

CREW CHIEF'S KIT ----- "OPENING NIGHT" -----FIRST TWO MEETINGS

This is it – your one chance to make a great first impression. Let's plan together how you can make this night one of the best for every boy who attends. The following notes are recommendations for conducting the first two meetings of your new program. Advice here can also be applied to guide new-comers who join later on [more on that at the end.]

Be sure that everything is in place well ahead of starting time: room is ready with adequate chairs and space, more than sufficient number of New Boy Fliers printed (always make more than you think you need – boys have a way of 'appearing out of nowhere'), and that every leader is informed of his role to play. Be specific about everything – trying to decide and assign with a room full of boys will test the limits of any man. Make this a 'great night', not a night that 'grates' (nerves can only take so much!!)

The following outline notes parallel the Weekly Meeting guidelines found in your **Building On A Biblical Foundation** Leader's Manual (p.12-15)

FIRST MEETING -----

0 – PRE-MEETING PREP Since boys are attending their first Lifebuilder Boy's meeting with you, plan to write down names and contact information (address, phone number) on as many as you can as they arrive. Other opportunity may be available as your meeting develops but may be difficult if your 'opening night' is a large one. Do what you can to establish 'records' early (always knowing who is there – when they are there – will be very important as you work towards achievements!) However, be prompt in starting as close to 'on time' as possible.

1 – LAY THE FOUNDATION. In your first meeting allow the boys to be seated (or standing in the absence of chairs) in whatever arrangement they are comfortable as you introduce yourself and the men leading with you. Make them feel welcome, expressing with enthusiasm your excitement about all that is ahead. Pass out "New Boy Fliers" to everyone. Bring their attention to the cover where the Lifebuilder Logo Patch is displayed. Have the boys recite with you the six descriptive words that border it ("New Friends.....Excitement.....Faith Building.....New Skills.....Challenging.....Adventure") keeping the boys following you by counting off with your fingers on a raised hand. Ask them, "**How many are READY for all of THAT?**" (your enthusiastic voice will likely get enthusiastic responses!) Now, direct their attention again to the brochure, "**Ok, then...let's recite together the Lifebuilder Boys Motto.**" Next, have them also follow you in reading aloud our Theme Scripture (Eph 2:10...Be sure to read slowly so that all, especially the youngest, can keep up.) Finally, without delay, ask the boys to reverently bow their heads as you pray a very sincere, from the heart but brief, prayer for your first night together!

2 – FRAME IT IN After prayer, have the boys turn to the inside of their brochures and you begin reading “**You are about...**” (Read to the end of this first paragraph.) Ask the boys about the picture of the footsteps and the Bible (“**What does it mean**”?) Now ask, “**Where do we learn what God wants to do in us and with us?**” (allow for a few answers.) Continue reading through to the end of the second paragraph (doing so with enthusiasm.)

This will be the time to divide the boys into their age-specific “Crews”. An idea of how you want to ‘gather them’ (standing together in separate parts of the room, or sitting on certain rows of chairs) should be determined before meeting begins. Continue reading in their brochure about who will be an Apprentice. Now, have the boys in grades 2-4 move to the place(s) you had pre-determined along with their respective Crew Chief(s).

Next, do the same for the notes about Journeyman. If there is a sufficient number of boys to divide into Journeyman and Journeyman Senior Class do so (it is important to have no less than 3 in a “crew”) otherwise the rest of your boys will be grouped together. [Note: During your second meeting, if the number of boys and men leaders is sufficient, you may want to divide again to place boys in the size of crews as suggested in the Leader’s Manual (see p.10)]

With all boys seated again along with their respective Crew Chiefs, read to the bottom of this 2nd page. Be prepared to answer any questions so far, especially from boys who may be nearing an age when they would be ‘moving upwards’ (such as at the end of 4th grade.) Everybody starts where they are today! [The exception is: during the summer months, after school has dismissed, boys are to be placed according to where they will be at the start of the next school year. You may also find it helpful to ‘advance’ a boy who, though behind in school due to failing grades, may actually be more suitably matched with boys his age (but do so with caution - academic age and emotional age can be quite a bit apart.)]

