



Introducing our Taster Programmes

As part of our continuing support for leaders during these challenging times, we are excited to launch a 4-week taster programme that covers both Virtual Sessions and #BBatHOME programmes.

This taster programme is designed to provide a fully resourced and structured programme over the course of a 4-week period, helping to give you with everything you need to run an engaging, balanced and successful programme. By the end of the 4 weeks the hope is that you will then have the confidence and the ideas to continue to provide a programme for your Company and engage with your members.

How does it work?

Within the programme you will find a four-week plan for each age group. These have been designed for both those looking to use virtual sessions and those wanting to use #BBatHOME activities. The programme provides a fully resourced plan for each week, including a choice of activities, videos and PowerPoint slides and will signpost where you will find additional resources you'll need. This has been designed to try to provide leaders with as much support as we can, particularly for those who have not tried virtual sessions or #BBatHOME yet.

What is in the programme?

The programme contains a mix of new and existing activities, designed to offer an easy to run, balanced and varied programme for each age group. The taster programme includes:

- **Detailed weekly planners** explaining which activities feature each week and where you will find the resources to run these.
- **New activities** including origami sunglasses, superhero colours quiz, 3 ingredient brownies, cryptic find me, emoji quiz and much more.
- **Old favourites** such as fitness videos, active games, quizzes and bingo sheets.
- **Video tutorials** (origami, paper aeroplanes) and Bible object lessons (Love, wise & foolish builders)
- **Themed programmes** where all the activities for the session link together. These include Noah, Sports, Superheroes and Animals.
- **PowerPoint slides** which have all of the resources (quizzes, videos etc) for each week within them, ready for you to download and use.
- **Takeaway challenges** for children and young people to do at home in their own time, helping to tick off all the activity areas and increase engagement with members.

Can I just use #BBatHOME activities?

Of course! The taster programme uses a mix of virtual sessions and #BBatHOME activities, however if you are just looking to use #BBatHOME challenges then we have also produced a template for this. This programme suggests two #BBatHOME challenges to send out to each age group per week. The

challenges cover all 6 activity areas and should provide a balanced mix of activities to get involved with.

#BBatHOME activity cards encourage families to take photos of them completing the challenge and sending these back to the Company. You'll need to make sure you have a means for families to do this (email, WhatsApp, social media account etc). You may also want to consider a points chart or other ways of recognising achievement to help encourage young people to take part and provide photos/videos. Further guidance on this can be found at boys-brigade.org.uk/introduction-for-leaders/

How do I get started?

Once you've had a look through the taster programme and decided you'd like to give it a try with your Company or age group then we'd suggest coming together as a staff team first to discuss what you hope to achieve and how you intend to do it. This can include delegating responsibilities and finalising the programme. You can hold this meeting via Zoom or similar, giving you a good opportunity to test the technology and try out the different functions (screenshare, mute, waiting rooms etc).

You'll then need to let your members know about your chosen method of activity and how they can get involved. If you've had little engagement with your members since March 2020, then this may require a little more effort than normal to fully get members engaged again. Support on how to communicate with your members can be found further below.

How do I structure a virtual session?

Within the programme is a suggested structure for your virtual sessions. This way of running a virtual session is tried and tested, but it is of course not the only way to do it. Feel free to play around with the structure to find what works best for your group. Our structure includes:

- **Welcome & Updates** (5 mins) – An important opportunity for children and young people to say hello to each other and share things about their day. This can also be a time used for members to feedback on what they have achieved on their takeaway challenge from the week before.
- **Game** (5 mins) – An active game or challenge to start the session with. For younger age groups this often involves them getting up and moving, helping to build excitement for the session and burn off some excess energy before your main activity.
- **Main Activity** (10 mins) – The programme usually offers two options for the main activity, giving groups a choice on what to use based on resources, ability and interests.
- **Devotions** (10 mins) – A period to take a look at a Bible story, verse or Christian value. These activities usually involve a video, challenge or discussion for young people to explore.
- **Game** (5 mins) – Another game to finish with, ending the session with an energetic and/or interactive activity.
- **Takeaway Challenge & Goodbye** (5 mins) – a few minutes at the end to explain what the takeaway challenge for the week is, share any notices, build excitement for next week's activities and then say goodbye.

Can I send out activity packs to members?

Activity or Care packs containing resources are a great way to engage with members and have been proven to increase participation in both Virtual Sessions and #BBatHOME. What goes inside a pack will depend on the activities you are doing, your budget and your delivery method. For virtual sessions, items to consider including are craft packs, bingo cards, worksheets & templates and craft materials (card, glue, pens etc). For #BBatHOME you might want to include the activity cards, basic craft

supplies, a craft activity and a small treat. Whilst activity packs do help with providing at home activities for your members, they are by no means essential – so don't worry if you are unable to do so.

When delivering activity packs it is important to abide by any local social distancing guidelines and follow best practise with regards to hygiene. This should mean reducing the number of people who handle the packs, quarantining the items for 72+ hours, socially distanced drop offs / letterbox drops and ensuring each delivery is as quick as possible with reduced contact with the household.

Please check with your Church / denomination for any additional guidance before delivering.

How do I encourage children and young people to the sessions?

