Manners for the Real World

Job Seeking Etiquette: A Positive Impression

Core Curriculum Area:
Family and Consumer Sciences

Suitable Delivery Modes:
- Club
- Special Interest
- Camp
- School Enrichment

Grade Levels: 8-12

Life skills:
Marketable skills; self-esteem; decision making; keeping records; communication; social skills; concern for others; nurturing relationships

Total Time: 45 minutes

Materials Needed:
- Handouts: Make a Positive Impression

Advance Preparation:
- Read the lesson plan and be ready to discuss topics with youth.

Evaluation Tool:
- End of meeting questionnaire
- Pre/post-test
- Open-ended questions
- Activities & games
- Checklist
- Show of hands
- Interview
- Quotes

Advance Preparation:
- Read through Leader Guide
- Gather materials

Objective: Youth will...
- Recognize the etiquette expected when seeking a job
- Demonstrate a proper handshake
- Simulate and critique telephone etiquette and job interview conversations

Curriculum to Use:
Jump Start for Job Seekers" (4EC-03PA)

Teens gain job seeking skills through hands-on experience in filling out an application, writing a letter of application and resume, workplace etiquette, and interviewing. Teens are encouraged to seek feedback from a mentor. This workbook may be completed by an individual member working at home with help from a parent or within a group setting such as a classroom or club. The University of Kentucky Career Development Center has on-line resources and videos for a variety of topics related to job seeking available at http://www.uky.edu/careercenter/students

Handout: Make a Positive Impression—Job Interview Etiquette

Background Information for Presenter:
Getting a job during high school allows teens to begin building a resume that shows independence, reliability, and motivation. Having work experience and work references will be beneficial when applying for technical schools, colleges, scholarships, and more challenging work opportunities in the future. As baby boomers stay in the work force longer and technological advancements replace people, it is more difficult for youth to acquire entry level positions. Exhibiting good manners in a business situation will give teens confidence and increase their chances of being hired.

Pre-Test: (<5 minutes)
Ask youth several questions to assess each teen’s current level of knowledge.

Have you had a job—paid or volunteer position?
Did the position require you to be interviewed?
How did you feel before the interview?
What would you do differently if you had the same interview again?
Guided Discussion: (20 minutes) Share with participants.

When does a job interview begin? (Allow time for participants to share thoughts and ideas.)

You might be surprised; the job interview may start today. A teacher at school may want to hire you to care for his/her child, to provide lawn service, or refer you as a tutor for another student. The store where you like to shop may be a place where you will submit an application. A friend’s parent may have future job opportunities that could be of interest to you. Any of the adults with whom you interact now may be asked to provide a recommendation for you in the future. It is important to display good manners at all times.

Every job and company is different but there are a few standard rules of etiquette that may give you the edge when seeking employment. Consider your appearance when making a first impression, the messages that are on phones and social media, the confidence exhibited during the interview, and the manners you display to the manager that will be seen by the client or customer.

Review information on the handout Make a Positive Impression—Job Interview Etiquette with youth. Depending on the time available, select one or both of the following learning activities.

Activity 1: Introductions and Handshakes (10 minutes) Choose this activity if youth did not do it as part of the “Meet and Greet” session.

Have the participants sit in a circle. Share with the youth.

Displaying confidence begins with an introduction and a handshake. Use an inside voice to give your name and tell the person something about you. You might tell why you are there, who you want to speak with, or something about yourself that relates to the position. Offer your hand to the person. A handshake should be firm but not too tight.

Demonstrate: Turn to your right. That person will be the employer. Ask them to stand, and then demonstrate an introduction and handshake [Hello. My name is __________. I am here to meet with __________ (i.e. the manager). OR Hello. My name is __________. I am interested in applying for the job opening.]

1. Pair up youth.
2. For each pair, the person on the left will be the applicant and the person to their right will be the employer. Instruct the applicants to stand, introduce themselves to the employer, and name a type of job that they are currently qualified to do. It can be paid employment or volunteer service.
3. It is good practice for the person receiving the introduction, the potential employer, to respond appropriately. “It is nice to meet you, (repeat the person’s name).” By repeating the person’s name aloud, you are more likely to remember it later. “I am __________.”
4. Switch roles and do the role play again.
5. After everyone has had an opportunity to practice introductions, discuss the difficulties people experience. Encourage the participants to identify situations and discuss how to address adversity.
   a. Your hands sweat when you get nervous.
b. Some people get tongue tied or can’t get their words out when they are nervous.
c. You were not able to understand or pronounce the person’s name.
d. People talk faster when they get nervous.
e. The person whose hand you are shaking feels very delicate.
f. The person does not reach for your hand after you have extended it.