[If time permits, continue on page 3. Read quickly through the first two paragraphs on this page, again placing emphasis on all the key points which are always highlighted with explanation marks!!]

The final part needs to be covered in this first meeting. You are asking these boys to pledge their co-operation and trust: expect more and you will get more! Boys need to fill in this ‘pledge card’ at the bottom of p.3 on their first night [adults may need to help the youngest boys, have pencils or pens ready.] Note that the first blank line is the name of your church, the other will be their ‘signature’ [youngest boys will likely only print.] Be sure to explain that the reverse side is to be read and signed by their guardian [usually a parent] but **ABOLUTELY DO NOT CUT IT OUT** [to be done by their crew chief next week...and it must come back!! This may be quite a challenge for a few - just see what happens!]

3 – TOP IT OFF Before boys rise to enjoy a little ‘recreational reward’ be sure to state that kindly behavior and fair play will be strictly expected. Tell them that this is their first, important opportunity to show just how sincerely they want to be a part of something this good! And ‘good’ is just what we are counting on from them!!

Game: “The Red Hot Shoe”

You need to ‘borrow’ a small shoe from one of the boys for each ‘team’ you are going to have. Divide all boys (ages mixed together) into two teams of 8 or more (if possible.) Larger “Sites” may have additional teams, but number of boys per team is important. At the start, with teams lined up in files (2nd boy facing the 1st boy’s back), crew chief(s) will hand a shoe to the head of each line. That boy (and all others) can only ‘clasp’ it between their wrists (no part of the palm or fingers making contact.) As quickly as they have control of the shoe the first boy turns and passes it to the 2nd (who also can only hold it this same way) and saying loudly, **“RED HOT – PLEASE TAKE!!”** If the shoe is dropped it is picked up only by the same boy who was attempting to pass it (and only by his wrists, which now becomes even more difficult!) When the shoe reaches the end of one of the lines, that team wins. However, you may decide to increase the excitement (or because teams are shorter in number) to have the shoe returned back up the line and the round is not over until it reaches the first boy again.

Time may allow for two or three rounds if everyone is enjoying it (a “best out of three” win is always more challenging for two teams.) Just try to end and get boys settled for the important closing in about **20 minutes**.

4 – COVER IN PRAYER

This being your first devotional closing, you need to request that the boys settle quickly and be reverent, as this will be your most ‘spiritual’ part of the meeting. Comment on how much fun the game “Red Hot Shoe” was, but tell them that we should be just as anxious to “pass on” the Good News about Jesus! Say, **“If we are just as excited about God and His Gospel, other people will become excited, too!! People watch us. “What they see in us may one day be in them!”**

“A powerful storm hit the east coast of the United States, causing mighty waves to beat angrily along the shore all night long. In the morning an elderly man walked from his home nearby to see what damage may have come to the beachfront. Sand and shells were everywhere and seaweed covered the beach.

“As he stood there watching with concern a young boy was noticed darting up and down the beach, picking up things and tossing them back into the sea. The man moved closer and

realized that it was starfishes, which the storm had washed ashore, that the little boy was tossing with all his might.

“Hey there, young man,” he said, “You know there are far too many...why...the whole beach is full of ‘em. Can’t much matter what you’re trying to do there!” The little boy paused and just stared at the old man, still holding another in his hand. Then he abruptly turned to the sea, tossed yet one more with all his might, and announced in a strong, proud voice, “Well, it sure matters to this one!”

“You see, boys, you may think that you are small and unimportant, but each one of us matters to God. And even if it seems like the whole world is going the wrong way, washed up and hopeless, let Jesus put His hands around you and toss you back into his sea of forgiveness!” [Add any other closing thoughts you may have, but wrap it up promptly!]

[Pray]

5 – DEPARTURE Remind all the boys the importance of bringing their signed booklets back to the next meeting. Be sure to praise them for an excellent time together and tell them how much you are already looking forward to next time!

Remember the Departure Chores outlined on p.15 of your manual. Let this first meeting end as well as it started. Congratulations will be in order to all of your team: be sure to lift one another up. This is truly your beginning of something of eternal worth!!

