specific life skills or they can address many at the same time. Look for recreation activities that focus on building one of these life skills, not just a fun game!

- Communication
- Discipline
- Teamwork
- Decision-Making
- Problem-Solving
- Goal Setting
- Responsibility
- Trust
- Initiative
- Patience
- Determination
- Respect
- Positive Self-Esteem
- Leadership
There are several important items to remember when conducting any kind of programming with an audience. When recreation is involved, several of these are even more important for the instructor to remember.

- First Priority is always the safety of participants. Make sure that any hazards are removed from the area so that there are no obstacles that might harm participants.

- Never force a child to participate in an activity that they may feel uncomfortable doing.

- Avoid belittling or laughing at a child – it is okay to laugh with them!

- If you are going to be conducting recreation that will require specific clothing, try to notify your audience in advance so that they can be prepared and won’t be left out.

- Keeping control of your audience will help the activity go smoothly. The next page will provide some specific examples of how to do this.

- Adults who actively participate in the program will draw kids in to participate. It is okay to play games, sing silly songs and laugh! If everyone is doing it, then no one can be critical. Kids learn by watching your actions.

- If a youth are asked to plan and conduct an activity, work with them to plan by giving hints and guidance. Do not do the work for them. Allow them to use their own creativity and talents. Step back and watch their leadership develop. If we, as coaches/leaders do everything for them, they will not develop the skills to succeed.
GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Before you try to implement any of these techniques, you must first be sure and explain the method you are going to use for the day to the group so that they all know and understand what is expected. As you begin the session, start by saying:

“Today we’re going to be doing some great games that I hope each of you will enjoy but before we start, there are some ground rules that we must all follow!

1. We are all going to play fair and not try to intentionally hurt one another.
2. Today we’re going to concentrate on saying nice things and not putting down each other. If we can’t say something nice, we won’t say anything! We want everyone to have fun!
3. When I am talking (or any of the other leaders are talking), we will all be quiet and listen so that we understand the rules of the game or activity.
4. Today we’re going to use this method of getting your attention when we need to give you instructions. (Pick one thing you’re going to use and then get them to practice that method using the information below.)

Okay, does anyone have any questions before we get started? Great! Let’s go!

Here are several strategies that can be used to gain the attention of the audience to signal it is time to listen for instructions.

1. **Hands Up, Mouth Shut** – Any time the leader raises his/her hand, that means that everyone else is to follow their lead and raise their hand and close their mouths. This is a visual cue that should not require the leader to tell the group what to do after they explain the rule at the beginning of the session. As soon as all hands are up and no one is talking, tell the group thank you for being quiet and proceed on with instructions.

2. **If you can hear me, clap once** – If the group is not listening and paying attention to the instructions, say in a normal voice where those closest to you can hear you, “If you can hear me, clap once.” Those that hear you should clap one time. Repeat the command, changing up the number of claps until you have the attention of all of the group and they are responding correctly to your instructions.
3. **If you can hear me, squat down** – same concept as the previous example, except, it seems that the mouth and squatting down are connected! They seem to listen better when they are squatting! You might want to have the group seated until you complete instructions so that everyone can see the demonstration and hear you clearly.

   Another variation of this might be to demonstrate instead of speaking. If you are squatting, others will follow your example and do the same.

4. **Hey, Hey – Ho Ho** – Any time you shout, “Hey, Hey” the group should respond “Ho, Ho” and then be quiet. Repeat until the group responds together and are quiet.

5. **Removal of participants from the activities** – If you have the support of the staff and feel comfortable in doing this, ask for participants who continually disrupt you and are causing problems to sit out of the game. Try to bring them back into the group after the game is complete if they agree to behave.

6. **Come up with your own unique way of crowd control.** Maybe develop a catchy word combination like “Hey Hey – Ho Ho” that you can use! Maybe you can ask the kids to come up with something with you so that they have buy in to the method.
Many games and activities require that large groups be broken down into smaller teams to complete a task or compete in a game. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this that help to keep the group under control and organized. Below are some examples of ways to divide large groups into smaller teams.

1. **Number off by the number of groups you need.** Ones form one group, twos form one group, etc.

2. **Colored Tokens** – have the number of tokens of different colors in a hat that you want in a group. For example, if you want groups of 5 and you have 20 people, have 5 red, 5 blue, 5 green, and 5 yellow tokens. Each person draws a token and that color is their group. (NOTE: You can purchase small tokens at Wal-Mart in the educational toys section or at any teacher supply store.)

