

**Merseyside Christian Youth Camps**

**Group Leaders Pocket Guide**

**CONTENTS**

Purpose and context.....	2
Job Descriptions.....	2
The Role of a Group Leader.....	3
At Camp Responsibilities.....	4
Duties.....	6
Child Protection.....	9
Forbidden Items.....	10
Fire.....	10
Quiet Times.....	10

## **PURPOSE**

To provide young people of Merseyside (and other parts of the UK) with an exciting and challenging holiday in a Christian environment.

## **CONTEXT**

The camping season is very short and each week represents a huge investment in the lives of the young people whom God entrusts to our care. It is important that individuals and teams come together and function in a united fashion under the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit

The ideal situation is that the staff team come together early in the year and are able to spend enough time together to pray and plan before getting to the week of camp. We are all unique individuals and there will be some people that we find it easier to relate to than others, however, we are united in our common faith and purpose and we should let those things which we agree on, motivate us to work together and ensure that the differences are minimised.

The Admin team have a particular responsibility to set the tone of the week in all ways; spiritually, level of commitment, openness, encouragement. Equally the staff need to recognise that they should accept the authority of the team and not allow situations to develop which undermine the team performance. There is a place for an open and honest debate on all aspects of the programme during the planning phase, but once consensus has been reached then each individual needs to give their full co-operation (110%) to the direction and goals for each particular week of camp.

Remember we are not working for the Admin Team or the Management Board, but we are giving our gifts and services to the Lord Jesus as a means of trying to say thank you for His sacrifice. It is also a requirement on us as Christians to fulfil Christ's great commission (Matt 28) to go and make disciples.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION AND JOB PROFILES**

### **DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS**

#### **Principal Responsibilities**

To provide under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Vision, Leadership and direction to the team who are sharing the responsibility for his week of camp.

To manage the resources available consistently within the policy and guidelines provided by the Camp Trust and the Management Board.

### **PADRE**

#### **Principal Responsibilities**

To provide, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the leadership and overall direction of the Spiritual programme for their week of camp.

To ensure that all staff are prepared and take an active part in the preparation and delivery of the spiritual programme

To prepare teaching and materials which will encourage growth and maturity as followers of Christ (staff and campers).

### **MEDICAL OFFICER**

This is a specialist role and requires someone who is qualified to treat minor injuries and handle drugs within the bounds of current legislation.

### **SPORTS LEADER**

This is an important aspect of camp and is a means for many of the campers to relax and enjoy their leisure time. The Sports leader will be responsible to plan indoor and outdoor programmes, with some leaders having specific responsibilities; however, all should be ready to help if needed.

### **CRAFT LEADER**

If you are selected to do this task, you will need to do some pre-camp preparation. However, if you are free to lend a hand in the craft room during your week of camp, your assistance will be welcomed and you may enjoy yourself!

### **SITE MANAGER**

This role is appointed and the individual is responsible for the smooth running and efficient operation of the camp site, its services and its facilities. He is responsible for maintaining water supplies, that the drains are clear etc and generally to maintain the services in good working order, thus to minimise the risk of infection or injury.

### **THE ROLE OF A GROUP LEADER**

The group leader is probably the key role in the staff terms which run each week of camp, their dedication and commitment will determine the effectiveness of the week.

You are in 'loco parentis' for the week - that is, you should act as a reasonable, caring parent, acting responsibly at all times. However this does not exclude a sense of fun, you will certainly need a sense of humour to survive the week!

You must be available to you campers at all times. Try to get to know them and be sensitive to their needs - physical, emotional and spiritual. This may mean spending time with them in Pwllheli, instead of having coffee with other leaders, or sitting next to the shy one on the bus, instead of your boy/girlfriend.

YOU ARE GIVING A WEEK OF SERVICE USING THE GIFTS GOD HAS GIVEN YOU - IT IS NOT PRIMARILY A HOLIDAY, HOWEVER THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH THE CAMPER'S AND OTHER CHRISTIAN STAFF MUST BE ENJOYABLE OR YOU WILL FIND THE WEEK A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE.