Activity 2: Guided Discussions-What Message Are You Sending?

(10 minutes) Discuss the following questions with the group.

You have applied for a job, let’s talk about what will happen when they call to ask you to come in for an interview. Encourage youth to discuss…

1. What message will people hear if they reach your voice mail message? Is the message appropriate?
2. Does your family have a land line? What is the message of that phone? Who might answer this phone if the potential employer called? Is the person who might answer the phone responsible for getting you a message?
3. Would it be better for a potential employer to call your cell phone or your family’s land line? Think about these things when you prepare to complete the job application. You will need to list a phone number on the application.
4. You will need to discuss your job seeking with your family members. Let them know where you are applying for positions and who might be calling. If you have younger siblings, talk to them about telephone etiquette.
5. Suggest a place where your family member will post messages so you will be sure to see them in a timely manner. You should reply to the potential employer within 24 hours.

Reflect: (5 minutes)

To complete the experiential learning model, discuss these or similar questions with participants. [http://florida4h.org/clubs/files/101.10_Using_Experiential_Learning_Model.pdf]

Share: “What did you learn today about job seeking?”

Process: “What types of manners will you need to be aware of in seeking your first job?”

Generalize: “Why is it important to practice good manners when you interview for a job?”

Apply: “Besides job interviews, in what other life situations would you use skills in introductions, handshakes, and etiquette?”

Post-Test: Conduct test with participants if applicable.

Observe youth as they work through the activities. Determine if each teen met the objectives of the lesson.
**Extended Learning:** Ways to extend learning beyond this lesson.

- Encourage teens to practice writing a thank you note to the person(s) who conducted the interview. Remind them that although they may have thanked the person with whom they interviewed, a handwritten thank you note may make the difference in who gets the job. Email may be considered appropriate, but a handwritten note makes a lasting impression.
- Remind youth that job searches and applications often begin online. It is important to make sure you are visiting a reliable and reputable website. Encourage youth to look online and ask an adult to review the site with them.
- Look online and print or collect applications for jobs that are often filled by teens in your community. Go through the application with youth and help them understand the responses needed in each section. Discuss the information they need to take with them if they need to fill out the application online at the place of business.
- Review cell phone etiquette.

**Presenter Tip:**

The activities can be divided into two or more 30 minutes lessons and incorporate other etiquette lessons such as letter writing, internet communications, cell phone and social media etiquette and safety.

**Reporting Your Success:**

**Initial Outcomes:** As a result of this lesson, youth were able to:

- List three or more etiquette expectations related to applying for a job (Discussion)
- Distinguish appropriate attire for job application and interview process and work clothing for three or more situations (i.e. first paid employment, scholarship interview, volunteer for community agency) (Activity)

**Intermediate outcomes:** Youth:

- Apply skills in volunteer or paid employment experience (observation or follow-up)
- Create an appropriate message for voice mail (observation or follow-up)
- Share skills with peers and younger youth (Activity)
- Estimate the cost of an appropriate interview outfit.
- Discuss the manners they put into practice.
- Compete in mock interview competition in a youth leadership organization
- Investigate a career
- Interview and/or shadow a professional in a career being considered in the future
Long Term Outcomes: Youth:

- Youth serve in leadership roles and represent their family, school, and community.
- Apply for paid employment, scholarship, or recognition
- Acquire a job or educational advancement opportunity (i.e. scholarship or award)
- Pursue post-secondary educational opportunities

Sources:


Additional Resources:


University of Florida IFAS Extension lesson “Good Grooming.”

This lesson plan was written by Pam Sigler as part of the “Manners for the Real World” Series with input from the Manners Writing Team made up of Extension Agents Christy Eastwood, Melissa Goodman, Nancy Kelley, and Paula Tarry; and Extension Specialists Pam Sigler, Evaluation, and Martha Welch, 4-H Youth Development. 04-2016.
Make a Positive Impression – Job Interview Etiquette
8 -12 Grades – FCS Core Curriculum

Making a good first impression goes a long way in helping you get a job. The first impression may be formed when you submit an application in person, when the company calls to schedule a job interview or at the face-to-face interview. The clothes you wear, your manners, your attitude and your body language influence how others see you.

