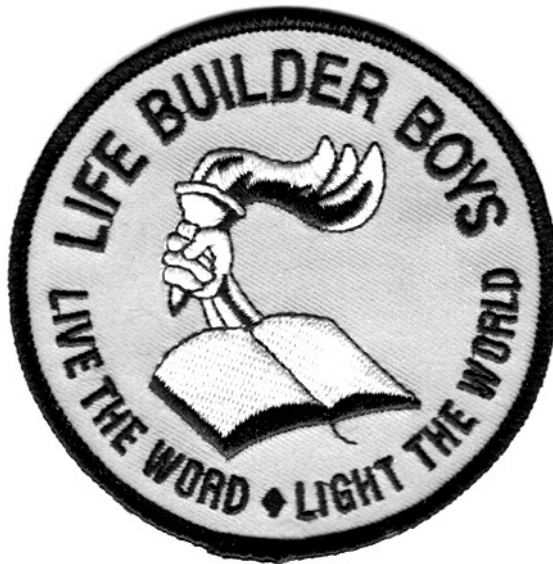
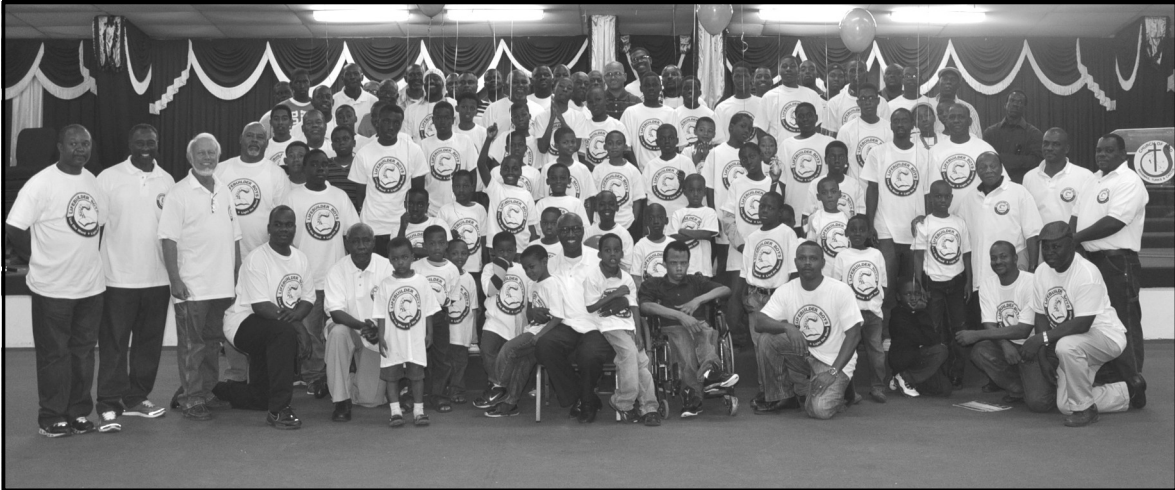


Time To Build Something Great



Guiding boys from Calvary to Christian service

“Well Begun Is Half Done”

Before any discussion on recruiting workers and gathering boys, let us be frank about something very important: there is a limit to what you, your team, and your facilities can handle! Jesus gave stern caution to first “count the cost” before setting out to build “a tower” to ensure that what you start - you can finish (Luke 14:28.) Much is at stake here (boys’ lives, of course, at the top of the list.) A ‘poor job’ will often be worse than a ‘delayed start’. Start when you are ready!!

