RS:
The Boys' Brigade Handout
What is The Boys’ Brigade?

For over 125 years, The Boys’ Brigade has reached out to millions of children & young people. Today it’s passionate about partnering with churches to build bridges into local communities and engage a generation of children and young people with a message of hope rooted in Jesus. Each week The Boys’ Brigade works with over 55,000 children and young people in 1500 groups (Companies) in the UK & Republic of Ireland, many of whom have no other connection with the Church.

Through The Boys’ Brigade children & young people (aged 4 to 18+) get involved in local churches by means of weekly groups, residentials (camps), special events, community involvement and training programmes. These activities are led by 15,000 volunteers who are trained and supported to work as effective children’s & youth workers in a Christian context. Whilst their work is in the UK and Ireland, they are part of a worldwide organisation set up and run to reach over one million children & young people all over the world.

Their work is split into four age groups and through these programmes they hope to make a positive contribution to a young person’s life and help them explore the Christian faith.

4-8 year olds

8-11 year olds

11-15 year olds
(Company section)

15-18 year olds
(Seniors)
What do we do?

Under-11:

- Learning new skills
- Developing confidence
- Developing physical skills
- Developing independence
- Developing a group identity
- Developing an awareness of the needs of others
- Developing a personal identity
- Learning to take responsibility
What do we do?

Over-11:

- **to experience new challenges**
  To develop and use existing skills, to learn new skills, to develop confidence, to have a sense of achievement and receive recognition

- **to be listened to and have a say**
  To have their opinions listened to and acted upon wherever possible

- **to be respected and valued**
  To be trusted and given responsibility, to be treated as you would like to be treated, to experience a safe environment, to be individually appreciated, to have the opportunity to be part of the wider community

- **to have fun**
  To be able to come to BB because they enjoy it and want to

- **to have the opportunity to develop a personal Christian faith**
  To be able to explore their own faith, at their own speed, in a way that is approachable and meets their individual needs
A Brief History

Where we started

The Boys’ Brigade was founded in Glasgow on 4th October 1883 by Sir William Alexander Smith. From this one Company formed in Scotland the BB has grown into a world wide movement having worked with millions of children and young people for well over a century.

William Smith became a teacher in the Sabbath School which was held in a mission hall in North Woodside Road, not far from the church. It was in the Sabbath School that he struck a snag, and had an idea. The snag was that the older boys were bored and restless. No one seemed able to interest or control them. They felt that they were too old for the Sabbath School and they were suspicious of ‘do-gooders’ and teachers who told them to sit still, make less noise, and generally behave themselves. In short, they were typical healthy teenagers. Smith thought a lot about it. On a Saturday afternoon, as an enthusiastic young officer in the Volunteers, he had no difficulty in making a hundred men obey his every word and command on the nearby drill ground. Yet on a Sunday he could do nothing with a small group of lively boys. It was then that he had his idea: ‘Drill and Discipline’. Why not turn his Sabbath School boys into a volunteer band or brigade, with the same military order, obedience, discipline and self respect as any well trained corps of the Army of the Queen? Religious instruction was the core of the Sabbath School work. But why should the boys not enjoy games as well as discipline, gymnastics, camps and sport as well as hymns and prayers?

Later, William Smith was to sum up his aims in these words. The aim was to devise something that would appeal to a boy on the heroic side of his nature- something that would let him see that in the service of God there is as much scope for all that is brave and true and manly as in the service of King and Country.

On 4th October 1883 he invited the boys of North Woodside Mission Sabbath School to join The Boys’ Brigade. The badge was to be an anchor and the motto ‘Sure and Stedfast’. William Smith took the words and the spelling and the crest from the Authorized Version of the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 6, verse 19: ‘Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast’. Name and badge and motto remain through the hundred years since that momentous day. The object was also quite clear from the beginning:

The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys and the promotion of habits of Reverence, Discipline, Self-Respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness.

(The word obedience was added some 10 years later).

Within a year the Boys’ Brigade of the 1st Glasgow were in uniform. Although the leaders might have liked to see the Boys as smartly turned out as their Volunteers on parade, William Smith wisely set his face against full uniform clothing. It would be too expensive for one thing, whereas cap, belt and haversack cost only eighteen pence (about 7.5p. in modern money).

By 1914 there were 120,000 young people involved in The Boys’ Brigade, and became famous for its bugle bands.

Extracts taken from First For Boys: The Story of The Boys’ Brigade 1883-1983, by Donald M. McFarlan
A Brief History

When
The Boys' Brigade was set up in Scotland in 1883.

Aim
The Boys' Brigade will care for and challenge young people for life through a programme of informal education underpinned by the Christian faith.

The badge
In the centre is a cross, the symbol of Christ and his church. On top of it is an anchor representing the secure hope that we have in Jesus which is the foundation on which we build our lives and is described in Hebrews 6:19.

Motto
Sure & Steadfast (Hebrews 6:19)

Object
"The advancement of Christ's kingdom among Boys and the promotion of habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, Self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness."