

SHOWING CHARACTER



SHOWING CHARACTER is a series of lesson plans for young people and adults working together to instruct exhibitors, their family members and others from the livestock community.

LIVESTOCK PROJECTS

The Cooperative Extension Service Youth Livestock Program has three goals. The most important goal is to provide an opportunity for young people to develop good character and life skills. The other two goals are to provide an opportunity for exhibitors and their families to expand their knowledge of livestock production and management and to improve and enhance livestock production.

The livestock production and exhibiting process consists of six components. These components are selecting an animal; caring for, feeding and housing the animal; preparing the animal for show; showing the animal; selling the animal or placing it into production and documentation.

PRODUCTION AND EXHIBITING CONCERNS

Livestock production and exhibiting provide excellent opportunities for developing good character and life skills, but a win-at-all-cost attitude sometimes results in unethical practices that have no place in the livestock production and exhibiting community.

Unfortunately, unethical practices have occurred at some livestock shows. These practices have been classified into four categories:

- Use of illegal drugs and abuse of over-the-counter drugs on show animals
- False ownership and substitution of animals
- Professional groomers and fitters doing work which should be done by the youth
- Physical alteration of animals

Ethical practices build ethical character. All livestock production and exhibiting activities are to support the six universal pillars of character - trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. The development of ethical character is far more important than the production of grand champion animals. Today's exhibitors are tomorrow's adults. The character they develop through involvement with livestock projects will enable them to be responsible citizens.

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SHOWING CHARACTER was developed by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service 4-H staff and livestock specialists to ensure the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service Youth Livestock Program is contributing to the development of positive character traits in the young people involved. SHOWING CHARACTER supports the six universal pillars of character - trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

CHARACTER COUNTS!SM is a service mark of the the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics.

SHOWING CHARACTER is based on "Exercising Character," created by Peggy Adkins for the CHARACTER COUNTS!SM Coalition.



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Agricultural Center
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service

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William B. Richardson, Chancellor
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
Jack L. Bagent, Vice Chancellor and Director

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SHOWING CHARACTER

The title **SHOWING CHARACTER** has two aspects. The first relates to the character of the livestock production and exhibiting community and the second to the character of the individual members of the community. Both are important, but the character displayed by individual members creates the character of the community.

Some people may think **SHOWING CHARACTER** pertains only to the show ring. **SHOWING CHARACTER** applies to all activities of a livestock project. Just as exhibitors must fit and groom an animal for show, they must also "groom" their own character. People are not born with good character. It must be developed.

Good character has three components - knowing what is right, feeling the need to do right and doing what is right. Good character takes courage and self-control. It may mean doing something you do not want to do, or not doing something you want to do. The more exhibitors know, feel and do the right things, the stronger their character becomes.

Each lesson sets up an activity in which an abstract principle (pillar of character) becomes an experience. Through the experience participants begin internalizing the principle. Your job as a trainer is to involve all participants and challenge them to apply the pillars of character in their lives. Above all else, you need to be a good example. You must show, through your enthusiasm, actions and words, that you are committed to **SHOWING CHARACTER**. The credibility and acceptance of the training depends on you and the others in leadership roles.

Encourage exhibitors and families to collect handouts and notes on family activities in a **SHOWING CHARACTER** folder and participate in recommended family activities as listed on the "**SHOWING CHARACTER** Family Activities" handout.

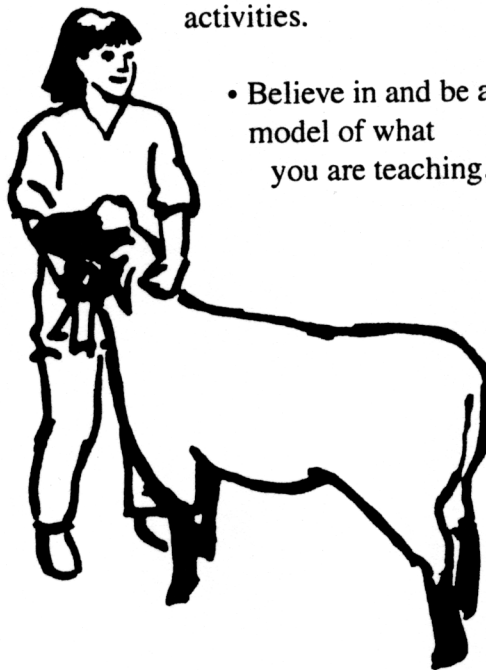
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TIPS FOR INSTRUCTING YOUTH AND ADULTS

- Appear confident without being conceited.
- Be thoroughly prepared. Good preparation adds confidence and credibility.
- Expect distractions but maintain control.
- Use individual and small group activities. They help participants focus on the topic.
- Display a sense of humor when appropriate.
- Involve all participants in the activities.



- Believe in and be a good role model of what you are teaching.

Materials for **SHOWING CHARACTER** were created with the leadership of Dr. Don Hammatt, specialist, 4-H Youth Development, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, and written by Johnny Arceneaux and Sarah Williams, Extension associates, 4-H Youth Development.

Initial input for and review of lessons were provided by: Dr. Tim Page and Dr. Rosilyn Williams, Extension specialists, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service; Dr. Kathy Cox, Extension specialist, Ohio; Stan Dutile, Trent Guidry, Rene Schmit and David Williams, Extension agents, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

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