Before announcing and launching your new boys’ program consider first your available space, workers, and resources. Of course everything you need will grow along with your program’s growth, but both types of growth tend to require their own special time. The strategy is to begin where you are then work towards where you want to be! Therefore, consider these suggestions first :

BEGIN AT ‘HOME’ A pitfall for many church men is to get excited about launching a new ministry, announcing such to ‘all the world’, and then finding themselves overwhelmed with more than they are ready to handle. It is sound advice to start ‘at home’ (within your own church walls) with boys you know and who know you. Get established in your routines. Allow time for some boys to excel, showing initiative towards leadership and will soon be ready to assist. Also, build confidence and cooperation with your men before going into ‘the highways and hedges’ to invite ‘whosoever will.’ Besides, boys from among your own church families are far more apt to co-operate as you get things together than some other boys with ‘little to lose’.

MEN-TO-BOYS RATIO Different boys’ ministries recommend different ideal ratios - how many boys per man. But churchmen should always remember that even Jesus (who could do everything) still limited Himself to twelve! And those were grown men!! Perhaps the best ratio (look at your hand) would be one (thumb) and four (fingers) with you being the wrist. And notice how each finger is uniquely different! So will be your boys, each deserving their own special attention. Don’t over-extend!! Eight to ten boys per man should certainly be any man’s limit (even less with younger ones.) It won’t be easy to turn away some at first, but that will be better than having to turn away all because your program failed from chaos, lack of funds, or shortage of help.

ANNOUNCE ONLY YOUR EARLIEST GOALS As you introduce your new program to your church and community, use restraint to not making promises that may turn out hard to keep. Proverbs 13:12 says that “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick”, and nothing is more disheartening for young boys than to get excited about things that end up not coming to pass! Plan well what you will be doing first...Do it...Then ride that success on toward your next goals. Through experience you’ll gain the skills for planning further ahead and find that the horizon gets easier to ‘see over’.

Building the Team

Your local ministry is called a **Site** (as in “job site”)

When boys come into your program, they are placed into a team called a **Crew** with an adult leader called the **Crew Chief**. This man will have the most ‘hands on’ responsibilities with the boys. He can also serve in other roles of leadership but this will always be his most important job. If the manpower is available, an **Assistant Crew Chief** will always be helpful to work with him. In larger Sites where there are 2 or more crews of the same age grouping you may want to assign a man to be their **Foreman** (who can also fill in for anyone who may be absent.)

A **Site Superintendent** will oversee the entire local LBB ministry, having final responsibility for the program’s success, take care of planning details, and serve as ‘liaison’ (go-between) for the church Pastor and his council. Any matters of conflict should be settled by him. Like the foremen, superintendents may also serve as Crew Chief working with boys.

Boys are identified as being in one of these three **Levels** based on grade in school (*or age)



(* boys who have been set back a grade or more in school should be with boys their age)

If possible, create a **crew** for each **level**. Or, all ages can work together - but use care in assuring that teaching and activities are suitable for the youngest as well as the oldest.

As certain boys advance and show leadership traits you may decide to appoint one to be a **Crew Leader** (maybe also an **Assistant Crew Leader**) but do not be hasty - give everything and everyone time to get settled in. These positions can be voted on by the boys themselves, but the choice that is made should be for those most skilled, not most popular! Some adults think it an advantage to ‘rotate positions’ like these to give every boy a ‘chance to lead’. But consider the whole of your objectives: much ground to cover, important lessons to learn, good things to be done. Try to give yourself every advantage by having the right people in the lead. Insure these positions go to capable boys!

Using capable, responsible **crew leaders** you may be able to form two or three smaller **Journeyman crews** who answer to one adult **Chief**. This can be a solution where a ‘shortage of manpower’ exists. But again, do not over-extend yourself where discipline and learning may fail. Apprentice boys must always be adult supervised!

Building With Weekly Meetings

The Life Builder Boys Adventure begins during weekly meetings but is not limited by walls, only by imagination. To make the adventure complete, activities need to venture also into communities and other outdoor places where what is learned is put to practice, and also where Christian service can be rendered as a witness of faith. Your best intent is to provide as interesting and varied an experience as your resources can offer. But it will be in your regular gatherings where ‘mortar is put to brick’ and the ‘building process begins’. So, let’s look at a recommended plan for your regular meetings (variations are possible .)

