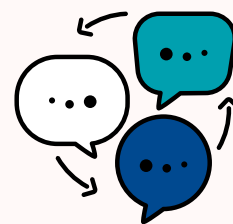


How to...

...run a children's holiday club

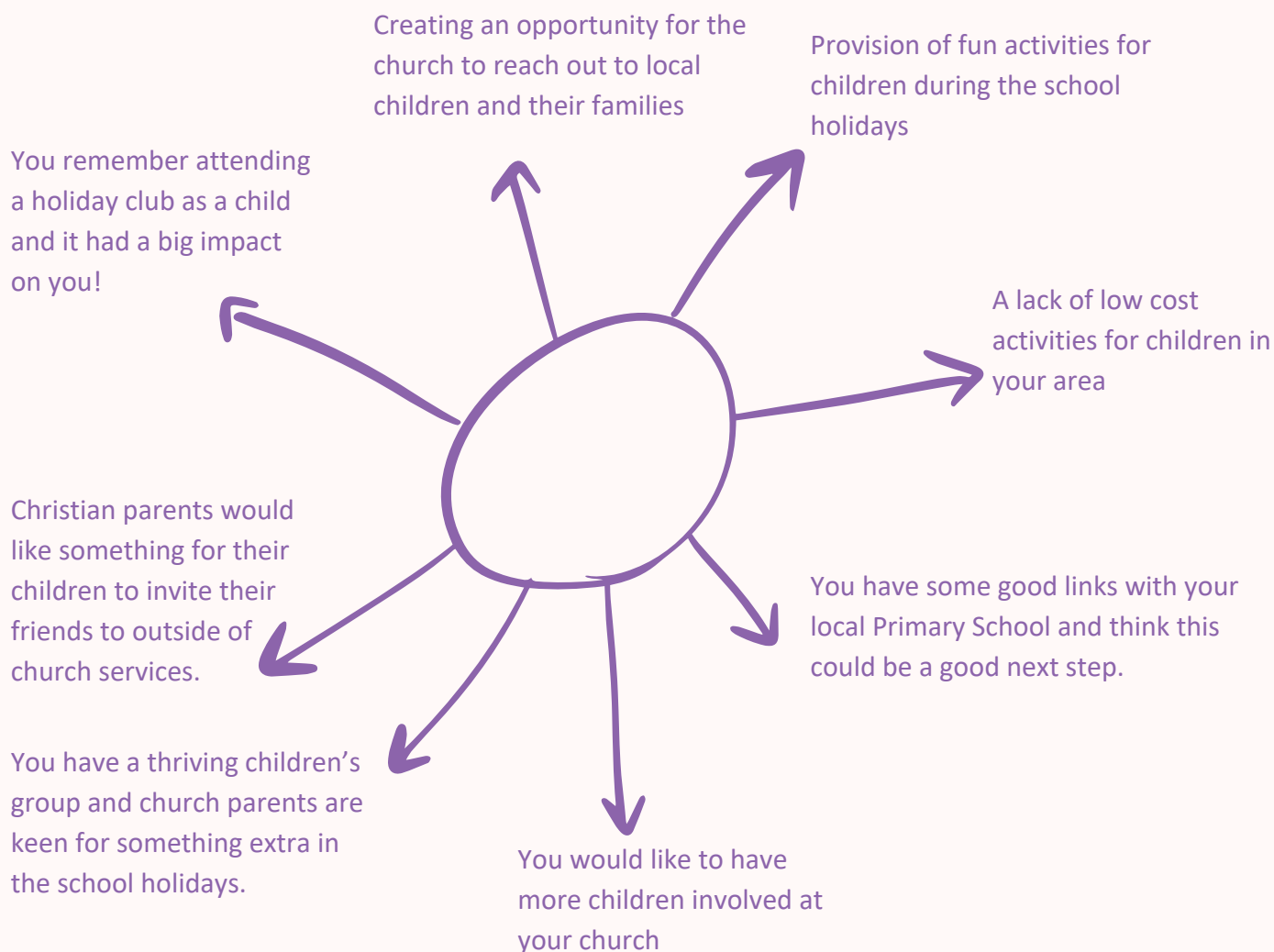


The aim of this guide is to help you think through the logistics of running a successful holiday club as part of the ministry in your church. It may be helpful to work through the headings below as a planning group, so that your vision for doing this is clear and shared by those involved. As with setting up any new ministry in a church, we recommend that you spend a focused period of time in prayer, so that God can speak into your plans.