Some of your duties:

#### Before Camp

Get to know some of the names of your group members from the list that you will receive. Pray for them and arrange prayer partners who will pray for you and your campers.

Send out camp booklets with a letter of introduction so that the group will know who to look out for.

#### At Camp

##### Coaches

Your responsibility as a leader begins at your coach boarding point and continues until the homeward journey is complete.

##### Arrival At Camp

Immediately on arrival you should settle the campers into their chalets or tents, which will be clearly marked with group names. Leaders' accommodation will normally be close to the campers.

##### Bank

It is your responsibility to collect bank money from campers and to distribute it at a specified time each morning (except Sunday). A clear written account of each camper's money should be kept to allow no misunderstandings. The money should always be returned to Assistant Directors the storing in the camp safe.

##### Rise and Shine

You will be expected to make sure that your group are washed, dressed and ready for breakfast on time.

##### Quiet/Group Times

You will be expected to lead a quiet time in the morning with a small group of campers. The material will be worked out and supplied in advance by the Padres, but should be prayerfully prepared before Camp. They may have a multitude of questions, some of which you may not be able to answer. Be honest and don't be afraid to admit it, then refer to Padre or other leaders for help. Without adequate preparation which considers their background, age, levels of knowledge etc., these sessions can be potentially very difficult. You can't spend too much time preparing.

Encourage your group to join in activities. The most enthusiastic group usually has the most enthusiastic leaders. Be sensitive to the needs and personalities of different campers, help them to get involved in activities which meet their needs. Watch out for the quiet and reserved ones.

Always support your group in their efforts at sport, crafts and other activities, help them prepare their team and, ensuring everyone gets an opportunity to take part.

During the week you are the first point of contact for your group. They will come to you first with their problems. Try to help, but never feel isolated as a group leader. Always share problems, others may be able to help.

NOTE: Remember Assistant Directors and Director will carry ultimate responsibility.

It is each group leaders responsibility to see that their own group is undressed, washed and bedded down. This includes making sure that the tents are safe and secure, particularly in bad weather.

You should supervise your group duties, ensuring that all campers do their fair share. Peer pressure is a powerful motivator for those campers who want to do the minimum to get by.

NB: No campers are allowed in the kitchen. Staff only to use the potato peeler.

Inspection is a necessary part of Camp to ensure hygiene. Imagination and initiative can make it more enjoyable. Encourage a responsible attitude to the site.

A rota will be provided for staff duties, including late night patrols, it is important to share these tasks to avoid the team becoming overtired.

You should know where your campers are at all times. Counting 5 is easier than 105!

### Relationships

Caution - Loving Christian relationships can be misconstrued by campers

### Drugs

Be aware of the signs and report immediately - see the Merseyside Police/Schools guidelines In the Training Manual

### Child Abuse

We are required by law to report any information received.

## **NOTE:**

Additional roles will be required to run a successful week of camp and group leaders will have to take on additional responsibilities for planning sports, crafts, concerts/fringe, wet day activities, outings etc. It requires everyone to pool their gifts and skills so everyone benefits.

### After Camp

Sit down and take time out to review camp, what went well, what could have been done better, what additional skills do I need for next season.

Go and do something about it.

## **THINGS TO NOTE**

- You must never issue any form of medication to a camper, including Anadin, Paracetamol etc.
- Try not to show favouritism to any member of your group.
- Avoid being alone in a closed room with any camper.
- No physical contact between campers and leaders is acceptable. (Either aggressive or loving)
- Never enter the sleeping areas of members of the opposite sex.
- Respect camp guidelines even when off site. This may mean that you will need to curb your normal behaviour for the week, so as not to offend another member of the camp.
- If you have a disagreement or grievance with another leader, discuss it in private with the person concerned or a member of the Admin staff.
- Remember that the Admin staff are experienced leaders and are there to help you.

## **DUTIES**

### DINING ROOM

#### **BEFORE THE MEAL STAFF TO:**

- Put wet and dry swill bins in place.
- Fill three bowls with hot soapy water and place on the table by the washing area.

#### **DURING THE MEAL**

- After the first course, campers bring their own dishes to the table, clear the food scraps into the correct swill bin and soak the dishes. Place the cutlery in the bowls of hot water to soak.