3. **Pixie Sticks** – same method as the colored tokens above.

4. **Playing cards** – if you need 4 groups and you have 40 people and you want 4 groups of 10, have 10 diamonds, 10 spades, 10 hearts and 10 clubs in a hat for them to draw. Their suit is their group.

5. **Colored pieces of paper** – Used the same way as the colored tokens described above.

6. **January - June birthdays in one team, July - December birthdays in one team** – If teams are uneven, choose a month and ask that month to move to the other team until you have two fairly balanced teams. This will work okay if the teams don’t have to be exact!

7. **Boys against Girls** – Use this method if the activity is not a physical game and the genders are fairly even. Examples would include activities where their team is working on a project at a table together such as a tower building contest.

8. **Odds & Evens** – have group number off from 1 to whatever number there is in the group. Odds form one team, evens form the other team. If you need more than 2 teams, you can split the odds into two groups and evens into two groups.
Objective: This game is designed to be a get acquainted activity with a new group.

Instructions:
- Arrange your larger group into smaller groups of 5-7 people. Five is ideal for this activity. It is fine if groups are not all equal, but keep them fairly balanced.
- As the leader you will give all of the groups the same topic to discuss and determine within their group who matches that criteria in their group.
- Before the groups discuss the topic, they are to introduce themselves to everyone else in the group and you may give them something else to tell as well. For example, “Everyone introduce yourself and tell what your least favorite subject in school is and determine in your group who has the biggest shoe size.”
- Instruct the group to raise their hands when they have completed introductions, discussed the topic and determined the person who fits the criteria being looked for in that round.
- To mix up the groups, you will tell the groups that when it is time to rotate the identified person who fit the criteria for that round will be the only person to move to a new group. The leader will say “One, Two Three!!!” and then all the groups will say “See Ya!” Then the identified person in each group with the biggest shoe size (or whatever the criteria for that round) will move to a new group, keeping the groups balanced.
- If there are two people who have the same size foot or meet the criteria the same, both can move!

You may use the attached list of topics or develop your own list! Continue to play until it looks like most people have had a chance to move and meet other people!
SEE YA! TOPICS

- Highest number of Brothers/Sisters
- Biggest Shoe Size
- Smallest Shoe Size
- Highest Number of Pizza toppings you like
- Highest number of pieces of jewelry you have on right now
- Lowest number of letters in your full name
- Highest number of songs on your iPod
- Highest number of pairs of shoes you own
- Most creative Halloween Costume (group has to come to a consensus)
- Person with the most missing teeth
- Person with the longest hair
- Person with the shortest hair
- Person with the most Red on (or you can choose any color you want)
- Person who has been in 4-H the longest
- Person who can write with their left hand
- Person who can write with their right hand
- Person who can do a flip off of the diving board
- Person who can recite all of the 50 states
- Person who has brown eyes
- Person whose hair is not their natural color (they have colored or highlighted their hair)
Objective: To identify different personalities within a group so that group members can see how they are similar and different from one another.

Instructions:
Show pictures of four basic shapes — square, circle, triangle and a squiggle (or curly cue).

Have individuals form a group with others who selected the same shape.

Ask individuals to introduce themselves to others in their group and provide reasons why they selected that shape.

Provide the following information on what each shape represents:
- **Square** — someone that does things the same way. They are very methodical and dependable.
- **Circle** — someone that keeps coming back to the same place to re-group. Circles are very inquisitive people, likes to talk and ask questions. These thinkers may not be considered by some as the most productive.
- **Triangle** — someone that gets things done. They are very directed and organized.
- **Squiggle** — someone that is very creative and often sociable. When describing this person, some might go so far as to say that “the lights are on, but nobody’s home!” at times.

These suggestions are NOT scientifically based but are just for fun! However, there is probably an underlying tie between those of you that chose each shape!
ADJECTIVE GAME

Objective: To help participants get acquainted and share information with the group about themselves.

Supplies: Create cards with one adjective on each card using the attached list of adjectives. You can type and put 10 words on a page and laminate to re-use cards or simply write them on index cards.

