

Military Families

Working in partnership with
The Methodist Forces Board

the **GIRLS'**
BRIGADE
ENGLAND & WALES



**FOREWORD by
Chaplain to the Forces, Padre Jo Critchley**

For leaders:

'I am impressed with the work that GB has done to bring this new badgework to fruition. Having been a member of GB for 25 years from age 5, as well as a Trustee in the past, I know both the benefit of badgework and the work that goes into producing the guidance. As an Explorer through to Warrant Officer, I always took pride in my armband as it held the badges that demonstrated the breadth of opportunities GB offered me. I have it in a memory box still as a reminder of those days!

'My hope is that those groups who engage in this material will grow in empathy of the vital role that so many men and women play in the military, from front line efforts to create peace and stability, through to those of us working together to provide welfare and pastoral support to those serving, and their families. There are such a diverse range of trades and professions in our Services all working together for the greater good. This diversity showcases the skills and gifts that our service men and women gain through their own time in uniformed organisations – led by people just like yourselves.

'I recognise that for some of you the topics might be uncomfortable, but I would encourage you not to be afraid of the conversations that will come from this material. Younger generations are growing up in a rapidly changing world and need to be able to think through difficult topics with people they trust. Please be assured that for the girls in your groups who have parents, friends and family members serving in the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force, they will share their stories with pride and delight knowing that they have personal links to the ethos in this new badgework.

'May I also ask that you pray for those families who are part of our armed forces as we collaboratively seek a safer world.'

To be read to the girls at the start of the programme:

'I really hope that you enjoy these new topics in your groups; lots of great work has gone into them to help you think and be challenged about the families who are part of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force.

'I was in GB from age 5 - for over 25 years! In my day, we sewed our badges on armbands. My armband in the 1980's & 1990's was filled with badges, and I wore it with such pride as I grew in greater understanding of the world in which I lived.

'If you have family members or friends who are in the forces, why not ask them to tell you some of their stories, and you can then tell them what you find out through this badgework. Sharing these things helps us all to understand each other more and develop a better knowledge of the work that the UK military does to bring about peace and stability all across the world.'

Session 1 - Belonging When Things Change



Spiritual Element

Bible focus: Ruth Ch.1:16–17 – ‘Where you go, I will go...’

Leader’s blurb:

Many children and young people in military families move house, school, and community more often than most. That can feel exciting at times, but it can also feel unsettling or lonely. In the story of Ruth, we meet someone who leaves everything familiar behind and steps into the unknown. Ruth doesn’t know what lies ahead, but she knows who she is going with, and she chooses loyalty, love, and courage.

This story reminds us that God is not tied to one place. God travels with us - into new homes, new classrooms, new friendships, and new beginnings. Faith does not mean everything stays the same; it means we are not alone when things change. God is present in the moving, the packing, the waiting, and the starting again.

Discussion questions:

- What feelings might come with moving somewhere new?
- Who or what helps you feel like you belong?
- How might God travel with people when their lives change?



Skill Element

Skill 1: My Moving Map

- Draw a simple map showing places you’ve lived, visited, or feel connected to
- Use symbols or colours to show feelings (happy, nervous, proud)
- Share as much or as little as you want

Skill 2: Packing Challenge

- In small teams, imagine you have 3 minutes to pack for a sudden move
- Choose 10 items only
- Discuss what mattered most and why



Social Element

Social 1 (in group): Welcome Circle

- Practice welcoming a “new member” into the group
- Take turns saying one way you can help someone new feel included

Social 2 (at home): Welcome Cards

- Create a welcome card or message for someone who is new to your school, street, or club.

Session 2 - Living with Separation



Spiritual Element

Bible focus: Psalm Ch.139:9–10 – ‘Even there your hand shall lead me...’

Leader’s blurb:

Many military families experience separation - a parent or carer away on duty, training, or deployment. This can bring pride and worry at the same time. The Psalms remind us that no matter how far apart people are, God’s presence is not divided or weakened by distance.

This psalm reassures us that God is with those who stay and those who go. God understands missing, waiting, and loving from afar. Faith does not remove the difficulty of separation, but it offers comfort, connection, and hope that love can stretch across distance.

Discussion questions:

- What is hard about missing someone?
- How can people stay connected when apart?
- What might help when feelings feel big?



Skill Element

Skill 1: Message Across Miles

- Write a message to someone you miss or care about.
- It can be words, drawings, or prayers.
- Discuss different ways people stay in touch today.

Skill 2: Signal Relay

- Create simple signals (claps, movements).
- Send messages across the room without speaking.
- Reflect on communication and patience.



Social Element

Social 1 (in group): Feelings Wall

- Create a wall of words for feelings linked to separation.
- Add ways to support someone feeling that way.

Social 2 (at home): Staying strong

- Ask a family member how they stay strong when missing someone and share what you learned.

Session 3 - Courage and Service



Spiritual Element

Bible focus: Micah 6:8 – ‘Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly...’

