**Leaders’ Instructions for a Residential**

**Before you go**

* Pray. Prepare yourself spiritually.
* Sleep. Prepare yourself physically beforehand.

**During the residential**

Leading spiritually

* Keep the main thing the main thing!! Our goal is to ‘present everyone fully mature in Christ’ [Colossians 1.28]. That’s a high target, so keep that your focus. Our goal is not just to have fun, take in the rays or build friendships but to tell people about Jesus, and we pray that they’ll respond and grow to be like Jesus!
* **Lead by example.**
* Regularly offer to pray with young people and encourage them to pray for one another.
* In response times, look for those who need prayer. **Only pray with people of the same sex.** If you can’t see anyone who you think wants prayer, watch the Senior Leader and they may indicate someone for you to offer prayer to.
* **If you want to respond yourself, ask another leader to pray for you later.**
* Please keep your small group on task. A residential is an important time for spiritual growth; let’s make the most of it. The questions will work because they’re based on God’s word. Keep your group going back to what they have heard in this talk (or previous talks on the residential), rather than giving answers from other bits of the Bible or other knowledge. If you allow them to do that, newcomers are totally left out, without the ‘special knowledge’.
* Between you and your co-leader, try to touch base with each of your small group for a 1-to-1. This is a great time to say, ‘How are you doing with Jesus?’ You will find out far more during these times than you will in a small group, but only if these 1-to-1s aren’t all about you!
* Talk to young people generally about what God is teaching them.
* Be open to growing yourself and modelling that to young people.

Personal discipline

* **Sleep.** You need energy at the end of the residential when no one else has or you may make bad decisions. That means 2am nights for any reason, other than keeping young people quiet aren’t wise. If you’re exhausted, talk to the Senior Leader before heading off to sleep during the day. Don’t plan to survive the residential only fuelled by tea and chocolate!
* **Please be on time for leaders’ meetings.** You know how long a shower and washing and drying your hair takes, so you know when you need to start to make it on time! These are a key part of the day and will often be our only time to discuss how things are going, how people are and to look at the day.
* **Do try and spend time with God daily alone.** Even 5 minutes reading the Bible and praying is time well spent. You need spiritual food to keep giving out.
* Get other leaders to pray for you regularly.
* If you’re starting to feel run down, rest, drink plenty of water, take paracetamol if you need to, talk to the Medical Officer. If you need to stop, then talk to the Senior Leader and stop!
* Dress appropriately. If you’re a girl leading a mixed discussion group wearing a low-cut top reading your notes on the floor, or if you’re a guy showing off your great six-pack on the football field, you’re probably not dressed appropriately.

Leading practically

* Make decisions. I, the Senior Leader, hereby appoint you to make wise decisions. If everything comes back to me for a decision, I will be exhausted after day one.
* Encourage people to the next thing on the programme. This is especially important on the way to the teaching sessions. We want a prompt start so move people in.
* Know what’s coming next. You will be the person that young people expect to know what is happening next and where it is. Try to keep a programme on you and listen during leaders’ meetings.
* Keep a small group list with you and a team list too. Then at key points in the day, you can check off your small group list quickly. And when you’re doing something with your team, you will know who’s meant to be there. Some people may need help to remember they’re meant to be somewhere.
* In your team, you are there to encourage the older youth in leading the team – you are not the leader here! Take a register, support them, but let them fly! Draw in members who are not looking included.
* Please set an example by bringing your own Bible, notebook and pen to sessions and small groups. Sit with others, not right at the back, as others will follow your example.
* In teaching sessions, separate yourselves around the room, don’t all the leaders huddle in one area, even round the edges. Engage with the people near you.
* Help others near you to find passages if they are struggling.
* Be proactive. If something needs doing, you can do it.
* Please keep your mobile turned on but muted so we can call you if we need you and can’t find you! This is especially important on the day out or if you’re the Medical Officer.
* Something might happen that you feel needs a higher decision (certain disciplinary issues for example or something that would mean a change in the programme). If that happens talk to the Senior Leader directly.
* Room changes. A lot of thought has gone into dorms, so think twice before allowing people to swap. Run all room changes past the Senior Leader and don’t promise things we may not deliver. We want people to enjoy their time away, so if someone has been put in a room without their friends, we can change it, but if that leaves one person on their own, we won’t. Don’t assume that because the person being left behind says it’s o.k. that it is.

Working as a team

* Sometimes there will be side meetings going on. These will be about things that not everyone needs to know about, which might be about health, safeguarding, discipline, team challenges, sessions, feedback, etc. and allow other leaders to be looking after the young people. Please be reassured that the Senior Leader will talk to you straightaway, if there’s a problem with anything you’ve done. We won’t sit on that, so please don’t worry that people are talking about you or anything you’ve done. Instead, all of us:
* Let’s operate Matthew 18.15ff all through the residential.

*If your brother or sister sins against you, go and show them their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'*

If we annoy or frustrate anyone, let’s give them permission to come and talk to us about it straight afterwards 1-to-1 and sort it out. I don’t mean to annoy you, but sometimes I will. Please talk to me about it, not a fellow leader and certainly not a young person.