SECOND MEETING -----

0 – PRE-MEETING PREP As boys arrive begin collecting their ‘Brochures’ from previous meeting and cut out the Pledge/Permission ‘ticket’ part of page three. Every boy needs to have one on file! If boys have forgotten or ‘lost’ their brochure you need to be prepared to give them another but the importance must be stressed! Each ‘Site’ will have to make its own decision in this, whether to limit or restrict a boy’s participation until this responsibility is met. Younger boys will always have greater difficulty and a measure of patience is needed. But having some documentation showing guardian approval on every boy is necessary so that your authority and their accountability are agreed upon. Do the best you can with this.

Remember the suggestions given in your Leadership Manual [p.12] about having some activities available for early arriving boys. Most important is a feeling of ‘order’ in the location you will shortly begin your meeting!

1 – LAY THE FOUNDATION. This week, as you announce the start of your meeting (perhaps with a loud “TIME TO POUR THE FLOOR”,) boys need to line up in their respective “Crews”. If you have not yet determined the ‘layout’ (how the crews will be positioned) do so at this time (again, consider the suggestions offered on p.12.) Remember to ensure that youngest boys will have good visibility and not feel ‘crowded’ by the older, larger ones.

With boys in place, go through the steps on p.13. In this meeting you are not likely to have “Achievements Earned”, and “Reminders” may only be events happening soon in your church (always keep these announcements limited to things shortly coming to pass – ‘boys don’t take notes’. For you to prepare notes and send them home may always be your best communication with families!)

Concerning “shares” (weekly dues): it should have been decided before this night if your Site will be expecting a weekly contribution from the boys (which you should explain to them at this time.) Beginning the next meeting, boys are expected to bring in what is announced here. Make your decision with full awareness that boys forget, new boys will arrive without, and plenty of other things will make this task a bit challenging. Do remind yourself of the words from your Leadership Manual: “...taking personal responsibility is a part of the Biblical lesson of stewardship, one of the important growing lessons we hope to instill.” (also on p.13)

Try to wrap up this opening part of your meeting on time (in about 15 minutes.)

2 – FRAME IT IN For this second meeting, have boys divide up with their respective Crew Chiefs, gathering into opposite corners of the room or in separate rooms. Going outside may be a possibility in good weather, but don’t lose too much time moving boys around!

If you did not have enough time in the last meeting to cover all of page 3 adequately, do so this week. Use this opportunity to let ‘crew members’ express their own interests in which subjects they would like to ‘tackle’ as you earn Skill Patches. Also talk about places they might want to go and things they would enjoy doing. Remind them that the Lifebuilder Boys program is meant to take them, with the Gospel, into their community to share with others and to experience new things. Consider the suggestions offered on page 25 of the Leadership Manual, mentioning only those that may apply to your area and be accessible to you. [It would be helpful to highlight or underline them before your meeting, or write some of your own in the large space provided. Of course, boys may add some ideas of their own as well.]

Now, using the notes in your Leadership Manual (p.17), discuss our Motto, having boys express (in their own words) what it means. It will be difficult for some boys to sound ‘original’ (there are only a few ways to describe this saying) but encourage them to also explain how they will try to apply this to their own lives: what changes they may need to make, or what help from the Lord they will be counting on. Let this be a comfortable, friendly discussion – a boy’s personal

life needs to remain 'private' at this time. Observe the notes in your Manual on how to proceed. Let each boy demonstrate that he has learned the Motto by reciting it alone. Now rehearse the theme verse (Eph 2:10), perhaps having them write it down as well. Be sure they fully understand that both are to be known and recited before they can be awarded their shoulder patches (likely during the next week's meeting.)

3 – TOP IT OFF Game: "The Crab Race"

Boys will be in teams of six and should be grouped according to height (rather than age.) Allowing boys to 'team up' with friends is fine, but you may find it better to 'assign them' to avoid hurt feelings by those who end up 'left out'. It is possible to have up to 5 boys that do not 'complete' a team so try including available men with oldest, tallest team or choose to have more than one race where these 'leftover' boys join with others to challenge the 'winner'. Plenty of space is needed, so clear the room of furniture or move this game outside. (This race could be done in a circle around the perimeter of the room with furniture going to the center.)

