

## Showcase Your Work



Now that you have completed some or all of these activities, celebrate your efforts by showcasing your work. *SHARE* what you made and what you learned (Ideas 1-4), *GROW* something new (Ideas 5-8), or brainstorm other ideas that suit your interests and are relevant to your locale.

### Objectives:

- Youth develop independence by choosing themes, materials, and scope of the showcase.
- Youth experience belonging by cooperating and socializing with others in the group in a safe and accepting environment.
- Youth express generosity in presenting and sharing showcase projects with the community.
- Youth demonstrate mastery through increased knowledge, capable work, and successful problem solving.

These objectives are based on the 4-H Youth Development Ideals, [http://www.national4-headquarters.gov/library/4h\\_ideals.pdf](http://www.national4-headquarters.gov/library/4h_ideals.pdf)

### Showcase Definitions

#### VERB

- ... to display prominently.
- ... to feature.
- ... to draw attention to.

#### NOUN

- ... a setting that displays something to best effect.
- ... an opportunity
- ... a cabinet with glass-front doors.
- ... a container.
- ... a platform.

### Idea 1: Make a Notebook

Assemble product samples — paper, rope, mats, dyed cloth, and nets into a notebook. Enrich this collection with personal reflections. Include supply lists and sources, how-to hints, anecdotes, and other information. The notebook could be used to teach someone else the techniques or it could be part of an exhibit.



### Idea 2: Talk It Over

The fun thing about working in a group is sharing your experiences. A “graffiti board” is an easy way to record on-the-spot questions and ideas. Make available newsprint and markers and encourage everyone to participate. You also might enjoy contributing experiences and ideas to an online blog.

A simple wrap-up at the end of an activity is to ask each person to explain what pleases them about their own work, what they like about at least one other person’s work, and what they would do differently if they did the activity again.



### **Idea 3: Organize an Exhibit**

Exhibits can be loosely organized with students selecting their favorite or most interesting work to display. Items can be suspended from a clothesline or taped to a window. Create a label that includes the maker's name, the title of the piece, the technique used, the date, and other pertinent information. Keep it within the group or invite friends, family, or the public.



A more elaborate exhibit might require a unifying theme, coordinated color scheme, and careful mounting of objects. You can also have fun designing the exhibit layout, building display boards, and creating a brochure or program.

### **Idea 4: Give a Talk or Demo**

If your group is involved with 4-H, explore their public presentation program, which sponsors annual statewide competitions. Students ages 13 or older can prepare a Demonstration or Illustrated Talk about the techniques they have learned and the products they have made. For additional information and downloadable forms, visit the New York State 4-H website at <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/4h/events/eventsppt.htm> and click on the Public Presentations section.



Even if your group is not involved with 4-H, public demonstrations and talks can still be used as a way to showcase your work. Exploring the criteria on the 4-H website should stimulate your thinking about presentation topics and potential locations for your area.

### **Idea 5: Grab An Activity and Run**

Do you have a favorite activity? Want to pursue it further? Maybe you can design an improved rope making machine and make jump ropes for all your friends. Discover six food items served in your school cafeteria that make paper with interesting textures. Hang different sized ropes from the ceiling and attach cloth leaves to simulate a rainforest in a corner of the classroom.



The references listed with each activity and the topics suggested for Internet research can get you started, but the possibilities for exploration are truly endless.

### **Idea 6: Tackle the Recycle Challenge**

You will probably have leftover materials from each of the activities. Divide them into equal portions. Give every student, pair, or team a packet and challenge them to make something "interesting," something "personal," or something "useful." It can be a one-evening, get-acquainted activity or a long-term, take-home project.



Compare creations, noting the many ways the same materials were used. This is a fun way to recycle materials and develop interesting pieces for an exhibit.



## **Idea 7: Integrate Activities as a Capstone Experience**

You probably noticed that some of the same plants that make good rope can also be used to make paper. Or, you might have realized, that indigo will dye paper as well as cloth.

Demonstrate your understanding of plants (sisal, cattails, etc.), tools (indigo, bobbins, etc.), techniques (dyeing, knotting, etc.), and textiles (paper, rope, etc) by developing a new fibrous product that uses elements from some or all of the activities. Work independently or in groups. Start with a challenge such as a time limit, size, or theme or allow everyone to just “do their own thing.”

**Again, lots of options!** Below are a few; you will think of others.

- Build a temporary shelter—tie together sturdy branches with rope and cover with woven mats.
- Create a lawn sculpture—use any (or all) of the materials, tools, and products to create a unique sculpture.
- Make a patchwork quilt—sew together squares of indigo-dyed paper or cloth.
- Design a writer’s bag—weave a mat using strips of old jeans (or another indigo-dyed fabric); fold the mat in half and stitch sides together to form a bag; make a rope handle and attach to the bag; and fill with paper and envelopes plus purchased pens, and stamps.
- Construct a mobile—use rope to attach and hang shapes cut from paper and indigo dyed cloth; suspend from the paddle of the rope making machine.



Make a rug -- dye sturdy cotton cloth with indigo or use old denim garments. Tear fabric into narrow strips. Use the rope maker to create a three-ply "rope". Coil the rope into an oval or round shape, stitching the coils loosely together to make a "braided" rug.

## **Idea 8: Design a New Activity**



One goal of this project is to engage young people in learning about plants and textiles. A second goal is to help youth link traditional technologies to modern technologies. A third goal is

to encourage students to apply what they learned to their immediate environment. These goals converge when a new activity is developed.

You can use this format to create a new activity that explores different plants and different fibrous products, especially ones with a strong connection to where you live. You might be intrigued by baskets made from willow, toys made from cattails, cloth made from flax, dye extracted from madder, or brooms made from straw.



You can create a new activity that links to a local historical plant or industry. For example, residents of Onondaga County might want to research the teasel plant, *Dipsacus fullonum*. Growing teasel was a thriving industry in Skaneateles and Marcellus, NY, in the mid-1800s. The prickly thistles were in great demand for combing and cleaning wool fibers.

If you hail from Otsego County, you should explore the textile-related uses of hops — hops are good for more than just making beer!

Another example is the intriguing use of dogbane by the Iroquois. The Tuscarora, located mostly in northeastern New York, were known as ‘the people of the shirt’, because of their extensive use of dogbane in fabric.