

Leading a Scripture Union Group in Scottish primary and secondary schools

The Team Leaders' Manual

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Welcome

Thank you for being willing to lead a Scripture Union (SU) Group. Each week in Scottish schools around 500 SU Groups are meeting in classrooms, GP Rooms, gyms and elsewhere giving thousands of young people an opportunity to explore the Bible and respond to the significance of Jesus.

This manual is partly training and resource ideas but it also goes alongside our SU Scotland Volunteers Handbook in outlining policy and good practice to shape all our work as volunteers and staff in schools. We are there to talk about faith in Jesus Christ for pupils to learn about, question, and respond to. We are also there at the invitation of the Head Teacher. Both aspects require a professional work delivered with integrity.

As the accredited Team Leader, we see you as key to delivering this whether it's only you on the team, you lead a team of several members or if you're just about to 'step up' to the role of Team Leader having been part of the team for some time.

The first chapter is all about setting up a group but you may well find some tips and ideas for promoting or developing your existing group within that section. As you move on through the manual you'll find practical help, ideas for resources, questions to stimulate thinking and, hopefully, an encouragement that you are also a member of a larger national team and supported by your local staff member. They will want to support you and your group through visiting and seeing you all in action as well as taking part in the programme. They will also put on training in your area to augment and develop ideas in this booklet. Please make this a priority for you and your team.

May God inspire, encourage and lead you in this work.

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Section 1 How to start an SU Group

This chapter is intended as a step by step guide to setting up an SU Group, but it will help to work through at least some of this with SU or Associate Trust staff and potential members of your team.

The title "SU Group" is virtually the default setting for Christian Groups in Scottish schools (just as a vacuum cleaner is likely to be referred to as a Hoover even when it's a Dyson). This position reflects the long history of SU's work in Scottish schools as well as the national breadth of our work over the years. This brings with it a trust from school staff and church leaders as well as a responsibility on current SU staff and volunteers to protect the goodwill offered to us.

We will therefore want to meet with prospective Team Leaders to support them but also to interview and approve them for this work. Appendix 1 in this manual outlines our approach and protocol in working with schools. Please take time to read this brief document carefully. There are differences in how we work in schools compared to residential events and missions; all school based volunteers will need to be comfortable and capable of working in that way.

This document raises a number of issues and offers advice and guidance relevant to starting an SU Group. The questions in each section offer space to gather information and record your thinking as you work towards starting the group.

1.1 Research

Get to know your school and some of the people in it. The chances are that you have some involvement already as a teacher, parent, chaplain, youth worker or pupil. Has there previously been an SU Group?

School name: _____

Headteacher/Rector: _____

School phone number: _____

School email: _____

Secretary: _____

Janitor: _____

Other key staff (e.g. Deputes): _____

1.2 Work with the full knowledge of the SU Regional or Associate Worker.

You may well have made contact with your local staff member by now. If not, visit www.suscotland.org.uk/regional and use the links to track down your nearest office. We will work with you through our Team Leader and Volunteer accreditation processes as well as support you in the thinking and planning towards an SU Group.

- One member of your team needs to be identified as the Team Leader (TL) and must request SU Leadership Forms (and TL Reference forms) from your local staff member. These forms are not available from the SU Scotland website.
- Other Team Members complete SU Volunteer Forms – application and two referees - which are available from our staff or our website (www.suscotland.org.uk/volunteer and look for the "Application Packs" link)
- All these forms – plus annual updates – can be completed electronically by email with no need to print or post although printing, writing and posting forms are still acceptable! Please pass

your reference forms on to your two referees, asking them to send them on to the Volunteers Unit in Glasgow. Address, email and phone details are on the forms.

- On receipt of SU Leadership or Volunteer Forms our Volunteers Unit will send out an application form for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.
- Your local staff member will want to meet with and interview you as the prospective Team Leader, normally once they receive a copy of your SU Leadership Form. This meeting will discuss subjects such as your experience in working with the Bible with children and young people; leading and working in a team; working across denominations as well as the content of your SU Leadership Form. They will also discuss your understanding of our Protocol or basis for working in schools. The local staff member will, if appropriate, approve the appointment of the Team Leader.
- It may well be possible to put you in touch with other SU Group Leaders to see groups in action before you start, and also to find on-going support.

Local staff member _____

Their office address _____

Phone number _____

Email _____

1.3 Involve other Christians from the Chaplaincy Team, pupils, school staff or local churches

A team with a breadth of membership will bring different talents and availability to strengthen the programme so gather a workable group of volunteers. It may be that school staff can be there as “gatekeepers” to give school management confidence but cannot offer preparation time or leadership. Be clear what people are being asked to do and are offering to do and be willing to push them.

Chaplains: _____

Christian staff or pupils: _____

Other Christians (e.g. parents): _____

Likely leaders: _____

SU or Associate Worker: _____

1.4 Pray as an individual and with others for the school, and for initiatives that could be taken to start a group in the school

Register with *Pray For Schools Scotland* (www.suscotland.org.uk/pray/) administered by SU Scotland; if others are praying for the same school and are happy to be put in touch, then we'll connect you. The website offers ideas and resources to help you and other people pray for your school throughout the year as well as at two significant times: Back to School with God Sunday (August) and the Europe wide “Pray for Schools” Day in November. Resources and ideas are also available in “hard copy” from our Prayer Co-ordinator in the SU Scotland national office on 0141 352 7632.

Most SU staff circulate prayer needs for their region to supporters on a regular basis; get your news included by contacting your local office. Try to add news to your church prayer agenda in newsletters, prayer meetings or other services.

People to be asked to pray regularly: _____

Prayer event: _____

1.5 Think what kind of group you would like to start

SU Groups can take many forms and styles. It may well be that the format of the group changes as you talk and pray with others or once the group has started, but you'll need to have a plan to begin with – at least to be able to hold an intelligent conversation with school management. Some groups in both primary and secondary schools have a limited age range; this can help to keep the group more focussed on what it does. If you are looking to develop a senior pupil group for discipleship and Bible study it is likely to have a different feel from a group that seeks to gather the various pupils who have just come up from their primary school groups. The chapters on good primary and secondary SU Groups will be helpful for you.

Young people involved with SU Scotland described the values of SU groups as:

- Safe places where all pupils are welcomed and respected; where Christian values are modelled.
- Fun, memorable, exciting and age-appropriate.
- Having good, challenging, interactive Bible engagement.
- Having time where there is opportunity for prayer.
- Being well structured and led; the leader(s) recognising and using the talents of others.
- Having a positive impact on the school, and being known amongst pupils.
- Exploring Christian faith and encouraging one another on their journey
- Working cooperatively and openly with the leadership of the school

This list is not intended to stifle creativity by group leaders, but rather to engender a common ethos that defines the ministry of SU Scotland.

In this manual we always refer to "SU Groups" but you are at liberty to call the group anything that describes, labels or defines the group to the satisfaction of you, the young people and the school. This might be Lunch Bunch, Monday Club, Ignite, 2CY, The Grid, If you are calling it an "SU Group" - or referring to it as such with the school's Management Team - then you must be an accredited volunteer with SU Scotland.

Aim of the group: _____

Age group: _____

Timings: _____

What will you call the group? _____

Day of the week? _____

What days do choirs happen in the school – never a good one to clash with!

What venue do you have available to you? _____

What kind of room would you like? Are there restrictions about eating for example in school rooms? _____

1.6 Work with the full knowledge of the School Management Team

Head Teachers value a busy extra-curricular programme. SU Groups contribute to this and the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence as pupils learn and lead together. They are also understood by Scottish Government to have an important place in Religious Observance:

Members of the school community, including pupils, parents and representatives of faith groups and communities, may wish to have opportunities for organised acts of worship within the informal curriculum of the school. Ministers would encourage headteachers to consider these requests positively and make suitable arrangements if appropriate personnel and accommodation can be provided. (Scottish Government, February 2011)

Contact the school, asking to start an SU Group and requesting a meeting with the Head Teacher or another member of the School Management Team. Do not expect to just turn up and speak to them unless you have a particularly good relationship already. The Scottish Government letter quoted above still leaves the decision on your group with the Head Teacher so don't go in asking for "your right." There may be reasons for "not now" such as school refurbishment. Clearly we believe in the power of prayer to change people and circumstances so it may be that you have to ask again after a reasonable period of time.

