

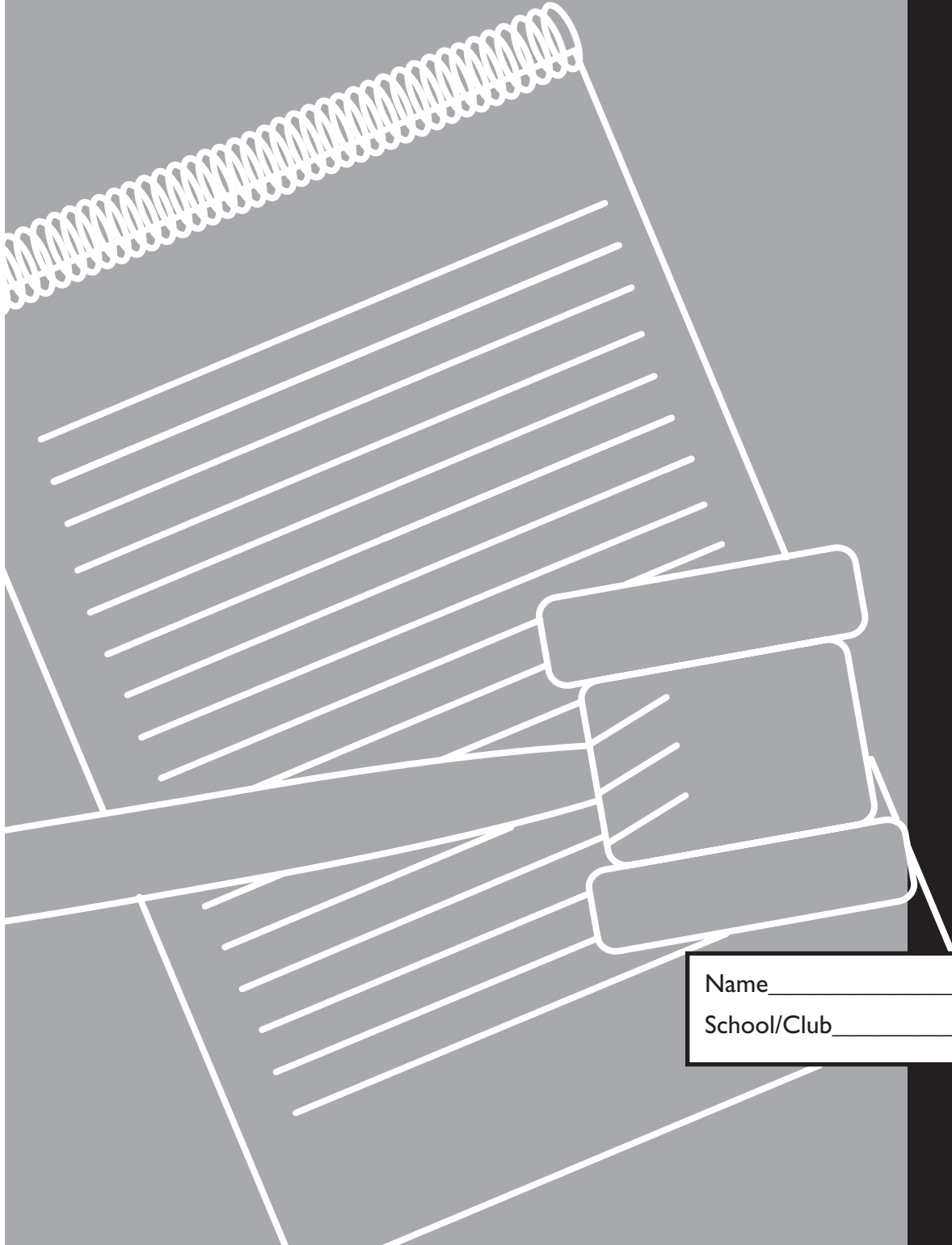


Ideas for Your 4-H Club Meetings

Ceremonies • Themes • Skits and Stunts • Games



Louisiana 4-H is an educational program of the LSU AgCenter



Name _____
School/Club _____

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IDEAS . . . For Your 4-H Club Meetings

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed for use by the 4-H Club member who is responsible for planning and conducting special activities and events for the club meeting. It may also be useful to 4-H leaders who work with 4-H'ers.

The handbook does not contain complete programs. Its main purpose is to provide the club member with a variety of ideas for the meeting. Some of the suggestions may not be suitable for every club.— You be the judge. Use those ideas you feel are best for your club. Use these ideas just as they appear, or you may want to shorten, add to or combine some to better fit your club meeting. Many other good ideas can be found in magazines, newspapers and books. Why not check the library?

The title "Program Chairman," as used in this book, refers to the elected or appointed club member who is responsible for "special features" at the club meeting. The special feature may be a ceremony, a skit, a game or any other feature of interest to the group.

FOREWORD

The program is very important to the formal part of the club meeting. As such, it should serve as that time when your club members can learn and have fun together.

A good program begins by planning ahead. When planning your program, always remember that the club meeting belongs to the members and you are only their pilot. Therefore, keep the membership active and interested through committee work and use them when planning *their* program. Consider the following before planning your program:

- A. Check arrangements for program beforehand.
- B. Keep the program within the time allotted. Begin on time.
- C. Have your program planned and ready for presentation before the meeting day.
- D. Use a variety of educational and recreational activities.
- E. Select only those activities that are in keeping with the size of your group and the place in which the meeting is to be conducted.
- F. Do not try to do it all by yourself. Use the membership or committees.
- G. Always recognize those who helped with the program.

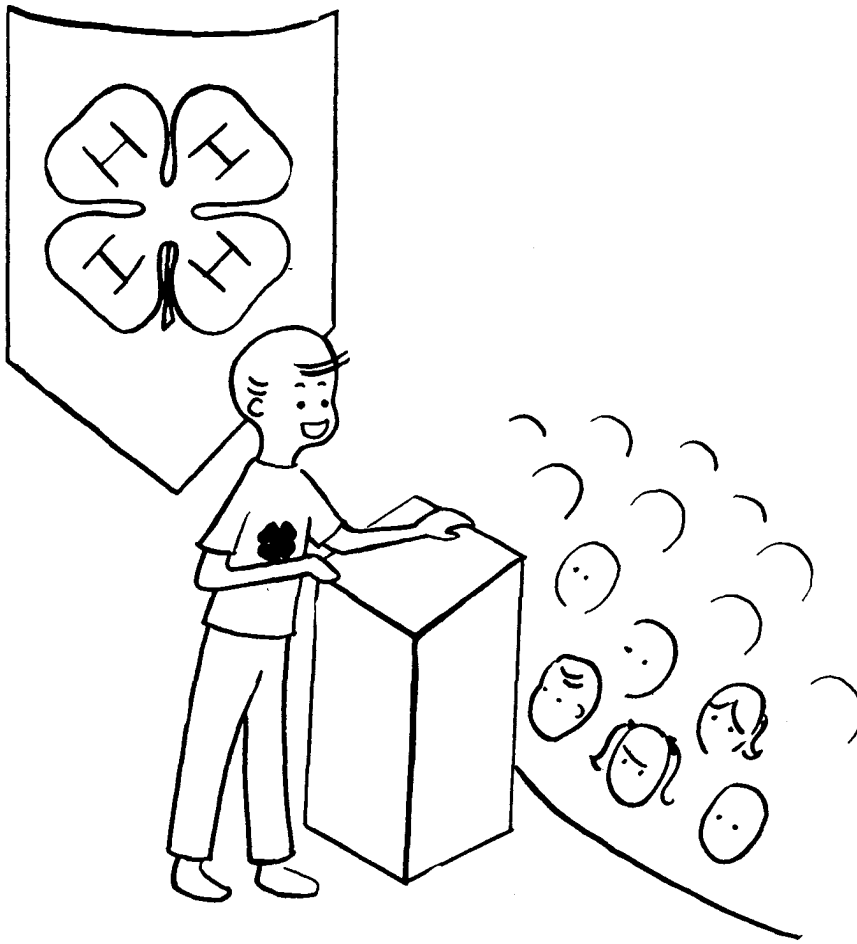
"SO YOU'VE BEEN ELECTED PROGRAM CHAIRMAN!"

Congratulations! Your fellow 4-H'ers have shown confidence in you and your ability to serve them as program chairman for the coming year.

The success of any meeting depends upon three important things—(1) leadership; (2) organization; and (3) content.

Well organized meetings offering *planned, educational and recreational activities* under strong leadership can become the core around which the entire 4-H program can be developed. Moreover, this type of meeting will win new members, increase school and community support and uphold interests on the part of those enrolled.

This handbook was developed for *you* with these thoughts in mind—Used properly, it can help *you* to be a better program chairman.

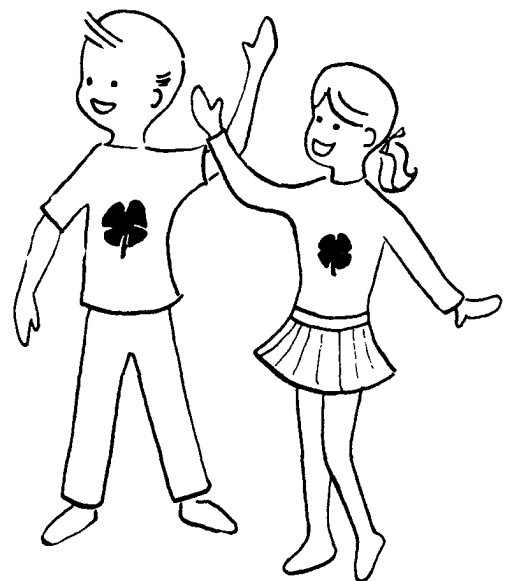


Ceremonies...

Hi! I'm Jim . . .
And I'm Judy . . .

We will be with you throughout this book to help you plan the special features for your 4-H Club meetings.

