



# Volunteering

Presenting The Boys' Brigade to Potential Volunteers

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# Volunteering

## Presenting The Boys' Brigade to Potential Volunteers

### Introduction

This resource has been produced to present volunteering opportunities in The Boys' Brigade.

Before you deliver this presentation, ensure that you have answers to the following questions:

- What is it that your Company does?
- What success do you have?
- What are your volunteering needs?
- What's the motivation of potential volunteers?
- What's your message to attract volunteers?
- Who is your audience?
- What activities, events and training do the local support networks (*e.g. Battalion/District*) offer?
- What activities, events and training does The Boys' Brigade offer nationally?
- What are the costs of volunteering?

Not all these questions will come up during a presentation, but they might form part of a Q & A session or a general conversation. Have a look in the Volunteer Tool Box for some help & guidance.

Remember to bring the following equipment:

- Anchors, Juniors, Discover and Challenge Plus programme packs
- Volunteering leaflets
- PowerPoint presentation and projector

## Presentation

Below is a script for the presentation. Although you should not read directly from it will help to give you an idea of what you might like to cover. It may be useful to create your own cue cards so that you remember key points.

### Introduction

#### ▶ Volunteering



<Location>  
<Date>



 **Your credentials:** *Introduce yourself and state briefly your experience as a children's or youth worker and how BB has supported you to be able to do this.*

For over 125 years, The Boys' Brigade has reached out to millions of children & young people. Today we are passionate about building bridges into local communities and engaging a generation of children & young people. The only way we are able to do this is finding people like you who are willing to support this work.

Through The Boys' Brigade children & young people (aged 5 to 18+) get involved in local churches by means of weekly groups, residential, special events, community involvement and training programmes. These activities are led by thousands of volunteers who are trained and supported to work as effective children's & youth workers in a Christian context. Whilst our work is in the UK and Ireland, we are part of a worldwide organisation set up and run to reach over one million children & young people all over the world.

We currently have over 12,000 leaders around the UK engaging with over 55000 children & young people, but due to the lack of adult volunteers there are thousands of children & young people who currently have no access to the Boys' Brigade.

**Rapport statement:** *Begin by sharing a personal experience where you have seen the impact The Boys' Brigade has made through your volunteering.*

**Presentation subject:** Volunteering in The Boys' Brigade

*Thank the group for the opportunity to be there and tell them a bit about volunteering in The Boys' Brigade, but more importantly about how we can work together to impact the lives of children & young people in <insert group location>.*

## Key points:

▶ Volunteering

Volunteering in The Boys' Brigade . . .

- ▶ engages
- ▶ is flexible
- ▶ supports

"70,000 members and 1500 groups in the UK"  
The Boys' Brigade 2008

🖱 During this presentation we want to tell you how The Boys' Brigade could . . .

1. Engages children & young people
2. Is flexible to your situation
3. Supports you in your role



**Question request:** Tell the group to feel free at any point to ask questions or instruct them that there will be a chance to ask questions at the end.

**Action request:** It's really important that at the end of the presentation there is a commitment from the group to take discussions further. Prepare them to be able to decide upon what they do next:

By the end of this presentation we want you to decide upon what your next step is going to be, whether you want to . . .

- Visit our Company
- Have a one-to-one conversation.
- Volunteer your skills at The Boys' Brigade.

**Bridge:** So let's begin by seeing how The Boys' Brigade . . .

## Main Body

### Key point 1: Engages Children & Young People

▶ Volunteering

engages children & young people



"8 years ago a lad was playing football outside the Church. He came in and had a great time. About 3 years ago he gave his life to Jesus. Since then, his brother and his Mum have both come into the Church as well!"  
Phil (Volunteer)

🖱 Each week The Boys' Brigade works with thousands of children & young people. The Boys' Brigade has a track record as a bridge builder into the local community. We firmly believe that we need to be in contact with children & young people, male and female, whether they have a faith or not. We cater for the varied interests of all children & young people. Everything is focussed on having fun, but we also have a special focus on developing individual potential, getting involved in your community, providing opportunities to be listened to and have a say, and recognising achievement.