Instructions:
- Randomly hand out 3 adjective cards to each participant.
- Instruct the group that they are to look at their cards only and not share them with anyone else yet.
- The object of the game is for each participant to select the card in their hand that LEAST DESCRIBES THEM, and pass that card to another person in the group.
- Each time they trade cards with someone new, they should each introduce themselves. Everyone should have 3 cards in their hand at all times.
- Give enough time for the group to mix well and trade cards at least 15 times (if your group is that big).
- Bring the group into a circle and have each person choose the card in their hand that best describes them. Have each person share their name and the adjective that best describes them with the group. Encourage them to tell why that card describes them!
<table>
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<tr>
<th>ADJECTIVE WORDS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
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<td>Sad</td>
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<td>Crazy</td>
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<td>Naughty</td>
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<td>Thoughtful</td>
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<td>Lazy</td>
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<td>Funny</td>
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<td>Mean</td>
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<td>Nice</td>
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<td>Sweet</td>
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<td>Hurtful</td>
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<td>Silly</td>
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<td>Caring</td>
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<td>Disappointed</td>
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<td>Joyful</td>
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<td>Jolly</td>
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<td>Revengful</td>
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<td>Loving</td>
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<td>Hateful</td>
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<td>Courteous</td>
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<td>Ambitious</td>
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<td>Humble</td>
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<td>Proud</td>
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<td>Boastful</td>
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<td>Rude</td>
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<td>Obnoxious</td>
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<td>Talented</td>
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<td>Classy</td>
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<td>Artistic</td>
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<td>Hot</td>
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<td>Dorky</td>
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<td>Quirky</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beautiful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handsom</td>
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<td>Kind</td>
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Objective: This activity is designed to teach youth to develop trust and communication skills.

Materials: 2 quarters for every 2 people
A bucket, box or garbage can
Masking tape

Instructions:
- Place a large bucket, box or garbage can in the center of a circle that has been marked off with tape.
- Have participants get into pairs.
- Give each pair 2 quarters and have them stand outside the circle.
- One person in the pair must tip their head back and place one quarter over each eye. Their partner will give verbal directions to them to help them walk toward the bucket in the center of the circle and drop their coins into the bucket. Hands cannot be used in this process!
- If the money is dropped before getting to the bucket, go back to the edge of the circle and start over.
- Switch places and conduct the activity again.
- The challenge in this activity is all teams trying to complete the activity at the same time!

Discussion Questions:
- Did you trust your partner? Why or why not?
- What made this activity difficult?
- Was it harder to give directions or receive them? Why?
- Why are communication and trust both important parts of any partnership?
- Are we ever “blinded” by money? How?
- What are examples of situations that we deal with in 4-H that relate to this activity and its challenges?
I CANNOT SAY!

Materials:  Whistle
           Watch or clock with second hand

Instructions:
- Ask participants to pair up and spread out in the room.
- Pairs will carry on a conversation without using the words “I,” “me,” “my” or “mine”.
- If one of those words are used, that person is out and must sit down. Their partner will remain standing until a new topic is announced.
- When a new topic is announced by the leader, everyone finds a new partner.
- The goal is to be the last person standing who was able to carry on a conversation without using the words “I,” “me,” “my” or “mine”.

Sample Topics:
- Favorite vacation
- Favorite book
- Favorite movie
- Least favorite food and why
- Hobbies you like
- Favorite music artists
- Who is your role model
- Characteristics of a great leader
- Favorite Sports Team
- The Olympics
- Any other topics you can think of!

Discussion Questions:
- Why is it difficult not to use those words?
- Why is it important not to use those words all the time?
- What can be learned from this activity?
Objective: The objective of this activity is to see how well we can communicate non-verbally!

Instructions:
This is a new version on an old game called Telephone or Gossip! This time, there’s no talking, just the use of non-verbal communication to pass on information!

- Instruct group to stand in a circle. The participants will face in toward the center of the circle while instructions are given then turn to face out when the game begins.
- One person will begin in the center of the circle and will be “Captain Video.” They will be the person who will start the non-verbal conversation.
- Captain Video will tap one person in the circle on the shoulder and they will turn to face the center of the circle. Captain Video will create a simple movement and demonstrate it one time for the person that was tapped on the shoulder. (an example of a movement might be to tap the head 3 times and bend over and touch toes with their fingers)
- Captain Video will then switch places with the person he tapped on the shoulder and face the center of the circle.
- The new person in the center — now Captain Video — will tap on the shoulder someone new who is facing outward and then demonstrate the same action they saw for them. Then they switch places and the activity continues until all persons in the group are now facing forward.
- The first person and the last person in the center will face off against each other and on the count of 3, will perform the movement to see how well the non-verbal communication was passed on from one person to the next.