Head Teachers will apply and interpret best practice in different ways. For example, a letter to parents makes it very clear what the group is about but tear off permission slips provide an administrative exercise for the school to implement as well as being a hurdle to children attending. Don't set out to make it difficult for pupils to come to the group but be prepared to go along with all that is asked of you by the school.

Bear in mind that an SU Group is, first and foremost, an extra-curricular club for the school so the approval of the school is paramount and relies on the Head Teacher's assessment of you and of your proposal. Prepare well for this meeting. A further implication of this is that the group is 'governed' firstly by school policies and secondly by SU policies. For example it will operate under the school's child protection policy which you should ask about. For example find out who the member of senior staff is to whom you would report any child protection concerns.

Member of staff to meet: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Council accreditation (e.g. PVG) needed? _____

Letter to parents agreed? _____

Parental permission slip needed? _____

Child Protection briefing received: _____

What is the dress code that is expected of you? _____

Are you allowed to park in the school car park? _____

What technology is available in the school? Where is it stored and who looks after it?

Are pupils able to take packed lunches to the room?

Can you store resources in the school? _____

How can the group be publicised within the school? (See Section 1.8 below)

1.7 Make sure that you and your leaders are properly prepared for your group

Agree what materials you will use. There are some suggestions in the Team Leaders' Manual and more ideas on our website. As well as planning your content we need you to keep a record of each week's content to show the Head Teacher or others who may ask about the group. This can be integrated as a few lines of text alongside the record of attendance.

You will need to be prepared to maintain discipline in setting the boundaries for your group. (Try *Top Tips on dealing with challenging behaviour*, published by SU!)

When is your planned start date? _____

What material will you use? _____

How will you plan and communicate who does what each week?

How will you keep records of who attended each week and what your subjects were?

Do you need resources for music, crafts, games etc? How will these be provided and stored?

What is your approach going to be to discipline? What is acceptable? What "crosses the line?"

1.8 Advertise your group to those whom you would like to see coming

Work with the school management to try to generate an awareness and anticipation for the group starting. Look on the SU Scotland website and download logos if you want to use them:
www.suscotland.org.uk/about/corporate-identity

Being able to talk to people face to face will be more significant than an email, notice read out in class or poster on the wall – though these ideas can still be used. Ask for some input to assemblies or a presence in a central area of the school at breaks. Some SU Volunteers have been instrumental to starting a "Clubs and Societies Fair" at the start of the school session.

Establish a system to record who is attending the club each week. Perhaps have a "sign in sheet" for each class. Keep these records alongside your notes of the content for each week.

Contact local churches and youth groups to help the group reach a critical mass early on.

Assemblies: _____

Launch event: _____

Posters: _____

School notice sheet/email: _____

School Tannoy/video boards): _____

Local churches: _____

1.9 Personally invite those who you would like to see coming

Perhaps some pupils already have a connection with you or with a local church; try to get information to all the local churches. Perhaps some pupils have been to a Scripture Union Holiday, weekend or mission. Ask your local staff member for a list of these people and work out how best to contact them.

Who to speak to and invite?

Who is going to do it?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

1.10 Persevere with your vision for the school for at least a term and then evaluate

SU Groups can take a bit of time to get off the ground but they can also become “the place to be” so be prepared for either eventuality. Keep supporters informed and praying for your group. Try to balance the need for a consistency and structure that pupils can identify and relate to with an expectation that there will be new and exciting things happening at the group. Look to the rest of the SU Group Leaders' Manual for advice and ideas as the group develops.

A couple of questions to think about:

What has gone well in this launch process?

What do you want to see happen in the school?

What should you start, stop and continue doing to realise this?

Are there other people who you need to involve?

Section 2 **What makes a good primary SU Group?**

SU Groups come in all different forms so leaders should not feel restricted to a specific model. Here are some examples of different types of primary school SU Groups:

- A group in a small school for all ages and stages
- An after-school club running for an hour or so alongside other clubs
- A short term club running in 6-8 week blocks
- A lunchtime group for a limited mix of ages

If your group meets over lunchtime you may only have half an hour in which to meet as a group, and if you meet after school, you will have more time. Most primary SU Groups meet at lunchtime in schools, but there are quite a few which meet at the end of the school day. There are advantages in both, but whenever the group meets, the ingredients will be similar.

This section will give you some ideas, resources and inspiration for what makes a good primary SU Group and what distinguishes an SU Group from other clubs that may be run in a school.

The Values of an SU Group

Young people involved with SU Scotland have identified the following values of SU groups. Your group should therefore be known for being:

- A safe place where all pupils are welcomed and respected; where Christian values are modeled.
- Fun, memorable, exciting and age-appropriate.
- Having good, challenging, interactive Bible engagement.
- Having time where there is opportunity for prayer.
- Being well structured and led; the leader(s) recognising and using the talents of others.
- Having a positive impact on the school, and being known amongst pupils.
- Exploring Christian faith and encouraging one another on their journey
- Working cooperatively and openly with the management of the school

This list of values is not intended to stifle creativity by group leaders, but rather to engender a common ethos that defines the ministry of SU Scotland.

2.1 A safe place where all pupils are welcomed and respected; where Christian values are modeled.

Some schools allow members of lunchtime clubs to be served first so that they can get to their group on time, but other groups arrange to meet over a packed lunch, with the school's permission. This can be a very important part of the programme, allowing you and your team to spend time getting to know the young people in your group and showing each one that they matter, and are important to you as individuals.

Keep a record of who attends each week. This will help you see who has been missing for a few weeks but may also be required as a Fire Safety tool should the alarm go off during the SU Group. Clearly if parental permission slips are needed then this should be reflected in when pupils are allowed to attend.

Even if the group meets for an hour after school, it's often a good idea, with school permission, to provide something to drink along with a biscuit. This can allow some young people to take responsibility in serving and allows you to spend time getting to know the individuals in your group.

Every member of your group will have something to say, but it's good to allow a short time for them to tell everyone in the group their news – especially from family or school community; that's a really good way of showing you value them as people. Jesus listened, we must listen. For some young people, apart from their teacher, you may be the only significant adult who might listen to what they are saying. It should be noticeably different to a classroom environment with an emphasis on enjoyment and a relaxed atmosphere. Leaders should learn names and get to know the young people in their group. SU Groups should be inclusive, and nobody should feel left out. As most young people in the group won't know very much about the Christian faith, we must represent Jesus to each one, so that when it comes to sharing the Good News, then they will see that it's something you practice as well as preach!

2.2 Fun, memorable, exciting and age-appropriate.

Typically primary SU Groups are for P5-P7 for a couple of reasons:

- Many SU Group Resources (SUPA Club, Schools Live, etc.) are written for P5-P7
- The residential programme of SU Scotland starts at P5

However some schools have SU Groups for P1-P3 or for P4/5 as this fits the age range of the leaders' children or the biggest gap in the school's extracurricular programme. A narrow age range means that the members know that the group is specifically designed for them and reduces the challenge to cater for a wide age-range

All sessions should be engaging and fun for young people. This can be done in a variety of ways and leaders should be encouraged to think creatively and use their skills and gifts. For example: sport, crafts, music, games, storytelling, etc.

Games can be just pure fun and are of great value on their own, or they can introduce the group to some aspect of the Bible passage you are about to look at. They don't need a lot of space, and very often, simple social games done in a circle on chairs can be very popular and there are lots of very simple ideas. Sometimes programme material provide some ideas to go along with the theme, but other good resources for primary games include books such as *"Ultimate Games"* and *"Everyone's a Winner"* from Scripture Union.

