



Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is one of the most effective means by which individuals can take orderly action as a group.

Depending on the skills that members have, the club can use simple, informal or formal parliamentary procedures. Club officers as well as club members should learn the appropriate parliamentary procedures they are going to use in making club decisions.

These are the three different meeting styles:

- **Simple Style**

Characteristics: No formal agenda; group discusses business until they agree on what to do; probably no officers; open discussion.

Settings: Project meetings, small groups, sessions with younger members.

- **Informal Style**

Characteristics: Flexible meeting agenda; basic parliamentary procedures; chairperson or elected officers; controlled discussion.

Settings: 4-H meetings, school/church/civic organizations.

- **Formal Style**

Characteristics: Precise meeting agenda; standard parliamentary procedures following Robert's Rules of Order; elected officers.

Settings: Large gatherings; 4-H Federation meeting, FFA formal meetings.

Steps in Making a Club Decision

- **Motion** – A motion is a request that something be done or that something is the opinion or wish of the group. Only one motion should be placed before the group at one time. It is debatable and amendable.

- **Second** – Someone from the group must “second” the motion, or agree to the motion, so that it can be discussed.

- **Discussion** – The motion “on the floor” is discussed by all members, addressing the pros and cons, etc.

- **Re-State the Motion** – The president re-states the motion before the group votes.

- **Vote** – The group votes by voice – aye/no; by show of hands; by standing; by secret ballot; or by roll call vote.

Ideas for Teaching Parliamentary Procedure

Developed by Southern District Leadership Team, October 2001

If you do some of these activities in your 4-H club, your club will understand parliamentary procedure better and they will be more likely to use it in the future.

Let's Make Trail Mix...

(Idea from a demonstration by Deb Ivey, 4-H Youth Development Agent in Iowa County)

Needed: Large bowl, spoon, ingredients for Trail Mix (Honey, Nut Cheerios, raisins, peanuts, plain and peanut butter M and M's, others as desired), serving utensil (paper cup, napkins, etc.)

- Display the ingredients and talk about the importance of parliamentary procedure to the smooth operation of a meeting.
- Tell your audience that you are going to make trail mix and that they will learn how to correctly make a motion as part of this process.
- Explain that ingredients will be added to the bowl as motions are made. Youth must say "I move that we add..." Ask for a second, discuss and vote. If the youth says, "I motion" ...ask them to restate it correctly.)
- As soon as all the ingredients are added, the members can eat the Trail Mix as a snack.
- In most cases, there will be one ingredient that is voted down. The leader may want to include at least one questionable ingredient in the choices to be sure this happens.
- NOTE: Karen Nelson, Columbia County Youth Development Educator, gave each 4-H club in her county signs that say "I MOVE..." in large letters for display at club meetings.

Mock Meetings

- Gather a group of older members and have them sit together at the front of the room.
- Use the sample materials to demonstrate a meeting that operates smoothly and one that does not.
- Compare and discuss the differences and similarities in the two meetings.
- Conclude by telling why parliamentary procedure is important. These points could also be emphasized by writing them on the board, a chart, etc.