On the phone
Job interviews may begin when the potential employer calls your phone. Consider the phone message that they will hear if you are unable to answer the phone when they call. Return phone calls promptly and listen carefully. Make a note of where and when you are to meet for an interview. It is acceptable to ask if there will be others participating in the interview. Before you arrive at the interview, turn your cell phone off.

Be on time and show confidence
Make sure you know the address where the interview will be held. Get directions online if needed. Allow ample time to arrive at the location or office. Plan to arrive at least ten to fifteen minutes prior to the appointment time. Demonstrate your people skills by being cordial to those you meet on your way to the interview – you never know if the person you chatted with in the lobby may have an influence on who is hired. Smile, introduce yourself, and extend your hand in greeting. A firm handshake is best (not too tight of a squeeze but not a limp dishtowel). Smile and be friendly.

Appearance
Take time to groom yourself and prepare your clothes. In addition to bathing, check fingernails and hair. Soap and deodorant create a personal scent. If you do use perfume or cologne, use it sparingly.

Shoes and clothing should be clean and in good condition. Check for scuffs, stains, or tears.

The clothes you wear should reflect the expectations of the company. In a casual working environment, a pair of slacks and an open collared shirt may be appropriate. A skirt or dress for women is also acceptable but consider the length. Your clothes and jewelry should not be a distraction. You want to look well-groomed and appropriately dressed. Minimize the amount of jewelry and avoid items that create noise. You want the person conducting the interview to listen to you and not be distracted by what you wear.

When it comes to your clothing for an interview, a general rule is to dress a little nicer than those currently employed in the same or similar position to the one you are seeking.

Be prepared
An interview can be very intimidating. Try to relax and maintain your composure. Sit up straight and smile. Do not chew gum. Avoid nervous gestures such as cracking your knuckles or shaking your leg.

Think about the types of questions that the interviewer will ask and then practice your answers. Practice in a place where you can talk out loud. Keep your responses to the point. Be prepared to give examples of your past or similar experiences.
Be prepared to ask questions at the interview. Questions may relate to their expectations of you if you are hired, what you will be responsible for doing, and what they expect to be the biggest challenge if you get the job.

Potential employers are not supposed to ask questions related to national origin, marital status, religion, sexual preference, and children. It is only appropriate to ask a person’s age if it relates to carrying out the duties of the job such as eligibility to drive or serve alcohol. If asked an inappropriate question, it would be best to say, “I’m sorry. The question does not seem relevant to my ability to perform the job.”

You may be offered a beverage or something to eat during the interview. It can be helpful to have some water, but avoid items that you might be required to hold in your hands or could be messy to eat while trying to talk. If you are invited for a meal, follow the rules of dining etiquette.

After the interview
It is beneficial to follow up an interview with a “thank-you” letter within two days. Because a lot of people do not make this extra effort, the letter not only conveys your appreciation, it shows that you are willing to function at a level higher than others. A handwritten note is very effective but the way the message is sent may vary according to the preferred way each company communicates. In the letter, include the date of your interview and the position for which you interviewed. Ask questions that you have thought of after leaving the interview or provide facts that they may have inquired about. End the note in a positive way by thanking them for the interview and that you are looking forward to hearing their decision about the position.

Often, the person conducting the interview will give you an idea concerning the time when the hiring decision will be made. The interviewer should follow up to let you know if you have or have not been selected for the position. If the time for the decision has passed and you have not heard from the interviewer, it is appropriate to contact the company and ask if the position has been filled.

If you are offered the job, should you delay giving your answer? If you are sure that you want the job, you can tell them “yes” immediately. However, it is acceptable to thank them for the offer and ask if you can contact them in a day or two about your decision.

If you don’t get the job, be polite and respectful. Thank the person for taking the time to interview you and let them know if the situation changes that you would welcome them contacting you. A thank-you, even if you are not selected, may be helpful if they reconsider the position or if you apply with the company in the future. You never want to “burn bridges.” Keep the door of opportunity open.

References:


This factsheet was written by Pam Sigler as part of the “Manners for the Real World” Series.