An engaging, structured programme can help with holding the attention of the group. Good groups are well planned so that leaders know in advance what they are doing. However don't let the thought of hours of endless preparation discourage you. There are many fantastic resources available to help to create a good programme.

SCHOOLS LIVE - Available free from Scripture Union at www.schoolslive.org, *SchoolsLive* provides Bible-based resources for Christian groups in schools. A three year rolling programme of material mixes short themes with stand-alone sessions and seasonal material with ideas for introducing, teaching and reflecting upon each topic by choosing from games, songs, craft and discussion. Material is downloaded either based on your choices or complete as a session for you to choose and edit later. SU has tried to make *SchoolsLive* as intuitive and easy to use as possible but if you're unsure about how to use the site to its full potential, you can take a step by step *SchoolsLive* Tour from the "About *Schoolslive*" page.



JAFFA, stands for Jesus A Friend For All and was originally published in three "year-long" books by SU Australia. Written especially for lunchtime groups with 30 minutes or so to work with, this material is an excellent



starting point even if some of the illustrations may be slightly cultural or dated.

They have now been out of print for some time but we have obtained the PDF files for Book 1 and made them available on the SU Scotland website (The Primary Resources page can be found on the left hand side of this secondary resources page www.suscotland.org.uk/resources).

All three JAFFA Books can be bought as PDF downloads from SU Australia (www.sushop.com.au) or downloaded for free as individual units from www.max7.org/channels/jaffa

EYELEVEL is Scripture Union's project to find new ways to make Jesus known to children and young people who are unconnected to a church community. It aims to provide ideas, resources and training to enable and support Christians and churches to look out for, make contact with and make Jesus known to these young people and children. Many of the themed books are follow up material for the popular Holiday Club themes such as Showstoppers, Rocky's Plaice etc, but others are standalone titles. Typically written for an afterschool or evening club, there will be some adjustment needed for a lunchtime club, i.e. spread one section over two weeks perhaps using the DVD to tell the story one week and another method the following week. Materials are available as A4 books available from many sources or as PDF downloads bought from www.scriptureunion.org.uk/shop. The most popular titles in primary SU Groups are likely to be:



Awesome! a programme of 8 sessions in which children follow the signs from the Gospel of John to discover who Jesus is.

Streetwise a journey down Luke Street visiting houses mentioned in Luke's Gospel to find out why Jesus went there and what happened when he did!

High Five shares stories in Mark, where Jesus touched the lives of those around him. It challenges children to make a further step of commitment to Jesus and to think and care for others in the world around them.

Take Away takes children through a story from Paul's life and helps children discover more about God through Paul's adventures.

Other ideas are available from the SU Scotland website at www.suscotland.org.uk/resources

Whatever material you use – published or developed by yourself – keep it appropriate to the age and understanding of your group and keep a record of your content throughout the year. It may be that the Head Teacher wants to see what the group has been doing because a parent asks about the nature and purpose of the group.

2.3 Having good, challenging, interactive Bible engagement.

Good SU Groups should have a clear focus on Bible engagement. Children should be helped to learn the story of the Bible through looking at individual episodes within the overall context and storyline of the Bible to give a greater understanding of God and the Christian faith. Handling of the Bible and interaction with it is a vital aspect of primary SU Groups.

The majority of children who attend primary SU Groups in Scotland will have had little or no contact with the Christian church, and will not know much about the Bible, so you will have to start from scratch. Have a stock of Bibles available for the children to read. Perhaps the SU Group can be the stimulus for local churches or individuals to sponsor the purchase a class set of Bibles to be used throughout the school including the SU Group. A Bible timeline or Bible bookcase can also help pupils – and team – visualize how one week's story fits into and contributes to God's whole story.

Exploring the Bible has to be the core of your meeting together in a Scripture Union Group, otherwise your group is just a social group. We believe that the Bible is God's powerful Word, and in itself it can transform lives.

You may want to use a particular programme from any number of good resource books, but it is possible to choose a gospel and work through some of the key stories and teaching of Jesus

- **Sit in a circle**, everyone comfortable, making sure that each has his/her own copy of the passage in a Bible, Gospel or possibly a printout from Biblegateway.com
- **Open the Bible** at the selected passage, and help young people to find the passage, using the contents page, or using a Bible library chart.
- **Pray** that God will speak to us from the passage we are about to read. Ask a child to pray.
- **Expect God to speak** from his Word! Explain to the group that we are here to listen to what God is saying to us.
- **Read the selected passage.** Some young people may volunteer to read it, or you can read it yourself. Make sure that everyone is able to find the place before you start.
- **Ask** the group to keep their Bibles open and then simply begin to ask these questions.
 1. Can someone describe what happened as if he/she were there?
 2. Who were the main characters involved?
 3. How would you feel if you were there and why?
 4. What do you think is the most important thing that happened, and what does it show us?
 5. What do we learn about what God is like?
 6. What might Jesus be telling you to do?
 7. Is there someone in this story that you want to be like? Why?
 8. What's your favourite bit? Why?

2.4 Having time where there is opportunity for prayer.

Your less formal discussions with pupils as the group gathers may lead to prayer before moving on to other aspects of the programme. It may be appropriate for you to pray at the end of the session or to end with a time of silence or in allowing children to participate in short open prayers, as appropriate. It is important that the children are allowed and encouraged to respond and see prayer as part of the Christian life. Good resource books on praying with children include **"Ultimate Creative Prayer"** from Scripture Union.

Make sure that you are allowing prayer to happen in an open environment, with all the considerations of good practice in Child Protection. For example, some situations that a child raises for prayer may need to be passed onto the school even if only to hear that they are already aware of the circumstances. It would not be appropriate to keep one child back to pray with them when everyone else has gone back to class.

2.5 Being well structured and led; the leader(s) recognising and using the talents of others.

If you and your team are going to run a good attractive programme each week for young people, you'll need to plan the term with a theme and the constituent parts of the programme for each week.

In some schools people do to take on a group by themselves; elsewhere there is plenty of support available from local staff members and local churches.

- Local staff members are able to provide resources and advice for running a group as well as communicating your news to those in the region who pray for the work of SU

- They will run evenings for Group Leaders to learn and share ideas together
- Local church members and leaders should be encouraged to pray for and perhaps visit the SU Group
- Maintain links with local churches through good communication and ensure they know what is going on in their local school. Encourage them to register with 'Pray for Schools Scotland'

Having a good leadership team will make the whole experience of an SU Group more enjoyable and rewarding for everyone involved.

- A team will be united and loving towards each other in order to be a good witness to the school and the children.
- Leaders can be of any age and experience. What matters are passion and enthusiasm towards children and their place in God's story.
- Leaders should be open, honest and genuine with the children about their life and their faith in Jesus. They should feel free to communicate the Gospel message to the children.
- There are great advantages if a team can reflect more than one local church although that is not always possible. The team – of whatever size – stands together with other volunteers on SU's Basis of Faith and there is no place for using the SU banner to push a party line on theology, church practice or membership.

With the possible exception of P7 boys, most primary children like to sing good songs and there are plenty around so if someone's talents are in music then make that part of your group. Even without a musician on your team you could be playing songs on a CD player you bring in or borrow by arrangement with the school. Alternatively it could be that you carry a £10 speaker to plug into your phone's earpiece socket and play an MP3 track. In most schools now, pupils will have a log in facility to school computers and, with the school's permission, volunteers are able to project words and play music – not to mention DVD film clips – onto screens or whiteboards in the GP Room or classroom where they meet. In various SU Groups it is also possible to play songs or other clips directly from YouTube. Look at our resources page on the website, or ask your local staff worker for some suggested sources of good Christian songs for young people.

