

# Positive Youth Development OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVE COMPETENCY AND MASTERY Meeting Plan

## Background



Youth need opportunities to achieve physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Starting out small, they advance to more complex things as they grow and develop. Through practice, they develop and acquire skills for living. When young people are recognized for their success, they experience a sense of progress and accomplishment. Good "habits of mind" result as they reflect on what they have been able to achieve!

### **Assessment: Does program create opportunities to achieve competency and mastery?**

- Do activities and experiences encourage curiosity, questioning, and exploration? If not, how can we foster those?
- Are activities based on a "hands on" approach to experiential learning? If not, what changes do we need to make?
- Are cooperative and interactive learning activities used? If not, how can we incorporate them?
- Is the level of instruction and curriculum appropriate to the abilities of group members? If not, what modifications do we need to make?
- Are youth provided opportunities to practice and demonstrate skills and knowledge? If not, how can we provide those?
- Is the development of life skills such as communicating with others, practicing responsibility, making decisions, or developing leadership emphasized? If not, what can we do to emphasize those?

**Anything shared here we need to discuss or work on together?  
(Write it down.)**

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## Roll Call Suggestions



Describe something you recently studied or explored.  
What did you do to learn about it?

Tell us about something you know how to do. How did you  
learn how to do it?

Tell us about a game you enjoy playing with friends,  
classmates, or family members.

Share one way you prefer to learn about something new.

Share one time you felt prepared to do something because  
you had the chance to practice first.

Tell us about a decision you had to make recently.

## Activities to Emphasize Opportunities to Achieve Competency and Mastery

*Refer to the following Activities:*

Every Home  
Design a Greeting Card  
Project Talk  
What Comes Next?  
Tower Building

# Activity Guide for OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVE COMPETENCY AND MASTERY

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## Every Home

**Materials needed for each participant:**  
Worksheet, and pencil or pen



This activity helps group members develop curiosity, questioning, and exploration. They think about a "home" of their choice and brainstorm a list of questions they could ask to find out about both the home itself and the people who live there. Encourage group members to choose a home they can actually research to learn about it and its occupants—**stress that members should choose the home of someone they know very well!**

- Give each 4-H member the "Every Home" worksheet, and either a pencil or a pen.
- Tell them to think about a home they want to learn more about—they may want to learn about a home they like from its outside appearance or about a specific person or family living in it. \*
- Once they have identified a home, ask them to think about things they want to know about the home itself such as how many rooms are inside, how old the home is, or about the way it is furnished. Have them write down 5-10 questions they want answered about the home.
- Then have them think about who lives there and what they want to know about that person or that family—have them write down 5-10 questions they want answered about the occupants of the home.
- Next, have them determine how they want to gather the answers to their questions—by letter, telephone, e-mail, or personal visit.
- Place them in pairs to work together to complete the information gathering process.

\* = A "home" can be an apartment, a trailer, a townhouse, a condominium, a duplex, or even an actual house—a place where people live.

**After information is gathered and worksheets are completed, here are two suggestions:**

- Have each 4-H member share about the home they studied by creating a visual representation of it—a drawing, a poster, a collection of words or symbols, a mural, a model, a group of photographs, or even a play.
- Combine the visual creations into a "community" of favorite homes!

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## "Every Home" Processing Questions

### *Sharing*

- What things did you find out about the home you studied?
- Was it hard to determine the questions you wanted answered? Why or why not?
- Was it difficult to identify a home you wanted to study? Why or why not?

### *Processing*

- What was one detail you remembered about the home you studied that surprised you?
- What, if anything, did you notice about the sharing that took place in the group?
- What did you notice today that the homes studied by group members had in common?

### *Generalizing*

- Why is it important for us to learn about where and how others live?
- Do you think asking questions is a good way to learn about something? Why or why not?
- How does thinking about a home and its occupants help us appreciate them?

### *Applying*

- Are there topics you are really curious about? If so, what are they?
- What can you do to explore or learn about other topics that interest you?
- How can you become more comfortable and successful at asking questions of others to learn about them?

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## Design a Greeting Card

### Materials needed for each person:

Sample greeting cards, paper, scissors, glue, colored pencils, markers, and crayons



This activity allows group members to exercise creativity in designing and making a greeting card for someone important to them, and presenting the card to that special person. The activity requires their participation and involvement to complete the assigned task.

