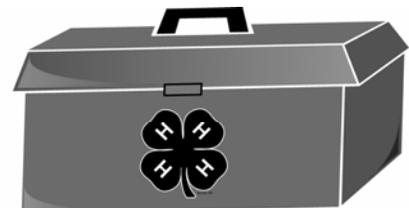


9

"Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public" Lesson Plan





Learning Objectives

1. To help youth identify what makes them scared of speaking in public.
2. To help youth learn to plan for and around stage nerves.
3. To help youth build their communications skills through simple speaking opportunities.



Supplies & Resources Needed

- Lesson plan with instructional objectives
- Notes pages of PowerPoint presentation with talking points
- LCD projector and laptop with PowerPoint presentation loaded
- Copies of PowerPoint slides printed as a three-slides/page handout for each participant
- Copies of the lesson plan resource for each participant, "Does Speaking in Public Scare You?"
- Copies of 4-H 689c-W, Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks
- Sample "Fun Box" and "Grab Bag" Demonstrations
- Copies of the "Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public" quiz
- Pencils or pens for volunteers to take notes and complete the quiz
- Copies of "Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public" fact sheet



References

4-H Communication Activities. (4-H 689-W, 2007). 4-H Youth Development, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Extension Service

Communication Toolkit: Fun Skill-Building Activities to Do with Kids. (4-H1560, n.d.) 4-H Youth Development, Children, Youth and Family Programs, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Extension

Overcome the Fear of Speaking to Groups. (4-H 689b-W, 2007). 4-H Youth Development, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Extension Service

Projected Length

30 minutes, depending upon length of time allowed for discussion questions.

Instructor Notes

- If you will be using the PowerPoint presentation to share this lesson with the volunteers, set up the laptop and LCD projector prior to the start of the program, and test the equipment to be sure it is working properly.
- Welcome the group and thank them for their participation.
- Begin "Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public" PowerPoint presentation.
- Utilize the talking points found on the notes pages of the PowerPoint presentation to guide you during the presentation.
- Review the purpose and objectives for this lesson plan.
- Provide a brief introduction of the lesson, including its importance to the 4-H Youth Development Program.
- Proceed with the lecture portion of the lesson.



- Distribute "Does Speaking in Public Scare You?" handout to each participant.
- Have participants complete the handout and lead discussion.
- Distribute "Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public" fact sheet to each participant.
- Distribute the lesson plan quiz to each participant; following its completion, review the answers.
- Conclude the lesson with a time for questions from the participants.

Methods/Content



Information found on Slides #1-2.

Introduction



Part of the belonging concept of the Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development is that youth know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. This "fellowship" has always been an important part of a 4-H experience. 4-H gives youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. Research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth.

Working in clubs through 4-H strengthens and reinforces social skills that will allow youth to co-exist and thrive with others in society. Success in life rarely comes to an individual without some type of personal interaction with others. 4-H members learn early on the value of cooperation in their project work and activities.

4-H can greatly help the members to interact with others and to overcome a common fear: the fear of speaking in public. The mere thought of speaking before an audience can be paralyzing to youth and adults alike. Delivering a demonstration or talk from beginning to end in front of a group can be equally daunting and scary. Taking small steps of getting youth up front in a safe environment such as 4-H will begin to help youth overcome the fear of speaking in public.

In this session, we'll focus on these objectives.

1. To help youth identify what makes them scared of speaking in public.
2. To help youth learn to plan for and around stage nerves.
3. To help youth build their communications skills through simple speaking opportunities.

Objective 1

To help youth identify what makes them scared of speaking in public.



Information found on Slide #3.

Group Activity: Does Speaking in Public Scare You?



Information found on Slides #4-6.





To help us overcome our fears, it's a good idea to first identify what it is that is making us afraid.

Notes for Instructor

Activity procedures

1. Introduce the topic by telling a personal story about a public speaking experience (funny or serious). The story should contain something you learned about yourself as a result.
2. Ask a few of the older youth to share a few fears they may have experienced and how they got through it.
3. Ask the kids if they also have some fear of speaking in front of groups. Reassure them that fears before or during a public presentation are normal. Explain that some fears and symptoms of nervousness will go away with practice. However, they need to learn what they might be afraid of and how they can work around those fears and still be able to share their ideas.
4. Distribute pencils or pens and the handout, "Does Speaking in Public Scare You?", to each person. Give them 5 to 7 minutes to write down some of the fears they may have and to check off some of the symptoms this stress causes.
5. Bring the group back together to discuss their answers.