We work in four age groups, with four different programme resources:

**Anchors.** This is our work with children aged from 5-8. They love to have fun and make lots of noise. At this age we seek to build firm foundations, establish a group identity and

nurture responsibility. They do lots of different activities which include crafts, music, games, sports, as well as learn about making friends, prayer, and Bible stories.

**Juniors.** This is our work with children aged from 8-11. This is a time of quiet change where we encourage independence. Their evenings are full of challenges, games and activities, usually ones that they have suggested themselves. We cater for just about every possible interest and at the same time support them to look beyond themselves. Children can look at the environment in which they live, healthy eating, fair trade, Bible superheroes and more.

**Discover.** This is for young people aged from 11-15. It's all about young people learning new skills, making their own decisions and then achieving their own personal goals. Activities range from improving football skills, pod-casting, learning about their carbon footprint, the Bible according to the Simpsons, sportsmanship, and more.

**Challenge Plus.** This is for young people aged from 15-18. It's all about young people planning and delivering their own programme. A wide range of topics focus on building life skills, encouraging recreation and leisure pursuits and being an active citizen. Young people can learn about fundraising, homelessness, independent living, preparing for work, and even more. All of which provide opportunities for young people to explore a personal Christian faith. This is a really uplifting and rewarding time for leaders. The young people have so many questions, seek out opportunities and responsibility, as well as bring energy to the whole group. Now you can really begin to reap what has been sown and nurtured from the age of 5.

Our work is relationship focussed, what we do is of less importance than the relationships we form. In a world that doesn't seem to be very good at building relationships, we believe that we have a crucial role to play helping young people realise their full worth as they mature from 5 year old children to 18 year old adults.

The lives of many children and young people in our communities are in turmoil. We know that 83% of young people believe that the community does not care about them, and yet 59% of churches have no one attending aged between 15 and 19. We also know that young people do best when they have a safe place to hang out with friends and trusted adult role models. Through The Boys' Brigade children and young people learn life skills that can transform their lives and put them in a position to make good choices. When their lives hit rocky times, they then have a steady anchor in and firm foundations built upon Jesus.

Are you willing to spend time with children & young people?  
Could you help them to harness their potential and discover more about themselves?  
Could you help make a difference in your community?

**Bridge:** The second point that we want to bring to your attention is that The Boys' Brigade is . . .

## Key point 2: Flexible to your situation

### ▶ Volunteering

#### flexible to your situation



"I would say to anyone considering becoming a leader in the BB; go for it! I've never regretted a minute"  
Joseph (Leader)



☞ One of the greatest strengths of The Boys' Brigade is that we have volunteers who commit long term to building relationships with children and young people in our Company. However, life can be hectic and we don't always have the time to do everything that we would like to do. There are so many competing demands. You have heard a bit about The Boys' Brigade and our Company, and probably would love to help out if only you had the time. Well we can't create more hours in the day, but we can design opportunities around you and what you are able to offer. Every volunteer has unique gifts and skills

that can benefit the group. There are lots of different opportunities, and some may even mean that you can do it from home, help on an infrequent basis as well as those able to help out on a weekly basis.

*Communicate the specific needs and volunteering roles your group has. Tell the group how those volunteering would make an impact. Tell the group that you are open to other ways that they could offer their services.*

**Bridge:** For some of you, you might not realise where you fit into all of this. However everyone has a role they could play, whether it's through encouragement or volunteering.

. . . and moving onto my final point The Boys' Brigade . . .

## Key point 3: Supports you in your role

### ▶ Volunteering

#### supports you in your role

"I never thought I could work with young people, but the training and support the BB has provided has given me the confidence I need"  
Karen (Leader)



☞ When we speak with potential volunteers they are always enthusiastic about the idea, but often concerned when it comes to the practicality of working as a volunteer. We pride ourselves on volunteers who respect and value children & young people, and love them as individuals. So if you do this, we promise to do everything we can to help support and train you to be effective children's & youth workers.