- Ask each group member to identify someone he or she wants to give a greeting card to.
- Tell them to think of what they want the card to look like and what they want to say in it. Show a few greeting cards as examples.
- Have each group member develop a design for his/her card.
- From a collection of materials provided (colored and white paper of varying stock, scissors, glue, colored pencils, markers, and crayons), ask each group member to select supplies to make his/her card.
- Allow time for all group members to make their greeting cards.
- Ask each group member to decide when, where, and how to present the hand-made greeting card to the recipient—in person privately, with others present, or by mail.
- Have members present their greeting cards to their recipients.

**After all of the greeting cards are presented, here are two suggestions:**

- Have each group member tell about the experience of designing, making, and presenting a greeting card.
- Have some of the recipients of the hand-made greeting cards share with the group what they thought and how they felt when the greeting card was presented to them.

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## "Design a Greeting Card" Processing Questions

### *Sharing*

- Was it easy or hard to identify who was going to receive your greeting card? Why?
- Was it easy or hard to design the greeting card? Why was it easy or hard?
- What things did you think about when you developed the design for the greeting card? While you were making the greeting card?

### *Processing*

- How did you feel when you presented your greeting card?
- Were you comfortable presenting your greeting card? Why or why not?
- Did you discover anything new about the person for whom the card was made? If so, what were new discoveries for you?

### *Generalizing*

- What do you think about hand-made items? What do you think others think about hand-made items?
- Do you think you learn more when you actually get to "do" something? Why or why not?
- When might it be beneficial to make something for someone? When might it be beneficial to purchase something for someone rather than make it yourself?

### *Applying*

- What are other things you want to make?
- What are other projects you need to design in the near future? Did you learn anything through the process of making your greeting card that may help you on another project? If so, what did you learn that may help?
- When is it important for you to "present" things to other people? Does it matter if you are dealing with a friend, a family member, or someone you don't know very well? Why or why not?

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## Project Talk

**Materials needed for each group member:**  
Item to be shared



This activity allows members of a group to learn about each other while practicing and demonstrating skills and knowledge. Through simple project talks, they identify things important to them, organize their thoughts and actions into a public presentation, and share information and techniques with other group members. The sharing process creates a learning community within the group!

- Tell all group members they are to “show and tell” something about their favorite 4-H project at their local 4-H club or at school—their subjects may be something they made in the project, a tool they used, or an activity they participated in.
- Group members must tell why they picked the project, what they learned, what they liked best about it, and how to make or use the item they brought. For example, group members could tell about a birdhouse made in woodworking or a picture taken in photography.

**If group members have problems deciding what to share or are reluctant to give their project talks, here are three suggestions:**

- Have group members taking the same project work together in pairs to plan and present their talk.
- Encourage group members to use props, music, or other “things” during their talk to transfer the focus from them.
- Incorporate special awards for project talks that are most creative, most inspiring, most complicated, most entertaining, or funniest!

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## "Project Talk" Processing Questions

### *Sharing*

- What skills and techniques were shared in our group?
- How did it feel to complete the plan for your project talk and then share it with others?
- Did anybody's project talk surprise you?

### *Processing*

- What was the hardest part of planning your project talk?
- What was the easiest part of planning your project talk?
- Why do we sometimes feel awkward demonstrating skills and techniques in project talks?

### *Generalizing*

- In general, do you think people are good at demonstrating skills and techniques? If not, why not?
- What types of people are good at demonstrating skills and techniques?
- Do you think it is important to practice demonstrating skills and techniques? Why or why not?

### *Applying*

- If you could pick a place to start improving your demonstrating skills and techniques—at home, with friends, at school, or in a 4-H meeting—which place would you start? Why start there?
- Can you think of people who might be able to help you improve your demonstrating skills and techniques?
- What can be consequences or things that can happen when a person has poor demonstrating skills and techniques?

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## What Comes Next?

**Materials needed for each group member:**  
Worksheet and item to be demonstrated



This activity helps group members organize their thoughts into sequential order and tailor them for different groups. By demonstrating simple things, they understand the importance of clarity, flow, speed, and understanding when communicating with others. They also connect the importance of carefully chosen words for different ages and characteristics of effective communication.

- Tell all group members they are to going to demonstrate the steps to complete a process such as brushing their teeth, tying their shoe, or making a ham and cheese sandwich.
- To help them realize the importance of properly naming and sequencing all of the steps in the process, first introduce the example: "How I Polish My Shoes".
- Distribute the 'What Comes Next?' worksheet to each group member.
- Read the following six-sentence paragraph aloud:

### *How I Polish My Shoes*

"Buff the extra polish off the shoes. Clean the shoes to be polished. Find the equipment needed to polish your shoes. Put the laces back into the shoes, and store the shoe polish equipment. Remove the shoelaces. Apply the polish to the shoes."

