

SHARING JESUS THROUGH FOOTBALL





FOOTBALL IS EVERYWHERE!

Over 11 million people play regularly in England alone, while a global audience of 4 billion follow the drama in a host of competitions like the Premier League, the Champions League or the World Cup.



A Football Camp is a fantastic way of channelling this into Kingdom-building community outreach. Ambassadors Football exists to see the lives of individuals and communities positively changed and transformed through football, and every year hundreds of children on the very fringes of church get to hear about and experience God's love through a Football Camp. Integral to this ministry is the church, which is strategically placed within communities. Together, we can play our part in the transforming mission of God.

Football Camps provide the opportunity to work with young footballers (usually 7-14yrs old), by giving them the chance to play and develop in a fun, safe and positive environment, whilst demonstrating core ethics of fair play and sportsmanship. What makes an Ambassadors Football Camp unique is that we combine this professional approach to coaching with Bible teaching. Throughout every camp children get to explore some of the Bible's greatest characters, applying what we learn to our everyday lives, as well as hearing a relevant Gospel message. The purpose of this information pack is to provide a deeper understanding of what would be required to run a Football Camp and outline some important issues to consider in making your event a success.

WHERE TO START



So, you've had the idea of running a Football Camp as a community outreach project. Maybe you've just had an initial idea, or just simply recognised a need in your community. Whatever your reason, there has to be a starting point, somewhere to get your thoughts in order and come up with a sound plan. Follow this flow chart to make sure you've got everything covered.

Prayer

How is God speaking to you about the camp?
Meet with others to pray and share ideas.
Have a prayer team in place and get the church praying for the event.

Church support

The most effective camps in terms of reach and lasting impact are those that work alongside the local church. This provides:

- prayer cover for coaches, for the children, for the Gospel witness
- helpers for the camp (you don't have to be a coach!)
- people to help with camp administration
- vision and encouragement

Partnerships

'To go fast, go alone. To go far, go together'. Are there other churches or groups who share the same vision and passion for reaching out through football? Benefits to working in partnership include:

- sharing costs and responsibilities
- wider variety of experiences and specialities
- greater opportunities to publicise
- greater access to local voluntary help, allowing the children and families to form lasting which can continue after the camp

When working in partnership, clear and regular communication is vital for success.

Leadership Team

With all these things in place, you should be in a position to build a leadership team of people who have a similar vision and an excitement for service. Responsibilities can be shared, ideas and decisions can be talked and discussed through, and there is support and encouragement for all involved. Ideally your Leadership Team that will arrange the camp will contain:

- A project leader (you?)
- An assistant project leader, who also knows everything that is happening
- An administrator
- A young sporty person who can be discipled and trained to take on future leadership responsibilities

Once you have a leadership team in place, it's time to nail down the specifics for your Football Camp.

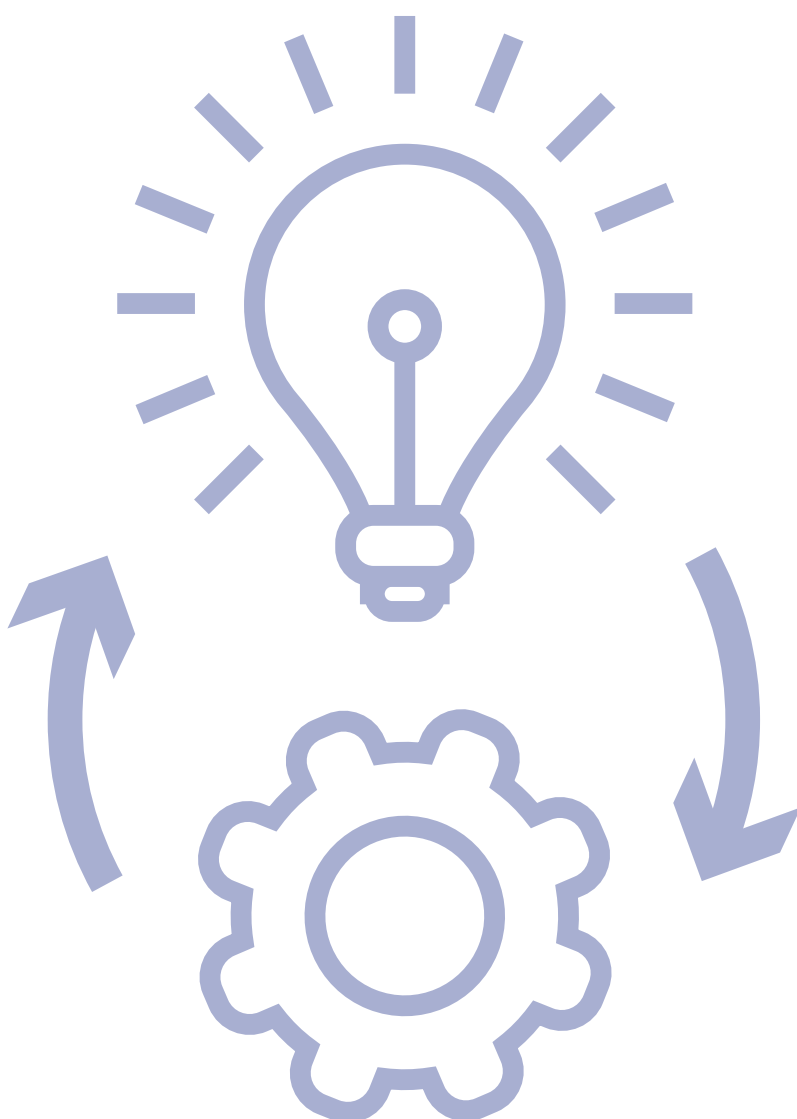
HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

