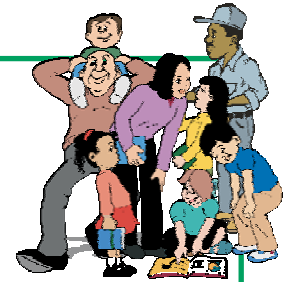




4-H for Families



“4-H and Spiritual Well-Being”

When we talk about strong families, one of the major components is spirituality or a sense of connectedness to each other. It is more than a sense of religion. It is feeling a part of a greater community.

Some families talk about faith in their religion, faith in life, or faith in loved ones. People who have this faith are generally hopeful about life and believe that, in a broad sense, life works out pretty well for them. Some describe a feeling of oneness with the world, a connection to nature or to the land.

Spiritual well-being comes from the caring center within each individual that promotes sharing, love and compassion. It is the feeling or power that helps people transcend themselves, rise above the mundane and identify with the greater good. People tend to help each other out and work together to solve problems.

4-H is tied to the land as members learn to raise crops and animals and take care of the environment. 4-H'ers also work to keep their communities safe and clean for future generations.

Spirituality plays a large part in the 4-H program. Each time a child learns a new skill through 4-H, there is a Mom, Dad or leader who has helped out. Each skill builds upon previous skills and we can cheer the child on the way to a completed project. Even after the project is completed, it is shown or displayed at the fair so others can see the child's progress. 4-H is family orientated. Leaders, parents, family and friends are all available to help the

child become a productive person in society. Part of the spirituality of 4-H is carrying out a service project in the community. Have you ever seen an elderly person's face light up when a 4-H group goes to a nursing home and sings carols to them? Have you ever felt a sense of pride when you helped walk the dogs for the local humane society? These simple activities help you feel as if you are part of the larger community. Working together to do something meaningful and worthwhile – from which someone else reaps the benefits – can be a powerful bonding activity for the 4-H club.

How can you find the spirituality of your 4-H club? Try some of these activities:

- Donate cookies to a blood drive
- Adopt an elderly person at the Nursing Home
- Make gift baskets for needy people at Christmas or throughout the year.
- Donate toiletries to Domestic Violence
- Donate pop tabs to the Ronald McDonald House.
- Show others in your club you care by giving cards on their birthdays.
- Adopt a soldier or family of deployed military
- Have secret pals that give small gifts to each other throughout the year.

4-H Club/Family Discussion Topics:

- My favorite community project is ...
- If we had a club slogan it would be ...
- I like 4-H because ...
- The 4-H project I want to work on with someone older than me is ...
- I have faith that ...
- In 4-H, I can ...

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Examples of 4-H Projects and/or Activities that Teach Spirituality Skills:

- Camping
- Clover Kids: Family Celebrations Around the World
- Folk Arts
- The World Around Me
- Citizenship – Public Adventures
- People and Customs of the World
- What’s Happening in Our World
- The World Around Me
- Project Learning Tree

This information, based on Family Strengths research by Dr. John DeFrain, was prepared by Myrna DeBois, UNL Extension Educator; Ann Fenton, UNL Extension Educator; Vickie L. Greve, UNL Extension 4-H Youth Specialist; Lisa Kaslon, 4-H Youth Assistant; Sandy Preston, UNL Extension Educator; and, Amy Topp, UNL Extension Educator.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.