Talking It Over

1. Allow at least 10 minutes for discussion, depending on the size of the group. Share the following information with the group.

Here are some fears that people have noted about public speaking:

- Boring the audience to sleep
- Burping uncontrollably
- Teeth chattering
- People laughing at them
- Tripping on the way up to the stage
- Others?

2. Ask the group the following discussion questions:
 - a. What other fears can you think of?
(Encourage the group to brainstorm as many as they can.)
 - b. Are you surprised at all the things people fear about public speaking?
(Explain that when they can identify a fear very specifically, they can work on overcoming it.)
 - c. What might you do to prevent some of these fears from coming true?
(For example, to help keep from boring an audience to sleep, you could read your speech to a friend to see how it sounds.)
 - d. What is at least one solution or problem-solving technique for each fear we have listed?
(Encourage them to be creative and not to worry about whether the solution will work for every public speaking situation.)
 - e. What nervous symptoms have you had before or while speaking in public?
(You could open with something like, "I always seem to get...sweaty hands...cold feet...an upset stomach...when I know I have to get up and talk in front of others.") After they've compiled a list of



symptoms, encourage them to come up with some ways they can reduce the symptoms (for example, to remedy or minimize an upset stomach, eat only a light meal before speaking.)

3. Give the group a final opportunity to talk about experiences they've had with speaking or reading aloud and how they felt.
4. Remind your group that being scared or nervous is not a good reason to avoid public speaking. Being able to express their ideas and share information is very important. Even though public speaking may be hard now, the more they do it the easier it will become.

Optional: Ask a local radio, television, or sports celebrity to speak to your group about his or her experiences with performance nerves.

Objective 2

To help kids learn to plan for and around stage nerves.



Information found on Slides #7-19.



Now that we have identified our fears of speaking in public, let's take a look at some ways that we can overcome our stage nerves.

Instructor Note: distribute "Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public" fact sheet.



To plan for and around stage fears, you must be aware of your anxieties and plan ahead to overcome them.

Proper preparation and rehearsal can help to reduce fear by about 75%.

Proper breathing techniques can further reduce this fear by 15%.

Your mental state accounts for the remaining 10%.



There are 10 steps you can take to help you reduce your speaking fears.

1. Know the Room

Arrive early and walk around the room.

Stand up front by lectern or podium.

Test out the microphone if using one.

Walk around where the audience will be seated.

Walk from where you will be seated to the place where you will be speaking.





Become familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early and walk around the room including the speaking area. Stand at the lectern/podium. Speak into the microphone. Walk around where the audience will be seated. Walk from where you will be seated to the place where you will be speaking.

2. Know the Audience

Try to greet some of the audience and chat with them.
Friends are easier to talk to than a group of strangers.



If possible, greet some of the audience as they arrive and chat with them. It is easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.

3. Know Your Material

Speak about things you know or that interest you.
Study your material until you know it.
Practice your speech.



Only speak about things you know well or that interest you, so you feel confident you have something to offer the audience. If you are not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech or presentation and revise it until you can present it with ease.

4. Learn How to Relax

Sit comfortably with your back straight.
Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for 4 to 5 seconds, and then slowly exhale.
To relax your facial muscles, open your mouth wide and eyes wide, and then close them tightly. Pause and open them again.



You can ease tension by doing exercises. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for 4 to 5 seconds, and then slowly exhale. To relax your facial muscles, open your mouth and eyes wide, and then close them tightly. Pause, and open them again.

5. Visualize Yourself Speaking

Imagine yourself walking confidently to the lectern.
Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured.
When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.



Imagine yourself walking confidently to the lectern as the audience applauds. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.



6. Realize People Want You to Succeed

Audiences want speakers to be interesting, informative, and entertaining. They want you to succeed, not to fail.



All audiences want speakers to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They want you to succeed, not to fail. If you get nervous speaking in front of strangers, try to chat with a few members of the audience before you give your speech. This helps establish contact and makes you feel as though you're on friendly ground.