WHY AND WHO?

- Why do you want to host a Football Camp? How can it fit into the wider aims of the church? By answering these questions early on, it will help to establish short and long-term aims, enabling you to structure your camp accordingly. Clear aims also give a basis for evaluation following the event.
- Who are you trying to reach? Consider age, gender, location and skill level. Do you already have a specific group of children in mind? Do you want to limit attendance to that group or open the event to a wider audience? Are you aiming at 'churched' or 'un-churched' kids?

WHEN?

- When is your target group most available?
- Are there any events that the camp can tie in with? Is your church already planning another outreach event? Are there any major football events happening at key times in the year? (World Cup, FA Cup final?)
- Just as tying in with other events may enhance a camp, other events that clash may limit the numbers that attend. For example, is the local council running any inexpensive holiday events? It is important to do some research before setting a date
- How much time is required for effective planning / publicising of the camp?



Consider these questions to help your event take shape.

WHERE?

- What facilities are needed? All camps will need some kind of playing area (hall, grass or astroturf), toilets and litter bins. Ideally the venue should have indoor space in case of wet weather, too. In our experience, the best facilities for running camps are often schools, as they have all the above in the one location.
- Private hire can be expensive, and cost is obviously a major factor in deciding on a venue. However, there are ways to make this work. Does anyone have an existing relationship with a school or facility? Is there any council or other funding available to help cover the costs of the facilities? Is there a local business that might help to fund the hire?
- Are the facilities well placed for both the church and the target group? Are they accessible for those children you want to be there?

Good facilities can enhance the look of a football school, adding credibility to what you're doing. However, sometimes the best facilities are those that are simply on the doorstep of the children you are trying to reach.

WHAT FORMAT?

Availability of venues, finance and volunteers will affect the camp format you are able to deliver. Whatever you choose, the aim with any outreach football school should be the same...to serve the community with excellence, demonstrating Christ's love and preaching the Gospel. Consider:

- Number of days – anything from 2 to 5 days can work, although make sure you leave enough time for relationships to be built. If you are limited for time, a weekend event might be just the thing for you. This allows the opportunity to invite families to watch their children take part in competitions on the Sunday afternoon and then invited back to an evening service, during which the awards and prizes are given out.
- Day length – the usual choice is around 10am-3.30pm, although half days can work too.

The week is rounded off with a competition day and prize giving, giving the kids the opportunity to put into practice what they have learnt, and you to invite families along to be a part of the fun and experience church hospitality. So many great conversations and friendships have started on these days!

Ambassadors are on hand to help you work through any of these important stages. Once you are set on what you would like your camp to look like, the next stage is making it happen!