Leader’s blurb:

Military service is often spoken about in terms of bravery and duty, but courage also looks like kindness, restraint, and care for others. The prophet Micah reminds us that God values justice, compassion, and humility more than power or strength alone.

This teaching helps us think about service as caring for people, protecting dignity, and working for peace wherever possible. Families who support service members also serve - through patience, resilience, and love.

Discussion questions:

- What does courage look like in everyday life?
- How do families serve one another?
- How can strength and kindness work together?



Skill Element

Skill 1: Acts of Quiet Courage

- Brainstorm everyday brave actions
- Choose one to practice this week

Skill 2: Obstacle Course

- Set up a simple course
- Complete it helping one another
- Reflect on teamwork



Social Element

Social 1 (in group): Thank You Web

- Create a web of people who support service families
- Talk about unseen support roles

Social 2 (at home): Act of Kindness

- Do one **practical act of kindness** for someone who supports others (teacher, carer, neighbour).

Session 4 - Resilience and feelings



Spiritual Element

Bible focus: 2 Corinthians Ch.4:16 – ‘We do not lose heart...’

Leader’s blurb:

Resilience does not mean pretending things are fine. It means being honest about struggles while trusting that renewal is possible. The Bible acknowledges weariness while affirming that God continues to strengthen people from within.

God welcomes all emotions - joy, fear, anger, hope. Being resilient includes knowing when to rest, when to speak, and when to ask for help.

Discussion questions:

- What helps you feel stronger after a hard day?
- Why is it okay to feel tired or upset?
- Who helps you recover?



Skill Element

Skill 1: Resilience Toolbox

- Draw or create a ‘toolbox’ of coping strategies
- Share ideas across ages

Skill 2: Shake It Out Game

- Move, stretch, and shake out stress
- Pair movement with breathing



Social Element

Social 1 (in group): Listening Pairs

- Practice listening without interrupting
- Reflect on being heard

Social 2 (at home): Check In

- Have a check-in conversation at home where everyone shares one high and one low.

Session 5 - Hope, Home, and Community



Spiritual Element

Bible focus: Revelation 21:5 – ‘I am making all things new.’

Leader’s blurb:

Home is not only a place - it is made through love, safety, and belonging. For military families, home may change often, but hope remains rooted in relationships and shared care.

This vision of renewal reminds us that God is always working toward healing and wholeness. Every new beginning matters, and every community can become a place of welcome.

Discussion questions:

- What makes a place feel like home?
- How can we build community wherever we are?
- What gives you hope?



Skill Element

Skill 1: Build-a-Community

- Use blocks or craft materials to build a welcoming space
- Label areas with values (kindness, safety)

Skill 2: Moving Game

- Play a game where groups change often
- Reflect on adapting and reconnecting



Social Element

Social 1 (in group): Belonging Pledge

- Write a group promise about inclusion
- Display it

Social 2 (at home): Welcome

- Help welcome someone new - at school, church, or in the neighbourhood - and reflect together.



Leader's Notes

Using the Girls' Brigade Badge Programme

Purpose of the Badge Programme

The Girls' Brigade badge awards are designed to nurture the whole person—spiritually, emotionally, socially, and practically. The aim is not only to impart knowledge or teach skills but to create space for young people to explore faith, build relationships, and grow in confidence and compassion.

Spiritual, Social, and Skill Elements in the Badge Programme

Each Girls' Brigade badge is designed to contribute meaningfully to three areas of personal growth:



Spiritual Element

Helping young people explore faith, ask questions, and grow in their understanding of God and themselves. Each **Spiritual element** has:

- A **theme** rooted in life experience and Christian values.
- A **focus section** to guide session design and intention.
- A **biblical reference** to root learning in Scripture



Skill Element

Equipping young people with practical, emotional, and leadership skills that help them navigate life with confidence and creativity.



Social Element

Supporting young people to build relationships, grow in empathy, and learn how to contribute positively to the community around them.

Each badge and each session are based around these elements. It is not imperative that you complete every skill or social element in each session. Some elements will take up a whole session. This badge work is designed to be flexible and adaptable to suit each group setting.

How to engage with each element



Spiritual Element

Look for moments when a session helps young people:

- Explore a **biblical truth or story**
- Ask **questions about faith, God, or purpose**
- Reflect on values like love, justice, and peace
- Experience **stillness, prayer, or worship**
- Think about **how faith connects to everyday life**

Leader prompts:

- “Where do you see God in this?”
- “What do you think this story is saying to us today?”
- “What kind of world does Jesus invite us to build?”



Skill Element

Badge sessions often introduce or build on:

- **Practical life skills** (e.g. finance, safety, communication)
- **Creative skills** (e.g. drama, design, storytelling)
- **Leadership skills** (e.g. planning, presenting, decision-making)
- **Critical thinking** and self-awareness
- **Problem-solving** in group or individual tasks

Leader prompts:

- “What new thing did you try today?”
- “What would you do differently next time?”
- “How could you use this skill at home or school?”



