

Know Your Government 2009
KYG vs. IGNORANCE
You Be the Judge



February 14-17, 2009

Red Lion Hotel, Olympia

Curriculum Packet

Mission Statement of WSU 4-H Know Your Government

The Know Your Government (KYG) Conference serves to strengthen the connection between youth and our political and social networks through education, experience, application, and inspiration.

KYG Values

1. Inquiry
2. Regard for others
3. Respect/Cultural Competence
4. Positive Communication
5. Strengthening personal values

The topic and activities experienced through the KYG conference are all vehicles to provide the opportunity and framework to develop these values.

Objectives of WSU 4-H Know Your Government

4-H Youth Development is committed to teaching youth important knowledge and skills through the many project areas we offer. A cornerstone to the influence we make on young people is the life skills developed in the process. Know Your Government strives to teach a certain level of civics and governance to our 4-H participants. But perhaps more important is meeting the learning objectives based on the Targeted Life Skills Model, which is the foundation of our curriculum. For example, even if delegates forget over time how to cross-examine a witness, they will surely remember that in order to make an informed decision, they need to listen carefully to what others say. In addition, because they will be working with people from other counties, they will remember the effort it takes to work with people who are different from them.

Using the Iowa State University Extension Targeting Life Skills Model (November 1996), the KYG committee aims to meet these specific objectives in the following areas:

Critical Thinking

(Developing strategies for analyzing comparing reasoning and reflecting to discover meaning and direction when deciding what to believe or do)

Communication

(Clearly state my thoughts, feelings, and ideas to others, settle disagreements in ways that are not hurtful, Listen carefully to what others say)

Accepting Differences

(Treat people who are different from me with respect, Work/Play with people who are different than me);

Learning to Learn

(Acquiring, evaluating and using information in new situations, to solve problems and change my behavior);

Decision Making

(Think about what might happen because of my decision, evaluate decisions I have made);

Useful/Marketable Skills

(Contribute as a member of a team, keep accurate and useful records);

Responsible Citizenship

(Developing individual devotion in response to duties, rights and privileges as a member of a community or county)

Educational Objectives of KYG 2009
KYG vs. IGNORANCE
You Be the Judge

“*KYG vs. Ignorance*” is a curriculum designed with the values above in mind; delegates will participate in a mock trial. During pre-conference orientation, participants will learn about the U.S. judicial system and how it works interactively with the executive and legislative branches of government. In addition, delegates will perform a role within a mock trial. At the February conference, teens will take on the roles of attorney, defendant, witness, juror, or reporter. Delegates should learn that the courtroom is a place where laws may not agree with someone’s personal feelings about a case. For example, a guilty verdict cannot be rendered simply because a defendant was guilty of using bad judgment and the jury feels that the defendant needs to pay a price. In this case, regardless of personal feelings, if sufficient evidence has not been presented that the defendant’s actions break a specific law, a juror must vote not guilty. It is important the delegates make this distinction, especially since it is likely that in the future they will participate in the court system as a juror judging a defendant in a criminal case or deciding fault in a civil case.

From orientation training and conference participation, the KYG committee believes delegates will have the opportunity to learn all or some of the following:

1. Knowledge of the U.S. judicial system: how it works, how a citizen functions within it, and how it pivots upon political happenings;
2. Realization that democracy requires responsible citizenship/participation;
3. Awareness that the law may differ from personal feelings and these feelings do not outweigh evidence when deciding the verdict of a case;
4. Skill development (debate, persuasive speaking, conscientious listening, leadership);
5. Knowledge of his or her state legislative district and an awareness of issues that affect his or her district.

Message to parents about the Know Your Government Conference

KYG is a wonderful opportunity for youth to explore different ideas. Please support the coordinators and chaperones in creating a safe environment for the delegates to be able to discuss topics that may be outside of their belief systems or comfort zones. The coordinator will be providing chances for kids to share their beliefs and opportunities for them to learn about other beliefs. People learn about themselves as they share their beliefs with others and learn others’ beliefs. While some delegates may change their opinion on a topic based on a discussion, we fully expect most will confirm their original stand and even find out more reasons to do so. To make this a positive learning experience, we look for your support in this endeavor.