Primary aged pupils now have a voice in a significant number of places in school and carry responsibility for looking after younger pupils as well. Curriculum for Excellence also allows for more pupil-led learning as a topic develops in class. You'll be in the minority if all the decisions about the group are made and implemented by adults.

2.6 Having a positive impact on the school, and being known amongst pupils.

An SU Group may well develop a strong identity of itself but it should never become an insular clique from one church, class or friendship group. The group needs to look outwards as well. The Serve Your Local School initiative is highlighted later in this manual (Section 9) and some of the ideas on that web based resource will be appropriate for the SU Group.

Pray for the school both during group time and elsewhere; ask the Head Teacher how you can pray for the school and be prepared to be surprised at their answer. As noted elsewhere respect the confidence in which that information is given.

Promoting the SU Group – as mentioned in Section 1 – needs to be done in agreement with the school management team; don't stick badly designed A4 notices on every glass door in the school corridor. But don't underestimate the value of reminding pupils with well-designed posters or invitations to the SU Group. Those who didn't want to join you in August may well rethink their plans in October if they were reminded the group existed.

When we asked groups to be more proactive in sending letters out to parents about the group, one Group Leader produced the letter as an attractive invitation and the permission slip was the RSVP reply. Pupils were desperate to hand out the invitations to their friends. Be creative in how you use opportunities to communicate with pupils, teachers and parents.

2.7 Exploring Christian faith and encouraging one another on their journey

Make sure that the conversations are just as two-way concerning what the Bible is teaching as they are when you're discussing what everyone did over the past week. Allow and encourage young people to answer more than just "who, what, where and when" quiz questions on a Bible story. Ask the "why, how and what if" questions too; allow other pupils to help answer the "why" questions that their peers ask. Our education system refers to this type of working as "developing higher level thinking skills" or "a set of generic or transferable skills that will help them cope with the challenges of future learning, life and work." (Search on the Education Scotland website for more information.) For us this also means being able to identify, share and apply lessons from the Bible to the reality of the Christian faith lived out day by day at school, home and in the community.

Hearing about the challenges or joys faced by group members one week should stimulate prayer and also some discussion the following week either in the group or aside over how these situations and our faith has developed.

2.8 Working cooperatively and openly with the management of the school

With an SU Group being run in a school, it is important to make an effort to maintain good relationships with staff and parents, and to see yourself as part of the wider school community. This is particularly important if you are not a member of school staff.

- Be there on the days that you agreed to be there or tell the school and the children in good time if you have to cancel.
- It's worth asking ahead for any events in the school diary that might impact on group attendance.
- Remember that schools are busy places; Head Teachers and other staff may not reply to your messages right away.
- Don't make unrealistic demands on the school in terms of storage space, time or materials.
- Leave the room you use exactly as you found it – if not slightly more tidy – and be out of it as quickly as necessary for others to use. It's not helpful to have pupils return to class late because they were helping you pack up no matter how willing they were.
- Do not use your access to the school to distribute leaflets to the staff. An occasional gift to the staff room such as a box of biscuits would be a lot more appropriate and appreciated.
- You may well be given some information about pupils in confidence; you must respect that confidentiality.

Leading an SU Group will be a hugely rewarding experience. You might be surprised by how much you grow and learn through the running of it. You may not ever see the fruit of your labour, but be encouraged that God can use the group for his glory.

Section 3 **What makes a good secondary SU Group?**

No two SU Groups are the same so this is not a fixed model we are trying to create in your school. Rather, it is hoped that it will give you some ideas and inspiration of what makes a good secondary SU Group and what distinguishes an SU Group from other clubs that may be run in a school. There are, however, a number of basic models from which most groups are derived:

- small cell group of 6 – 12 young people involved in studying the Bible.
- lunchtime social group with a Bible thought which is a refuge for some youngsters in school. This group may be a way in for some to the other groups.
- A “Cosy Café” meeting place in a central and prominent room of the school where small group discussion is had around tables over Hot Chocolate or similar; most team members will be there for the whole time but pupils drop in and out.
- weekly forum for those interested in finding out more about the Christian faith possibly using a nationally available resource such as ALPHA or perhaps working through a Gospel.
- monthly or termly big events for young people in school.

Young people involved with SU Scotland have identified the following values of SU groups. Your group should therefore be known for being:

- Safe places where all pupils are welcomed and respected; where Christian values are modeled.
- Fun, memorable, exciting and age-appropriate.
- Having good, challenging, interactive Bible engagement.
- Having time where there is opportunity for prayer.
- Being well structured and led; the leader(s) recognising and using the talents of others.
- Having a positive impact on the school, and being known amongst pupils.
- Exploring Christian faith and encouraging one another on their journey
- Working cooperatively and openly with the management of the school

There are no magic ingredients to make the perfect SU Group, but these values are all things to consider as you plan, prepare and lead your group.

3.1 Safe places where all pupils are welcomed and respected; where Christian values are modeled.

As one of the core values of SU Scotland as a whole, “Deepening Relationships” are key and central to a strong, effective SU Group. Your relationship with God, the relationship with the other leaders, with the young people, and their relationships together all contribute to the success of the group. To allow this community to grow we need to invest time to build relationships and understand each other. From these relationships we create the right programmes tailored around the needs of the individuals and the group.

Spend time learning their names, ages, family backgrounds, interests. Chat with them naturally without making them feeling they are being interrogated. Board games laid out at the start of the group can really help these informal chats e.g. playing cards, dominoes, connect 4 etc.

- Be sensitive to the wide range of educational abilities within the group. Ensure games and activities do not exclude people with additional support needs e.g. switching on subtitles on a DVD clip for those with hearing impairment, not forcing anyone to read out loud, creating a culture where no one is made to look stupid if they don't understand complicated instructions.

- Successful groups have strong sense of community, with shared memories and experiences, and safe space for diverse young people with all types of needs and backgrounds (which you can find out about through deepening relationships with them!)
- You are an equal part of this community and a powerful influence on the group. SU Scotland has accredited you as part of its team and your contribution is valued so be yourself! Integrity is vital to youth ministry. Avoid being someone you are not, recognise your own strengths and weaknesses, and lead your group in ways you are comfortable with. You can work towards a knowledge of youth cultures, without feeling the need to don sunglasses and start every sentence with 'like.' It's helpful to have an awareness about what TV/ films/ music the young people are into, but not necessary to feign an appreciation for it.
- Accept the commitment that leading the group involves; ensure adequate preparation time, with your team and alone. This includes prayer and practical planning of what will happen at the group.

3.2 Fun, memorable, exciting and age-appropriate.

- It needs to be fun and enjoyable! Successful clubs have young people coming to them because they WANT to be there, whether it's a fast paced programme, a chilled out drop in, or a Bible study. Run the group that's right for the young people and not for you!
- Being relevant is key to picking up young people and helping them to move on in their journey of faith so you'll need to find out where they are on that journey. SU Groups don't always attract Christian young people. For some young people their SU Group might be the closest they have ever got to church. As you get to know them, sensitively find out if they belong to another faith group, do they have anyone in their family who belongs to a church, what is their attitude to religious people?
- To keep it engaging you need to keep adapting; young people don't stay the same for long! It's good to ask yourselves regularly whether you are still aiming to do the right thing with the right group of people who you are working with – both leaders and pupils. It is helpful to have aims for each week, term and year.
 - Week e.g. pupils to discover that they can pray to God anywhere/anytime
 - Term e.g. exploring and experiencing different ways of praying
 - Annual e.g. to have some senior pupils leading the group
- Be aware that young people change enormously between S1- S6. Chat with the young people or a friendly staff member about how they are taught or talked to differently across the ages, and think about how you communicate with the different groups. Do you need separate groups for the older and younger ones, or could the older ones help with the younger group?
- Consider your content. Try to answer the questions they are asking not ones they don't ask. Look to them for topics to cover.
- Dealing with life issues that young people face today from a Christian perspective can be really helpful for secondary pupils.