Ceremonies are very good in a club meeting for special occasions such as installing new officers, family night programs, and helping club members learn more about 4-H. Why not look through this section to see if any of the ceremonies would be good for your club!



4-H OFFICER INSTALLATION

Member Parts—Leader and Officers

Property—Five clover parts made from green construction paper (4 leaves and stem).

The leader may be the outgoing president, the adult leader, the school principal or another selected person. The leader should call the name and office in order of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Chairman, Program Chairman. Ask each to step forward as his pledge is read. He should respond when asked and return to his place at your left. As each answers, he should be given a portion of a green paper clover (4 leaves and stem).

LEADER — Leadership ranks high among our many rich heritages. It has come to us through the memory of accomplishments by some of the great pioneer men and women—Washington, Adams, Franklin, Jefferson and Lincoln, to name a few.

Through their leadership, they have given us our freedom which, unfortunately, we often take for granted. To take this heritage of freedom for granted is the first step toward losing it. Through good leaders, we can preserve it.

Good leadership is blessed with many qualities, qualities which we can develop through serving as leaders in our 4-H Club.

Now, I will ask those who have been elected to lead our club as officers this year to come and stand to my left as I call your name.

(Name), as President of our club for this year, do you pledge your “Head” to clearer thinking that will lead us in paths of service to our schools and community, in paths of knowledge so we learn new skills and in paths of fun so that we will enjoy meeting together? If so, answer, “I do.”

(Name), as Vice-President of our 4-H Club, do you pledge your “Heart” to willing and loyal service to our club? Will you serve as a strong right arm to our President, and perform your duties faithfully? If so, answer, “I will.”

(Name), as Secretary-Treasurer (call both names if two are elected for separate offices) of our 4-H Club, do you pledge your “hands” to larger service as you keep the records of our meetings and perform the duties of your office? If so, answer, “I do.”

(Name), as Publicity Chairman, do you pledge your “Health” to better living through 4-H Club work so that all people will know the benefits of our 4-H Club? If so, answer, “I do.”

(Name), as Program Chairman, do you pledge to help us learn more about our club, our community and our country through well planned programs throughout the year? If so, answer, “I do.”

Each of you has been given a part of a 4-H clover. No part can stand

alone, but you must all work together to give the clover life.

As members of the (*School*) 4-H Club, we also pledge ourselves to help you to perform the duties of your offices and to live up to our club pledge.

All stand and repeat the 4-h Pledge in unison.

I Pledge

my HEAD to clearer thinking
my HEART to greater loyalty
my HANDS to larger service
and my HEALTH to better living
for my Club, my Community, and my Country.

(All may be seated)

THE 4-H CLOVER CEREMONY

Member Parts—5

Property—A 4-H Clover with white H's cut into five parts (four leaves and a stem).

LEADER—As we pause for a quiet moment, let us think of the four-leaf clover which is the symbol of this organization of which we are a part. These 4-H members with me represent the four-leaf clover with H on each leaf. The H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands and Health. These are symbols of the teaching of 4-H Clubs by which we endeavor to become better citizens of this world of today and builders of the world of tomorrow. Let us now hear from the H's.

HEAD — (Places 1st clover leaf upper left). The Head is the governing body of our lives. It represents knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is learning facts, but wisdom is knowing how to use those facts wisely. A clean mind trained to function and directed by proper impulses of the heart is an essential to success and right living.

HEART — (Places 2nd clover leaf upper right.) The heart is the fortress of the soul. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." All our ideals and dreams come from the heart. The heart is the spring from which flows the motive power of life. If the course is impure then life will also be impure.

HANDS — (Places 3rd clover leaf lower left.) Our Hands represent our service to others. The Hands can do no evil for themselves—they are merely the tools of the brain and heart. Let the Hands, therefore, become the symbol of expression of our ideals and dreams and the creation power guided by an alert mind and a clean Heart.

HEALTH — (Places 4th clover leaf lower right.) Good Health is an essential factor. It consists not only of a body free from disease and infirmities but of a clean mind and pure heart. Sick minds and sick hearts produce sick bodies. Health is a symbol of a well personality.

LEADER — (Places stem at bottom.) The beauty of the leaf cannot develop until we live by it each day.

GROUP — 4-H Pledge in unison (by members on stage or all club members).

(Each of the four H's mount a green leaf on the white background board as they speak. The stem of green is added last to complete the clover. The clover sections may be attached to the white background with tacks, pins or tape.)

4-H SYMBOLS

Member Parts—5

Property—Poster for each Symbol

NARRATOR — Today, we would like to tell you about some of the symbols we use in the 4-H Club. (Introduces each part.)

PART 1 — NATIONAL 4-H CLUB CREED

I believe in 4-H Club work for the opportunity it will give me to become a useful citizen.

I believe in the training of my Head for the power it will give me to think, to plan, and to reason.

I believe in the training of my Heart for the nobleness it will give me to become kind, sympathetic and true.

I believe in the training of my Hands for the ability it will give me to be helpful, useful, and skillful.

I believe in the training of my Health for the strength it will give me to enjoy life, to resist disease, and to work efficiently.

I believe in my country, my state, and my community and in my responsibility for their development.

NATIONAL 4-H EMBLEM

PART 2 — The National 4-H Emblem is a four-leaf clover with the letter "H" on the midrib of each leaf. It stands for the development of the Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. The four-leaf clover signifies good luck and achievement.

PART 3 — 4-H CLUB MOTTO
"TO MAKE THE BEST BETTER"

PART 4 — THE 4-H CLUB COLORS

The national 4-H Club colors are green and white. The white background of the 4-H flag symbolizes purity; and the green of the 4-H emblem represents nature's most common color in the great out-of-doors and also is emblematic of youth, life and growth.

NARRATOR — We should always display the 4-H clover and the 4-H colors with pride because now we know their true meaning. As 4-H Club members, it is our duty to live up to these ideals in all that we do.

LOUISIANA 4-H CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

Member Parts: 2 Adults, 2 Boys, 2 Girls

Property: Candles, Table

INTRODUCTION:

An adult leader, two 4-H boys and two 4-H girls, all dressed in white. An adult not in costume, and other members of the club.

If on stage, the club members should be supplied with small candles.

If outdoors, either small candles or wood tapers, and also a small bundle of fagots for each of the different kinds of projects listed in the club enrollment. There need not be more than three or four fagots to the small bundle. Also a fair size piece of tin on which to light a fire.

If on a stage, either a wood scene or soft drapes on the back and sides. A white draped stand with a large candle in a holder on the stand in the center of the stage. The adult local leader standing behind the white draped stand. Club members seated on the floor in a circle around the stand. One of the 4-H members in the cast standing in each corner of the stage. The adult not in costume off stage. If music is available, have a slow waltz played softly throughout the ceremony; or have the seated club members hum a slow waltz.

If outdoors, the adult local leader stands behind the piece of tin. All of the 4-H members in the cast station themselves so as to form a square several paces from the corners of the tin. An equal number of club members stand around each of the 4-H members in the cast. The club members stand with their backs to the 4-H members in the cast. The club members with fagots should be placed so that there will be nearly an equal number in each group. The adult not in costume is stationed within good hearing distance of the audience.

CEREMONY (On Stage)

LEADER—“If we were asked to express what the 4-H Clubs mean to us, each would tell a different story and many of us would find great difficulty in putting into words all that would need saying. This is often true of the things that mean a great deal to us.”

ADULT NOT IN COSTUME—

“When words seem inadequate, we symbolize as beautifully as we can what we want to express. Therefore, I call on the Spirit of 4-H Club Work to light the candle so that we may get a better understanding of the purposes of 4-H from the light.”

(While the leader is lighting the candle, the leader not in costume continues.)

“If I knew you and you knew me—
If both of us could clearly see,
And with an inner sight divine,
The meaning of your heart and mine;

“I’m sure that we would differ less,
And clasp our hands in friendliness;
Our thoughts would pleasantly agree
If I knew you and you knew me.”

LEADER—(While the 4-H member representing the Head H walks slowly to the lighted candle.)

LEADER—(While the member is walking.)

“Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past,
Let each temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast.
Till thou at length are free,
Leaving thine out-grown shell by life’s
unresting sea.”

(The 4-H member lights candle.)

4-H MEMBER—My light is the first H which stands for Head. When we have lighted this candle we begin to think about 4-H Club work and seek to know all that it means. We learn from this light the club motto: ‘To make the best better.’ To keep this light burning, we must study and observe with an open mind in order that we may learn from life and books, speak with knowledge, grow in wisdom, and act with good judgment.”

“I pledge my head to clearer thinking.”

(While the Head H walks slowly back to corner, the Heart H slowly approaches the center candle.)

LEADER—“Isn’t it strange that princes and kings,
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
And common folks like you and me,
Are builders of eternity?

“To each is given a bag of tools,
A shapeless mass, and a book of rules,
And each must make, ere life is flown,
A stumbling block or stepping stone.”

LEADER—(The 4-H member lights candle.)

“My light is the second H which stands for Heart. This light is the love which is in us. When we have lighted this candle, we begin to learn that 4-H Club work means cooperation, working together, and respecting the rights of others. We must never let this light go out, because if we do, all of the other lights will flicker and go out.”

“I pledge my heart to greater loyalty.”

(While the Heart H walks slowly back to corner, the Hand H slowly approaches the center candle.)

LEADER—(While the members are walking.)

“Oh, it’s fun to go swimming or a-fishing on the pond:
To camp in the woods that skirt the shore,
There’s a thrill in climbing mountains,
And of motoring, we’re fond,

“But sport alone gets tame without a chore.
For there’s something kind of cheering,
In the joy that goes with work.
We feel that we’ve a part in life’s great plan,
And our pleasure’s all the keener,
If our duty we don’t shirk—
It’s achievement, after all that makes the man.”

(The 4-H member lights candle.)