As a volunteer you are not alone. As well as support in your own Company, there are also local and national support networks which means that you are never far from a friendly face, someone to share ideas with, and other groups to join in with activities & competitions.

*Use this as an opportunity to add examples from the local Battalion & District from your research. Include how many groups meet in the area, their numbers, what events and activities they put on, any other benefits etc.*

If you are involved in contact work with children & young people you also don't have to reinvent the wheel. Our four programme resources contain important information about working with children & young people, as well as a wealth of ideas to keep your group fresh and most importantly enjoyable for children, young people and leaders. These contemporary programmes offer a firmly Christian-based means of working in a creative and relevant way using a balanced programme of adventure and activity.

### Key Quotes!

"I give up my free time to volunteer because I want to make a difference. I want to give the young people opportunities to explore faith, to learn new skills, and to share in new opportunities . . . We have The Boys' Brigade in our church , because it is a form of outreach into our community, bringing in people who perhaps wouldn't come across the door."

Sue (Leader)

**Bridge:** So just before I give you opportunity to ask any questions, I would like to just sum up.

### Conclusion

#### ▶ What next ?

**"Be an example to everyone with your words, your actions, your love, your faith and your life"**  
1 Timothy 4:12

the adventure begins here . . .



#### Remind people of the problem/ opportunity:

Our passion as a children's and youth work outreach organisation is to engage children & young people in our community and we want you to join us in that adventure.

Never underestimate the role that you could play in one child or young person's life. Your interventions through your work with The Boys' Brigade will change their futures.

#### Restate the key points and crystallise the message:

We really would like you to join us and help us engage children & young people in our community. We want to be flexible to your situation and we commit to support you in any role you choose to do.

**Question request:** Offer an opportunity for any questions to be asked.

**Request action:** Agree a time frame to take this further.

Now you've heard from us and we want to give you an opportunity to think about what we have said, and we'll be back in contact with <insert named person> in <insert time frame> (e.g. 1-2 weeks).

Then hopefully we will be in a position to progress further, and take the next few steps that could include:

- Visit our Company
- Have a one-to-one conversation.
- Applying to become a volunteer

If you think The Boys' Brigade is an organisation that you could volunteer for, then we would love to continue this conversation.

## **Follow Up**

It's important at the end of the presentation to agree a timeline as to what to do next. This could include . . .

- Visit our Company
- Have a one-to-one conversation.
- Applying to become a volunteer

Remember to follow the guidelines in the Volunteer Recruitment Tool Box on volunteer welcomes and ongoing support.

## Key Tips

### Do . . .

- Make the most of the opportunity. This presentation is a chance to share the strengths of The Boys' Brigade; our resources, training, networks of support, and ability to engage young people.
- Look for a response from the audience, but be aware of asking questions that could cause disagreement or create negativity.
- Agree the next steps as outcomes from the meeting.
- Place a leaflet on each chair before the presentation.
- Tell the group if you don't know an answer, but ensure that you get back in contact with one.
- Follow up the presentation in the time period agreed.
- Create cue cards to prompt you on the three main points of the presentation.
- Study the FAQs so you can answer potentially difficult questions.

### Don't . . .

- Read from a script.
- Make promises that you can't keep.
- Stress negatives. Remain positive on all occasions.
- Use your experience of The Boys' Brigade to limit what they can do with the group.
- Use BB language that may be confusing to someone from outside the organisation, e.g. *Company (Group), Battalion/ District (Local and national support networks)*.

## FAQs

There are many people who would like to make a contribution in their communities by volunteering, but who feel unsure about how to go about it or what they could do. There are also some real and imagined barriers for people that may hold them back from offering their help. BB companies can benefit from being aware of potential barriers and be able to respond by being positive and honest about what working in the BB will entail.

If we can anticipate what would hold suitable people back from volunteering, then we can try to reassure people where the barriers are imagined. Some of the questions in volunteers' minds (and some suggested responses) may include:

### **What is The Boys' Brigade?**

For over 125 years The Boys' Brigade has reached out to millions of children & young people. Today we are passionate about partnering with churches to build bridges into local communities and engage a generation of children & young people with a message of hope rooted in Jesus.