3.3 Having good, challenging, interactive Bible engagement.

- Be creative! The Bible is exciting and it's important to bring it alive as it helps the young people see how it is relevant. Section 6 of this manual focusses on using the Bible with young people and has many top tips.
- Ask yourself, "why are we running this group?" Is it to support Christian young people? To give all pupils an opportunity to explore the Bible and Jesus? Or is it both? These are vital questions to answer as you plan your programme.

There is a wide range of resources that you might use with your group. It isn't helpful to randomly select one and hope that it is suitable for your group. To prevent this happening use the information you have gathered from the questions above to choose the most appropriate material.

We've selected our top three materials to highlight in this manual but if you visit our resources page (www.suscotland.org.uk/resources) you'll find a downloadable list of many more ideas.

www.suscotland.org.uk/resources

SU Scotland has produced a range of materials suitable for secondary SU Groups. Topics last from four to six weeks and include New Term – New Start, David, Psalms, Parables and the book of James. These resources download as PDF files.



Opening the Bible with a group of young people is an exciting adventure and a core part of any SU event. We've put together some ideas to help you get started - and it really is about going back to basics and allowing God to speak through His Word. Our *Teach yourself Bible Reading Groups* booklet is available from our website resources page.

www.schoolslive.org

SchoolsLive is free to use and gives you weekly programmes for your group. There is a three year programme of material online and a helpful search box for locating programmes based on the Bible passage or theme you are working from.



SU has tried to make *SchoolsLive* as intuitive and easy to use as possible but if you're unsure about how to use the site to its full potential, you can take a step by step *SchoolsLive* Tour from the "About *SchoolsLive*" page.

There are often some young people who come to groups who are not very familiar with the Bible and they don't get some of the things that Christians believe and do. It is great that they want to be part of your group and to help them get the most out of your sessions *SchoolsLive* contains some brand new activities designed especially for them. These new activities are called *Base Camp*. They have been especially written to enable those who are less familiar with Christianity to engage with the Bible through *SchoolsLive*. The Bible is still at the heart of these activities but way that the Bible is used is intended to be more accessible. You'll find a *Base Camp* activity in each Connecting section. Where necessary, there are also a few in some of the Responding sections.



www.biblegateway.com

If you haven't found Bible Gateway – then it's worth you knowing that many others now use this site as a quick and extensive online Bible and concordance. Lots of Bible translations and paraphrases, advance search options in multiple translations plus dictionaries commentaries etc. all of which can be printed out for group use.



Don't forget resources that you'll not find in books or on websites. The local Christian community is a great resource. Can you involve them in the group?

- Other SU Groups or church youth groups in the area. Can you share resources?
- School chaplaincy team
- Our local SU and Associate Worker staff

3.4 Having time where there is opportunity for prayer.

Don't allow prayer to be a tagged on summary of the session, said by a leader as the bell is ringing, pupils are reaching for their bags, and the next class is trying to come in.

Build it in at the start some weeks; use the topics of conversation to shape prayer. Pause to pray about big events in the life of the pupils, your neighbourhood or world news.

Use "European Pray for Schools Day" on the third Tuesday in November to put a particular focus to that week's meeting or to add in another prayer meeting perhaps with staff. Open up the opportunity to the rest of the school – who knows who might come along. Resources and ideas can be found on the Prayer pages of the SU Scotland Website.

Look for ideas from Prayer Spaces in Schools to use within the group and, again, to share with the wider school community. Local authorities and Head Teachers have been instructed to make facilities available in schools for reflection

Consideration should be given to providing appropriate facilities in schools for acts of religious observance and worship. Locations need to be considered in the light of the size and diversity of participating groups. Locations for religious observance and worship should be considered in the planning and design of new and refurbished school buildings, to provide facilities which meet school and community needs. (RO Provision in Schools Para 22, Scottish Gov. 2011)

This RO document makes particular reference to "opportunities for organised acts of worship within the informal curriculum of the school" so it would be good to encourage worship in prayer rather than focusing exclusively on petition and subsequent thanksgiving.

3.5 Being well structured and led; the leader(s) recognising and using the talents of others.

- Good groups have leaders who engage with God and listen to his direction during planning.
- Consider the length of time; will the programme fit in?
- Consider the space you are meeting in: does the room have windows? Does it have desks that need to be moved?
- Consider the school timetable and programmes; find out what music, drama and sports departments are doing at lunchtimes and after school. Think about asking the 5th years not to come during exams (or come to be supported and prayed for but not DO things). Major school trips can also have an impact, so it's worth finding out what's on the school calendar.
- Enable the young people to have ownership of the group, allowing them input into the direction and content. That way you know you are covering things that are relevant to them.
- As leaders from the church going into the school, it is important to be organised and professional, so that what you do is done to the best of your ability.
- When planning the programme attempt to locate the group within the local and national SU community. When is there a regional SU weekend you could attend?

3.6 Having a positive impact on the school, and being known amongst pupils.

- Look outwards from the SU Group as well as inwards. Ask your local staff member for access to a video clip illustrating what other secondary SU Groups have done as they look and reach out to the school. As noted in Section 7 of this booklet, SU Groups have led their school's involvement in Christmas Shoebox appeals or other charitable responses.

- Successful groups are visible in the school. Does the school know that you meet; can the young people find where you meet? Are you still as visible in your promotion as you were at the start?
- Are there times of the year when the SU Group has a particular message to share with the rest of the school? Could you use the resources sent by the local SU staff to promote SU Holidays as pupils and leaders together?

3.7 Exploring Christian faith and encouraging one another on their journey

- The team needs to be focussed on God, and what God is looking for in the lives of the young people. The members of the team should share the same ideas about the purpose of the group and the young people who they work with.
- Look to build on ideas, themes and experiences. This means allowing pupils to express their own views and faith.
- Look at the chapter on “Children and young people developing faith” in this manual and expect to see faith expressed in different ways as young people develop. Look to our downloadable resource list for other books to help you actively encourage faith development.

3.8 Working cooperatively and openly with the leadership of the school

Do bear in mind, particularly if you are not a member of school staff, that things can happen in school to have a bearing on the group that you know nothing about. What’s happening outside the group may well affect the dynamics; anything from world events to a favourite teacher leaving. Sometimes even the weather can have an influence..

As the SU Group Team Leader it is important to make an effort to maintain good relationships with staff and parents, and to see yourself as part of the wider school community. This is particularly important if you are not a member of school staff.

- Be there on the days that you agreed to be there or tell the school and the young people in good time if you have to cancel.
- It’s worth asking ahead for any events in the school diary that might impact on group attendance. They may even add you to the “Parents Newsletter email list” that is becoming more common for school communication
- Remember that schools are busy places; Head Teachers and other staff may not reply to your messages right away.
- Don’t make unrealistic demands on the school in terms of storage space, time or materials.
- Leave the room you use exactly as you found it – if not slightly more tidy – and be out of it as quickly as necessary for others to use. It’s not your right to have pupils return to class late because they were helping you pack up – no matter how willing they were.
- Do not use your access to the school to distribute leaflets to the staff. An occasional gift to the staff room such as a box of biscuits would be a lot more appropriate and appreciated.
- You may well be given some information about pupils in confidence; you must respect that confidentiality.
- Keep your appearance and manner in line with what’s expected of staff and pupils.

Section 4 Leadership and Teamwork

What makes a good SU Group leader?

Well, it's not all about age! What is needed is a genuine love for Jesus and for children and young people, a readiness to convey your passion for the Gospel, and a little bit of free time.

4.1 Jesus' Leadership

Here is one of the things Jesus teaches about leadership:

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:42 – 43

Take a few moments to consider the following:

- What does Jesus say is important in becoming great?
- Who is the supreme servant?
- Think of leaders you know – do you see these qualities within them?
- Think of yourself – in what ways does your leadership reflect that of Jesus?