Team members take their position by turning their backs inward and locking arms at elbows, forming a small circle ("crab"). As they make their way around the 'track' teams should revolve so that each member gets a chance to lead ('spinning 'crabs' are always more fun!). The objective is simple: come in first. But the challenge includes co-operation within the team as each boy will, in turn, be backwards to the direction of travel.

It may be wiser to have teams compete in pairs indoors, but outdoors all might go at once. Be sure to caution the boys that this is not a 'contact sport' (running over another 'crab' may disqualify you!) Add laps if space is limited, and extra races as time allows.

4 – COVER IN PRAYER Tonight your devotion is to bring 'home' key elements of our motto and scripture, reinforcing your boys' understanding. Before you address the group assign three boys to read one of these three verses: Psa 100:3 ; Psa 139:4 ; and Proverbs 21:2,3. (It may be necessary to have Bibles available with pages bookmarked to give to the boys.) You have Titus 2:6-8 ready for reading or paraphrasing in your own words. Now begin something like this:

"Have you ever seen a sand castle that was just awesome – in size and detail? They have contests in places like California and Florida where teams of people build huge ones of every kind, sometimes taking many days to complete.

"How about you? Did you ever make one yourself? But what happens if you build it at low tide and then the tide comes back in? Or, what happens when it begins to rain? How many times might you make a nice one, go home for the day, then come back to find that somebody stepped all over it during the night? Anyone here have an experience like one of these? Even the big, fancy ones in those contests will last only a short time.

“Jesus told his followers that ‘everyone who hears these sayings of mine and doesn’t do them is like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. When the rain descended, floods came, and wind blew (beating on the house) so it fell and great was the fall of it.’ [from Mat 7:26-27] None of us wants to lose everything – or, really, anything – so why don’t we just do what the Lord tells us to? Most of the time it is because we just don’t know what that is!

“This is one of the best reasons to be a Lifebuilder Boy: to learn about the Lord, His Word, and ourselves! What is our Theme Verse? [Have boys recite it with you – see the 3rd paragraph of p.17 in your Leadership Manual. Now continue with this paragraph at your best pace. Time is short here so limit your comments. Be familiar with this part to do an efficient job!]

In your closing, remind the boys that they will be ‘tested’ next time on the Motto and Verse, and stress the importance of having their signed parental permission forms turned in. Until then, since none of us know what the next day may hold for us, all should take to heart everything they have learned so far and together have a very sincere talk with Jesus! [Prayer]

Special note for week 3: In the case of a new Site, with many boys to be awarded patches, it is suggested that the first part of their third meeting night be extended into the Frame-It-In session. Afterwards, any extra time can be added to Top It Off, giving the boys a break from lessons as a kind of ‘reward’. Boys in this 3rd meeting should take turns reciting the Motto and Verse receiving only the slightest help from their Crew Chief (any boy who clearly is not prepared can be given a second chance later in the same meeting or try again next week, but do not slacken on this important requirement!) A formal presentation of award shoulder patches (Lifebuilder Boys & Level Patch) can be done on this night, or churches may choose to feature this event in their following Sunday morning worship service (an opportunity to encourage un-churched families of boys to attend!) However it is done, be sure to make this a very special, formal event for your boys!

Special note for boys who join later: These two meeting outlines are intended for newly starting ‘Sites’ where all boys are just joining. They may, however, be used for existing programs where several or more boys ‘join on’ later at about the same time (a boy may visit once or twice before being required to ‘join’.) For these boys, form a ‘Start-up Crew’ (grades 2-12 together.) These boys will work separately during Frame-It-In and Cover-In-Prayer as you take them through these two weeks of introduction, covering the materials suggested above. Do your best to provide a quality experience, remembering that they are checking you out as you do the same with them. If a single boy wants to join (and there is no expectation of others coming soon) you can guide him through his own personal introduction but this will be much better done at another time and place (perhaps in his home.) Again, do your best!!]