Our work is relationship focussed, what we do is of less importance than the relationships we form. In a world that doesn't seem to be very good at building relationships with young people, we believe that we have a crucial role to play helping them to realise their full worth as they mature from 5 year old children to 18 year old adults. Through doing this, we work with children & young people who have no other connection with the church, and demonstrate to them the reality of a living God through what we do, say, and teach.

Through The Boys' Brigade children & young people (aged 5 to 18+) get involved in local churches by means of weekly groups, residential, special events, community involvement and training programmes. These activities are led by thousands of volunteers who are trained and supported to work as effective children's & youth workers in a Christian context. Whilst our work is in the UK and Ireland, we are part of a worldwide organisation set up and run to reach over one million children & young people all over the world.

Underpinning all of our work is a steadfast belief that what Jesus said 2000 years ago is relevant today. Our leaders have experienced the truth that Jesus offers life in all its fullness. Consequently our passion is for children & young people . . .

- . . . to experience acceptance and opportunities to develop skills and positive values.
- . . . to hear & see Jesus' hope for themselves.
- . . . to become a practical demonstration of Jesus' love to their peers.

Whilst not every child & young person becomes a Christian, we do believe that Jesus' life and message, is challenging and inspiring today as they seek to understand their value and purpose.

### **Why does The Boys' Brigade need more help?**

We currently have over 12,000 leaders around the UK engaging with over 55000 children & young people, but due to the lack of adult volunteers there are thousands of children & young people who currently have no access to the Boys' Brigade. If more adults helped

out this would take the burden off our current volunteers and allow more children & young people to experience the adventure of The Boys' Brigade.

### **How can I help with The Boys' Brigade?**

There are many ways in which you can give your time to help The Boys' Brigade whatever your gender, age, abilities and skills. Simply let us know about your skills, your availability and how you would like to help and we will match this to roles within your local area.

### **I don't have a background in The Boys' Brigade, does this matter?**

No previous Boys' Brigade experience is needed. Energy and enthusiasm are what is important. In fact, getting volunteers from outside the organisation is what has kept The Boys' Brigade as an innovative organisation for over 125 years.

### **My child is in The Boys' Brigade, is there anything I could do to help?**

The short answer is yes. Many of our helpers and leaders are parents of members. They are able to see first hand how The Boys' Brigade benefits children & young people and consequently want to give something back, moreover they can spend time with their child, learn new skills, and have lots of fun.

### **I will only be able to help out on a flexible basis is this ok?**

Yes. There are many different ways to help in The Boys' Brigade and many of these can be adapted to suit your needs. Whether you can help out once a fortnight, month or term or just at special events or camps, there is bound to be a role you can play.

### **Will I get paid?**

*As a voluntary organisation we are unable to pay volunteers for the time they give to The Boys' Brigade. Out of pocket expenses are often paid and many leaders are offered opportunities to take part in activities and social activities.*

### **Will it cost me anything to become a volunteer?**

*Companies will need to be clear with potential volunteers about the local arrangements for the payment of registration fees. Many groups pay these on behalf of leaders, but this is not always the case. We should also point out that this is standard practice in the other uniformed youth organisations, and that we in the BB charge a lower fee than the others. It is important that we are honest about any other costs that may be incurred by volunteers so that people can make the decision to volunteer with all the relevant facts.*

### **Do you have any policies on expenses?**

*It would be standard practice to reimburse leaders for materials bought and even mileage for trips etc.*

### **What are the benefits of helping out?**

There are a number of benefits you can gain from volunteering. Spending time with children & young people, learning new skills, contributing to your community, and sharing your faith are just a few of the reasons why our current Leaders choose to spend some of their spare time in The Boys' Brigade.

### **I don't have a specific skill but am keen to help out, what can I do?**

Everyone will have a skill, attribute or ability that they can pass on. One of the best things about volunteering however, is the chance to learn new skills you may not have been able to do otherwise. The BB also provides opportunities for training in different aspects of the work; there will be an induction period when new volunteers will be given information and advice about training. People do not need qualifications to volunteer for the BB, but they may develop skills that help them in other areas of their lives.