- Ask each group member to rewrite the sentences in the paragraph in the correct order on the worksheet. (The correct order is: Find the equipment needed to polish your shoes. Remove the shoelaces. Clean the shoes to be polished. Apply the polish to the shoes. Buff the extra polish off the shoes. Put the laces back into the shoes, and store the shoe polish equipment.)
- Ask for a volunteer to read the ordered paragraph while someone demonstrates the steps of polishing shoes as the volunteer reads them.
- Ask whether anyone else had the steps in a different order—have another volunteer read a differently ordered paragraph while someone demonstrates the new steps.

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## "What Comes Next?" Processing Questions

### *Sharing*

- What skills and techniques were shared in our group?
- How did it feel to order the steps in a process correctly?
- Did people have difficulty explaining steps of a process to others? What difficulties did you observe?

### *Processing*

- What was the hardest part of listing the steps in your process?
- What was the easiest part of listing your steps?
- Why do we sometimes forget to list steps in a process?
- When communicating things to others, why do we sometimes leave things out or say them in the wrong order?

### *Generalizing*

- In general, do you think people are good at ordering steps in a process? If not, why not?
- In general, do you think people are good at communicating steps in a process to others? If not, why not?
- What types of people are good at ordering steps in a process correctly? What types of people are good at communicating to others steps in a process?

### *Applying*

- If you could pick a place to start improving your communication skills—family, friends, school, or 4-H—which place would you start? Why start there?
- Can you think of people who might be able to help you improve your ability to explain steps in a process more clearly to others?
- How do you think you would change the words and the way you explain a process to a young child? How about a teenager? An adult? Someone from a different culture or country from yours?

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## Tower Building



### Materials needed for each small group:

Manila envelope of equal supplies including one letter sized piece of cardboard stock, various sizes and weights of paper, three plastic straws, three pipe cleaners, and scotch tape of equal amounts (also have scissors and masking tape on hand)

This activity helps small groups understand how decisions are made. They work together using resources provided to design and construct a freestanding tower within a specified amount of time. Topics important to cover in the processing discussion include personal leadership styles, individual and group goals, individual and group decision making processes, utilization of available resources, taking initiative, participation levels, and working together as a team.

**NOTE:** This activity is also used to demonstrate another element of PYD. To add variety to its delivery, this time give each member a specific role to play such as a leader, builders with permission to touch only a certain type of building material, a lazy member, a member who tries to distract another group, etc.

- Divide the large group into random teams of three to five members making sure teams are of equal size and both young team members and adults are included in each the team.
- Give each team a manila envelope of supplies.
- Tell teams they have thirty minutes to design and build a freestanding tower from the supplies provided.
- Stress that the goal of the activity is to work together as a team to build the tallest tower possible.
- Announce, "It is time to begin" to start the activity and "Time" at the end of the thirty minute construction period.

**To raise the level of enthusiasm and competitiveness during this activity, here are four suggestions:**

- Have in your possession a pair of scissors and a roll of masking tape—tell the groups you are the keeper of these items and if they need to cut paper or secure additional stronger tape, they must come to you to dispense it to them.
- Periodically tell the group how much time they have left in the thirty minute time allotment—tell them more often as the end of the allotment nears.
- Announce after five of the thirty minutes have elapsed that you have a prize for the group that builds the tallest tower—select small and appropriate recognition items to give to group members at the conclusion of the activity.
- If the group is comprised of older members, place an additional restriction on them of "No talking."

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## "Tower Building" Processing Questions

### *Sharing*

- How do you feel about the tower you have just built?
- What were some of the effective decisions your team made?
- What roles did team members play in building the tower? If you had young team members or adults on your team, what roles did they play?

### *Processing*

- What did you do to build your tower together as a team that you would not have been able to do alone?
- What did you learn about how you participate on a team by working together on this activity?
- What advice would you give to a team charged with building a tower under similar conditions and limitations?

### *Generalizing*

- Why is it important to plan or discuss a team project with other team members before attempting to complete it?
- What other times have you had to use available resources to complete a project?
- What kinds of decisions do adults in this group allow you to make on your own? What kinds of decisions do you need to make with adults in this group?

### *Applying*

- How can you improve your skills in building things or putting things together?
- Think about the next three months for you. What are examples of projects or assignments that you need to complete? What did you learn through the tower building activity that will help you in those projects or assignments?
- What decisions do you want to make on your own (without adult help or influence) over the next year? If you need adult help, whom will you turn to?