4-H MEMBER—“My light is the third H which stands for Hand. This light teaches us to use our hands for service. When we light this candle, we learn to do each tiny task perfectly—not only to help ourselves, but to help in the great plan of the Universe which calls for work by all.”

“I pledge my hands to larger service.”

(While the Hand H walks slowly back to corner, the Health H slowly approaches the center candle.)

LEADER—(While the members are walking.)

“The man who wants a garden fair,
Or small or very big,
With flowers growing here and there,
Must bend his back and dig.

These things are mighty few on earth,
That wishes can attain;
What’er we want of any worth,
We’ve got to work to gain.

It matters not what goal you seek,
Its secret here reposes;
You’ve got to dig from week to week
To get results and roses.”

(The 4-H member lights candle.)

4-H MEMBER—“My light is the fourth H which stands for Health. This light teaches us to be healthy in body, mind and soul. When we have lighted this candle, we learn the rules of health so that we may grow into strong men and women with alert minds, sympathetic hearts, and that we may find joy and pleasure in our work.”

“I pledge my health to better living for my club, my community and my country.”

(While the Health H walks slowly back to corner.)

LEADER— “Iron of the earth, glow of the sun,
Breath of the four winds clean.
Hours for work, hours for play,
With stars and sleep between.
Our goal to health, the quest for man and maid,
Lift high the goblet fair,
And pledge the toast, from coast to coast,
Our health, the wealth we keep and share,
Faces that lift, pulses that throb,
Limbs that are lithe and strong,
Heads that think, hands that do,
And hearts that serve with song.”

ADULT NOT IN COSTUME—

“Members of the (name) 4-H Club, arise and light your candles.” (The 4-H members in the cast approach the circle of club members and start lighting the candles. The four members should walk in the same direction. While the candles are being lighted, the leader and club members sing “God Bless America”—repeating until all the candles are lit. The four members walk to the front of the stage.

LEADER—“MAY ALL OF YOU BE USEFUL CITIZENS, DOING YOUR PART FULLY AND WELL.”

ALL THE 4-H MEMBERS—

“Shine little light in our hearts tonight,
Shine and make our pathways bright,
Let no darkness cloud our sight,
In our daily work for right.”

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FLAG

Member Parts—6

Property—American Flag

The leader comes to the center of the stage and gives the Introduction. The leader steps to the right of the stage as the flag bearer enters carrying the American Flag and stands at center stage. The members selected for Parts 1 through 5 come onto the stage one at a time to present their parts. As each part is completed, the members should step to the left of the stage and remain standing at attention until the program is completed.

LEADER—INTRODUCTION:

“Our flag is a proud and sacred symbol of the freedom, equality, and justice for which the United States of America stands. Pride and pleasure will come to you as you learn and teach others about our flag.”

FLAG BEARER—(Enters carrying the flag and stands at center stage.)

BIRTH OF THE FLAG

PART 1—After the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776, the people of this new country needed a national flag to symbolize their unity and independence. On June 14, 1777, Congress adopted the following resolution: “Resolved that the Flag of the United States be 13 stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field representing the new constellation.”

No one knows who designed the first flag. Some historians believe Betsy Ross, a flag maker of Philadelphia, made the first U.S. flag.

THE FLAG TODAY

PART 2—Two stars were added to our flag when Alaska and then Hawaii were admitted to the Union in 1959. The stars are now arranged in 5 rows of 6 stars each, and 4 rows of 5 stars each. The 7 red and 6 white stripes represent the 13 original colonies. White stars on the blue field represent the Union of States. This flag was officially unfurled July 1, 1960. It is your flag and mine!

MEANING OF COLORS

PART 3—Red symbolizes valor, zeal, courage, and human sacrifice. White is the symbol of purity, cleanliness of life, and hope. Blue is the color of vigilance, reverence to God, truth, sincerity, and justice.

OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

PART 4—On September 13 and 14, 1814, a Baltimore lawyer, Francis Scott Key, had gone to the British to obtain the release of some friends. He was detained aboard ship while the British bombarded Fort McHenry. All night he anxiously awaited the outcome of the battle. Finally at dawn, he saw the flag, still flying and was inspired to write the “Star Spangled Banner.”

LEADER—[Ask group to rise and sing the “Star Spangled Banner.”]

STAR SPANGLED BANNER

Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thru' the perilous flight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming,
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

HOW TO DISPLAY THE FLAG

Member Parts—4

Property—American Flag on right of the stage

The stage should be set with the American Flag on the right of the speakers as the speakers face the audience. If there is no stage, the flag should be at the right of the audience. The members with assigned parts should come into the center of the stage as each presents his part. All participants should step to the left and remain standing until the program is completed.

OUR FLAG

PART 1— I love to see the starry flag
that floats above my head.
I love to see its waving folds
With stripes of white and red.
“Be brave,” say the red stripes,
“Be pure,” say the white,
“Be true,” say the bright stars,
“And stand for the right.

—Author Unknown

PART 2—I would like to give you some general rules for displaying our flag.

The flag should be displayed from sunrise to sunset.

The flag should not be flown in rainy or stormy weather unless for some special reason.

Raise the flag briskly and proudly. Lower it slowly, ceremoniously.

Never allow the flag to touch the ground or floor. Gather and fold it correctly.

When flown with other flags on the same halyard, the American Flag should always be at the top.

During the ceremony of raising or lowering the flag, or when it is passing in a parade, all persons should face the flag, stand at attention, and salute.

People in civilian clothes salute by placing their right hands over their hearts. Men remove hats. People in uniform bring their right hands to their foreheads with fingers extended and salute.

When displayed with a speaker, (1)The flag is on a staff to the speaker's right when on his platform. It should be slightly in front of him; (2) The flag is on a staff to the audience's right when on their level; and (3) When fastened to a wall or other flat surface, the flag is placed above and behind the speaker.

When the American Flag and the 4-H Flag are placed on a desk or table at a club meeting, the American Flag is always on the president's right.

Our flag should not be used as draping. Use red, white and blue bunting for decorating. The bunting must always be arranged so that blue is on top, or to the observer's left, white is in the middle, and red below or to the observer's right.

FLAG TERMS

- PART 3—"The Colors"—Sometimes used when referring to the flag.
"Half Mast"—To lower the flag some distance (not necessarily halfway down) from the top of the staff, as a token of mourning. The flag is always raised to full mast, then lowered.
"Halyard"—A rope or cord to which a flag is attached. It is used to raise or lower the flag on the staff.
"Staff"—A shaft or pole to which a flag is fastened or on which a flag is flown.
- PART 4—[The person with this part should ask the audience to stand and join in singing "God Bless America."]

GOD BLESS AMERICA

God bless America, Land that I love,
Stand beside her and guide her,
Thru the night with a light from above.
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans white with foam,
God bless America, my home sweet home.

—Irving Berlin

* * * *

CITIZENSHIP

Member Parts—3

Property—The American Flag on the right of the stage.

The stage should be set with the American Flag displayed on the right. Before the program begins, copies of the 4-H Citizenship Pledge should be given to the audience.

"WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?"

- PART 1 — What does it mean? I look across the years . . .
I see them come, but thru a mist of tears,
Our gallant forebearers, full of hopes and fear.

I see them leave behind for conscience's sake,
The homes they loved, the ties so hard to break
Their questing, wondering, westward way to take.

I see them face and fight the wilderness,
Undaunted by its dangers, its duress,
And from its wildness, wrest and win success.

I see them take their living from the soil,
The men and women joined in homely toil . . .
Where they then planted, now our heart-roots coil.

I hear the drums of war's alarm beat,
I see them seize their arms, rise to their feet
Their enemies—and liberty's—to meet.

I see them build their homes, their house of prayer,
And when its bell rings out upon the air.
I see them kneel in simple worship there.

I see them face and conquer every foe,
I see their cities rise, a nation grow,
To whose broad breast earth's eager pilgrims go.

To be an American is to be one
In whom these brave inheritances run,
A worthy daughter, or a noble son . . .

—Roselle Mercier Montgomery

CITIZENSHIP DEFINED

PART 2 — A citizen of the United States is any person, native or naturalized, who owes allegiance to the Government and is entitled to protection from it. Insofar as the Government is concerned, all citizens of the United States are equal and have equal rights. Some citizens have more ability than others and some are greater leaders. Some serve as public officials while others live and work as private individuals. Each one has only one vote on any one problem and all other rights and privileges are equal. It is therefore great fortune to be a citizen of a democratic country.

Anything so valuable as citizenship in a democracy, or freedom, is not bestowed upon people without full obligation on their part. The word "allegiance" means to loyally defend when it is necessary. When we say, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the republic. . .," we are re-affirming our loyalty and willingness to defend the country against an enemy. This is a quality of good citizenship.

The time has passed when the country must depend solely on the army, navy, marines, and air force for national defense. Every citizen should serve his country.

PART 3 — [Ask the group to stand and read the 4-H Citizenship Pledge in unison according to the parts as marked.]

4-H CITIZENSHIP PLEDGE

ALL — We individually and collectively pledge our efforts from day to day to fight for the ideals of this nation.

BOYS — We will never allow tyranny and injustice to become enthroned in this, our country, through indifference to our duties as citizens.

GIRLS — We will serve for intellectual honesty and exercise it through our power of franchise.

BOYS — We will obey the laws of our land and endeavor increasingly to quicken the sense of public duty among our fellow men.

ALL — We will strive for individual improvement and for social betterment.

GIRLS — We will devote our talents to the enrichment of our homes and our communities in relation to their material, social and spiritual needs.

ALL — We will endeavor to transmit this nation to posterity not merely as we found it, but freer, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

THE HERITAGE OF YOUNG AMERICANS

Member Parts—7

Property—The American Flag placed on the right of the stage.

