



Responsibility



Learning About Responsibility

Have you ever tried to fit two days' worth of work or activities into one day? It seems like we have all done this at one time or another. Constantly trying to fill our days with busyness, however important it may be, is not healthy. Only by prioritizing do we sort out the most vital things that need to get done, and cross those off the list first, sometimes even before fun. A simple activity to teach youth about prioritizing responsibilities is called "Filling the Jar". Have someone demonstrate how balancing golf balls (responsibilities) with rice (fun) in a jar makes everything fit into a day, both our obligations and the things we want to do. Both responsibilities and fun are necessary for an emotionally healthy, fulfilling life.

Responsibility...in its many forms

Another necessary part of life that youth need to understand is financial responsibility. Bring in a bank representative or other financial literacy professional to talk about how youth can start being responsible with their money. Topics covered should include spending within your means, developing budgets, saving strategies, how to properly use credit, etc. Make sure to talk about financial responsibility for your club, too.



Emergencies can happen at any time. The responsible way to prepare for an emergency is to have a stash of supplies on hand at all times for use in an emergency. Brainstorm what items you might need in an emergency, such as a radio, extra batteries, flashlight, canned food, etc. When the list is complete, take the lists home and prepare your family for emergencies. You can also help with efforts to have classroom emergency kits made up for your school as a community service project. Practice fire and tornado drills at home so your family will be safe if something happens. Taking responsibility for you and your family's safety in an emergency is one of the best precautions that can be made.

Many 4-H members own pets or livestock as part of their 4-H projects and just for fun. Owning animals requires much responsibility on different levels. At a club meeting or project meeting, talk about an animal's life cycle (be specific for a species, if you're at a project meeting) and the different needs that an animal has at each stage of its life and what the owner should to adequately meet its needs. Then discuss how to be a responsible pet or livestock owner—reliably taking the animal to the vet, dependability (since the animal depends on its owner for food, water, and care), and self control (not losing your temper when the animal misbehaves). Plan a field trip to an animal shelter, humane society, farm or ranch to reinforce the lesson.



Adapted from Character Development Seminar Training Materials and Good Ideas: To Help Young People Develop Good Character.

Find more activities for Responsibility in the "Good Ideas Book" at your local Extension Office