



## Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Program

# Building Leaders for Tomorrow

Instilling and developing leadership capabilities in youth and adults.

**AGE LEVEL** - Beginning

**CONCEPT OR SKILL** – Learning to learn – planning and organizing

**LIFE SKILL(S) – Head** – Planning/Organizing, Goal Setting, Problem Solving

**BEHAVIORAL INDICATOR** – Short attention span; often don't like to keep records.

## ACTIVITY 21: “Can of Worms”

### THINGS TO KNOW:

Youth are creative and have great ideas for projects. However, because effective planning and organization are not inherent, it is necessary to expose children to experiences that develop skills in goal setting, problem solving, planning and organizing. As a volunteer or teen leader your role is to teach and guide. This means you provide youth with the fundamental knowledge and the opportunities that develop these life skills.

4-H members should be actively involved in all project and program planning. Young people have a greater commitment to the program/project if they have been contributing members of the planning process. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to read the Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Development Series #856 “Planning” in preparation for this activity. The following is a brief excerpt from the material.



Planning is a process that involves advanced thought, preparation, and commitment to a project or idea. The process includes deciding what is to be done, how it is to be done, identifying resources needed, identifying who is responsible and providing a schedule of completion times. 4-H members and committees should always place a plan in writing. The act of writing it down makes a formalized commitment to that plan.

Planning provides a systematic process for achieving one's goal from beginning to end. In planning, an individual works backwards from their goal by deciding what needs to be done to reach that goal by a designated time in the future.

Planning provides a way to track ones progress, prepare for possible setbacks or alternatives, and also provides a means for evaluating and redirecting time, talents, and resources in an efficient manner.

People who resist planning because they believe it takes time, involves too much thought and paperwork, is too restrictive to their creativity or it makes them too accountable, waste more time and energy simply because of their lack of planning. In the end planning saves time, energy and resources.

It is the role of the volunteer to help younger youth learn to plan out their approaches to accomplishing their personal project goals or club/committee/team goals set by the member(s). Providing opportunities to experience and practice these skills early in the child's development establishes the foundation necessary for personal and professional success. This activity is a fun way to select a club project. It is a fun way to open discussion and make decisions as a group. The activity is also an excellent way to evaluate or receive feedback at the conclusion of a project/activity /committee assignment. Can of Worms allows the child to be active and is helpful for sparking discussion and conversation among more quiet groups or members.



**Materials Needed:** Plain paper or clean tin cans with labels removed, markers or crayons, clear tape or glue sticks, scissors, magazines, something that can be used as a “worm” – either small pieces of rope, string, yarn or even candy gummy worms.

**Do:**

**TO START THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS** - If “Can of Worms” is being used to help a group make initial planning decisions, have them brainstorm their choices and make a label for each choice. The label can include words, a drawing or both. If using tin cans, tape the label on the can. Give all participants a “worm” and ask them to simultaneously drop their worms in the can/on the card that they think is the best project for the club/group. The can/card with the most or least worms is open for discussion (pro’s and con’s.) Someone may want to record the discussion for future reference.

**TO EVALUATE A PROJECT/ACTIVITY/ASSIGNMENT** - Begin by creating a dozen tin cans or cards with words, pictures or expressive faces which cover the wide range of responses that are typically experienced by the 4-H member as a result of planning and carrying out a project or program. *Youth can have a greater investment in this activity if they brainstorm with you and help form the list. Let each child creating a can/card.*

Place the cans or cards on the floor. Cards should be face up. There should be a wide range of images or words to cover the wide range of responses that are typically expressed when one is learning to learn, planning and organizing, goal setting, and problem solving. Give all participants a “worm” and ask them to simultaneously drop their worms on the card that best represents their experience during a previous project/activity. The leader of the session can open the discussion by commenting on the can/card that has the most or least number of worms.

**Reflect:** *The volunteer can model good debriefing skills to young children who may not be familiar with the reflective process. Be very careful that you do not say too much or give them the answer or conclusion you want them to come to on their own. The primary purpose for reflection and application is for the young person to learn to think, process, evaluate and apply the experience to daily living and the decisions made based on other experiences or choices in life. Reflect and Apply questions will be guided by the purpose for the activity-“to make a decision” or “evaluate.”*

- 1) Did the way other people voted affect how you voted? Why or why not?
- 2) What factors influenced where you placed your “worm?”
- 3) Did people keep an open-mind during discussion?
- 4) Did you observe that some people found making a decision easier than others? Why do you think this is so?
- 5) Did you find it easy or challenging to think through your thoughts and/or decisions?
- 6) What steps were taken to make a decision?

**Apply:**

- 1) Did hearing the thoughts of others change your thoughts/decision?
- 2) During discussion did you learn anything that influenced your choice or would change the way you approached a decision in the future?
- 3) Is it easier to make a decision as an individual or collectively as a group?
- 4) Was it easy to keep an open-mind if you think you have the answer? Why or why not?
- 5) What personal steps or practices can one take to make decisions or set and achieve one’s goals?
- 6) How can we approach challenges or set-backs with a positive strength of mind?