7. Don't Apologize for Being Nervous

Most nervousness does not show. If you don't say anything, nobody may notice.



Most of the time your nervousness does not show at all. If you don't say anything about it, nobody will notice. If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you'll only be calling attention to it. Had you remained silent, your listeners may not have noticed at all.

8. Concentrate on Your Message

Your nervous feelings will ease as you focus your attention away from your fears. Concentrate on your message and your audience, not yourself.



Your nervous feelings will dissipate if you focus your attention away from your anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience, not yourself.

9. Turn Nervousness into Positive Energy

The same nervous energy that causes stage fright can be an asset to you. Transform this energy into vitality and enthusiasm in delivering your speech.



The same nervous energy that causes stage fright can be an asset to you. Harness it, and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm. Learn a quick stress-reducing routine for relaxing your neck, shoulder and facial muscles just before giving your talk.

10. Gain Experience

Experience builds confidence and reduces anxieties. Volunteer to speak when possible to build your confidence.



Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. Most beginning speakers find their anxieties decrease after each speech they give.





If the fear of public speaking causes you to prepare more, then the fear of speaking serves as its own best antidote. Remember, he who fails to prepare is preparing for failure!

Professional speakers say that preparation and practice are the two most critical things to do before delivering a speech. When you feel prepared and have practiced delivering the speech, the butterflies that you feel in your stomach will fly into formation very quickly. After that initial release of the voice at the podium, the butterflies begin to settle and the nerves begin to calm.

Objective 3

To help youth build their communications skills through simple speaking opportunities.



Information found on Slides #20-29.



To help give youth opportunities to practice their speaking in public, you can begin in a 4-H Club setting, which can be referred to as a learning laboratory. You, as the leader, should set the stage for a safe learning environment. A safe learning environment in this case means that youth can make mistakes and try new things without being ridiculed or made to feel less than a whole person. You, as the volunteer leader or advisor of the club, set the tone for a fun, positive, and safe learning environment through your actions and handling of mistakes.

There are a number of methods by which we can help youth build their communications skills by providing them with simple speaking opportunities. In this objective, we'll look at some of these options.

Ways you can help youth to build their public speaking skills and gain speaking experience are:

1. When doing roll call in your meetings, have youth stand to give their audible response to a question. Sample questions might include:
 - What is your favorite 4-H Project?
 - What is your favorite dessert?
 - What do you like best about 4-H?
2. Have the officers and members stand when addressing the group. This accomplishes three things:
 - It gives the speaker presence to the group.
 - The club members or audience can hear and focus on the speaker.
 - It gives the speaker practice with standing up and facing the group in a non-threatening way.
3. Arrange for youth to speak to the club or group. They might share a:
 - One-minute demonstration or illustrated talk
 - Share a completed 4-H project from last year in a show-n-tell format
 - Full-blown demonstration
 - Short speech for contest
 - Skit or share-the-fun act or talent





What other ideas came to your mind as you heard these options?

(Allow time for responses.)

Demonstrations and illustrated talks can help members:

- Gain self-confidence,
- Learn to speak before a group,
- Increase knowledge about a project,
- Develop leadership skills,
- Learn to organize materials in a logical sequence, and
- Develop skill in putting words and actions together.



Suggestions for using demonstrations in your club can be found in publication 4-H 689c-W, Demonstrations and Illustrated Talks.

Instructor note: distribute a copy of 4-H 689c-W publication to each participant.

“Fun Box” Demonstrations

Instructor note: show a “Fun Box” of items that you have assembled from your home or office.



As we have discussed earlier, getting up in front of a group can be a scary experience for a younger member. Talks or demonstrations for beginning members should be short, even as short as 30 seconds at first, and about something familiar to the member. The “fun box” is a simple way to introduce demonstrations to your club.

Here are simple directions to create a “fun box.”

Create a “fun box” containing a variety of different, familiar, every-day items (suggested items: shoe and shoelace; band-aid and first-aid ointment; hammer, nail, and board; screwdriver and screw; can and can opener; needle and spool of thread; balloon; toothbrush and paste; instant camera and film; tape measure; pencil and pencil sharpener, items from the kitchen, etc. The list is endless.)