### **Are there any age restrictions on helping out?**

As long as you are over 18 years of age, you can help out as an adult volunteer. There is no upper age limit for adult volunteers.

### **What is the process for joining?**

There is an application form to fill out which someone in your group will be able to help you with. References, interview and an enhanced disclosure check are also required for most roles.

### **Will I be insured?**

Yes. All Members are covered under our comprehensive insurance scheme.

### **Do I need to be registered?**

All volunteers who take part in regulated activities that involve frequent (once a month), intensive (three or more occasions in a period of 30 days) or overnight contact with children are required to register with The Boys' Brigade, provide references and agree to an enhanced disclosure check. It is an easy procedure and we will provide you with all the help and support you need to complete any forms. Even though this is an added burden, it better ensures the safety of children and young people in our care.

### **Would I have to lead worship sessions?**

*There are differing levels of Christian commitment required for different roles within the company. Even people with a strong faith may feel uncomfortable in this role and we try to fit people to the tasks that match their gifts. The BB is able to provide training and support materials to help leaders gain skills and confidence in this area.*

### **Will volunteering for the BB affect my benefits?**

*Volunteers who are claiming Job Seekers Allowance or other types of benefit would need to check with their benefits office, in most cases benefits will not be affected.*

### **I didn't realise that the BB was still around!**

*Although some reservations about our image may not be voiced directly, it is crucial that we take the opportunity to dispel some of the myths about the uniformed youth movement. We need to present an image that reflects the best of the work of the BB, and demonstrate that we are doing exciting and worthwhile work with children and young people. It can be useful to have examples to share of some of the national projects as well as the local work.*

### **Does The Boys' Brigade allow girls into membership?**

Since January 2009 The Boys' Brigade has given churches the opportunity to provide mixed children's and youth work as part of the organisation. Girls and young women are now allowed to be full and equal members.

As an organisation we still believe in the importance of single sex children's and youth work. The Boys' Brigade remains committed to providing quality experiences for boys and young men, and will continue to do so. However, we also recognise the need to respond to differing church situations in a flexible manner. Consequently we have approved the acceptance of girls and young women to become members of The Boys' Brigade where it is a need and will of the church.

### **Why do you wear a uniform?**

Although recognisable by what we wear, our uniform does not define who we are and what we do. Nevertheless with all our experience, we have learnt that a uniform creates a sense of identity. It promotes unity, equality, and a sense that all that come belong to the group.

### **Will I have to wear a uniform?**

*Again, we need to be clear about the local requirements and any costs attached. It will not be necessary for leaders in some roles to wear uniform.*

### **What age group should I work with?**

This is dependent on your interests and skills. Most people will find that they feel most comfortable with a particular age group. If you don't know then you may want to try out a couple of evenings with a variety of age groups.

### **What's the point of the awards?**

Recently we carried out a piece of research that looked at what children & young people liked about coming to The Boys' Brigade. One of the many interesting aspects was that they loved to receive badges and awards for what they do. We really value children & young people and all that they do for their personal, community and spiritual development. Therefore we give awards to recognise all that they do and achieve, individually and as a group.

### **How do we provide opportunities for children & young people to discuss and learn about God?**

Our four contemporary programmes offer a firmly Christian-based means of working in a creative and relevant way. They cater for the varied interests of all children & young people, and by engaging them in these activities we are also able to teach and discuss issues surrounding faith and discipleship.

However all BB activity is based around relationship building, we do nothing that will not help us in this aim because our leaders want to help children and young people to discover more about themselves, reach their potential, and find a relationship with Jesus that will last them a lifetime and beyond! Our programmes engage children & young people, and it is then by developing trusting, positive relationships and by modelling who Jesus is, that we can help children & young people come to know Jesus for themselves. We are confident that through strong relationships your lives will speak even louder than words.

### **How is it best to keep up to date with what is going on in The Boys' Brigade?**

We keep in contact with our members through our quarterly magazine called The Gazette, our website, and Blink our magazine for young people aged between 16 and 25. Through

these lines of communication we will keep you up to date with latest news, information, ideas and best practice.

