



Initiation of Members

Ina Linville, assistant director

Missouri 4-H Center for Youth Development

Ceremonies have special significance in every organization. In 4-H clubs, ceremonies give emphasis to occasions that club members and leaders consider to have special meaning. Ceremonies express the values and ideals of 4-H with dignity and beauty. Initiation of new members and installation of officers (LG 800, *Installation of Officers*) are special occasions for many clubs.

Your club can adapt the following suggested format to meet your own needs. In addition, your club can prepare ceremonies for such events as campfires, flag raising, vespers and awarding 4-H medals.

Initiation of new members may be held soon after the start of the club year or at an appropriate time during the year. The purpose of an initiation ceremony is to give new members the feeling that they belong to the group and share in its opportunities and responsibilities. It also acquaints parents and others with 4-H club purposes.

The setting

If the ceremony is held in a room or hall, the U.S. flag, the 4-H flag and flowers add to the ceremony. Singing or soft music throughout the ceremony can make it more impressive. If candles are used, darken the room. Each 4-H member and leader may have a lighted candle. One leader will need extra candles to give to each new member. If candles are not used, a single flower or four-leaf clover can be pinned on the new members.

The new members should be in another room with a leader. While music is played or sung, the leader enters from another room with those who want to become members. All stand in a row opposite the officers until the music stops.

The program

Leader:

These youths, (*first names*), who stand before you wish to become members of the (*club name*) 4-H Club.

President:

We want to share the purpose of 4-H with you who are about to become members of the 4-H club. 4-H is to help youths develop mentally, physically, socially and spiritually in order to assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society.

Vice President:

Our motto is "To Make the Best Better." Repeat the motto with me. Repeat the 4-H pledge after me.

Reporter:

The 4-H club emblem is a green four-leaf clover with the letter "H" on each leaf. The green four-leaf clover symbolizes youth, life and growth. The four Hs stand for head, heart, hands and health.

President:

The treasurer will say the 4-H creed.

Treasurer:

Treasurer says the 4-H creed. (*creed on page 2*)

Secretary:

We are glad to have you as members of the (*club name*) 4-H Club. You are now members of one of the world's largest youth organizations. 4-H clubs are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and, in our state, by the University of Missouri. There are 4-H clubs for boys and girls in every state and in many other countries of the world.

President:

You are now familiar with the purposes of 4-H work, the extent of the organization, the 4-H emblem and what it symbolizes, the 4-H motto, and the 4-H creed. Are you willing to try to live up to the ideals of 4-H clubs?

New members:

I am.

President:

Do you wish to become a 4-H club member?

New members:

I do.

President:

As a 4-H member you will be expected to attend meetings regularly, learn the 4-H pledge, take an

active part in our club and keep your parents informed of your progress.

After you have entered your names in the secretary's book, you are club members. *(The membership leader leads them to the secretary's table where they enter their names. Other members might sing an appropriate song during this time.)*

Now take a candle from our leader, *(name)*. Light it from his or her candle and then take your place in line with the other members. *(While the new members light their candles, music may be played softly or hummed by all members.)*

We welcome you as members of the _____ 4-H Club. Please join me in saying the 4-H pledge.

Leader:

May the 4-H light shine in your home, your club and your community. Let us close by singing together. *(4-H or patriotic song.)*

4-H Creed

I believe in 4-H club work for the opportunity it gives me to become a useful citizen.

I believe in the training of my HEAD for the power it will give me to think, to plan and to reason.

I believe in the training of my HEART for the nobleness it will give me to become kind, sympathetic and true.

I believe in the training of my HANDS for the ability it will give me to be helpful, useful and skillful.

I believe in the training of my HEALTH for the strength it will give me to enjoy life, to resist disease and to work efficiently.

I believe in my country, my state, and my community, and in my responsibility for their development.