PLACE AND TIME Consistency will always be an important key to your success. When you meet and where you meet should remain as **unchanged** as possible. Other activities need to fit around your program (if you really believe in its importance) - not the opposite! Be sure the pastor and church leaders understand, though exceptions sometimes have to be made. It is often a good idea to meet on a day and in a place where nothing else is going on, where you have access to everything needed and where distractions can be minimized. This program is not just something to do with the boys while the rest of the church does ‘their thing’. This is a ministry. Give it every advantage to bear fruit! A week-night is fine, a weekend probably better; on church property always preferred but not required. But, again - consistency is a must.

PLAN AND PREPARE Let’s be honest. We men tend to put off to the last minute, drag our feet when swiftness is required, and find making excuses simpler than making progress. It won’t work here! Have your meeting planned and preparations made (supplies, volunteers, etc.) before your first boy arrives (preferably before your meeting night!) Get busy – early! Give yourself time to have a clear sense of your goals and how you intend to reach them. Most of the guidance you need will be provided in your **Skill Kits** (more about them shortly.) Get an early start: best time to begin your planning and preparing for the next meeting is just after the last one ends, while enthusiasm and inspiration is highest.

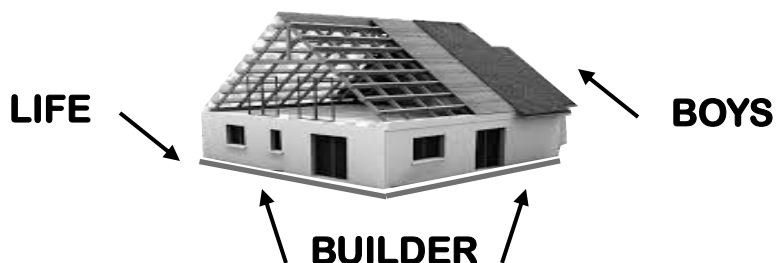
PRESENT WITH PURPOSE **(make it meaningful and memorable)** “It’s show-time”! Your stage is set, script well read, and props ready. Now it’s time to give your young men an experience that is meaningful, memorable, and (Lord willing) life changing. Sounds important? It is! May well be the highlight of your week and theirs. When done right boys just can’t wait until your next one. So let’s consider an effective, ideal ‘structure’ for the time you will spend together. Remember, there is some flexibility in amount of time spent or even the order in which you proceed. But, where possible, give your boys more, not less! The results will be eternal!!

The Adventure Begins

PRE-MEETING PREP An adult leader should always be the first person to arrive at the meeting place (an older **crew member** may earn the trust for that responsibility.) Do all possible to keep your young men out of ‘trouble’. Use this pre-meeting time to get everything ready. It can also be very valuable for building friendships with new boys or with ones from difficult circumstances who would benefit from your personal time. Where possible, schedule with boys who are working independently on personal advancements to come early and you be ready to give them full attention [more on this later.] It will prove helpful to have a few simple games, crafts, or other activities ready to keep the early arrivals occupied, but by all means – stop everything to start on time!

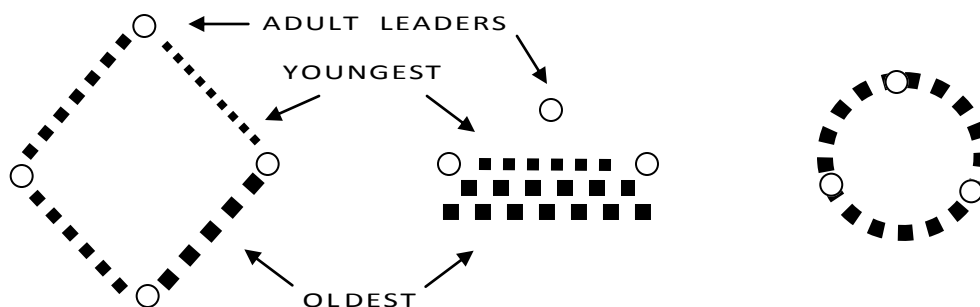
LIFE - BUILDER - BOYS (meetings with three parts)