STAFFING THE CAMP

WHAT YOU NEED

The NSPCC recommends a ratio of 1 coach to every 8 children. In our experience, this ratio helps with players' development (as they can have more touches of the ball) and gives coaches a greater opportunity to build relationships during the event. Ideally, these coaches will come from the local church community, so that relationships established during the camp can continue at future church events that families might attend. However, volunteer coaches from across the country are trained by Ambassadors and available to help with your camp if needed.

RECRUITING LEADERS

Make a list of who might be available in your church, and what experiences they have. Of course, skilled football coaches are important, but not everyone has to be a big football fan to be an effective coach. Much more important is their experience working with children, their heart to serve their community and their readiness to share their faith. Ambassadors provide free online Camp Leadership Training for those wanting to learn more about being a coach at a camp. When approaching potential leaders, remember to emphasise the missional potential of the camp. Many great potential leaders might not see themselves as able football coaches but would definitely say yes to being part of community ministry to those usually hardest to reach!

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Here are some key roles to think about for the smooth running of the camp:

ROLE	DESCRIPTION	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
Camp Coordinator (usually sourced by Ambassador)	In overall charge	Overall responsibility during the planning, running and follow up to the camp; Makes the final decision on things; delegates tasks
Divisional Leader	Oversees an age-group	Coach a team; work closely with the Camp Co-ordinator; oversee the timings of activities; coordinate games, competitions and matches
Coach	Responsible for a team of children	Coach specific skills and techniques; coach team in games, competitions and matches; teach and lead Bible times; be available for the needs of the group; build rapport with team; teach and demonstrate fair play; be prepared
Assistant Coach	Help with the smooth running of the camp. Often Assistant Coaches are teenagers or young adults looking to build experience. This discipleship can be an exciting by-product of the camp!	Build friendships with the children; be involved in leading Bible times; assist coaches during sessions; setting a good example.

FINANCES

Another crucial area to address early on is finances and the putting together of a budget for your camp. This section focuses on the different costs you'll need to consider, together with ideas on how to meet those costs.



CAMP COSTS

Together with the venue, some other costs to consider would be:

- The cost of publicising and promoting the event
- The cost of providing any refreshments for the children
- The cost of providing lunch for the coaches
- Any give-away items

In return for coordinating the week and providing all coaching equipment and Bible teaching materials, Ambassadors request a contribution towards their involvement in the camp, too. This is available in Gold, Silver and Bronze packages, to suit your budget and what giveaway items you would like included (medals, trophies, footballs, t-shirts etc). Ultimately, we would never let finance be a barrier to church engagement in football ministry, so if you have any queries or concerns don't hesitate to get in touch.

MEETING COSTS

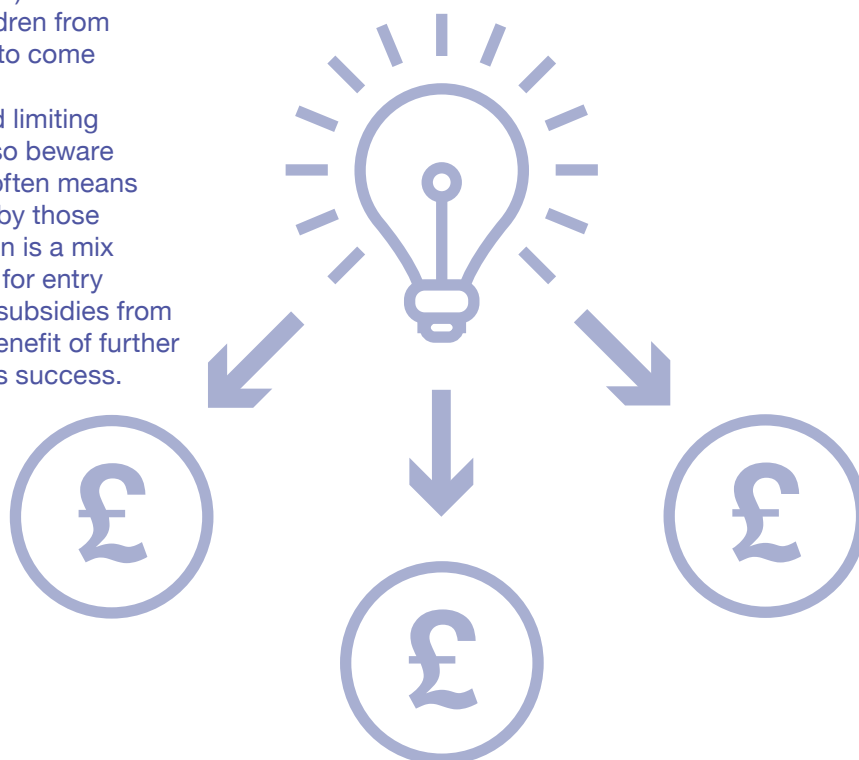
Once you have an idea of all the costs involved, spend time thinking through the different options of meeting those costs. These include:

- Charging the families a set amount for the camp in order to cover all costs
- Charging the families a set amount to cover some of the costs and the church makes up the rest (either from an events budget or by holding a fund raising event)
- Find sponsorship to enable children from less privileged areas to be able to come

Beware of charging too much and limiting access to well-off families, yet also beware of making the event free, as this often means it will not be prioritised or valued by those attending. Perhaps the best option is a mix of charging a reasonable amount for entry (depending on your context) and subsidies from the church. This has the added benefit of further investing the church in the camp's success.

FUNDING

If your church is not in a position to be able to do this and opportunities for fund-raising events are quite limited, there are a number of options for seeking outside funding from the many trusts and grant-giving bodies available. You may well have people within your church with experience of funding applications. If not, Ambassadors can advise on getting started with this.



PUBLICITY



The next task is publicising the event, keeping in mind your target group. Consider asking teachers, ministers, youth workers or junior football team managers for help.

You might try:

- Taking school assemblies and PE lessons
- Distributing posters and leaflets to schools, or placing in local public places like coffee shops
- Social media – local community groups, church Facebook pages or free websites like mumsnet are all useful
- Publicising at the front of church during a service (be creative in how you do this)

The earlier you start, the more strategic the ways of getting the word out are, the better the end result will be.

FOLLOW UP

A lot of thought should be given to what will be left after the camp has finished in terms of community legacy. It's important that you plan effectively how you can follow up the children who make decisions to follow Christ or are interested in knowing more as well as new contacts made in the community. Follow up shouldn't be an afterthought, but an important factor in the overall vision and strategy of the camp. Think through the following questions:

- How can we maintain contact with each child and family?
- How can we integrate them into church life and the body of believers?
- How can we get them involved with people of a similar age and background?
- How can we disciple them?
- How can we best pray for them regularly?
- How can we build friendships with the whole family?
- Can we continue to use football as a means of contact with the young people?

The key is to find what works best in your area, for the children and families you're trying to reach. Some ideas that have been used in the past to follow up with the children who attended a camp are:

- Inviting the children to attend existing youth clubs and events at the church
- Inviting all the families along to family fun-days and other events
- Starting a weekly football night for those who attended the camp
- Running a community football tournament for the young people in the local area, or showing some World Cup / European Championship matches at the church

Make your investment in the children and families from your community a long-term one. It's been our experience that following Football Camps churches come into contact with a great number of people who have had no contact with them previously. Churches have even had parents of the children that

attended the event go to Alpha courses as a result.

“We loved you so much that we were very delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”

1 Thessalonians 2:8



STAYING SAFE

As with any church event, there are important things to remember to keep everyone safe and well:

- Make sure your church insurance covers the event
- Making sure all leaders are aware of the church's Child Protection Policy and follow best practice
- Making sure all leaders have *current* DBS certificates
- Making sure at least one leader is the designated First Aider, in charge of treating and logging all incidents
- Have an organised system that allows quick and secure access to all medical information, emergency contact details, necessary medicines and a well-stocked First Aid kit
- Make sure all areas of the venue are clean and hygienic. This means checking facilities on a daily basis, replenishing soaps and rubbish bags. If you are using a public space, a check of the playing area before the players arrive is essential.
- Ensuring all children are kept well-hydrated and protected from the elements.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the venue and all areas to be used before the start of the camp
- Prepare an effective registration system that ensures each child is accounted for and leaves with the correct adult.

Remember that you are responsible for the health and safety of the children while they are in your care. Do all that you can to make sure they are kept safe and well.





WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU RUN YOUR EVENT

Ambassadors usually provide at least one member of staff to coordinate your camp, as well as providing all coaching equipment and Bible teaching materials. However, we are here if you need assistance in any way, before, during or after the event.

Please get in contact if you need any assistance whatsoever or just want some experienced advice.

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