4.2 Characteristics of good leadership and teamwork – PERFORM

What makes a good team? How can the team you are part of perform so that it is effective in its work, whichever model of SU Group you are working with? This can be summarised by the acronym 'PERFORM'.

Purpose

It is important to have clear aims for your SU Group. These may vary from group to group, e.g. some groups may be more evangelistic while others may be more discipleship focussed.

- What is the main purpose of your group?
- What makes it distinctive from other groups in the school?

Empowerment

Through prayer God empowers those of us involved in leading SU Groups. It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure the gifts and abilities of everyone in the team are being used. Don't forget that senior pupils in secondary schools could have much to contribute.

- Does everybody feel a sense of ownership of the group and its decision making? (Important if some members work within the school community and others come in solely for the group.)
- Are team members equipped with the necessary resources for their role?
- Is everyone in your leadership team aware of training opportunities? (e.g. regional group leader training events, 'Equipped to transform', Missions Training Day, COMMISSION)

Relationships

Good relationships are vital with the school to ensure that channels of communication are kept open at all times. The same is true among the group leaders - good morale creates a positive atmosphere and helps encourage good relationships with the pupils.

- How is your group thought of in the school?

- How can you build up the relationships within the team?
- How well do the pupils relate to one another and to the team?

Flexibility

It is good to have a structure planned for your group, but within that, flexibility is helpful. You can never be sure who will come to the meeting, nor what questions they will bring with them.

- Is your leadership team able to adjust to new circumstances and changes in the membership of the group?
- Do the young people welcome new members to the group?

Optimal Performance

Planning and preparation are crucial to enable your group to run well. Involving everyone on the team not only ensures the workload is shared but also facilitates the training of future leaders. This should allow smooth transition should anyone on the leadership team have to leave.

- What can your team do to make sure it is working as effectively as possible?
- Does the team evaluate its work and roles of team members on a regular basis?
- What planning can your team put in place to ensure the continued smooth running of your group?

Recognition and Appreciation

It is good when members of the team value one another and show appreciation for each other's contributions, as well as valuing the young people in the group. It is even better when the school shows appreciation for the regular commitment of the leaders and the presence of the group, but this will not always be the case.

- How valued do team members feel for the work they do?
- What could you do to show your appreciation to your fellow team members?
- Do you take time to show the young people who come to your group how much they are appreciated?

Management

Good leadership is key in managing the team and its resources to help the team work well together and enable the group to flourish. Some important characteristics of a good leader are: commitment, reliability, being approachable, willingness to listen, willingness to take initiative, having a clear vision for group and believing that prayer makes a difference.

- Which characteristics of leadership are strongest and which most need development among your leadership team?
- Are all members of your leadership team aware that local staff are there for support?

Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.

1 Peter 5:2, New Living Translation (NLT)

Section 5 Children and young people developing faith

The aims of this section are:

- To explore how children and young people develop in understanding the Christian faith
- To explore what triggers faith to grow and how a Christian group in schools can encourage this growth.

5.1 How do you see the state of children before God?

In the Bible there are many different ways in which people come into a believing faith. Over the years as people have tried to lead and support children and young people in coming to faith and developing in their faith, different – and sometimes opposing – points of view and models have been used. Consider some of these positions listed below:

- All children start life outside the kingdom
- The presence of a Christian parent establishes right standing before God
- The presence of a Christian parent creates privilege not status
- All children belong to God
- All children will begin with God but will drift from that position unless effective evangelism/ teaching occurs in their lives

What we think about the state of the child before God will determine the methods we use in evangelism. Considering these positions opens up the issue of how to work with integrity with children and young people.

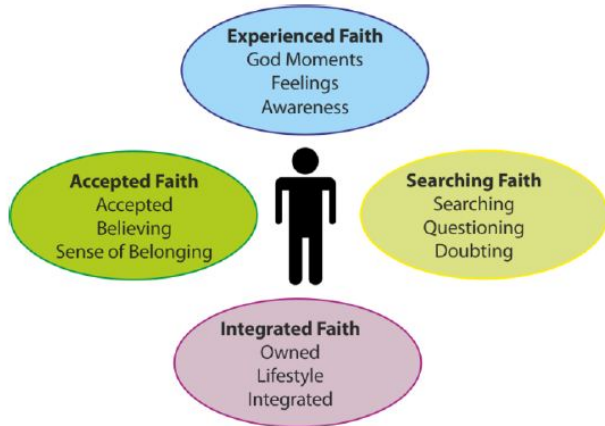
5.2 Considering models of faith development

There are many ideas about how faith develops in a person. Here are two for you to consider with regard to your group.

John H Westerhoff: (*Will our Children have Faith?*, Harrisburg, Morehouse, 2000) suggests that faith grows in us rather like a tree going through stages and adding rings rather than a progression or a journey.

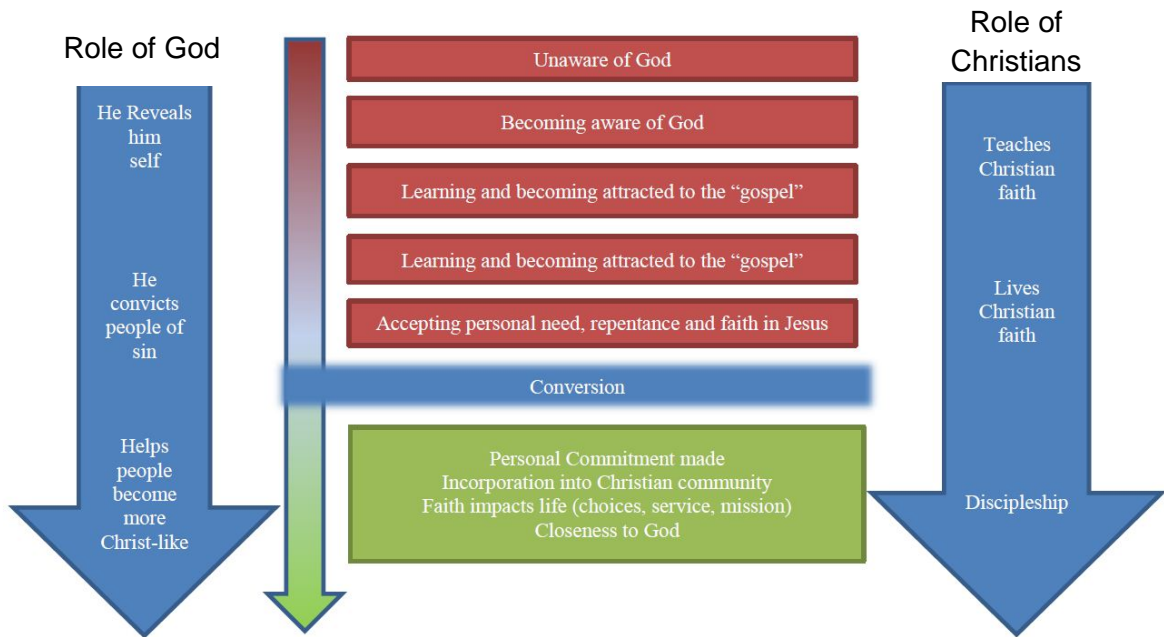
- **Experienced faith** is the faith of the young child or the new Christian. It is an experience of God and of the people of God. Almost subconsciously people know about God but couldn't articulate this. Pre-school/ Early primary
- **Accepted faith** is the faith of childhood where things are accepted and believed. A strong sense of acceptance and belonging mark this stage.
- **Searching faith** is a stage where people are experimenting and testing out a number of options. Questioning and doubting would be hallmarks of this stage. (This would be the stage of 'belief' most affirmed by our society at present where everyone is free to work out their own thing)
- **Integrated faith** is the stage where belief is 'mine' not from my family or peer group. An integrated belief which integrates lifestyle, mind and heart. Adult.