* If you hear a young person has a problem with another leader, help that young person talk to the leader, coming with them if necessary. Don’t allow them to complain behind backs without dealing with the problem.
* Don’t let young people play you off against another leader. If a young person is asking you to change something, ask if they’ve already talked to other leaders about it and ask what they said.
* Engage! Please throw yourself into everything on the programme, even if you think that it’s a bit retro. The young people will follow your example.
* Use your gifts!!! If you can see something that can be improved using a gift that you have, please talk to anyone in charge of that area, and then do it – don’t just leave it and complain afterwards that something wasn’t as good as it could have been!
* Always speak well of one another publicly. Always speak well of one another privately. Be careful about sarcasm, and especially if you are at the front. This can easily be misunderstood. Remember Ephesians 4.27

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

* Support the woman or man with the ball. If the speaker is speaking, listen intently. If the band is leading worship, sing loudly. People are looking at you to see how they should respond. If someone says, be there at 2pm to start, and you’re there at 2.05, you’re not supporting the woman with the ball.

Relationships

* Cherish all the young people and encourage young people to do the same.
* Use the time to get to know young people. This is your best chance of the year to remember names. Aim to know every single person’s name by the end of the residential.
* Look out for people, and especially people on their own. If you can, get them involved with other people. Give them a job to do or introduce them to someone with the same interests etc. If you’re a charismatic personality, people will flock to you, but they will tend to be the same people all the time. Look out for other people who would love to be talked to by a charismatic person like yourself!
* Delegate responsibility. Give young people jobs to do. They often rise to the challenge.
* Look out for members of the opposite sex who may be paying you a bit too much attention. If you think that a member of the opposite sex is spending too much time with you (unless you’re married to them!!) then tell the Senior Leader and we’ll operate a system to help you out. If X has come to talk to you for the tenth time today, excuse yourself and find someone else to talk to. Don’t let yourself be monopolised.
* Don’t choose talking to leaders over talking to young people, unless it’s about practicalities. You’re here primarily to serve the young people... This is true unless you are a Leaders’ Pastor.
* Spot people doing something great and make sure they get an award for it on the last day, or talk to Team Challenge Leaders so they’ll get points for it!

Leading a part of the programme

* If your name is down against an event, assume that you are organising it completely!! So don’t assume you can just turn up and everything will be ready for you. Make a checklist and check we’re bringing everything you’ll need for your event. Include prizes if appropriate.
* Prepare as much as you can possibly do for your event beforehand. Don’t lose relational time on residential to prepare if it can be avoided!!
* If you are responsible for an activity, you make the decisions around it and announce them. If you’re not in charge of it, please don’t announce things around it. It only causes confusion. If you spot a better solution, talk to the person in charge of the activity, rather than announcing the better solution to the group.

Leading safely

* Be safe – don’t go into a room on your own with any young person, even your own child or sibling (not everyone may know they are). If you need to go into a room with a young person (e.g. one is sitting in their dorm and everyone else has gone to the meeting), prop the door open or safer still, speak from the door... Keep everything in a public place. Ask another leader to come with you or stand where they can see you if you need to. If you need privacy, sit in a quiet corner of the meeting room etc. Sitting in the garden with a teenager at 1am in the morning isn’t a public place.
* Never promise to keep something a secret if someone wants to tell you something. If you do, you may regret it, and have to break your promise. Better not to promise – they will still normally tell you if they’ve gone that far. If someone tells you something that you think may need telling to someone else, then talk to me or telephone the church’s Safeguarding Officer on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Write a record of what was said immediately (next day is better than nothing, but still late), sign it, date it and keep it safe.
* Keep children safe. Constantly be running dynamic risk assessments, which means asking, ‘What is the worst thing that could happen here?’ Think ‘worst case scenario’ to keep children safe. Young people decide to practise human pyramids on the field.... Do you want to ring a parent to say their child has broken their neck? No? Or be financially liable for a lifetime of care? No? Then what do you need to do to make sure that doesn’t happen? I’d suggest you can build a human pyramid on a soft, sandy beach with 11- to 14-year-olds with two leaders one in front and one behind, close enough to catch a faller but not on a field with 14- to 18-year-olds. You are in loco parentis. You are a proxy parent for the week.
* At night-time, prepare for a hasty exit. If the alarm goes off, have these at hand:
  + Your clothes to put on quickly
  + A torch (useful when pranked too!)
  + Your small group list and a pen

...and know your fire exit. Everyone will be looking to you, so you need to know where you’re going. Talk to your co-leaders about which rooms you’re going to check in the event of an evacuation, and include toilets etc.

* Please take care of the property we are staying in. Please don’t let young people damage it. If things are damaged, please let the overall leader know as soon as possible. Damage being discovered later normally just makes it worse. If things are moved around and you know they have been moved, please move them back yourself. We have been charged for staff to move back furniture and for a new carpet.
* Ensure children sleep. Most parents would not allow their 9-year-old to talk till 1am, or their teenagers to talk to 2am four nights running. If you are struggling to get the children to be quiet, talk to the Senior Leader about strategies. Even on a weekend away, Sunday morning’s talk will be noticeably less effective if 11- to 14-year-olds have been talking later than midnight both nights.
* Know your limits. If something happens where you are not sure what a parent would do, then immediately contact your Senior Leader even late at night. If you cannot contact them, then do not be afraid to call the child’s parent, even in the middle of the night. This is especially true if a young child has been distressed for an extended time, or is homesick and not easily distracted, or is seriously ill/gone to hospital. Children are used to parents being around when they are ill, and it can be very frightening to be ill without parents nearby. Look out generally for ‘Call the parents to let them know’ moments. It’s important to allow parents into your decision-making.

And also...

* Smile and be friendly.
* Have fun!

**After the residential**

* Stay in touch with your small group. Meet them for a hot chocolate and ask them how they’re going on after the residential. How has the residential changed them?
* Pray for your small group.
* If you are a regular leader, think who didn’t make it to the residential that would appreciate extra care now?
* Rest well, knowing you’ve done well what God has called you to and equipped you for...

Dave Thornton