### **What are the benefits of being part of a larger organisation?**

Being part of a larger umbrella body means that you are part of a worldwide movement that has a recognised brand name in the community and gains parental trust. Through being a member of The Boys' Brigade we also provide you with several services, including programme resources, support, training, advice, leader registration procedures, a ready to use child protection policy, and regular updates on government policy and best practice.

### **What training will be provided?**

The Boys' Brigade has a wide range of courses to support leaders in their voluntary youth work, these include managing volunteers, relational youth work practice, sharing your faith and leading residential. They are all based on the youth work standards. The basic training course that we have for all leaders is called YLT (Youth Leader Training), and Quick Start training provides all the necessary child protection, safety and programming training to get a group started.

### **What should I expect from the local support networks?**

The local support networks in *<insert group location>* provide support, training, competitions (e.g. football, uni-hoc, athletics, pool, swimming etc.) communal worship, finance, and extra activities (*delete depending on location*).

### **What national events are there?**

The Boys' Brigade runs many national events, including national football, music, and athletics competitions, Christian festivals, and weekend residential for young people.

### **What is the role of a chaplain?**

Through being a chaplain it is an amazing opportunity to be in contact with children & young people, and be known as someone rather than a face behind a pulpit. In reality the chaplain may not have time to be in everyday contact with the group, but they should be confident in the leaders that are appointed to represent the church.

The Boys' Brigade belongs to the church and is its outreach tool. The chaplain's role is to support the group in communicating the Christian message, offer leaders pastoral support, and being fully involved in the decision making processes of the group.

### **What is the role of a captain?**

The captain is invited by the church to undertake a leadership role for the whole BB group. They are the leader in charge and must undertake Captain's training as soon as possible to prepare them in the basics of personnel management, administrative skills and direction of the group.

## Dealing With Barriers

**We would like to volunteer in The Boys' Brigade group but . . .**

**. . . once I become a leader, I'll be stuck with it for the next 30 years.**

Volunteer burn out is a real danger. It's important that those who work with children and young people are committed to the work, but also that they do it out of love not out of guilt. It should be fun, exciting and challenging. Becoming a BB leader is not a life sentence, it is often a good thing after a period of service to take a break and see if you still have the enthusiasm and desire to still be a leader.

**. . . we don't understand children's and youth culture.**

Children and young people have always used different language, worn different clothes and listened to different music. However, don't worry because they don't expect you to. What is far more important is to have adults that are constant in showing an interest in them and love them for who they are.

**. . . we don't want to deal with all the red tape.**

Today, if you want to get involved in youth and children's work there are necessary procedures to follow. We have guidelines on good practice and child protection. These guidelines cover the way in which we work and the boundaries within which good practice operates. This by necessity does require some paper work and training. Even though this is an added burden, it is mostly good practice that is common sense and ensures the safety of children and young people in our care. This surely is a good thing!

## Popular Myths

### **The Boys' Brigade is not owned by the Church**

A BB group cannot normally operate outside a Church context. We hope that the group is seen as an integral part of the church's children's and youth work, as well as a partner in outreach. The leaders, Church minister and wider church membership have the joint responsibility for all group matters, including programme, finances, and nomination of leaders.

Therefore as an organisation we are flexible to the needs of your church. The Boys' Brigade is a great way that your church can work in your community. We believe in an integrated approach to our work. Your Boys' Brigade group is part of your church. The church should have the vision for it, and its leadership should be 100% behind it. We hope that what happens during the week will be seen as just as important as what happens at the weekend! Although we are cross denominational, we are not a parachurch organisation.

### **The Boys' Brigade isn't focussed on the local church, in fact it draws people away from it to the national organisation**

The local groups are the core unit of the organisation and without them The Boys' Brigade would not exist. It may be appropriate that some leaders volunteer as part of the local support networks or even on a national level. However this should never be at the expense of what is happening in a local group.