PART 1 — I am an American, one of the heirs to the riches of the most wonderful country in the world. I have a share in its hills and its valleys, its winding streams and beautiful lakes. The streets of its “alabaster cities” gleam for me. Its modest homes with “open gates,” its great factories with powerful and skillful machines and its great business houses were built for me.

As an American, I may till its fertile soil and produce nutritious food and the fibers for clothing. Its mines and forests are ready to give material for providing a home and its comforts.

As an American, the freedom that we in the United States of America love so well is mine, and I will guard it in every way that I can. The churches invite me to worship in my own way, that I may know the true meaning of the “abundant life.”

As an American, the government exists for me, and I have a share in its responsibilities through my vote and my loyalty.

I may enter the libraries and delve in their wealth of books of all ages, to broaden my vision and make me tolerant. The museums and art galleries, with their great treasures, are mine to enjoy. The public school is open to teach me the American Way of Life.

Because America gives me so much, it is my duty to treasure these riches and guard them with a keen mind, healthy body, skillful hands, and a loyal heart.

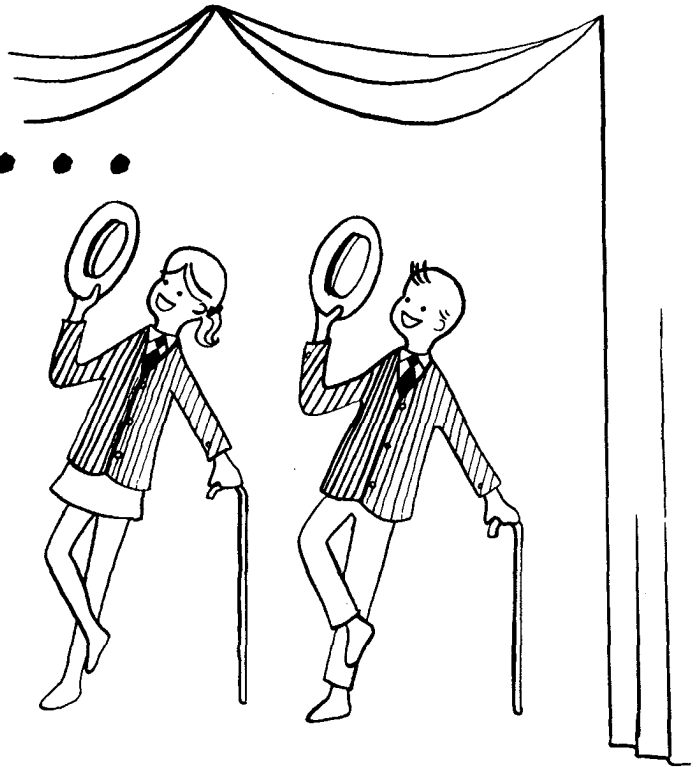
I will use the bequest which is mine, to enrich my own life so that I may bequeath—increased, to future generations of my country—this precious heritage, with it “the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” and all that this implies.

—T. A. Erickson

[Six people take part and each reads a verse]

- PART 2— There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my bread with you.
And I can share my joy with you.
And sometimes share a sorrow, too—
As on our way we go.
- PART 3 — There isn't much that I can do,
But I can sit an hour with you,
And I can share a joke with you,
And sometimes share reverses, too—
As on our way we go.
- PART 4 — There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my flowers with you,
And I can share my books with you,
And sometimes share your burdens, too—
As on our way we go.
- PART 5 — There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my songs with you,
And I can share my mirth with you,
And sometimes come and laugh with you—
As on our way we go.
- PART 6— There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my hopes with you,
And I can share my fears with you,
And sometimes shed some tears with you—
As on our way we go.
- PART 7 — There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my life with you,
And oft times share a prayer with you—
As on our way we go.

Skits and Stunts...



We like skits and stunts for “meeting features” because they give lots of members a chance to take part and, you know, this is part of your job, to involve as many members as possible.

Skits and stunts should be simple if there is little time for practice. These can be found in books in the school library or even written by club members themselves.

There are some examples of skits and stunts in this section to get you started. Look through them and “do your thing.”

HAT SKIT

Member Parts—I Narrator, 7 Girl Models

Property—Items used as hats

NARRATOR — Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with real pleasure that we present to you—for your entertainment—one of the most unique and individual assortments of ladies’ hats and bonnets ever assembled this side of Paris. This collection is strictly out of this world. . . . And that’s probably just as well. I have been asked to announce that none of the creations are for sale, but materials, procedures and directions will be sent to you upon request if you will merely address your inquiry to me personally, enclosing a self-addressed envelope and a twenty-five dollar check made out to cash. And now, on with the show.

COFFEE PERCOLATOR — We now present our first creation modeled by Flossey,—I mean Floosey,—I mean Flosey Folger. She is what the well dressed drip will be wearing next season. Isn’t it a perky little number? And it’s not dated. This bonnet will fit any sized bean. It will be good to the last drip.

EGG CARTON — Hilda Hatch wears the next little lid called the “Rhode Island Rocket.”

Here is a chick little number that was hatched up just last week. Now . . . not a peep out of you old hens. It was designed by Madam Omelette of the Metro Poultry Opera House. With this clever creation you never need to worry about your hat being scrambled in a crowded clothes closet. . . . Just boil your hat for five minutes and leave it in the deep freeze. Any yokel can see the practical value of this number. It is especially nice on long trips or picnics . . . with Canadian bacon.

- ONION SACK — And Now Wanda Cry—modeling a number called, “I’m Prancing with Tears in my Sighs.” You will readily note the Bermuda influence in this casual design. Girls who wear it say it brings tears to their eyes. Perhaps you think it is a bit snooty. Actually, it is a bag within a bag. Notice how it offers protection, ventilation and allure at the same time. It is being shown at the local green market this week only—and in three different odors. I’m sure you’ll all agree this number is just one big mesh!
- FLIT GUN — Henrietta Dash now approaches wearing something for the fleaty, flighty, flitty type. You’ll just kill your best friends with this selection. It is especially designed for little squirts. So easy to handle. Excellent for the feminine gardeners. Guaranteed not to rust, shrink, or puncture under normal conditions. Be sure to look for the DDT label of approval. We hope and spray that this hat will fleas you.
- BLOCK OF WOOD — Our next number, “Forest Folly,” is worn by Ima Whittle. Don’t you think it is a quaint little shaver for the would-be stylists? Hi Ho, Silver! This chippy little headpiece comes in maple, birch, and in yellow eucalyptus . . . a number that most women will positively be knots about. Have you ever seen anything quite like it? You’d be a sap not to get one. Call Evergreen Lumber Company . . . Forest Tree, Tree, Tree . . . and ask for Mr. Twig of the downtown branch. The price??? Wooden you like to know?
- LAMP SHADE — I’m sure you’ll all get a charge out of this foreign headpiece called an “Inca Dessante,” modeled by Rise ’n Shine. This electrifying top-knot is rather shady—not glaringly so—but it is particularly becoming to light headed women . . . even those who wear a switch. Some men think this hat is revolting. Others claim it is de-lightful. Wats your opinion? I think it is reflecting of good taste, indirectly of course. Don’t sell yourself short, girls. See this headpiece currently being shown at your local utility showroom. You will find hats to go with every base.
- ALARM CLOCK — Tillie Tocker is our last model and wearing a unique Ingersol original . . . truly a spring bonnet. It’s the hat of the hour . . . and that’s no Bulova. The designers really shot the works on this creation. Isn’t it alarming what they can do these days? Definitely it is one of the most timely hats on the market today . . . worth twice its face value. It was designed to do something for that run-down feeling . . . to put a main-spring in your step. It is a stem-winder if I ever saw one. Girls, if you wear this spring

headpiece, you will really ring the bell with your most discriminating friends.

We hope you have enjoyed our hat show. See me later to place your orders.

Now, for a last look at these lovely creations I'll call all of the models back onto the stage for a round of applause.

POKEY HUNTUS

Members Parts—19

Property—Broom, ladder, block or box, hatchet, bucket, rope, nuts, flashlight, large heart cut from red cardboard, a pair of cut-out goggles, a "Warrant" and a "Manifesto" (two scrolls which may be rolled up containing the warrant with the words "not on Your Life" and the manifesto with "If he goes, I go."), cardboard signs with long strings attached for hanging around the players' necks, giving their character names.

Characters:	Curtain		
	Situation	Plum	Pokey Huntus
	Scene	Elm	Danger
	Brook	Maple	Chief Powder Can
	North Wind Squirrels (2)	Sun	Holy Father
	Pine Tree	Capt. John Smith	Birds (2)

Action: The following story is read slowly and distinctly by the reader. The characters, holding the cardboard signs in plain sight, act the words out literally, with much exaggeration and enthusiasm. Each capitalized word represents the CHARACTER in action at that time, and the words in italics indicate the action.

STORY

NARRATOR — Young Folks, have you heard the story,
Heard the great and thrilling story of the Princess of Virginia.
Of the Noble Pokey Huntus—
How she saved the captive white man?
Listen now and I'll *unfold* it.

John Smith was the captive white man;
Pokey Huntus, the Indian Maiden,
Who is owned by chieftain
Powder Can, whose savage people he
Rules with might and rules with powder.

Softly now the CURTAIN *rises* (Lying down on floor—stand up and stretch.)

See the SCENE *laid* in the forest. (Comes on stage—lies down.)
Where, for many moons, I'm thinking
Through the forest comes the NORTH WIND.
Shakes the stately PINE TREE.
Wiggles too ELM, PLUM, AND MAPLE.

Lo, where in the highest heaven
Mounts the SUN (climbs a ladder)
And casts its bright ray (Lights the light).

Hear the BROOK, so sweetly *gurgling*,
(Come on stage gargling water)
Babbling, prattling through the forest.
(Brook leaves flipping lip.)

See the SQUIRRELS gently *sporting*,
(Dancing in ring with hands joined.)
Gathering nuts to safely store them. (Pick up nuts off floor,
from people's pockets, out of trees, and put in basket.)