Select members to look through the “fun box” and pick some item or items to talk about for 30 seconds to one minute.

“Grab Bag” Demonstrations



“Grab Bag” Demonstrations would be another option to consider. At the beginning of the meeting, a member selects a bag that has a complete kit of items needed to do a short demonstration. During the first part of the meeting, the member prepares what he or she will say about the items. The member then talks about these items or demonstrates how to use or complete the process for maybe 1-3 minutes.



An example of these grab bag kits would include a kitchen measuring kit with measuring spoons or measuring cups along with two bowls, a leveling knife and a supply of sugar, flour, baking soda, or another common measuring material to demonstrate to the club on how to measure.

Contests

At the county, area, and/or state levels, 4-H members can enter contests in:

Demonstrations or Illustrated Talk

- Presentation based on a certain subject matter area
- Supported by visual aids

Public Speaking

- Speech based on an annual theme

Action Demos

- An exhibit option in some projects
- Presentation given to the general public multiple times regarding some aspect of the 4-H project



More information about each of these options is available upon request from the Extension office.

Do you see other ways you can provide the opportunities to build their communications skills within your 4-H program?

Demonstration Practice



Information found on Slide #30.

To provide practice for the volunteers, have a "Fun Box" prepared and a few "Grab Bags" and select a few people from the audience to carry out a "Fun Box" Demonstration and a "Grab Bag" Demonstration.

Conclusion and Quiz



Information found on Slides #31-32.



We've looked at common fears that youth and adults have when faced with the task of speaking in public, steps to take to reduce these fears, and methods we can use to provide public speaking opportunities through the 4-H experience.

What questions do you have about "Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public?"



Briefly review the lesson. Then, distribute the “Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public” quiz questions. Allow volunteers time to answer the questions. Provide the correct answers from the key provided in this packet. You may choose to collect the quizzes or allow the volunteers to keep them as a review of the lesson.

Thank the volunteers for their participation.

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, David C. Petritz, Director, that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to the programs and facilities without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, or disability. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution.

This material may be available in alternative formats.



“Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public” Quiz

1. What one thing do more people fear than any other?
 - a. Fear of death
 - b. Fear of speaking in public
 - c. Fear of snakes
 - d. Fear of heights

2. What is one reason people fear speaking in public?
 - a. They think they will bore the audience.
 - b. They think people will laugh at them.
 - c. They worry about tripping on the way up to the stage.
 - d. All of the above are fears of speaking in public.

3. Which of the following is a not a recommended step to reduce speech anxiety?
 - a. Learn to relax
 - b. Know the material
 - c. Turn nervousness into positive energy
 - d. Concentrate on yourself, not your message

4. The two most important things that professional speakers say are critical for a successful presentation are preparation and practice.

TRUE or FALSE

5. Name two skills that members can achieve or enhance by giving demonstrations at a club meeting.



- KEY -

“Conquering Fears of Speaking in Public” Quiz

1. What one thing do more people fear than any other?
 - a. Fear of death
 - b. Fear of speaking in public
 - c. Fear of snakes
 - d. Fear of heights

b is the correct answer. Speaking in public is the number 1 fear!

2. What is one reason people fear speaking in public?
 - a. They think they will bore the audience.
 - b. They think people will laugh at them.
 - c. They worry about tripping on the way up to the stage.
 - d. All of the above are fears of speaking in public.

d is the correct answer. All of these are reasons that people fear speaking in public.

3. Which of the following is not a recommended step to reduce speech anxiety?
 - a. Learn to relax
 - b. Know the material
 - c. Turn nervousness into positive energy
 - d. Concentrate on yourself, not your message

d is the correct answer. It is recommended that you concentrate on your message, not yourself, to reduce speech anxiety.

4. The two most important things that professional speakers say are critical for a successful presentation are preparation and practice.
TRUE or FALSE

The correct answer is TRUE. Preparation and practice are critical for a successful presentation.

5. Name two skills that members can achieve or enhance by giving demonstrations at a club meeting.

Any two of the following skills would be acceptable answers.

- ***Gain self-confidence, learn to speak before a group, increase knowledge about a project, develop leadership skills, learn to organize materials in a logical sequence, and develop skill in putting words and actions together.***