Westerhoff is adamant that people must go through the stages before adult, mature faith can be experienced, but you might find it more helpful to look at it presented in the following way:



Unlike the linear-looking original, this diagram suggests that, rather than faith growing in us along a linear path, it moves around these stages. Although we should realise that these stages are not bound to a certain age group and that we all probably have different “aspects” of our faith in a few of these stages at any given time, we may recognise some of our groups being predominantly at one stage. For example, Searching is very common in late primary school, whereas before that they may be more accepting of what a trusted relative or youth worker says.

Dr James Engel, director of the Billy Graham graduate programme in communications at the Wheaton College Graduate School, has observed a model of the spiritual decision-making process, (see for example *What’s Gone Wrong With The Harvest*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 1975) The following diagram adapted from Engel shows some broad steps that a person can go through on their path of spiritual development. It also helpfully reminds us of the role of God in all this and where we can fit in too.

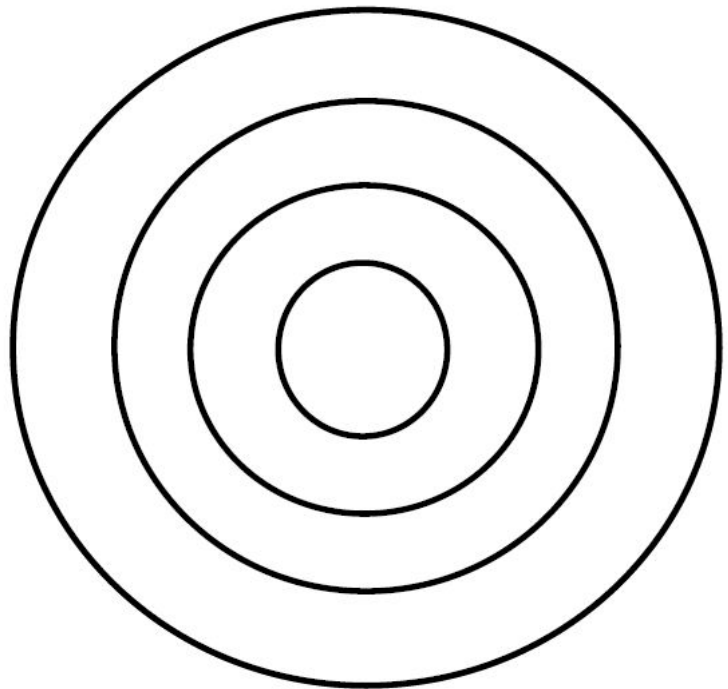


Note:
This diagram is descriptive not prescriptive, and a young person may indeed return to previous point in the “scale.” The conversion line in this Engle scale has been deliberately blurred to represent that it is possible for this to happen over a period of time.

5.3 How did you get to where you are today?

One of the best ways you can grasp this process is by considering your own spiritual development. The circles are like the rings of a tree and represent stages in your life i.e.:

- Inner Circle: 0-5 Years
- Next circle: 5 – 11 (primary school)
- Next circle: 12 – 20 (secondary school)
- Next circle: Adult life



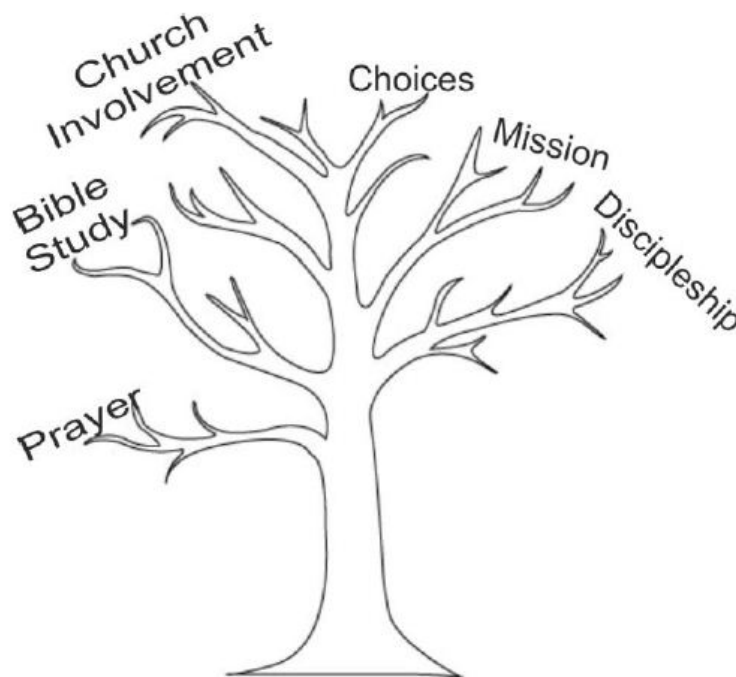
Draw or write key words on the circles for the following

1. First awareness of God as a word, a name...
2. Awareness of God as a person
3. God experiences
4. Draw a cross where you think Jesus was understood as Saviour
5. Key moments of faith growth

Think about and include

1. What factors or events helped progress in faith growth?
2. What factors or events hindered progress in faith growth?

If the circles represent inner growth then the following can represent outward signs of growth:



5.4 How does this apply to your group?

For us as group leaders, we can support young people on this path of faith development by gauging broadly where they are, and putting into practice the following:

- Listening** this is a 2 way process, leaders listening to young people's experiences of God and young people listening to others e.g. guest testimonies and news of Christians from around the world
- Encouraging** it is important to ground young people's experiences, beliefs and responses in the word of God e.g. Samuel also heard God speak to him, but wasn't sure it was God.
- Inviting** we should provide opportunities for young people to question and test their beliefs / assumptions in a safe environment e.g. "Grill a Christian" events.
- Challenging** we can also create opportunities for young people to express their faith through mission and service within school setting, their community and when appropriate, abroad.
- Modelling** it is about embodying your faith personally, being one who prays, studies the Word, reaches out in service and mission. This can also be at a wider SU Group level too.

Section 6 Using the Bible with young people

The aims of this section are:

- To help leaders assess the value of using the Bible with children and young people
- To affirm the importance of the Bible in our work
- To equip leaders to communicate the Bible well

6.1 Introduction

The aim of Scripture Union Scotland is to help young people explore the Bible and to respond to the significance of Jesus. In everything we do under the name of SU, we aim to promote and encourage Bible use amongst children, young people and adults. The Bible is central to what we do because we believe that it is through His word that God reveals Himself to human beings.

However, the ways we choose to use the Bible must be relevant and helpful to the young people in our care. How do we deal with young people who dismiss the Bible as an old boring book? What about those who can't read well? And if we tell them the gospel in a relevant way, do we need to bother opening the Bible?

6.2 Why is the Bible important?

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither"

Psalm 1:2-3

Before thinking about how to communicate the Bible with children and young people, it is helpful to consider how we, as leaders, view the Bible. If we want to encourage the young people in our group to find refreshment in God's word, we need to be thirsty for it ourselves! Take time by yourself or with those you run the SU Group to look up the following passages and reflect on what the Bible has to say about itself.

- The Bible is the inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- The Bible is trustworthy because the Author is trustworthy (Proverbs 3:1-6; Matthew 7:24-27)
- Jesus is the focus of God's revelation in the Bible (John 1:14; Colossians 1:15-20)
- The Holy Spirit helps us understand and interpret the Bible (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- As we read the Bible we are transformed. (Psalm 1; Jeremiah 17:7-8; Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 3:17; James 1:25)
- The Bible needs to be viewed as a whole story with a variety of literary genres which need to be interpreted in their own context (John 1:1-18; 2 Timothy 3:16)
- We have a responsibility to teach the Bible to the next generation, or perhaps more helpfully, to help them discover its truth for themselves (Psalm 78:1-8)

There is no doubt that sometimes there can be a real battle to give the Bible space and to let it speak...it gets squeezed! Do you recognise these...