Like constructing a house, you begin your meeting by first laying a foundation with opening chores and a **Life** stirring devotion. You **Build** upon that with lessons and learning activities. Then you top it off with recreation or continued skill activities (**Boys** being boys)



How you open your meeting will have considerable influence on how it will end! Be ‘ceremonial’ – ‘formal’ – make it the beginning of their week’s ‘Main Event’. Lined up and at attention will command focus and respect, helping you accomplish much in a short space of time. Since you’re on a ‘job site’ say with a loud, commanding voice, “**Let’s Build Something Great!**” It will certainly bring everyone to attention!

With these words boys should immediately cease their activities and line up according to your instructions. See illustrations below for suggestions so that eye contact can be made with all boys. Maybe a diamond shape with each side filled by boys of same age group, leaders at the corners. Or simple rows facing front with shortest boys first, tallest in back (if they can see you, then you can see them, and order is maintained.) Small Sites may just want to form a circle.



----- L I F E ----- (15 - 20 minutes) -----

Welcome new boys and adults . Be prepared to say something interesting about those you are 'introducing' (learn something unique about them before the meeting begins: where they go to school, favorite hobby or athletic interest, who brought them, etc.) Remind everyone of upcoming events or schedule changes. Any planning or explanations that require discussion should be done at end of meeting (after lesson)

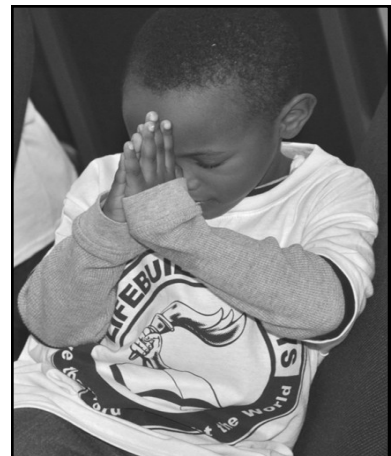
Recite our motto: "WE ARE LIFEBuilder BOYS.
WE LIVE THE WORD AND LIGHT THE WORLD."

Recite our theme verse: "FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM. EPHESIANS 2:10" (You may wish to include the powerful salvation verses, v. 8 & 9)

[Note: **Flag salutes and pledges** (national and Christian) are appropriate but not required]

Devotion This is your very important opportunity to speak into the hearts of those gathered around you. It may change lives! Be as focused with compassion as your pastor is on Sunday mornings. You may choose to speak from your own heart something you have prepared or use the devotions provided with many of the Skill Kits your crews may be working on. Usually you can say some very effective things in about 5-7 minutes, leaving time for a meaningful time of prayer. Read over the helpful advice on page 2 & 3 of the Leadership Manual "**MORE TOOLS**" on how to make your devotions impactful and how to lead boys to Christ - soul winning is our Job No. 1!!

As you close, be sure to pray for the Spirit's move and that decisions for Christ may be made by some before the meeting is over. Be sure to thank the Lord for attending the meeting with you, reminding the boys that you will not be the only One watching them! Include in your prayer any special requests, but be careful not to reveal anything that a member of your LBB ministry would rather be kept private!!



----- **B U I L D E R** ----- (25 - 30 minutes) -----

Now is when boys discover valuable knowledge, acquire new skills, and have experiences which inspire them to grow in Christ. Their role at home and in the community should improve. Older boys may begin to envision vocations they would enjoy pursuing. A variety of topics, projects, and learning experiences are now available with more expected soon. Making a choice that considers both the interests of the boys and the skills of the available instructors is important. As your program grows so will your resources. Remember: to make the launch of your new ministry as successful as possible select attainable goals. The Skill Kit **Personal Evangelism** is a great place to start. Not only will it speak to your crew members' hearts but will also help them in reaching out to others.