Discussion Questions:
- What was the objective of the game?
- Was the objective accomplished? Why or why not?
- What challenges does non-verbal communication cause when working with a group?
- How can non-verbal communication help in communicating your thoughts? How can it hinder?
- What are situations where problems can occur when good communication is not used?
FOUR LEAF CLOVER RACE

Objective: The objective of the game is to complete the relay race the fastest while following the rules of the game!

Equipment:
- Two — 4 leaf clovers for each team cut out of paper
- Cones or masking tape to mark lines

Instructions:
- Divide the group into two teams of no more than 20 per team. Add teams as needed, depending on the number of participants.
- Set up two lines using the cones or masking tape that are approximately 20—30 feet from each other.
- Place half of the team in line in single file behind one line and the other half of the team behind the other line in single file. Teams should be lined up across from each other and facing each other.
- The first person in each line on one side only will take the 2 clovers. Place the first clover on the ground and step on it with one foot. Then place the second clover in front of the first clover and step on it with the other foot. When the second foot touches the second clover, the first foot must come off of the ground so that they are standing on one foot only. While that foot remains in the air, they must pick up the clover that they just took their foot off of and place it in front of the other one and then step on it with their free foot.
- The same process continues until the participant reaches the other line and pass off the clovers to their teammate.
- If at any time both feet are on the ground, they must go back to their start line and begin again!
- Play continues until all team members have completed their leg of the race!

Variations for this game include:
- Provide a clover to every participant and have each person complete the activity at the same time. This would work well in a large space like a gymnasium.
- Use different pictures or items besides a clover during different holiday seasons i.e. a turkey for Thanksgiving, a pumpkin for Halloween, an Easter Egg for Easter!

Discussion Questions:
- What made this activity difficult? Or Easy?
- What strategies were used to help complete the task?
- What are some examples of situations where the skills used could be applied in 4-H?
Objective: Each person will contribute to a group project and the group will work together as a team.

Equipment:
- Large sheet of paper
- 10 markers, each a different color

Instructions:
- Divide the group into teams of 4 to 10 members.
- Provide each team with one piece of paper and 10 markers. Ask team members to choose only one marker each.
- Once team members choose a colored marker, they may not trade markers or change to a different color marker.
- The goal of the activity is for the group to create a piece of artwork. Each member must be involved in the project in some way but may only use the marker that he/she has.
- Once the group finishes their artwork, they will share it with the other groups.

Variations for this game include:
- Blindfold a few members of the group and have the rest of the team members provide verbal instructions only to the blindfolded members to help them contribute to the art project.
- For younger audiences, provide an idea for them to use to draw their art. For example, a summer time activity or a park.

Discussion Questions:
- What made this activity difficult? Or Easy?
- How did the group work together to complete the picture?
- If everyone in the group happy with the artwork that was created? If not, what could have been done differently to improve the project?
- Why is it important to be able to work with others as a member of a team?
- How does this activity relate to experiences in the 4-H program?
# PAPER TOWER

**Objective:** To work as a part of a team and to problem solve as a team. To continue an activity even if frustration occurs.

**Equipment:**
- 20 sheets of paper per team (plain copy paper works best — don’t use cardstock!!!)
- Table for each team

**Instructions:**
- Divide the group into teams of 4-6
- Provide each team with a work table and 20 sheets of paper
- The objective of the activity is for each team to build the tallest tower they can in the specified length of time using only the paper provided.
- No other items may be used such as tape, gum, scissors, etc.
- If the tower falls in the process of building, the group may start over as long as there is time remaining.
- Allow 5 minutes for groups to work. This can be adjusted if needed.

**Discussion Questions:**
- What steps did the group take in order to make a plan and solve the problem?
- Did everyone in the group contribute? If so, how? If not, why?
- Did anyone in the group get frustrated at any point? If so, how did the group handle it?
- What things did the group do that showed teamwork?
- As a member of the team, what role did you take on in this activity?
- How would this activity relate to a 4-H officer team?
**Objective:** To develop trust and communication skills while using teamwork to complete a task.