To get the most out of your virtual/remote programme and to encourage as many children and young people to take part as possible, communicating with and reminding families of the activities is key. Sending one email and hoping for the best can often end up in disappointment and low numbers (particularly over time). Regular communication using a combination of methods at different times can be successful in helping to gently encourage families to get involved with your programme. There are various different methods of doing this.

- **Email** – Good for sharing information and files (activity cards) with lots of people in one go. OBM can support you with this.
- **Post** – Good for sending activity sheets, puzzles and challenges direct to members.
- **WhatsApp / Text** – A quick way to send reminders directly to parents. Texts / WhatsApp messages usually have a higher chance of being seen than emails and social media posts. Groups can be set up on WhatsApp (including groups where only admins can post) to help you communicate with a large number of people in one go.
- **Social Media** – A platform to share messages with families and your wider network of supporters. A good tool to use to prompt families to interact and engage with. (i.e share photos and updates from any activities). The least intrusive method of communication.
- **Telephone** – A useful way of contacting those who may use technology / the above methods less. This method may be best when used occasionally for those who are struggling to engage via other methods.

What messages and reminders could I be sending?

Spreading messages across the week / month can also be a great way of gently reminding families of any challenges that have been sent and providing children and young people with encouragement and motivation. To keep your messages fresh and engaging, think about sharing different messages at intervals throughout the week / month. This could include:

#BBatHOME

- Setting the challenges & providing instructions
- Sharing an example carried out by a leader to encourage members to have a go
- Reminder text / message midway through the week / month
- Bringing together member's photos / video so everyone else can see how others have got on.
- Creating and sharing a points chart each week/month. Helping to reward participation and encourage children and young people to get involved going forwards.

Virtual Sessions

- Sending out the link and joining instructions a few days before.
- Sending a reminder text / Whatsapp an hour before the session starts, helping families to not forget.

- Sharing the takeaway challenge instructions via email / social media the day after a virtual session.
- Sending a reminder about the takeaway challenge via social media or another method mid-way through the week.

How do I recognise achievement?

Recognising achievement is a big part of a young person's experience in The Boys' Brigade and something we would encourage Companies to continue via virtual sessions and #BBatHOME.

This is possible in a number of ways:

- **Badges & Awards** – The programme is structured around the 6 activity area (Get Active, Get Creative, Get into the Bible etc) and provides a good mix of all areas. By completing the activities, members should be ticking off their badges as they normally would do. For Company & Seniors, the activity areas can be transferred across to the existing structure (for example to 'Skills', 'Recreation' & 'Community').
- **Certificates** – A range of certificates can be found on the website to download or you can purchase ready to use certificates from BB Supplies and these can be used to reward participation and achievement.
- **Medals** – Special #BBatHOME medals and trophies have been created to help encourage members to take part in activities and give leaders a way to specially recognise participation in activities.
- **Point Chart** – Point charts are a great way to encourage and motivate members to participate in activities and try to achieve the best they can. Points could be given for submitting photos / video, attending virtual session, winning games and so on. Be sure to provide regular updates to members on how many points they have got and continue to encourage them to earn more. A Points Chart template in PowerPoint is available to download.

More ideas on ways to recognise achievement, as well as access to resources such as certificates, can be found here - <https://boys-brigade.org.uk/recognising-achievement/>

What do I do once the 4-week taster programme comes to an end?

Our hope is this 4-week taster programme will give you the confidence and ideas to offer a programme of activities to your members. Once the 4-week programme is completed, the encouragement is for you to take what you have learnt and build on this to provide your own programme going forwards. Termly and Weekly Programme Planner templates are available to download at boys-brigade.org.uk/introduction-for-leaders/

What other resources are there for me to use?

There are a wide range of resources available to support you in engaging with your members. We are also committed to continuing to provide further resources over the months ahead.

Resources and support include:

- **300+ #BBatHOME Activities**
- **250+ Virtual Activities**
- **200+ Face-to-Face (Socially Distanced) Activities**
- **Monthly Programme Resources** (30 new activities every month)
- **30 + Devotional Videos**
- **Fully planned and resourced 'Camp at Home'**
- **Resources to support running a 'Fundraising Challenge'**
- **Guidance on how to set up and use Zoom**

All these resources and more can be found at <https://boys-brigade.org.uk/programme-bb-leaders/>

What support is available for returning to face-to-face activities?

This taster programme is designed to provide leaders with confidence in running activities whilst we can't physically meet. However once groups can meet again, a wide range of support and resources are available to you, to help you get back to meeting together. These include:

- **Detailed framework document for returning to face-to-face activities.**
- **Template risk assessment & action log.**
- **Template letters for the church and parents/guardians.**
- **Signage for your buildings, including one-way systems and social distancing signs.**
- **We're back / we've missed you posters.**
- **200+ Face-to-Face (Socially Distanced) Activities.**

These resources and more can be found at <https://boys-brigade.org.uk/ourframework/>

Further Support and Help

Should you require any further support or wish to ask a question, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at BBHQ. We are more than happy to answer questions, provide assistance and help in any way that we can.

You can contact us via email at programme@boys-brigade.org.uk or by phone on **0300 303 4454**.