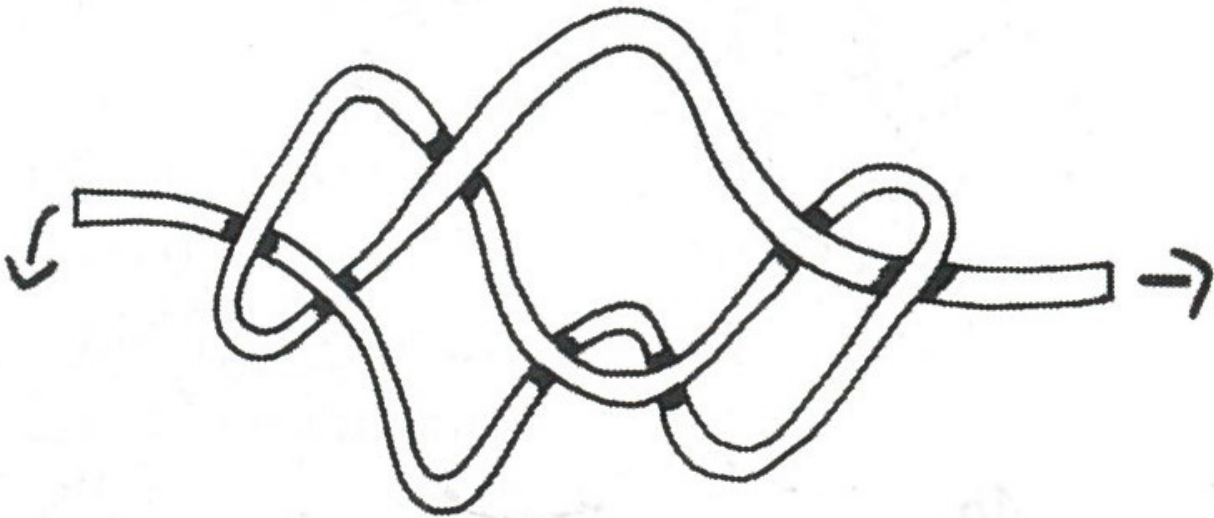




NOT KNOTS ACTIVITY ICE BREAKER

Supplies: Piece of rope, approximately 10 feet long

This activity is designed to be a consensus building activity and can be done with any size group. Using the diagram below, arrange the rope in an open area or on a table where all participants can view the rope.



(Image of rope from The Revised & Expanded Book of Racoon Circles by Dr. Jim Cain and Dr. Tom Smith, 2007)

The object of the activity is for each person to determine if the rope will form a knot or not when the ends of the rope are pulled. The instructor will be providing the group with some tools to use when they cannot easily form a consensus.

Typically, upon analysis, about half of the group thinks the doodle will form a knot and the other half a straight line. Have participants group up on one side if they think there will be a knot and on the other side if they think the rope will be a straight line.

After each person has chosen a side, ask each person to partner with another person that has a different viewpoint. Partners are then encouraged to listen to each other's point of view and come to a cooperative decision on whether there is a knot or a straight line when the rope is pulled. Have the partners move to the side of the rope doodle that they have agreed on – knot or straight line.



It is likely that there will still not be consensus among the whole group. The next step is to slowly begin to pull the ends of the rope. As you pull the rope, tell the group that as they watch the rope, if they want to change sides, they can move.

Debriefing Questions:

- What strategies did you use to determine your first opinion?
- What skills did you use to convince your partner that you were right?
- Why did you change your original opinion when you were working with a partner?
- What happened when the rope was being pulled?
- How does this activity relate to our 4-H club meetings?
- What does the pulling of the rope symbolize in relationship to club planning?

The point to be made is that the rope activity is like a 4-H club meeting in that the more you plan (pull the rope) the better the club meeting will be (the clearer the outcome of the rope).

Club meetings don't just "happen." They must be planned, and officers and club managers must be prepared and know what their part is in the meeting in order for the meeting to run smoothly. All members of the club also need to be involved in some way during the year in the 4-H club meetings so that they feel like they are a part of the group and can contribute to the success of the club.