Why do you want to run a holiday club?

We might all agree that holiday clubs are a fun way to connect with children and their families, but it is important to get on the same page about the aims and outcomes for your particular context.

Potential reasons for running a holiday club



You should now be able to come up with 3 or 4 aims which reflect the missional and practical elements of what you hope to do. They can also include who the club is aimed at (i.e. is it aimed at children from church families who you already know, those you have yet to connect with, or both?)

When will you run it and for how long?

Holiday clubs are often run during the summer holidays, but can equally work well at Easter or in the February, May or October half term. This is worth thinking through in terms of your church events calendar, as well as events happening in the wider community. You may not want to compete with another holiday club running at the same time nearby.



Lots of holiday club material- such as that from Scripture Union - is written for a 5 session programme, with an all-age service to follow on the Sunday.

However, some churches find that whole day holiday clubs work better for working parents. 3 day holiday clubs (where children bring a packed lunch) also work well and the material can be adapted to suit.

Some churches find that families are less inclined to come to a Sunday service, so put on a short service with a tea or BBQ on the final afternoon, where families are invited to come. Others have gone for a single day event, and sometimes families are invited to the whole day.

Think about what would work best for your target families. It might be worth doing some kind of survey to find out when and what would work best. It is also important to ask your team what would work best for them, and you can also ask the children who will be attending what their preference would be.

A note about OFSTED: In England, childcare involving under-8s that occurs more than 5 times in a year, and lasts longer than 2 hours each day usually requires registration with OFSTED, but most church-run holiday clubs do not fit into this category, therefore are not required to register.

Where would be a good venue?

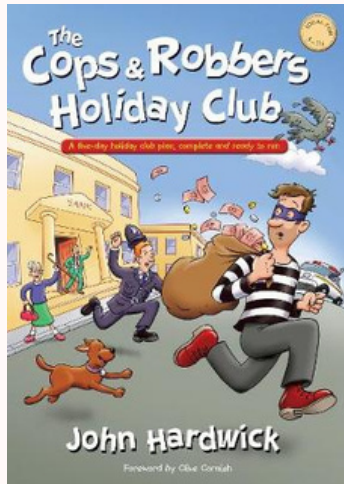
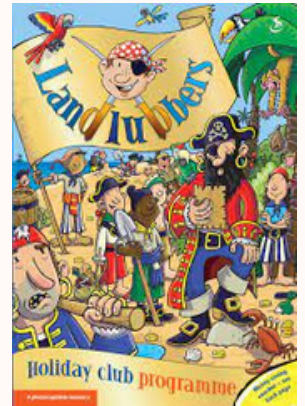
Key to any event is a good venue. Do you have church premises which will be available, accessible and suitable for the club you hope to run? Will there be enough space inside? Do you need outdoor space? Are there adequate toilet and hand washing facilities?

As an alternative to a church building, is there a community building you could use, such as a school or village hall? This may bring benefits in terms of facilities and accessibility as well as being somewhere children and parents are familiar with.

You will need to carry out a risk assessment on any space you use for each activity you plan to do. This does not need to be a daunting or complicated task. You simply need to think through potential hazards and how best to limit the risk of harm to those present. See our [downloads page](#) for more information and a sample risk assessment.

What kind of activities do you want to include?

There are a number of organisations who produce holiday club resources which you can adapt for your own context. Scripture Union and John Hardwick are well known for their 'ready-to-use' Bible-based programmes. Typically they have an overall theme linking to a Bible story and include ideas for games, illustrations, story-telling, drama, songs and craft activities which all link in to the theme. They also have useful material for training and preparing your team to run a holiday club. Resources like these are usually aimed at 5-11 year olds (Primary school age).



Some materials include useful options for older or younger children, as well as considerations for children from other cultures or faith backgrounds and for those with additional needs. Depending on numbers or your context, you may choose to narrow or widen the age range of your club, and tailor your programme to suit this.

For help and advice finding resources and planning a programme, contact your Archdeaconry based Go Team adviser. We have a number of tried and tested resources available to borrow.