Comprehend the SITUATION
Calm serene and full of beauty.

But the restless WIND comes *sweeping*
(Sweep across floor with broom and over scene.)
Sweeping onward o'er the fair SCENE.

Now the hero, CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH
is a-stalking through the forest.

Now our darling, POKEY HUNTUS,
Smirking, humming, trotting, *trips* in. (Falls down)
Watch our darling, mincing onward,
Sweeping obstacles before her.

SMITH, he sees our blessed darling,
Fastens his sad EYES upon her, (Pins cut-out goggles on Pokey.)

DANGER all about is hovering,
Lurking in obscure places.

Then CHIEF POWDER CAN, the noble,
In his might, he *comes a-stalking*
Calmly *steps* up on the FAIR SCENE
While he *views* the SITUATION.

SMITH stands in all his manhood,
Meets the red man's *gaze of anger*,
Watches while CHIEF POWDER CAN *shows* his
"Warrant" (Not on Your Life)

See the block of execution
That the noble SMITH is led to.
Hold your tears. Stop all that weeping!
Fate! It isn't going to hurt him.

POKEY *wails* and *groans* and *shudders*
Hands her dad her "Manifesto," (If He Goes, I Go.)

Silence reigns. Then through the forest
Breaks the mighty rushing NORTH WIND
Shakes each tree and makes it totter.

POWDER CAN, deep thoughts is *thinking*
"Shall I scalp him—give him POKEY?"
Better thoughts at last prevailing
He relents and *kicks* the bucket.

Now the SITUATION changes (changes coat)

JOHN SMITH *gives* his heart to POKEY
Begs her to be his darling wifey.

Enter quick the HOLY FATHER
Ties the knot (fastens them together with rope)
While from the forest
All the BIRDS *sing* happy carols. (Whistle wedding march.)

Now you've heard the noble story
Of the Princess Pokey Huntus
How she saved the captive white man
Saved the noble Captain John Smith
Now 'tis time to end the drama.
Falls upon the SCENE the CURTAIN.

Member Parts—Narrator

Entire Audience

Property—None

THE WILD WEST WEAKLING

The narrator reads and the group responds. Divide into six small groups and assign each one to one of the sounds. Before reading the skit, have the group practice all sounds, including the the final kiss.

Noises: HORSES, neigh

SHOTS, go "pow! pow!"

DIRTY VILLIANS, hiss

HOPPY, says “hurrah”

MINNIE, says “ah-h-h!”

FRIENDLY INDIANS, “How! How!” and shake hands with each other.

KISS, Everyone kisses the back of their hand with a big “Smack!”

NARRATOR — Here, my friends, is a story of the o-o-o-ld West, in the days when men were men, women were women, HORSES were HORSES, and the folks aimed to keep it that-a-way!

In this same country grew up a small boy, the Wild West Weakling.

He sent off for a muscle building course and became the strongest man in the country. His name was HOPPY LONG. (They called him this because of his peculiar hop, caused by dropping a muscle builder on his foot.) He had a HORSE named Ivory, and they were as close as brothers. Among their closest friends were the FRIENDLY INDIANS.

In this same country also were some DIRTY VILLIANS, and they were stinkers! They never bathed, and furthermore, they stole HORSES.

Our hero’s girl was the lovely MINNIE, daughter of old Chief Pow-Pow. The DIRTY VILLIANS were afraid of our hero, but one day he went to the city to get a store-bought suit, they decided to steal in at night, steal the HORSES, and steal away. MINNIE overheard them making plans, so she sprang on her trusty HORSE and started to warn her lover. But the DIRTY VILLAINS captured her and rushed her to their hideaway.

Two FRIENDLY INDIANS saw it all, and they rode to warn HOPPY. Would he get back in time? When he heard, he said, “Why, those DIRTY VILLIANS! I’ll lick ’em single-handed. As he rode on, he said, “No, I’ll use both hands!”

When he neared the robber camp, he yelled to MINNIE, “I’ll save you!” The robbers took a SHOT at him. He SHOT back. Then he SHOT again. Things got lively. They SHOT and SHOT and SHOT! He SHOT, SHOT, SHOT SHOT! They SHOT, SHOT, and SHOT SHOT SHOT right back! Soon they ran out of SHOTS, and one of them called out, “Boys, we’re all washed up!” HOPPY and his HORSE, Ivory, did the trick!

That’s about all. MINNIE helped HOPPY take the DIRTY VILLAINS to jail, where they got their just deserts. Soon afterward, HOPPY rewarded the FRIENDLY INDIANS, and then he gave his trusty HORSE, Ivory, some sugar. And of course, no good western ends without having the hero kiss the heroine a nice big juicy KISS. (Each person kisses back of hand.)

* * * * *

BETTY BOOP, POP-EYE, AND THE WOLF

Member Parts—Narrator
Entire Audience

Property—None

Divide the audience into three groups and assign each group a part as follows:

BETTY BOOP — “Boop Boop a Doop.” (Smile coyly, place right index finger against cheek.)

POP-EYE — “Well, blow me down.” (Feel arm muscle.)

BIG BAD WOLF — “Woooo-o-f!” (Make clawing motion with hands.)

Now tell the story of Little Red Riding Hood, using these characters. As each group is mentioned, the group stands up, shouts the proper response and sits down.

STORY

“Once upon a time there was a charming young lady named BETTY who was loved by a sailor called POP-EYE. BETTY lived near a great forest in which there roamed a big bad WOLF. One day BETTY decided to visit her grandmother who lived in the heart of the forest. POP-EYE urged BETTY not to go into the forest where the WOLF lived, but BETTY would have her own way and would not let POP-EYE accompany her. ‘I’m not afraid of the big bad WOLF,’ said BETTY as she started out with her basket on her arm, but when she entered the forest and saw the eyes of the WOLF gleaming at her from behind a tree, she was sorry POP-EYE was not with her. The WOLF followed BETTY step by step getting closer and closer, and behind him came POP-EYE. Just as the WOLF was about to spring on BETTY, POP-EYE killed him with his trusty club, and saved BETTY’S life. ‘POP-EYE, my hero, you’ve killed the WOLF and saved my life,’ said BETTY as she fell fainting in his arms. Thus ends the story of POP-EYE, BETTY BOOP, and the big bad WOLF.” (Similar stories may be told about other well-known characters)

* * * * *

A HEALTH STUNT

Member Parts—11

Property—Chair, magazine, end table, piece of cake, dressing table with toilet articles, trash can, paper faces for characters.

Characters—Mary, her CONSCIENCE, her HEALTH CHART, her TEETH, her STOMACH, her SKIN, her HAIR, her EYES, her SPINAL CORD, her FEET, and her MIND.

SCENE — Mary is seated in a large, comfortable chair in the center of the stage, reading a cheap magazine. At her right, upon an end table, is a large piece of cake which she nibbles as she reads. At one end of the stage is a dressing table containing toilet articles, with a waste basket near. CONSCIENCE, a pleasant girl, dressed in an attractive white costume, is hidden behind MARY’S chair. Crude, exaggerated pictures of the other characters are drawn on large pieces of cardboard, with eyes cut out for the ones who

carry them to see through. Turning the eyes about as much as possible will give it a more gruesome effect. CONSCIENCE pauses between each warning.

CONSCIENCE (Calling.) Mary! Mary!

MARY (without looking up) Huh?

CONSCIENCE It's bedtime.

MARY (Crossly.) I know it! (Takes a bite of cake.)

CONSCIENCE You shouldn't eat between meals, especially just before going to bed.

MARY (Crossly.) I know it!

CONSCIENCE You're straining your eyes, Mary. They need sleep.

MARY I know it.

CONSCIENCE Mary!

MARY Oh what now?

CONSCIENCE You haven't had your bath.

MARY Who cares? Is wish I could strangle you!

CONSCIENCE (Laughs gaily.) Strangle your Conscience? You haven't brushed your teeth either.

MARY I wish you'd hush nagging!

CONSCIENCE And you haven't brushed your hair. (Pause.) Mary!

MARY Oh, for crying out loud! Can't you let me read in peace just for a moment?

CONSCIENCE You are poisoning your mind on that trashy magazine.

MARY Well, it's my mind!

CONSCIENCE Mary! Mary!

MARY Now what?

CONSCIENCE You have poor posture. You'll grow stooped.

MARY I'd like to kick you so far you'd never find the way back!

CONSCIENCE In those tight shoes? You'd only hurt your corn. Well, I see you aren't going to listen to your little old Conscience, so I might as well hush.

MARY For once, I agree with you.

CONSCIENCE You'll probably have nightmares when you do go to sleep.

MARY Says you! (She reads for a moment and then falls asleep. Her actions while asleep will add greatly to the effect of the stunt.)

CONSCIENCE (Coming from behind the chair, bends over Mary, speaks tenderly.) Mary! (Mary, without opening her eyes, slaps Conscience. Conscience sings to the tune of "Farmer in the Dell.")

Your conscience pleads with you
About the things you do;
You slap its face, so in disgrace,
Your conscience weeps for you.

(Conscience moves over to the left front corner, weeping. During the remainder of the stunt, she weeps afresh every time Mary shows she is in pain. The following characters enter as needed, holding their drawings in front of their faces. They sing their lines to the same tune at the back of Mary's chair, bending over her. They then form lines on either side, leaving Mary in the middle.)

HEALTH CHART

Your health chart's made to show
Some things you ought to know;
Its aids you spurn! You cannot learn
The things you ought to know. (Mary groans.)

CONSCIENCE Poor Mary!

TEETH

Your teeth should all drop out
And scatter round about,
Because, you know, you treat them so,
Your teeth should all drop out!
(Mary puts her hand over her mouth and groans in pain.)

STOMACH

You'll make your stomach ache
(Mary rubs her stomach and groans.)
By eating too much cake,
Because, you know, you treat it so,
You'll make your stomach ache.