Skill Kits are your set of guidelines for conducting six to eight **training sessions** where boys receive instructions and do activities during weekly meetings. Some supplies may be needed for certain sessions and leaders should always ensure preparations are made. "Being ready will keep things going steady!" The **Kits** will talk you through what resources are needed and what should be ready for the boys. Having access to a copying machine will ensure every boy has his own handouts (always better but not always necessary.)

Be mindful of the clock so that this part of the meeting ends in reasonable time. Pace yourself - slow down only to ensure learning is complete, not because of distractions or interruptions. Be efficient. Things will always go better. A few more notes on Skill Kits can be found in the next Leadership Manual.

----- **B O Y S** ----- (15 minutes - closing) -----

Now it's time to 'reward' your boys for their co-operation and hard work. Yet, this time of recreational activity has purpose: to add to the lessons learned, and develop physical skills, teamwork, and a charitable spirit. It is not so much what you play but how you play that gets the job done! Of course you want to make it challenging for all but you must also remember that 'all' do not have the same abilities. And this is definitely not the time for a few to 'show off'. Team sports only work with real teamwork! Whatever games you play, it is not who comes in 'first', or scores the most 'points', but who has the most fun that will make this time a real success. Avoiding competition is not the only solution, but may help if it solves problems from having too many overly-competitive boys. Scoreless games may be 'just for fun', but they also fail to teach sportsmanship values that boys will need in life. Use wisdom (and set yourself as the best example – play too, but play 'fair'.) Apply resources as they are available from Life Builder Boys (some Skill Kits have game suggestions) or come up with ideas of your own. My favorite is soccer but using an American football – so you never know where the ball will go! Always make fun, not competition, your objective.

Departure Chores (while boys are leaving)

Try in every way you can to have a 'clean break' at the end of meetings – boys departing together and men wrapping it up quickly. However, a few things should be accomplished before the last man leaves and the door is locked (besides making sure that no little boy is still inside!!)

- ✓ Ensure that all trash is collected and all things are back in place. Seems an obvious duty but often men 'overlook the obvious'.
- ✓ Be sure everyone knows their assignment for the next event (weekly meeting or special outing.)
- ✓ Confirm that awards to be presented next week are taken care of (who will place orders and who brings to meeting.)
- ✓ Refreshment plans are made in advance. Nothing was said about this previously because it is not always a wise thing to have each week. First of all, it can get pretty messy. Second, it will consume time and money. And thirdly, if your program is good enough it won't be necessary (though water should always be available, especially at recreation time!) This will be your call: some sites enjoy 'rewarding' a good meeting once in awhile. Whatever decision you make, be responsible with it.

Pray together, as men who are standing 'in-the-gap' for every one of your boys!!

A well done meeting will be a source of exhilarating joy, making it hard for you to slow down and put the day to rest. But, before you do, don't forget to make for yourself some notes observing what went well and what did not. Give the other men a call or visit during the first days and explore ways to make this something good even better. This is your ministry – make it one of the best things you do in life!

***** ADDITIONAL NOTES *****

Collection of "Shares" and other event fees due. A "**share**" is a weekly offering that boys should bring (amount decided by your group, but a dollar is a fair expectation.) Let them do their 'share' to help with expenses. Usually this will go directly towards the cost of their refreshments with a part set aside to cover other needs. Do this in your opening will be more effective. You decided when and how.

[Note: Skill awards and recognitions, as well as any other insignia for their uniforms, should be the responsibility of the boy and his family, though you may choose to invite sponsorships by church members or conduct special fund raising events to cover costs for the whole unit. It is vitally important that no boy be left out because of a shortage of his own funds. However, taking personal responsibility is a part of the Biblical lesson of 'stewardship', one of the important 'growing lessons' we hope to instill.]