How will you gather a team and also involve the wider church?

Gathering a team for your holiday club can often be a challenge if volunteers seem few, but it is essential to have the right team in place. Things to think about should include:

Roles and responsibilities

There are a number of roles and responsibilities within a holiday club team, and whilst a number of these can be doubled up in a smaller club, it is helpful to share them out if you can.

Roles could include:

- Programme/activity leader(s)
- Storytellers
- Music leader/band
- PA/AV tech
- Craft co-ordinator
- Refreshments team
- Safeguarding lead
- First Aiders

Some roles need to be undertaken by more experience leaders or those with relevant qualifications, but sharing out other roles can be a good way of using the gifts of those not usually involved in children's ministry, including young people who are too old for the club itself.

Safe recruitment



All volunteers working with children in a holiday club setting are subject to the church's Safe Recruitment policy which should include an application process, the relevant DBS check and Safeguarding training. For more information speak to your Parish Safeguarding Officer, or the [Diocese Safeguarding team](#).

Ratios

The recommended staffing ratio for children 4-8 years is 1 adult to 6 children, and for children 9-12 years is 1 adult to 8 children. In certain situations it will be necessary to have a higher number of adults, for instance when doing difficult activities, travelling outside of the venue, and for children with additional needs. If young people under the age of 18 are in your team, remember to count them in the number of children present.

Planning and preparation

Involving as many of the team as possible in the planning and preparation can be a really good way of sharing the vision of the holiday club, as well as the ownership. Whilst there might be those who can only help on the day or for part of the week, make sure you communicate well with the whole team so they know what is happening when, and what to expect, as well as what is expected of them as a team member.

Training

All those working with children, as well as those leading activities should have undertaken the relevant Safeguarding training (more information on our website or speak to your Parish Safeguarding Officer). In addition, it may be helpful to lead a short team session on good and safe practice as part of planning and preparation.

Involving the wider church

Not everyone will be able to come and help at the actual holiday club, but there are ways to get the wider church involved:

- Ensuring the church is updated as time progresses and people sign up for the holiday club and plans come together, so that they can pray for those involved.
- Inviting individuals to support the club with a financial gift.
- Produce invitations so church members can invite family members or neighbours to the club.
- Ask for help with preparing craft materials or making cakes for the team.
- Making a 'Prayer Card' so people can pray for the holiday club during the week.

Budget and cost



Costs will have to be considered at some stage, especially if you are hiring a building or equipment for the club. It may be that the church has funds set aside for a project like this. If not, you will need to consider a funding strategy. A decision will also need to be made about whether you charge families to attend, and how much they will pay.

Advertising

You will want to advertise your holiday club in all the places you would normally promote events - local shops, parish magazine, notice boards, as well as social media. You may also want to advertise through your local Primary School(s).

Don't forget to consider what your flyers/posters promote and who the club is aimed at. How will they sign up for the club? How much are you going to charge?

How else can you advertise? Can you go into your local primary schools to do an assembly to invite the children? A personal invite to children and families goes a long way.



Note about registration: No child can be admitted to a holiday club without a consent form signed by a parent or adult with parental responsibility. Asking parents to pre-register for the club ensures this is not an issue on the day, and also identifies numbers, additional needs and information like allergies which might be important when planning refreshments or activities.

Have you got a 'next step'?

As you plan the event it is worth thinking through how you might follow up with those who attended, and what you might invite them to next. Perhaps another holiday club at the same time next year, or maybe another seasonal one-off event such as a Christmas family day or something at Easter. You could think about holding a regular club for children of that age group, or if you already have a club going, make sure you invite those from holiday club to come to it. If you have your next event planned before holiday club, then you can make sure invitations are handed out at the end of the holiday club to those who might want to attend.

Useful links

Scripture Union resources <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/holiday-clubs>

John Hardwick resources <https://www.johnhardwick.org/holiday-clubs>

Messy Church holiday club ideas <https://www.messychurch.org.uk/tags/holiday-club>

Faith in Kids holiday club resources <https://www.faithinkids.org/resourcetype/holiday-club/>

Top Tips on Running Holiday Clubs (free to download from Scripture Union [website](#))

For any further advice or help, contact your Archdeaconry based Go Team Adviser:

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/children-young-people/>