Social Element

Each badge includes opportunities for:

- **Teamwork** and relationship-building
- Practising **kindness, respect, and empathy**
- Discussing **community, diversity, and justice**
- Building **confidence to speak and listen** in groups
- Understanding **how our actions affect others**

Leader prompts:

- “How can we help each other this week?”
- “What does it mean to be a good friend, even when it’s hard?”
- “How could we use what we’ve learned to help our community?”

Putting It All Together

Each badge is different, and one badge may lean more heavily on one area over another, but all three elements are included.

For example:

Badge	Spiritual	Social	Skill
Money	Trusting God with resources; values around money	Discussing generosity; teamwork in budgeting games	Budgeting, understanding accounts, practical money tips
Heritage	Faith stories in GB's past; Hebrews Ch.12:1	Learning from women of faith; building GB identity	Research, storytelling, presentation
Friendship	Love and kindness in the Bible	Making and sustaining healthy relationships	Communication, empathy, conflict resolution
Caring	Caring as part of discipleship (Philippians Ch.2:4)	Encouraging service and compassion	Basic care skills, understanding needs, volunteering

General Guidance

1. Badgework is for all ages.

Girls' Brigade badgework is mostly all age - recognising that many Girls' Brigade groups have a wide range of ages in their groups.

You will see these logos throughout the badge guidance to help you recognise the different elements of the badgework.



Spiritual



Skill



Social

When you see these logos are square (below), that means that badgework is intentionally **written for older young people** and may cover themes that are not appropriate for younger people.



Sessions are written to be all age in mind, but leaders should feel free and confident to adapt:

- Use **storytelling, crafts, games, and sensory play** for younger groups
- Use **discussion, roleplay, creative media, and deeper reflection** for older groups
- Offer **choice and leadership roles** to older young people within a session (e.g. planning an activity)

2. Session Flexibility

Each badge includes multiple sessions, often designed around **5-week blocks**. However:

- You can run them weekly, monthly, or in condensed formats
- Sessions can stand alone or build on one another
- You may choose to focus more on a particular theme if it fits local needs
- Some badges, such as the Church Year badge, are intentionally written to be spaced out throughout the year.

3. Faith Engagement

The biblical references are chosen to support the theme and invite reflection, not to impose belief. Leaders are encouraged to:

- Share the Scripture in an age-appropriate and inclusive way
- Allow time for **open-ended wondering questions** ('What do you think this means?')
- Model faith as a journey, not a set of fixed answers

4. Inclusion & Safety

Sessions are written to reflect **GB's commitment to inclusion**. This includes:

- Creating a safe and welcoming space for all young people, regardless of background or belief
- Addressing topics like **mental health, LGBTQ+ inclusion** and **gender justice** with sensitivity and confidence
- Allowing room for **personal stories, questions, and disagreement**

The Girls' Brigade safeguarding policy, EDI guidance and gender guidance can be found in Life to the Full, [click here to read them](#).

If a session covers a potentially sensitive topic, leaders should:

- Check in advance what support is available if a young person is affected
- Remind the group of ground rules and confidentiality
- Signpost where further help is available

Practical Tips for Leaders

Prepare Well

- Read the session materials in advance.
- Adapt activities to your group's size, space, and needs.
- Have resources (e.g. Bibles, paper, craft materials) ready beforehand.

Start With Connection

- Always begin sessions by checking in - how are they feeling today?
- Build trust before diving into deeper content.

Make It Fun and Meaningful

- Use **games and activities** as tools for connection and reflection.
- Mix physical movement with quiet time.
- Include creative expression - art, drama, storytelling, song.

End With Prayer or Reflection

- Offer a moment of stillness at the end of each session.
- Encourage young people to write, draw, or quietly think about what they've learned.
- Keep prayers simple and invitational.

Awarding Badges

- Badges are awarded not just for attendance, but for engagement, reflection, and growth.
- Celebrate learning with the group: you could hold a **badge ceremony, parents' evening**, or make space for young people to **share what they've learned**.
- Encourage peer encouragement – 'What did you notice others doing well this term?'

Encouraging Leadership

- Older young people can and should be encouraged to **co-lead sessions, mentor younger groups**, or help design part of the badge journey.
- This supports leadership development and gives them agency in their own growth.

Final thoughts:

- When planning or reflecting on a session, ask yourself:
'Where is the spiritual moment? What social connection is happening? What skill is being learned?'
- You might want to **highlight or debrief** at the end of each session, helping the group name what they've experienced or learned.
- Celebrate growth in **all three areas**, not just the visible outcomes.

Over many years our dedicated leaders will have come up with or used a variety of games and activities. We encourage you to use them all in your groups. The activities, games and tasks are related to the theme of the week but they are by no means the be all and end all. Your experience is valuable and we encourage you to draw upon it.

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