4-H Legislature Preparation IV: Mock Legislature

Project Skills:
1. Understand parliamentary procedures.
2. Gain communication skills.
3. Listen to varying viewpoints.
4. Respect the opinions and rights of others.

Life Skills:
1. Decision making
2. Conflict resolution
3. Communication
4. Accepting differences

Ages: 11-18

Time: 2 hours

Supplies Needed:
- 11x17 sheet of paper for each participant, Markers
- Example Name Signs
- One red and one green 5 ½ x 4" square of paper per participant
- Gavel, Podium
- Timer for Clerk
- Laptop/LCD projector
- Copies of Florida 4-H Legislature Manuals I & II
- Copies of "Mock Legislature Manual & Bills"
- PowerPoint slide show "4-H Mock Legislature"

Advance Preparation:
- Read over the lesson plan & "Mock Legislature Manual & Bills" and make sure you have all the supplies needed.

BACKGROUND

One of the goals of a mock legislative session is to provide a "learn by doing" educational experience to help youth gain knowledge and develop skills that will foster and promote civic engagement. The objective is for youth to become aware of and active participants in our democratic process through this simulation.

This lesson is designed to be conducted with those teens attending 4-H LEG plus any youth between the ages of 11-18.

The mock session described here calls for a specific role to be performed by the participating youth. To lead the session, two youth already strong in the legislative process need to play the roles of "speaker of the house," "clerk," and a third experienced youth, 4-H alumnus or adult as the "facilitator." All other participants will play the role of "legislator."

- Speaker of the House – presiding officer of the session. Expected to provide leadership during the event.
- Clerk – announces whether or not a quorum is present, announces the calendar of bills, reads bills, controls voting mechanism, keeps & calls time during debates, and assists the Speaker in maintaining control of the procedures during the session.
- Legislator – represent the people of the geographic area where they reside. Also known as a "representative" in this setting. They represent the diverse people, industry business, agriculture, economies, and environmental interests of their "home district." Legislators are also encouraged to become a "Bill Sponsor."
- Bill Sponsor – a Legislator that represents a particular bill (written issue and its proposed solution.) The bill sponsor "champions" this bill throughout the process of the bill becoming a law. The bill sponsor presents the bill before debate and provides closing remarks.

1

- Facilitator – consults and advises the Speaker of the House when needed to ensure a smooth session.

Voting Procedures

When it is time to vote, (and to determine if a quorum has been reached) each legislator will hold up a red rectangle of paper to vote in the negative and a green rectangle to vote in the affirmative. The clerk will be responsible for verifying the final count of "yeas" and "nays."

WHAT TO DO

There are two parts to the mock legislature. A 30 minute "prep" session with participating youth led by the designated Speaker of the House and Facilitator. Part Two is the entire group of youth (up to 100) where the legislative session actually takes place. This entire mock legislature can easily be included as a part of a larger event where the youth rotate between several 30-minute sessions in the morning. The mock legislature is just one of those sessions.

Introduction Session (30 minutes) *Script*

Facilitator: "Today we are going to learn about the Florida 4-H Legislature Program and you will get to play the role of legislators. To help us we have _____ who will play the role of Speaker of the House during our Mock Legislative Session." *(Add more introduction of this individual, if appropriate.) (Speaker stands.)*

Speaker of the House: "and _____, *(introduce the "facilitator," include if they're a 4-H alumnus or former 4-H LEG participant, etc.)* 4-H Legislature (LEG – pronounced "LEDGE") was one of _____ favorite 4-H activities."

Facilitator: "My job today is to be a facilitator. I'm here to help you in your role and to provide information, advice and assistance so that you can be successful. Today we are going to "learn by doing." You are going to play the role of legislators. Now we are going to learn a little about the LEG process and procedures and then we will have a Mock Legislature session. Now I'll turn this over to your Speaker of the House.

(hand the gavel to Speaker)

Facilitator: "Mr. Speaker this is your Chamber and the gavel is yours"

Speaker raps the gavel once and says:

Speaker: "Chambers will come to order – all Representatives will take their seats."

Speaker waits for chambers to come to order.

Speaker: "At this time I would like to would like to remind the members of the purpose and meaning of gavel raps. In the House or Senate Chambers, the gavel is used by a presiding officer to gain the attention of the members and to signal to the members what they should do. The presiding officer is either the 'President of the Senate' or the 'Speaker of the House' which refers to the House of Representatives. "

"Members, that's you, you are the legislators. Members of the Senate are called Senators and Members of the House of Representatives are called Representatives. "

"Members must understand and promptly respond when the presiding officer raps the gavel. The number of raps used gives a signal. "

Speaker: "Now let's practice a little, everyone please stand" (*wait for everyone to stand*)

"1 Rap *(Rap once)* means the Chamber will come to order - that means Members will be seated and will be quiet."

