

## **4-H CAKE DECORATING GUIDELINES**

Helping youth develop life skills is part of the goal of 4-H. The following are guidelines and suggestions for participating and providing learning experiences in the cake decorating project area.

### **GENERAL SUGGESTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATING:**

1. Starting age is at leader's discretion.
2. Members and their parents understand (1) the cost involved for this project, (2) the equipment necessary for cake decorating, (3) the time involved in learning skills of cake decorating.
3. Participant is willing to provide the materials and equipment necessary for this project.
4. Participant is willing to develop basic skills taught in project well before proceeding to new and more difficult skills thus member is proceeding on his/her own level.
5. Participant is able to prepare and bake a cake for decorating. (Box or styrofoam is permitted for display at fair).
6. The fair classes for cake decorating are categorized as basic skill, intermediate, and advanced. These are determined by the number of years of experience a member has had in cake decorating, and are flexible depending on the member's ability. The skill level should be determined by the leader and member. For example, the 4-H'er who has no cake decorating experience should start at the basic skill level, and if they are older and more coordinated, they can reach the more advanced levels quicker. The level should best meet the needs and experience of the member.

The suggested experience guidelines are:

Basic Skill: 1-2 years in the project  
Intermediate: 3-4 years in the project  
Advanced: 5 years and over in the project

### **EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES**

#### **Basic Skills**

- A. Learn to prepare frosting
- B. Learn to make and use parchment paper decorating cones.
- C. Learn to level and put together a layer cake.
- D. Begin to learn smoothing techniques.
- E. Learn basic decorating tubes and proper application:
  - a. Star tubes
  - b. Writing tubes
  - c. Leaf tubes
  - d. Drop flower tubes
- F. Learn to make basic sugar moldings.
- G. Learn basic air brushing techniques (not required, but if leader has access to equipment, do learn).

- H. Learn to decorate a cake using the basic skills of cake decorating.

### **Intermediate Skills**

- A. Continue to improve present cake decorating skills.
- B. Learn new and more advanced skills of cake decorating in the following application:
  - a. More complex borders
  - b. Advanced writing techniques
  - c. Begin basic figure piping
  - d. Begin basic nail flowers (daisies, chrysanthemums, etc.)
  - e. More advanced sugar moldings (hollow bells, eggs, etc.).
  - f. More advanced air brushing -- learn to cut basic stencils or do simple free-hand pictures.
  - g. Cake should be smoothed with no crumbs by now. Try other smoothing techniques (paper toweling, hot water, etc.)
- C. Become familiar with different types of frostings and icings (chocolate, cream cheese, etc.)
- D. Learn to make and decorate cut cakes.
- E. Composition - learn what makes a cake attractive and pleasing including harmony, color choices, types and placements of decorations. A good decorator learns early that less is more. Don't use every technique you have learned on a cake. Pick out one or two borders, flowers, etc. to use that works well together. Don't over decorate!

### **Advanced Skills**

- A. Continue to improve present skills and develop new and more advanced skills.
- B. Learn more complex nail flowers (roses, apple blossoms, violets, etc.)
- C. Learn advanced figure piping.
- D. Learn to make royal icing decorations.
- E. Learn skills in color flow techniques.
- F. Learn to make, assemble and decorate tiered (separated) cakes.
- G. Air brushing -- cut a portrait stencil or do a complex free hand picture.
- H. Learn to apply the skills of cake decorating to decorate other foods.

### **4-H FAIR CAKE DECORATING CLASSES**

- A. Member should enter the skill level appropriate for their experience.
- B. May be on box or styrofoam using either freezer paper or floral paper for lining if desired.
- C. Cakes decorated and displayed should reflect the guidelines suggested for different levels of experience, as well as individual creativity.
- D. An exhibit that does not meet the established criteria or a class will be dropped one grade.
- E. Attach index card to exhibit tag if member is disabled or has reached his/her capability. Use card to briefly explain this.