

4-H guiding principles build tolerance in youth

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Use the Michigan 4-H Guiding Principles for Positive Youth Development to teach youth to appreciate differences between people.

Michigan 4-H has seven guiding principles to encourage development in youth. These principles help us plan better and safer programs for Michigan's youth. The principles help volunteer leaders and parents understand how Michigan 4-H educational programs are developed. Practice activities that emphasize guiding principle six: *Youth recognize, understand and appreciate multiculturalism.*

Several terms pertaining to this guiding principle might be explored. The clubs' goal is to develop a shared value in which everyone is respected and appreciated for who they are and for what they can become.

Stereotyping is one term to discuss. Members will learn about making fair judgments by discovering how inaccurate stereotypical labels can be. Youth are encouraged to be cautious when making hasty judgments because of stereotypes.

The following exercise is adapted from "The Teaching of Values" (Los Angeles Unified School District), 1978:

- Leaders should write "stereotype" on large piece of paper. Ask the members to define the word. Discuss definitions until everyone is clear about what it means.
- What are some common labels assigned to people? Generate a list include labels like: dumb farmer, nerd, silly blonde, crooked politician, dumb jock.
- Ask youth to share experiences from movies, school or current news about stereotypes. Discuss how stereotypes can be harmful and unjust. Emphasize how generalizations confuse our ability to judge people fairly on their own merits.

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- Display the word “prejudice” and explain that it comes from “pre-judging” that is judging others before they have the chance to prove themselves.
- Finally discuss the possible consequences of using stereotypes to judge others?

Other terms that the club might discuss include tolerance, diversity, discrimination and justice. “101 Tools for Tolerance” by [National Campaign for Tolerance](#) is an excellent resource.

Finally, return the members’ attention to guiding principle six, discuss how the club can respect differences among individuals of the group. Deliberate the ‘strength in diversity’ concept. Encourage members and leaders to appreciate the diverse cultures within their community.

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