(Wait for members to sit and quit talking, Rap once again and repeat meaning if necessary)

Speaker: "Thank you."

Speaker: "2 Raps means Members will rise"

(Rap twice, wait to see if members stand, if necessary repeat meaning and rap twice again)

Speaker: "Thank you"

(Rap once and members should be seated, if they do not sit remind them that one Rap means to come to order - to be seated and quit talking - rap once for them to come to order)

Speaker: "3 Raps means that Members stand and applaud - and continue applauding until 1 rap brings order. 3 Raps are used when a guest enters the Chambers – someone like the Governor or another person that President or Speaker wants to recognize or honor."

(Rap 3 times, wait to see if members stand and applaud and keep applauding, repeat the meaning of 3 Raps if necessary)

(1 Rap to bring to order)

Speaker: "Thank you. Now let's see if you understand"

(do a series of gavel raps to get the youth to rise, come to order, stand and applaud)

Speaker: "Let me give you a little more background so you understand the legislative process. The big picture. There are 120 seats in the House of Representatives and 40 seats in the Senate. The purpose of the Legislature is to debate and vote on bills that may then become law. It is important that we listen to each other's opinions about an issue before we vote. If everyone talked at once, no one could be heard so we have some rules of decorum and debate that we follow.

1. First rule of decorum – you address the Presiding Officer, that's me, as Mr. (or Madam) Speaker, and you <u>always</u> wait to be recognized.

2. When a legislator wants to speak, he or she must be recognized by the presiding officer. At LEG, each of the legislators has a name card that they hold up so that they can be recognized. When a legislator hold's up their card, I will call on them saying "Representative Whateveryournameis for what reason do you rise?"

3. When you rise, the first thing you must say is your name and county and then why you wish to speak. For example:

     (Facilitator holds up his name card and Speaker calls on him)
     Speaker: "Representative Jones for what reason do you rise?"
     Facilitator: "John Jones, Santa Rosa Co, Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this bill"
     Speaker: "You may speak"

Speaker: "Then Representative Jones would have a certain amount of time to speak either PRO, meaning he's speaking <u>for</u> the bill, or CON meaning he's speaking <u>against</u> the bill"

4. If you do NOT say your name and county I may tell you to be seated and then I will call on someone else. For Example

     (Facilitator holds up his name card and Speaker calls on him)
     Speaker: "Representative Jones for what reason do you rise?"
     Facilitator: "This bill that we're talking about ….."

Speaker: "Representative Jones you did not state your name and county you are out of order, therefore you may not speak. Please be seated"

(paper and markers are distributed)

Speaker: "Now each of you is going to receive a paper and a maker to make your own "name sign." Please print neat and large so that I can see and read it from way up here at the front of the room. Print the word "Representative" and your LAST name. You will use these signs in our Mock Legislature session."

(Show some example name signs. You can also create the name signs for each participant ahead of time to eliminate his step.)

"Keep working on making your signs and the Facilitator is going to tell you more about the 4-H Legislature program and what we will do next."

(Set up powerpoint slide show "4-H Mock Legislature" & leave on title slide during this time.)

Facilitator: "Ok so now you know the meaning of gavel raps and you know how to address the Presiding Office and you know how to be recognized. There are many other procedures that are used in Florida 4-H Legislature. There are two handbooks that are used for 4-H Legislature.

(hold up Manual I)

Resource Manual I – Guidelines and Procedures has all the information that you will need to help you know what to do and say. Everyone who goes to LEG takes their Manual I with them to the event.

(hold up Manual II)

The other handbook is *Resource Manual II – Bills and Lobby Groups*, which contains about 60 bills that are written and or selected by member of the LEG Committee each year. Both manuals are found on the Florida 4-H website in the late spring and they remain there throughout the summer.

5

Today we're not going to worry about a lot of the rules and procedures but there are a couple that you will need to know for our mock legislature.

The purpose of the 4-H Legislature program is to help 4-H'ers learn how our governmental process works. One of the most important parts is "How a Bill Becomes a Law". The Legislature is the group that is responsible for writing and passing laws.

(Display "How an Idea Becomes a Law," slide #2)

This diagram "How an Idea Becomes a Law" shows the process that an idea has to go through before the idea can become a law*. (You can also show the school house rock youtube video from Lesson 1, instead of this slide,* http://youtu.be/0dVo3nbLYC0*.)*

Facilitator: "Each year the Florida legislature meets to determine and debate issues important to the people of our state. Basically someone has an idea of something that should done to make life better for the people of Florida. Today, you will have the chance to debate and vote on some bills."