SKIN

Your skin won't function right
Without a bath each night,
(Mary scratches.)
Because, you know, you treat it so,
Your skin won't function right.

HAIR

You won't have lovely hair
If you don't give it care,
(Mary frowns, runs her fingers through her hair.)
Because, you know, you treat it so,
You won't have lovely hair.

EYES

Your eyes can't do their best
Unless you give them rest.
(She rubs her eyes.)
Because, you know, you treat them so,
Your eyes can't do their best.

SPINAL CORD

Your spinal cord will crook
(She wriggles, groans.)
While bending o'er your book,

Because, you know, you treat it so,
Your spinal cord will crook.

FEET

Tight shoes will pinch your toe.
(Mary wriggles her feet, groans.)
And cause old corns to grow,
Because, you know, you treat it so,
Tight shoes will pinch your toe.

MIND

A trashy magazine
Won't let your mind stay clean,
(Rolls her head, groans.)
Because, you know, you treat it so,
Your mind cannot stay clean.

(The characters form a semi-circle back of Mary's chair, each singing loudly his own verse, but all together. Mary writhes in pain, Conscience weeps, and as they finish the song, Mary screams. They all run off the stage except Conscience, who rushes to Mary's side and tries to soothe her.)

CONSCIENCE Poor Mary! Wake up, dear. It was only a mean old nightmare.

MARY (Awakens.) Oh, it was a nightmare! Thank goodness! Oh, Conscience, I'm sorry I was so cruel to you. Don't ever leave me, ever! I'll listen to you from now on, honest!

CONSCIENCE Want to shake on that?

MARY (Smiling.) Shake! (They shake hands. Mary drops the cake into the wastebasket, kicks off her shoes, runs to the dressing table, picks up the articles as she names them, handling them as something very precious.) Good old toothbrush, hair brush and comb! Good old soap, towel and wash cloth! (Looks in the mirror, stands with a proper posture.) Ah, a backbone that is still straight! (Conscience picks up the magazine which has fallen to the floor, offers it to Mary who grabs it and sticks it into the wastebasket.) A clean mind, little Conscience! Come, let's get ready for the good old bed!
(They leave with arms about each other.)

—CURTAIN—

(Taken from "Plays and Stunts for 4-H Clubs" by Ethel Rogers)



Say, Jim, maybe our “Program Chairmen” would like to plan a game for their next meeting. You know games can make great special meeting features, especially if they are well planned.

Here are some suggestions for using games at club meetings:

1. Know the game WELL; how it is played, scored, and what equipment is needed.
2. Explain and demonstrate the game clearly.
3. Don't embarrass anyone.
4. Stop the game while the players are still enjoying it. Never let it lag.

Ready? Let's play!

A What?

The name of this game is A What? A What? A What?! And if that's confusing, just wait until we start playing. In this game, no one ever knows exactly *what* is happening.

We stand in a circle, facing the center. One of us starts the action by taking a ball (any object will do) and handing it to the person on his right, saying, “This is a banana.” The person who now holds the ball is evidently already confused, because she inquires, “A What??” The first player repeats, “A banana!”

Person number two, her confusion temporarily cleared up, hands the ball to the person on her right and says, “This is a banana.” Now person number three is confused. “A What???” he asks of number two. She then turns back to number one and asks again, “A what??” “A banana!” he says. Whereupon number two turns back to three and confirms it. “A banana!!” she says. Now that number three is enlightened, he can hand the ball he's holding to the person on his right, number four, and say, “This is a banana.” And when number four asks, “A what???” the whole sequence gets played back to number one: “A what???” “A what???” “A banana!” “A banana!!” “A banana!!!”

While number four starts the process all over again with number five, number one takes another ball, hands it to the person on his *left*, and says, “This is a pineapple.” “A what??” And the pineapple takes off to the left. By the time the two balls collide somewhere in the circle, who’ll be able to say for sure what’s what?

When we become pros at this time, we can add more balls to the fruit bowl. Maybe a pomegranate. A what?

GROUP JUGGLING

Fellow bumblers, fear no more! There is a way to juggle that’s as much fun as the traditional method and a lot less work. We just combine a dozen or so aspiring jugglers and a game of catch.

We stand in a circle facing the center, with our hands raised in the air. Starting with one ball, we catch it and throw it, establishing a pattern. One of us tosses the ball to someone on the other side of the circle, say, and she tosses it to a third person who tosses it to a fourth and so on, until everyone has tossed and caught the ball once. (We each drop our hands when we’ve had a turn.) The last catcher tosses the ball back to the player who started the pattern, and we all run through the sequence again, for practice. Now the real juggling can begin.

With one ball on its way around the circle, we add another, so that we have two balls in the air following the catch-and-toss pattern. Now we add another ball, and by this time we should be watching carefully for midair collisions, trying to toss the ball so that the intended receiver can catch it, and perhaps calling out the names of the receivers as we toss the ball to them. We should remember that this is a cooperative venture: We want to keep as many balls in the air as we can, but if one drops, we should just pick it up and keep the pattern going.

We can continue to add balls, or we can reverse the balls’ direction and send them through the pattern in opposite order. How about one ball going in one direction and another going in the opposite direction simultaneously? We can keep making the game more challenging as we get better at it.

GET DOWN

This good-time ritual has probably been performed at every New Games event since it was first introduced to us at the New Games Camp in Malibu, California. It has worked in situations you absolutely would not believe. It’s bound to work again, if we give it our spirited best.

We start in a large circle facing each other. One of us struts into the center and, while swinging her shoulders and hips and pointing her fingers in each of the four appropriate directions, launches into the following chant:

And up (chew-chi-chew, chew-chi-chew,
chew-chi-chew)

And down (chew-chi-chew, chew-chi-chew,
chew-chi-chew),

To the right (chew-chi-chew, chew-chi-chew,
chew-chi-chew),
To the left (chew-chi-chew, chew-chi-chew,
chew-chi-chew).

(The “chew-chi-chew” part is that familiar wire-brush-on-snare-drum sound.)

The chanter now strolls over to one of us in the circle and in her hippiest, most zoot-suity style says:

Hey, here! You’re a real cool cat!
You’ve got a lot of this, and you’ve got a lot of that!
Some come on in and get down!

Who could resist such an invitation? Both the chanter and her invitee strut into the center and (with the rest of us joining in) repeat the whole “chew-chi-chew” routine, probably with a bit more spirit since there are now two cool cats. After the ups, downs, rights, and lefts, they go back to the edge of the circle and each of them invites another would-be hipster with a “lot of this and a lot of that” to join them.

These four do their “chew-chi-chews,” and then invite four more real cool cats into the circle. Those eight become sixteen; those sixteen become thirty-two; and after only six more rounds, we’ll have 4096 people pointing, swinging, and wire-brushing (and that’s more than the Lap Game world’s record)! In twenty-one rounds, we’ll have all of Brooklyn getting down, and in thirty-two-and-a-third rounds, we’ll have every human on the planet playing together.

So come on in and *get down!*

RAIN

We wanted to play outside today, but the sky is heavy with low gray clouds, there’s an incessant drizzle filtering onto every leaf and blade of grass, and the weatherperson warned us to expect felines and canines and perhaps taxicabs falling from the sky. No matter, we’ll play Rain.

We sit in a circle, facing the center. We close our eyes, pausing for a moment or two of quiet while each of us gets ready to repeat the sound the person on his right will be making.

We all keep our eyes closed, and the rainstorm gets underway as the leader rubs his palms together, back and forth. The person to his left joins him, and then the person to her left, and then the next person, and so on around the circle until everyone is rubbing palms and we can listen to the drizzling rain building in intensity.

When the leader hears the drizzle sound being made by the person on his right, he starts snapping his fingers. One by one around the circle, we replace palm rubbing with finger snapping, and the sprinkling rain turns into a steady patter. When the snapping action has been picked up by everyone, the leader switches to hand clapping, and we all follow in turn. We’re hearing a hard rain now.

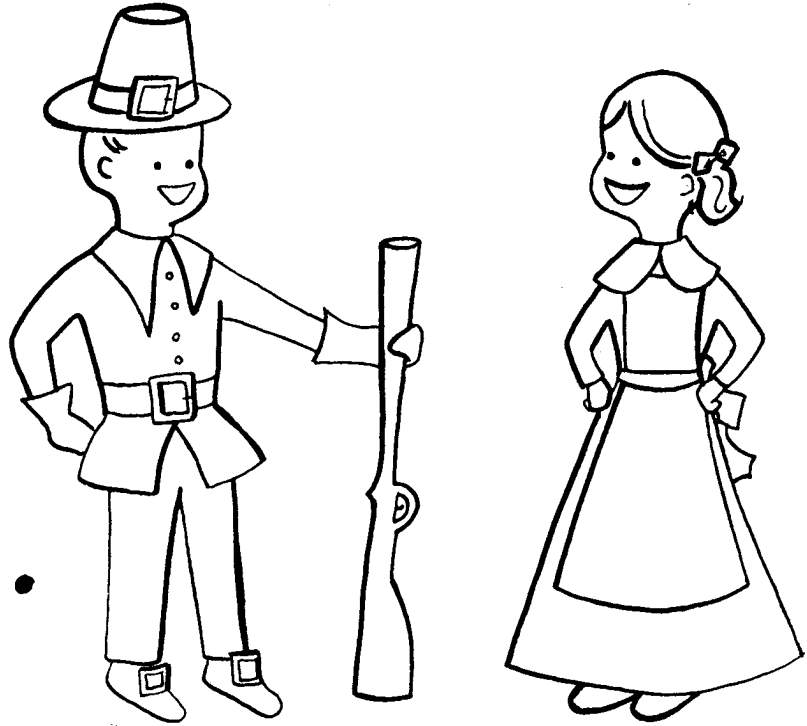
Our storm builds into a downpour as the leader begins slapping his thighs. Then the skies open and thunder crashes as the next round has us stomping our feet.

