

Doing Brigade Under COVID

Christian Service Brigade's COVID Suggestions

As a leader in a children's club ministry, you have a duty to provide a safe environment for children, parents, leaders, and yourself.

***Note:** These suggestions are provided to church and ministry leaders as they consider how to establish a safe environment in which people can gather. These are only suggestions and may not apply to your situation. Ultimately you, the CSB leader, are responsible to enforce the protocols that have been established by government authorities, church leadership, insurers, and parents for the gatherings of your group.*

Preparations for Meetings Under COVID

1. Follow your provincial, local, and church COVID-19 protocols.
2. Start the Brigade season 2 to 4 weeks later after the start of school. This will allow students to become familiar with the COVID protocols at school, and it will give parents extra time to establish a routine for those school requirements. School protocols can provide a reliable guide to the COVID protocols that you must enforce.
3. Determine how masks, gloves and other protective gear will be used in the club ministry.
4. Determine what social-distancing will look like.
5. Remove/bag-up the water fountain. Have each person bring a bottle of water for themselves clearly marked with his name. Have extra bottles and a felt pen on hand to give away as needed.
6. Have a dedicated set of game equipment for each CSB group (Battalion, Stockade, Tree Climbers), so that each set is only used once each week by its designated group. This gives six days between uses to allow virus germs to die on their own. Equipment should be sanitized by leaders before, during or between activities. (Leaders should wear gloves when doing this. Each piece of equipment should be wiped down with sanitizing sheets, as needed, and the equipment container sprayed with a sanitizing disinfectant spray.)
7. Discard any cloth, foam, or soft-covered equipment. Throw out any foam balls that don't have smooth or undamaged surfaces.
8. Get church approval for your COVID Protocols.
9. Notify parents of the COVID Protocols being used by your church and group.
10. Announce the date, time, and location of your first meeting.

Planning Your Meetings

11. Use one of the extra non-meeting weeks to bring the leaders together for a *COVID Protocols Training Session*. Be sure to practice sanitizing procedures. (It is better to train invested volunteers to do this than to pay time-conscious janitorial staff.)
12. Assign someone to maintain an awareness of the local, provincial, and national COVID Protocols.

13. Have parents sign their children in at the beginning of each meeting with the child standing with them. This allows you to ask about the child's health; to have the child sanitize his hands (soap and water will do); and to ensure that the child has all the gear he needs for the evening's meeting: appropriate clothing, bottle of water (with his name on it), CSB stuff, Bible, etc.
14. Do as many meetings outdoors as possible. This is especially effective when it's below freezing and the guys are bundled in multiple layers of winter clothing. Starting the season off with campfires, marshmallows, and hotdogs can make for an easy transition to a more outdoorsy CSB program.
15. Have internet-based meetings using Zoom (great for live, active fellowship. Games are possible), Discord (great platform for fellowship and sharing, and for streaming video games – Steam), and Twitch (live but not readily interactive, good for streaming live and recorded videos).
16. Meet in person every second week, if there is a concern by the parents, church, or authorities. This allows 14 days between face-to-face get-togethers.

Having Your Meetings

17. For each meeting, record names and contact details of each participant, including leaders and guests. This will be used for contact tracing should it be necessary.
18. Provide spare disposable masks, gloves, and protective gear, should it be forgotten.
19. Ensure that Room Capacity Limits are posted in each room being used.
20. Do not exceed Room Capacity Limits.
21. Limit what rooms, including washrooms, that can be used.
22. DO NOT ALLOW groups to share equipment.
23. REQUIRE EACH GROUP to have its own basic equipment.
24. Have the boys and leaders (everyone) sanitize their hands after activities where common equipment may have been handled.

After the Meetings

25. Have leaders wipe-down all doorknobs/switches/bathroom fixtures, tables, chairs, etc. at the end of each meeting even if janitorial staff is coming in. (Encourage the leaders to take ownership of their meeting space.)
26. Have the leaders sanitize only the tools/equipment/etc. that have been used.
27. Record all rooms that have been used for the meeting, including washrooms.

Beyond the Weekly Meetings

28. No Over-Nighters and no All-Nighters are allowed until COVID restrictions are lifted. Replace such activities with game nights/ board game nights/ outdoor movie nights/ special Saturday activities such as hikes, golf, frisbee golf, biking, canoeing, AirSoft, PaintBall, treasure hunts, quests, widegames with 5ft pool noodles for tagging, etc.

Jesus commands us to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). This includes the children of your community. His calling doesn't include "when we have COVID figured out."