"We have ten bills that have been selected for you do consider."

(Distribute copies of the Mock Legislature Bill Book and give youth a few minutes to read over the bills. Ask for volunteers to sponsor each of the ten bills.)

Speaker: "I hope you each have a little better understand of the legislative process.   We are going to take a short break to set up and then we will debate the bills and vote on the bills. If you have any questions, please see us during the break."

MOCK LEGISLATURE SESSION
        Select a Speaker of the House and a "clerk." They should be individuals familiar with the mock legislature procedure.
        Voting Procedures: Distribute one red rectangle and one green rectangle to each participant. When it is time to vote, (and to determine if a quorum has been reached) each legislator will hold up a red rectangle of paper to vote in the negative and a green rectangle to vote in the affirmative. The clerk will be responsible for verifying the final count of "yeas" and "nays."

6

The speaker uses the raps and calls the session of the mock legislature to order. Ask the clerk for a quorum. The group progresses through several bills by following the guidelines. At the designated time, close the session.

Use the slides of the powerpoint to help the group know which bill is currently on the floor.

Speaker: We will now revert to the order of passage of bills.

Sponsor: of bill coming up next on calendar, gains recognition and says, "Mr. Speaker, I move that the rules be waived and House Bill No. ___ be read for a second time by title only."

Speaker: "It has been moved that House Bill No. ___ be read for a second time by title noting changes made in committee. Is there and objection to the motion? Hearing none, will the Clerk read House Bill No. ___ for the second time by title noting changes made in the committee."

Clerk: *(Reads the bill by title only, noting changes made in committee.)* "House Bill No. ___ , a bill to be entitled…"

Speaker: "The sponsor has three minutes to present the bill."

Sponsor: Goes to the front of the chamber and presents the bill.

Speaker: "We are now in order for two minutes of non-debatable technical questions."

(A legislator rises)

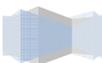**Speaker:** "For what reason does the representative rise?"

Legislator: (states name and county) "I rise to ask a non-debatable technical question of the sponsor."

Speaker: "Will the sponsor yield to a non-debatable technical question?"

Sponsor: "Yes, I yield." (Legislators ask questions until time expires.)

Speaker: ""We are now in order for debate on the floor."

(Debate continues, from assigned seat, on an alternating basis – one pro/con speaker, 3 minutes each until three pro and three con speakers have been heard. Debate may continue by a decision of the chair or by a motion to extend debate)

7

Speaker: "The bill sponsor has 3 minutes to close."

Sponsor: Returns to the front of the chamber and presents his closing arguments. When finished, he then says, "Mr. Speaker, I move the rules be further waived and that House Bill No. ____ be read for a third time by title only and placed on final passage."

Speaker: "it has been moved that House Bill No. ____ be read for a third and final time by title only. Is there an objection to the motion? Hearing none, will the Clerk now read House Bill No. ____ for the third and final time by title only?"

Clerk: Reads the bill by title only.

Speaker: "Are there any amendments on the desk?" (If so, they are read by the Clerk)

At this point, if there are amendments, each is taken up in order as read. The bill sponsor has two minutes to present amendment. An opposition speaker is then given two minutes. Debate continues until there have been two Pro and two Con speakers. The amendment sponsor then has one minute to summarize.

Vote on each amendment is taken and recorded.

After all amendments have been disposed of, the original bill sponsor gets recognized and says…

Sponsor: "Mr. Speaker, I move that House Bill No. ____ does now pass."

Speaker: "The Representative moves that House Bill No. ____ does now pass. House Bill No. ____ is on final passage. The Clerk will unlock the machine and the members will prepare to vote. By your vote you have passed (failed to pass) House Bill no. ____ ." *(participants use red and green squares to vote.)*

Speaker: "The Chair recognizes the sponsor of the next bill."

Go through as many bills as you have time for.

REFLECT & APPLY *(on slideshow, too.)*
Sharing-
- What was the hardest part of this activity?
- What other types of occasions have you had to follow specific rules? How about times you needed to make introductions or "speak off the cuff?"

Processing-

- Were there any bills that someone wanted to see passed but which were defeated?
- Besides the legislature, what groups follow formal rules to make decisions?

Generalizing-
- Why does how you speak in public affect what people think of you?
- Why is it important to be a good citizen?
- Is it difficult to get bad laws passed using the process our government uses? Why?

Applying-
- What are some of your ideas for real laws?
- What would you have to do to get your ideas made into real laws?
- How can you use the ideas learned here in other places in your life (outside of 4-H)?

SUMMARY
Review updates from the 4-H Events Office – role assignments, bill sponsor info, etc. Review the week's schedule, packing lists, etc found in Manual I and the travel and chaperoning details for your county.