And then the storm subsides, just as it grew—foot stomping, thigh slapping, hand clapping, finger snapping, and back to palm rubbing. (If we're having trouble hearing the changes, we can alert our neighbors with a gentle nudge each time we switch from one action to the next.)

For the last round, the leader stops rubbing his palms and takes the hand of the person on his left, as each of us does in turn around the circle until there's silence once again. When we open our eyes, perhaps the sun will have appeared.

(Games from "More New Games," The New Games Foundation, Andrew Fluegelman)

Themes...



Tell me, Jim, what's a "Theme" program?

Oh, themes are my favorite kind of meeting "feature."

A "Theme" program is a program planned around a certain holiday or historic event, such as Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, Christmas, or even man's landing on the moon. When this feature is used, all of the skits, games or songs follow the theme chosen.

Lots of skits and games can be changed to fit your theme. Another good idea is to check the encyclopedias for ideas on the history and symbols used on certain holidays. There are examples of theme programs in this section. Remember, these are but a few examples. Check the "Theme Program" calendar located at the end of this section. Better yet, why not plan one yourself—they, too, can be lots of fun.

THEME PROGRAMS

A. CHRISTMAS

1. Christmas Traditions and Carol Stories:

[Can be used as a complete program or as parts of other programs.]

HOLLY

The holly has been a symbol of Christmas for hundreds of years. It is said that the crown of thorns

was made from the holly. Before the Crucifixion, the berries were white but ever since that day the berries of the holly have been red as drops of blood.

We now place holly over the doors to decorate the door frame or windows. Legend tells us that this used to be done to keep out witches and evil spirits. Holly was a Christian symbol, and therefore hateful to witches. They would enter no dwelling protected by a branch of holly.

The significance of holly goes back to ancient days before Christianity to the days of the Druids. These pagans were sun worshippers. Whatever the sun loved, the Druids considered sacred. Since the holly stayed green all winter, the pagans believed the sun loved it. Hence, it was a sacred tree to them. Later it continued in favor as a Christian symbol.

The rivalry between the holly and the ivy is traditional. Some folks thought of the ivy as the badge of the wine god Bacchus, which he wore as a wreath around his head. Some thought of it as the emblem of human weakness clinging to divine strength. One superstition is that holly protects the men of the household and ivy protects the women. Whoever brings the holly into the house first at Christmas, the husband, or the wife, is the one who will rule the household for the coming year. In English homes, the women often wear a spray of ivy and the men a twig of holly at the Christmas season.

MISTLETOE

Mistletoe is another Christmas plant whose history goes back to the worship rites of the Druids. Mistletoe grows as a pale green parasite high up in oak trees. The Druids held the oak to be one of the sacred trees, so the mistletoe was revered also because it gained its strength from the oak.

The chief nature festival of the Druids was their celebration at the winter solstice. A tree containing the most mistletoe was chosen. The whole company of men, women and children entered the forest where the tree stood. First, came the bards, then a herald, and with chants and shoutings they all hailed the tree. Previously, steps or easy ladders had been built up the tree; platforms were hung in the branches so that the Druid priest clad in long white embroidered robes could ascend into the tree and with a golden sickle cut the mistletoe down so that it would fall into the upheld mantles of the youths and maidens who helped with the ceremony. The mistletoe must never touch the ground. This plant was then broken and pieces given to each one with a blessing and wish for good luck through the new year.

The Christian church has never permitted the use of mistletoe in decorating because of this pagan origin. But people still feel the magic in its leaves and attach power to the branches.

In France bits of mistletoe were worn around the neck to prevent sickness. In Sweden rings were made of mistletoe and worn for the same reason. In Brittany the berries are crushed and strained into oil. This oil is taken as a cure for fever and to give strength and vigor. In some German villages mistletoe was called "all heal."

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

"The beautiful tune *St. Louis* to which *O Little Town of Bethlehem* is usually sung has an interesting story. It is composed by Lewis H. Redner, who was organist and Sunday School superintendent of Dr. Brooks' church. When Brooks asked Redner to write a suitable tune for the words, the latter waited

for the inspiration that never seemed to come. Christmas Eve arrived and Redner went to sleep without having written the tune. In the middle of the night, he dreamed that he heard angels singing. He awoke with the melody sounding in his ears. Quickly he seized a piece of paper and jotted it down. . . .”

(Story of Our Hymns—E. E. Ryden)

OH COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

Few Christmas hymns have stirred the multitudes as much as “Oh Come All Ye Faithful,” translated from the Latin “Adeste Fideles.” The origin of this hymn is somewhat controversial. The words were translated into English by Tractarian Frederick Oakeley, in 1841, under the title of “Hymn for Christmas Day.” Some say it was written by Bonaventura, Bishop of Albano, born in 1221 in Tuscany. But Samuel Duffield in “English Hymns” says that it is a graduale of the Cistercian monks.

The music is usually called the Portuguese Hymn and it is variously credited to Vincent Novello and Marco Portogallo, the chapel master for the King of Portugal.

Others credit the air to John Reading, organist of Westminster College, about 1680.

Perhaps the true solution is that this hymn has been gradually changed by various musical writers. Translated from the Latin, its English lines do not rhyme, yet few persons have realized this.

It is said to have been the favorite of the late President Theodore Roosevelt.

“It is one of the hymns of the ages which apparently is to live for centuries, a hymn which has stirred religious loyalty in the hearts of countless numbers of happy folks, which have gone on before us and thousand of generations to come,” so writes Harold Gregson, Director of the Santa Barbara Christmas Chorus.

2. CHRISTMAS PLAYLET:

PLAYLET BEGINS WITH EVERYONE SINGING A CHRISTMAS CAROL. AFTER THE CAROL IS SUNG, THE PLAY STARTS.

PARTS—2 NARRATORS (BOYS OR GIRLS) AND 3 BOYS
AND 3 GIRLS TO CARRY CHRISTMAS ARTICLES.

PROPERTIES—1 doll, 1 small Christmas tree and 1 sprig each of mistletoe and holly, and 2 song books.

NARRATOR 1: Every creed and age is awaiting the signal. In all the land each man and woman, boy and girl, after his own custom, prepares the feast, the celebration of joy, the festival of gifts—Christmas.

NARRATOR 2: Christmas is known by many names in many lands. Some of its traditions are as old as the mind of man. Its beginnings are hidden in the lost shadows of ancient centuries.

NARRATOR 1: In America, Santa Claus and the giving of gifts, the eating of candy, nuts, pumpkin pies and plum pudding, remembrance of the birth of Christ (girl enters left, carrying Babe in manger), singing joyous carols (girl and boy carolers enter, holding song books—have them lead the singing of carols), Christmas trees (boy enters, carrying a small tree), mistletoe (boy enters with a large bunch of mistletoe), and red holly (girl enters carrying a large holly wreath) are all a part of this wonderful occasion.

NARRATOR 2: And we do not even know how many of these things became associated with this holiday; we have only legends to explain it partially.

BOY WITH TREE: (Steps forward.) There are many legends concerning the origin of the Christmas tree. One of them states that on Christmas Eve in Germany one time, Martin Luther was walking through a pine forest. He was inspired by the sight of thousands of stars twinkling through the branches of the trees. When he arrived home, he cut down a fir tree and covered it with small candles so that his children might know what the heavens are like. The pine Christmas tree was introduced in England when Victoria married the German Prince Albert. Victoria, always wishing to please her husband, commanded that a green tree be brought to the palace each year, to be decorated as it might have been in Albert's homeland. (Boy steps back.)

BOY WITH MISTLETOE: (Steps forward.) It was the ancient inhabitants of the British Isles who first gave significance to the mistletoe. Their priests held it sacred and called it the symbol of everlasting life because it grew green and lovely during the winter when the other plants were cold and dead. The priests called it "Heal-All" and they gradually assigned to it all kinds of magical powers. Every year, around the time when we now celebrate Christmas, they would have high platforms built around the sacred oak trees on which the mistletoe grew. Then they ascended these platforms, and with the golden sickles made especially for the solemn occasion, they cut away the mistletoe, broke it into little bits and gave it to the watching crowd, that all might partake of the good fortune that the mistletoe promised for the following year. And now I give to you this mistletoe that it might be a promise of good fortune and also of peace . . . for soon the mistletoe represented this last, too. (As he speaks, he breaks the mistletoe into small pieces and throws it out to the audience.) Opposing warriors who met near it would call a truce, and it was customary to hang it over the entrance doors so that they who entered might be assured of friendship. As further proof of this friendship, they were received with a kiss. We are all familiar with this custom, for it continues to this day. (Boy steps back to original place.)

GIRL WITH HOLLY: (Steps forward.) Centuries ago, a gay and a somber significance was given to holly. The fairies are said to have loved it, and they found

the leaves to be admirable shelter. So much so that, even when the holly was cut from the tree, the fairies lingered and allowed themselves to be carried indoors, blessing the homes with protection from evil spirits.

GIRL WITH BABE: (Steps forward at same time as girl with holly.) Later, the Christians saw in the prickly leaves and the bright red berries symbols of the crown of thorns and the sacrifices which the Christ Child, grown to manhood, made on Calvary.

GIRL WITH HOLLY: Without losing sight of this somber significance of the holly, we emphasize the gay, happy meaning by giving to one of you this holly wreath to represent the joyous season we wish to all of you. (As above is said, girl gives wreath to someone in the audience. Then the two girls step back to their original places.)

Playlet ends with entire group singing, "Deck the Halls."

3. A Christmas Story:

Each person takes a card or paper and writes down a column of numbers 1 to 23 on the left-hand margin. Opposite number 1 have each one write a "part of day"; opposite number 2, a "building"; and so on, using words below. When everyone has written words opposite the numbers, the leader reads the story, inserting the words written by various members of the group whom he may call upon.