## AFTER THE MEAL

- Staff to wash, rinse and drain dishes. Campers may assist with drying and setting out the room.
- Clear and wash the tables.
- Stack sauces (wipe bottles if necessary), jams, sugar etc. on shelves.
- Brush the floor.
- Reset the tables if necessary. STAFF to check with Catering Manager for specific instructions.
- Leave the washing area clean and tidy.

## STAFF ONLY

- Return any spare food to the kitchen.
- Return any kitchen utensils to the kitchen.
- Place dinner plates back in the warmer if required.
- You will be required to wash up in the kitchen occasionally on a rota basis.

## TOILETS

### STAFF ONLY:

Toilets: Toilet pans to be cleaned by STAFF ONLY

Use the toilet brush and disinfectant, which the Site Manager will provide correctly diluted.

The cloth for wiping the seat and rubber gloves are in the cupboard in the toilet area.

Female toilets: Staff to empty the sanitary bins in the individual toilets into a large bin bag and take to the incinerator area for burning.

Male toilets: Staff to see the Site Manager for special instructions for cleaning the floor.

## CAMPERS AND STAFF

Wash area: sinks and showers to be washed with Vim or Glitto and hot water (except on plastics.)

Sweep and mop the floors.

Mop, bucket and brush must be left in the toilet area for hygienic reasons.

### Note

Cloths, cleaning powders, disinfectant, bin bags and spare toilet rolls are kept in the toilet block cupboard. Extra stock is in the store room in the cookhouse. Report any defective items to the site manager immediately.

## POTATOES

STAFF check with the catering manager for the quantity required. Staff only to use the peeling machine as follows:

Place sieve in the sink allowing the waste to flow into it.

Half fill the machine with potatoes. Turn the water on.

Turn the electricity on and leave running until all the peel has been removed.

Keep the sieve clean, emptying contents into a bowl for the site manager.

Clean the machine, sink and floor area after use.

## CAMPERS AND STAFF:

Eye the potatoes.

Place in a large metal container of water.

Work area to be left clean and tidy after the duty.

Wash the potato peelers and put back in box.

Put peelings into a bin bag and leave bag by the incinerator for the site manager.

Brush the path.

Staff report to the catering manager on completion.

## CHALETS & TENTS

### CHALETS

- Campers to tidy the chalet daily.
- Brush floor.
- Empty the rubbish bins.
- Open the windows
- Staff to check for graffiti.
- Please ensure that blankets are not placed on the floor as mats or used outside on the grass.
- Report any defective beds, covers, windows, doors etc. to Site Manager.
- Shut doors and turn off lights when not in use.
- Check chalet doors are locked and windows shut before leaving camp on outings.

### TENTS

- Campers to make or air the beds daily (if weather is good).
- Tidy the tents daily.
- Ensure campers bedding and luggage is dry and in order.
- All litter in and around tents to be collected and removed.
- Ventilate tents - depending on weather conditions.
- Check daily that rubber bands are secure. Replacement to be made as soon as possible after failure.
- Ensure that flaps are closed during inclement weather.
- Check tents are closed and secure at night and before leaving camp on outings.

NOTE - During inclement weather the Site Manager cannot attend to all the tents at the same time. **Your help is needed.**

### CHILD PROTECTION

It is the responsibility of all MCYC staff to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people whilst safe-guarding against false accusation.

It is essential that any member of staff who suspects or has knowledge of a young person being abused follows the correct procedures. The fear of causing false alarm, hostility or unpopularity must take second place to the prime objective of protecting the child or young person.

#### ***Types and symptoms of abuse***

- Neglect leaving children alone/unsupervised, starvation. Can be shown in poor health, appearance, poor personal hygiene, low self esteem/confidence.
- Physical Abuse - actual physical harm. Can be shown in unexplained/hidden injuries.
- Sexual Abuse - sexual exploitation. Can be shown in pre-occupation with sexual matters.
- Emotional Abuse- emotional ill treatment or rejection having a severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of the child/young person. Can be shown in regression in behaviour, nervousness, attention seeking behaviour, inappropriate relationships with peers and adults.