**Equipment:**
- Blindfolds
- Various obstacles (chairs, tables, cones, any other objects)
- Small objects that can be held in the hand i.e. rocks, marbles, candy, ping pong balls, etc.
- Cups or bowls

**Instructions:**
- This activity requires a large open space.
- Create an obstacle course in the open space using chairs, cones, or other objects that must be navigated around. There should be no particular pattern to follow. This area is the “ocean.”
- Blindfold all participants except 3. Line them up on one end of the playing area in single file line. These participants are the “cargo ships” that must deliver their “cargo”. Provide each “cargo ship” with three pieces of “cargo.” Cargo are three small items for each ship such as rocks, marbles, candy, etc.
- The remaining three members will serve as “lighthouses” and be stationed on the “ocean” at various spots (spread them out!). You may need to provide each lighthouse with a cup or something to put their cargo in so they can hold all of the items!
- The “lighthouse” closest to the first “cargo ship” will provide verbal instructions to navigate them through the obstacles in the “ocean.” Once the “ship” reaches the lighthouse, they deliver one piece of “cargo” to the “lighthouse.” The next “lighthouse” then takes over giving directions to the “ship” to guide them to the second “lighthouse.” Once the “ship” delivers the second piece of “cargo,” the third “lighthouse” begins giving directions and guides the “ship” to them where the final piece of “cargo” is delivered.
- The only “lighthouse” that can be giving instructions is the one that the “ship” is heading for!
- When the last piece of “cargo” is delivered to the last “lighthouse”, the “ship” may remove their blindfold and step off of the playing area so that the game can continue. The “ships” that have completed the course may not provide instructions to any “ships” but are observers only.
- Once the first “lighthouse” has received their “cargo” from the first “ship”, they can then begin to navigate for the next “ship” in line. This will eventually lead to several “ships” being in the “ocean” at the same time.
Variations for this game include:

- If the group has more than 20 individuals, divide the group into teams of no more than 10 per team. Select 3 lighthouses for each team and place all the lighthouses on the ocean but spread them out so that they are not all in direct line with their team. This will create more of a communication challenge for the teams as they complete the activity.

- If you have individuals who are uncomfortable with being blindfolded, use them as “floating logs” or moving obstacles in the “ocean” and have them walk back and forth in a specific area. They cannot talk or try to interfere with the “ships.”

- Institute a rule that if a “cargo ship” runs into any obstacles in the ocean, they are immediately out of the game and will not have an opportunity to deliver their remaining “cargo.” Challenge the group to set a goal of how many pieces of “cargo” will be successfully delivered to the “lighthouses” then count at the end to see if the goal was reached.

Discussion Questions:

- Did you feel safe when you were the “cargo ship”? Why or why not?
- How did you feel being the person responsible for guiding the “cargo ship” safely through the “ocean” obstacles?
- What could the “lighthouses” have done better to make the activity more successful?
- When did the activity get more difficult? Why?
- What skills did the “cargo ships” have to use in this activity?
- What skills did the “lighthouses” have to use in this activity?
- Do you have people in your life that you trust to guide you? Who and why?
- What are some examples of things we do in 4-H that require us to be “lighthouses”?
- What are some examples of things we do in 4-H that require us to be “cargo ships”? 
**Objective:** Group members work together to create the different parts of a book through using creativity.

**Equipment:**
- Paper
- Pencils
- Markers or colored pencils

**Instructions:**
- Divide the group into teams of no more than 8 per team.
- Give each team a supply of paper, pencils and a set of markers.
- Assign each person in the group an element of a book to create. They must work individually for this part of the activity and not share any information with others on their team. (see the list below of book element assignments)
- The team should use their group or organization that they are currently involved in as inspiration for this activity. (i.e. an officer training, teambuilding workshop, club manager training, etc.)
- Once team members have created their book element alone, instruct the group to share the information they created and then work together with minor edits to create a complete book using the elements they developed. (No story is to be written, just the elements assigned!)
- After teams have completed their assignments, have each team share their book with the other groups.

**Book Element Assignments**
- Book Title
- Book Cover Art
- Synopsis (brief overview of the book on the back cover)
- Book Dedication
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- Chapter Titles
- Illustrations

**Discussion Questions:**
- What does this “book” say about the group?
- Did you learn anything about the group from this activity?
- What challenges did the group face in trying to complete this activity?
- Will the story of your group stay the same throughout your experience together? If not, what do you think will change?
TEXAS 4-H MOTTO AND PLEDGE

In support of the 4-H Club Motto, “To Make The Best Better”

I pledge:
My head to clearer thinking,
My heart to greater loyalty,
My hands to larger service,
And my health to greater living
For my club, my community,
My country and my world.

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