'Twas the (1. part of a day) before Christmas, and all through the (2. building) not a creature was (3. verb), not even a (4. animal). The (5. garments) were hung by the (6. part of house) with care, in hopes that (7. prominent person) would soon be there. The children were nestled all snug in their (8. furniture) and mama in her (9. garment), and I in my (10. garment) had just settled our (11. part of the body) for a long (12. season) nap; when out on the lawn there rose such a clatter, I (13. verb) from the (14. furniture) to see what was the matter. Away to the (15. part of a house) I flew like a flash, tore open the shutters and (16. verb) up the sash. When what to my wondering (17. part of the body) should appear but a miniature (18. toy) and a (19. number) tiny (20. animals), with a little (21. adjective) driver so lively and quick, I knew in a (22. period of time) it must be (23. local person).

4. MERRY CHRISTMAS MIXER:

Give all guests a sheet of paper when they arrive, with the letters MERRY CHRISTMAS printed down the left side of the paper and a space for writing a name after each letter. Each guest tries to find persons whose last names start with the letters. A small Christmas gift prize may be awarded to the first person completing his list of names.

B. HALLOWEEN

1. THE JACK-O'-LANTERN

The following story is read by the storyteller or leader. Each time a character is mentioned, the designated child or children make the noises indicated. Whenever the storyteller says, "THE JACK-O-LANTERN BLEW OUT," *all* noises are made and everyone must change places with someone else.

Characters:	Owls: Hoot! Hoot!	Witch: Shrill Laugh!
	Black Cat: Meow! Meow!	Goblins: Boo-o-o-o!
	Ghost: Scream!	Bats: Whir-r-r!
	Clock in the Church Tower:	

STORY

On a dark and windy Halloween night, *Owls* flew from the tree top across the moon as Jim and Judy started down the road through the woods. A *Black Cat* darted out from behind a dead tree and rubbed against Jim's legs. Judy grabbed his arm and pointed to a white, fluttering *Ghost*, which was floating off among the trees. A cold wind blew from the graveyard and from the church tower. A *Witch* with scraggly hair and flying cape soared across the tree tops and up to the moon.

THE JACK-O-LANTERN BLEW OUT. (All change places.)

Jim and Judy ran down the road and turned into the lane that led to a little brown cottage where a light flickered in the window. Jim was about to knock on the door when the *Clock in the Church Tower* struck. *Bats* flew from the tower, swooping over the tombstones white in the moonlight. When Jim gathered his courage, he knocked on the door. *Three Goblins* flew out of the windows. The door slowly opened and the head and shoulders of an old woman with a hooked nose and one front tooth appeared around the edge of the door. Judy grabbed Jim and whispered, "She's a *Witch!*"

"What do you want?" asked the *Witch*. "Please," said Jim, "may we have a light for our lantern?" "Why, of course," said the *Witch* and took the jack-o-lantern. The *Black Cat* jumped onto her shoulder. "Here you are, my pretties!" As the *Witch* gave them the lighted lantern, she slammed the door.

Jim and Judy ran down the lane. *Owls* flew across in front of them, then off into the woods chasing the three *Goblins*. Over in the graveyard, a group of *Ghosts* danced slowly in a circle. Jim and Judy ran down the road through the darkest part of the woods and heard the *Clock Strike* in

the Church Tower. They looked down and found *THE JACK-O-LANTERN HAD BLOWN OUT AGAIN*. (All change places.)

On they went with only the moonlight to guide them—on and on, afraid to look to the right where the *Ghosts* danced, or to the left where the *Owls* chased the *Goblins*, or up over their heads where the *Witch* rode her broomstick, holding her *Black Cat* in front of her.

C. THANKSGIVING

1. Poem—“UNEARNED”

PART 1: While meditating o’er the past,
There comes to me the thought—
Of all the blessings that are mine,
How few I’ve really bought.
How weak my effort for them all,
How little have I paid,
How small, compared with actual worth,
The sacrifice I’ve made.

PART 2: The gift of sight that I may see
The grass and flowers and trees,
The ear to hear the songs of birds
And humming of the bees,
The sense of smell that I may know
The sweetness of the rose,
The strength to walk and mingle here
With everything that grows.

PART 3: The gift of friends of sterling worth,
Whose hearts are open wide,
Who keep their faith and trust in me,
Whatever may betide.
For helping hands in times of need
And cheers to meet the test,
And kindly words that spur me on
To do my level best.

PART 4: For pleasures here and pleasure there,
Wherever I may roam,
But most of all and sweetest, too,
The blessing of a home:
The greatest gift of all to me,
Of gifts I can’t repay,
And so, the least that I can do,
Is thank the Lord today.

—Frank C. Nelson

2. THANKSGIVING GAMES:

The group is divided into pairs (threesomes if group is large). Each pair or threesome is given a pencil and piece of paper and asked to write a Thanksgiving menu using the letters in the word "Thanksgiving" to start each word of the menu. For example, T (Turkey), H (Hot rolls), A (Apples), etc. Allow five minutes, then collect the menus and read as many as time will permit.

D. NEW YEAR'S

1. Since New Year's is the time of the year to make resolutions, time to "turn over a new leaf," the following activity will be most timely for January.

Give each player a pencil and a piece of paper. As the leader reads the following story, very slowly, each player makes a list of all the words relating to time. Player with largest list of correct words wins the prize (a new calendar).

On *Monday night*, I called up Mary. I said, "Are you coming to my *New Year's party*?" "When?," she asked. "On *Saturday night*." "What will you do *then*?" "Oh, play games and make a regular *night* of it." "I'll let you know in a *little while*, when mother comes home. She went away *yesterday*; she should be back *now*. I'm expecting her any *minute*. What *time* will the party begin?" "At *nine o'clock*, promptly. Come *early*." "Will you have refreshments?" "Yes; cheese and *date* sandwiches, *fall* nuts, wafers, such as *five-o'clock* teas, and ice cream. Have you any *timely* suggestions?" "Not unless you want to have a regular dinner, with *spring* lamb and *early June* peas and things of that sort." "No, I won't have *time* to bother with that. I'll be busy up to the last *second*. I want something I can prepare *quickly* and serve *at once*. Call me *as soon as* your mother comes home. Do come over *early* and help." "I'll be on *time*, but I'll see you some *time* before *then*. We've seen so little of each other *lately*. I'll call you this *evening*. Goodbye."

E. PATRIOTIC ACTIVITIES

1. Give each player a pencil and piece of paper and ask them to list: (play as many of these as time will permit)
 - a. 15 states and their capitals
 - b. 10 U.S. Presidents
 - c. Dates and names of 5 American historic events

Calendar

(Theme Programs)

AUGUST

- 9 – Francis Scott Key (1780, Author of our National Anthem, “The Star Spangled Banner”)
- 10 – Herbert Hoover (thirty-first President of the United States, 1929-1933)
- 17 – Davy Crockett

SEPTEMBER

- Labor Day, the first Monday in September
- National 4-H Club Week
- 11 – Patriot Day
- 13 – The Star Spangled Banner was written, 1814.
- 14 – Constitution Day. On this day in 1787 the Constitution of the United States was completed and signed.

OCTOBER

- 12 – Columbus Day
- 24 – United Nations Day
- 27 – Theodore Roosevelt (twenty-sixth President of the United States, 1901-1909)
- 31 – Halloween

NOVEMBER

- Election Day (first Tuesday after the first Monday)
- Thanksgiving Day (Fourth Thursday)
- 2 – Daniel Boone (American colonizer and explorer, 1735)
- 6 – John Philip Sousa, the March King
- 11 – Veterans Day

DECEMBER

- 17 – Wright Brothers’ first airplane flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903
- 24 – Kit Carson (famous American explorer and Indian fighter)
- 25 – Christmas Day
- 27 – Louis Pasteur (French chemist – pasteurization, 1882)
- 28 – Woodrow Wilson (twenty-eighth President of the United States, 1913-1921)
- 31 – New Year’s Eve

JANUARY

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. day (third Monday in January)
- 1 – New Year’s Day
- 1 – Paul Revere (American Patriot)
- 1 – Betsy Ross (Maker of first American Flag)
- 17 – Benjamin Franklin
- 19 – Robert E. Lee

FEBRUARY

- 2 – Groundhog Day
- 12 – Abraham Lincoln, (sixteenth President of the United States, 1861-1865)
- 14 – St. Valentine’s Day
- 22 – George Washington (first President of the United States, 1789-1797)
- 27 – Henry Longfellow (American poet, educator, linguist)
- 29 – Leap Year Day

MARCH

- Mardi Gras (Tuesday before Ash Wednesday—may fall in February some years)
- 3 – Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922, Inventor of the telephone)
- 17 – St. Patrick's Day
- 20 – International Earth Day
- 23 – Patrick Henry delivered famous speech ("Give me liberty or give me death.")

APRIL

- Easter
- 1 – April Fool's Day
- 13 – Thomas Jefferson (third President of the United States, 1801-1809, author of the Declaration of Independence and Father of American Democracy)
- 18 – Paul Revere's ride, 1775
- 19 – Patriots' Day
- 22 – Arbor Day
- 26 – John Audubon (famous for studying and sketching American birds)

MAY

- Mother's Day (Second Sunday)
- Armed Forces Day (Third Saturday)
- 1 – May Day
- 12 – Florence Nightingale (1820-1910, an English war nurse, the founder of modern nursing)
- 29 – Patrick Henry (Birthday)
- 30 – Memorial Day

JUNE

- Father's Day (Third Sunday in June)
- 3 – Jefferson Davis (1808-1889, President of Confederacy)
- 14 – Flag Day (anniversary date when the Continental Congress formally adopted the Stars and Stripes as the flag of the U.S.A.)

JULY

- 4 – Independence Day
- 20 – Apollo 11 lands on the moon, 1969. Neil Armstrong is the first person to walk on the moon.

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