### **Groups are so activity orientated that there is little time for discipling and relationship building**

All BB activity is based around relationship building, we do nothing that will not help us in this aim because our leaders want to help children and young people to discover more about themselves, reach their potential, and find a relationship with Jesus that will last them a lifetime and beyond!

We firmly believe that in order to talk to children & young people in a meaningful way we need to be in contact with them and model what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Our contemporary programmes offer a firmly Christian-based means of working in a creative and relevant way using a balanced programme of adventure and activity. We enable you to cater for the varied interests of all children & young people. Then by developing trusting, positive relationships and by modelling who Jesus is, we can help children & young people come to know Jesus for themselves.

All of our programme activities, whether playing football or discussing parenting, are underpinned by our faith in Jesus. Groups also have a dedicated weekly time of activity focussed on teaching and discussing the basics of Christian faith and discipleship. Our resources provide lots of suggestions on how to do this, but you are also free to use whatever material is appropriate to your group.

Our passion as a children's and youth work outreach organisation is to empower children & young people to know that when Jesus promised life in all its fullness he really meant it. The core of what we do is to support and help churches and Christians to run outreach

groups all over the UK & Ireland, where week in week out we meet with over 70000 people. The need is great, but we trust in God that a generation of children and young people can engage with Jesus.

**How?** We demonstrate that there is a God who loves them and gives them everything they need to live and thrive. The New Testament teaches us that, we can stand up and talk about Jesus with no authority, if those we are talking to are hungry, naked or thirsty. That's why when we talk about empowerment we really mean it. Through The Boys' Brigade children and young people learn life skills that can transform their lives and put them in a position to make good choices. When their lives hit rocky times, they then have a steady anchor in and firm foundations built upon Jesus.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NLT) we hear Paul say, "We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives". That's what children and young people need as they journey from childhood to adulthood. We look to create sustainable models of outreach, where Christian adult leaders have a passion and love for children & young people, who want to spend time with them, who want to help them to harness their potential and avoid any pitfalls.

#### **The Boys' Brigade has a "take it or leave it" and "one size fits all" attitude**

One of the biggest strengths of The Boys' Brigade is its diversity. In fact, no two groups are exactly the same. What happens changes depending on the interests of the children & young people, as well as the skills of the leaders. The BB structure is there to provide a framework, not a straight-jacket and there is lots of flexibility in its implementation.

#### **Some of the activities don't have wide appeal amongst children & young people**

Our programmes have recently undergone a radical review and are now made up of a wide range of topics which can be selected or adapted to meet all needs. They are also easily adaptable by leaders with suggested differentiation and extension tasks.

#### **The Boys' Brigade is militaristic, no one does drill and marching bands these days**

Drill and band are not compulsory parts of the programme. There are some groups who use this as a means of building teamwork amongst the group. The terminology and uniform that we have is designed to build cohesion amongst the group, and is not motivated by militarism.

#### **The Boys' Brigade is old fashioned and needs modernising**

Our 125 year history isn't something that dictates what we do today, but has given us lots of experience in partnering churches in outreach. Some of the things we did at the beginning of our organisation's history have changed. We have learnt, adapted and updated what we do. At this moment in our history we are investing in new ways of working. The fact that we have been around for so long is a testament to the work that people have been doing in building God's kingdom through The Boys' Brigade, rather than a hindrance for the present day.

#### **The uniform needs to be one that children & young people want to wear**

Our uniform is very simple based on a polo shirt and sweatshirt. There is an optional more formal uniform which some groups wear, some only for special occasions, and some never

at all. We have several examples of groups whose young people have designed their own “unofficial” uniforms, which encourages it to be worn inside and outside of activities. Our uniform gives us an identity, and helps build an organisation that children & young people are proud to belong to.

## **Facts About The Boys' Brigade**

- The Boys' Brigade has over 70,000 members in the UK and Ireland.
- There are 15,000 leaders around the UK and Ireland.
- The Boys' Brigade in the UK and Ireland has over 1500 groups.
- The Boys' Brigade was founded on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1883, and is now over 125 years old.
- The Boys' Brigade is a worldwide organisation in over 50 countries and one million members.