***N.B. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse, but there may be other explanations***

#### ***If you suspect abuse***

Speak to the Director In private as soon as possible. Do not discuss this with other staff members as confidentiality and the privacy of the child is also important

When you have done this, the Director will decide on the appropriate course of action, you have discharged responsibility into his hands.

#### ***If a young person wants to talk about abuse***

- Accept what the young person says, keeping calm.
- Let them know that you need to speak to the Director, do not promise confidentiality.
- Be aware that the child/young person may have been threatened
- Never push for information.
- Reassure the child/young person that they were right to tell you and that you believe them.

- Let the child/young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down what was said, dates, times etc. Give a copy to the Director and keep one yourself.

## FORBIDDEN ITEMS

If you discover any forbidden items e.g. alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or offensive weapons, report them immediately to the Assistant Directors.

## FIRE PROCEDURE

If you discover a fire raise the alarm.

If you hear the alarm your role is to ensure that all campers proceed to the football field immediately and in an orderly manner.

On arrival, check that your group is all present and inform the Director.

The Fire Officer and his appointed team will deal with the incident

## QUIET TIMES/GROUP TIME

Quiet times are one of the most important activities that take place at camp. They are your opportunity to encourage the campers to talk about their experiences and understanding of God.

In order for you to be able to lead a quiet time, the following points are important  
 Quiet times are not necessarily quiet - they are times of discussion and your aim is to involve as many of the group members as possible either by encouraging them to verbalise their thoughts and perceptions or by involving them in some other way.

Your role is not to preach a sermon, but to facilitate a discussion which deepens their understanding of God's Word and how it applies to them today.

If you are to be able to encourage and draw out meaningful discussion, you will need to do the following things before you go to camp.

- Pray about you quiet times and those who will be in your sessions.
- Read the information supplied by the Padre and ensure that you know what the objectives of the sessions are. Put them in the context of the week's theme.
- If you are not sure of anything talk to the Padre before camp.
- Be clear about the aims of each session and what you want the campers to know, feel and do differently about their Christian walk on a daily basis.
- Ask yourself, "How can I make this interesting? What will I need to do to gain

the attention of the campers and how can I actively involve them in the discussion?" If you are unsure visit your local Christian bookshop and seek out publications that have ideas about working with groups. ( If you want to save your money, ask those in your church who already have them if you can borrow them and what help they can give.)

When you get to camp make sure that you attend the prayer meeting each day. This is such an important aspect that it will show in your quiet time.

When leading your group time remember the following key points;

- God gave you two ears and one mouth, that is a good ratio.
- Questions that start with what, when, where, how and why always get more response than questions that can be answered yes or no e.g. How does this story apply to us today? or What can we do to put this into practice? or When we do this what will others think about Jesus?
- Do not allow a clever group to lead you away from the topic -BUT do not be constrained entirely by the material supplied especially if an issue helps the group to respond more openly to a related issue.
- Do always try to open and close with prayer.

In order to enhance your relationships and discussion leading ability, you should try to nurture the following Key Principles and the examples of how to apply the principle.

- **Maintain or enhance the self-esteem of each individual.**  
*That is a very important point, I am glad that you made it.*
- **Listen and respond with empathy to an Individual's views.**  
*I can see that you really feel strongly about that point.*
- **Ask individuals for their help and encourage their involvement**  
*John, I wonder if you could tell me what you think that passage might mean to someone?*
- **Share your own thoughts, feelings and rational (sparingly)**  
*When I have read this in the past I have often thought it meant.... but now I think it also means....*
- **Provide support for individuals without removing responsibility**  
*I realise that it is important **for you** to make your **own** decision **on** that, but if you want to explore it further before **you do**, I would be happy to talk **with you**.*

Remember that if you need help, the Padre and the Admin team are there to help you.

Some don'ts about quiet times.

Don't respond positively to campers' comments about not wanting to take part

Don't start the time late or try to finish early.

Don't allow your group to disrupt other groups.

Don't allow your group to enter into sports activities until all the groups have had the full allotted time.

Don't be frightened about quiet times.

### **FINAL ADVICE**

**IF YOU DON'T KNOW.....ASK!!!**