1. Pressure to do something 'Fun' instead of Bible – to keep playing the introductory game
2. Having the Bible marginalised to a 'God Slot' – this sends out a signal that the listening to God is not really central at all
3. Distractions – lunch queues, prefect or P7 duties, or just individuals not settling; these are common problems (it's not just you!).

Will opening the Bible and hearing from God be the distinctive thing about your group? There is the need to be very deliberate in making sure that engaging with the Bible won't get squeezed out by other things.

6.3 Top Tips for an SU Group focussed on hearing from God's Word

As you look through these discuss the real, practical ways that you could see them being played out in your group.

1. 'Wow Factor'

Show you are enthusiastic. As you introduce the programme for the day make sure you enthuse about the Bible passage or the text you are going to be looking at. 'Today, we are looking at an amazing passage about Moses', 'We are going to look at a song from the Bible later – don't worry I won't sing it – but I actually think it could be life changing if we listen properly'; 'Our story today is about one man who was the odd one out – we are going to find out why and then you can decide if you would be the odd one out?'

2. Tell your own stories

As you talk about the Bible tell what it means to you, how you have been changed, challenged, impressed, thrown by the story too. Your own experience of the reading the Bible is an important lesson for the young people too.

3. Let people know what's happening

We want to avoid the 'squeeze' on using the Bible - we know this is a danger, so have your time together well planned so you can say, 'we are starting the group in two minutes – if you need to go to the toilet, now is the time' (Hopefully, just for the primary groups this one!). 'Two more rounds of this game and then we need to open the Bible – we don't want to miss out on the story we have today – it's a shocker/tear jerker/amazing, etc.'

4. 'Show me the Bible!'

It's always good to have the Bible up front, and to keep emphasizing that they could go and read this for themselves. Sometimes you will want to read it out, or perhaps learn the story well and tell in your own words but quote from time to time.

You may want to have the passage printed on to a sheet for people to have in their hands, but still having the Bible handy is a good message for everyone.

5. Homework!

Often when a group doesn't seem to go well or we haven't seemed to get to the point we can trace it back to preparation (lack of!). Even with good resources there is no substitute for reading the passage until we know it well and asking God for help to best grasp what He is saying to us. There may be other preparation to do with games, crafts and a whole host of other things but don't let your responsibility here be sidelined.

6. Big Story

It's always worth letting the young people know where any given story fits in to God's big story of the Bible, ie is it Old or New Testament. Have a Bible timeline – you don't need it every week but definitely every so often.

7. Have a point!

Often having one point that you want everyone to go away with will help you keep focused. Let them know what that point is more than once.

8. Question Time!

Give opportunities to a ask questions (and get ready for the tricky ones) Sometimes questions come out during a story – look out for red herrings – and it's okay to say, 'That's a good question, and we will look at that soon but for just now...'

Having a week just for questions (with a question box available for a couple of weeks beforehand). If you don't know the answer be honest and say that you will get back to them.

9. Re-inventing the wheel

There is lots of good material around– there are some noted in Sections 2 and 3 with more ideas on the Resources pages of the SU Scotland website. But make sure you give yourself time to know the Bible text more than anything.

10. Make room for God to speak

Give room for reflecting and responding. Be quite deliberate about saying that there is going to be a quiet moment – or by suggesting scenarios in their own lives where they could apply God's word too. i.e. if you are looking at the hard time Jeremiah got for telling God's message ask them to think of a time when speaking about Jesus was difficult for them, or if they think that speaking about their faith is the way to make themselves cool in the school.

11. 'Hide the word'

Have a memory verse or summary statement for the day. There are lots of fun ways to teach this too. Think about the purpose of teaching a memory verse. It's not to see who the cleverest person is – it's a chance to let as many as possible learn it.

12. Pray!

Ask God to prepare the hearts of the young people and to guide you as you prepare. Allow Him to speak to you through your preparation.

6.4 How will they hear?

Often the biggest frustration at an SU Group is that the Bible got lost somewhere in the mix of everything else. Think carefully about how God's Word can be at the centre of the group. Perhaps the game played at the start will be helping with that. Actually, just mentioning it as people come into the room is an obvious way to set the scene for what this group is about. ('Hi, come in...once people have had lunch we are looking at a brilliant story – it's about the least likely person you would ever imagine following Jesus...no, it's not your teacher.' Etc.)

Give the story prominence. How is it going to be heard?

Are the young people going to read it? Then make it as easy as possible for young people to read the passage for themselves. Some of your group may be very poor readers. Don't ever force them to read out loud – if you are going to let people read aloud, ask for volunteers. Don't always read the passage – you may want to act it out, tell it as a story, show a clip from a video like *The Miracle Maker* or the *Jesus* video or use pictures. Your group may not be able to find their way around the Bible – help them by giving page numbers and explaining the layout of the Bible.

The Schools Live website has lots of good ways of telling the story in interesting and creative ways. However, just settling people down and telling the story in a way which shows that you know it, have loved it, want them to get something from it is key no matter what prop, costume, Bible version, etc., you are using.

Try to obtain a set of Bibles in a modern translation for use in the group. New Living Translation (NLT), Contemporary English Version (CEV) or New Century Version (NCV – Youth Bible) are all good. Failing this use www.Biblegateway.com to compare and print Bible passages in various translations.

Section 7 Outreach through SU Groups

SU Groups as well as being the main focus of Christian discipleship in school can also provide meaningful opportunities for outreach to staff and pupils. Listed below are a variety of outreach ideas for your group to try. Not every activity will be relevant to your school or may need adapting but they have all been successfully tried in schools throughout Scotland.

7.1 Prayer

Prayer is vital to the success of any SU Group and should be the first thing to embark upon when considering outreach activities. Prayer possibilities might include praying with your group and local churches. SU regional or associate staff can also inform you about any relevant prayer groups in your area, including Pray for Schools Scotland at www.suscotland.org.uk/pray. You may want to organise a time for staff and pupils to pray in the school leading up to outreach events.

7.2 Advertising

It is hard to get pupils to come along to an SU Group if they don't know what it is. The letters "SU" or even "Scripture Union" will not mean much to pupils who have had no prior involvement, so it is important that you consider inviting pupils by means of personal invitation or general advertising with a clear explanation of what the group is about. School assemblies and bulletins as well as posters are a good way to do this. Templates for postcards and posters are available in most desktop publishing packages including Microsoft Publisher. SU Scotland Logos are available to download from <http://www.suscotland.org.uk/about/corporate-identity.aspx>

Remember to get permission from the school before doing any advertising.

7.3 Youth Christianity Explored and Youth Alpha

Christianity Explored courses explore Mark's Gospel to examine who Jesus is, why he came, and what it means to follow him, and in doing so discover the wonder of his grace. There are now three versions for younger people **Epic Explorers** (aged 4-11), **CY** (Aged 11-14) and **Soul** (aged 15+) Visit www.ceministries.org for more details, or phone Christianity Explored Ministries on 0207 5808954.



Youth Alpha is an evangelistic course that is being used by groups all around the world to help young people meet Jesus. The course looks at topics from 'Who is Jesus?' and 'Why did Jesus die?' to 'How & why should I read the Bible?' It's a more informal version of the Alpha course using the same teaching content but adapted in a way to better engage with teenagers. The 10 week course gives students the opportunity to discuss, ask questions and work through their own ideas of Christian faith and how this affects them in small groups.



The Alpha Youth Film Series is 12 video sessions designed to engage students in conversations about faith, life and Jesus. And it's all available for FREE. Visit www.alphayouthfilmseries.com

For more information about running Youth Alpha in your school contact Alpha Scotland

7.4 Big Half-Hour lunch-time events for the whole school

Why not consider organising a half-hour lunch-time event in a very public place in school? The event could include music, drama, guest artists, 'grill a Christian' question panel, etc.

7.5 Charity fund-raising events

Fund-raising can be a very fruitful activity and a good way to focus your group on a specific task whilst developing a sense of team spirit within the group and raising the profile of the group. SU

Groups have already been involved in raising money for causes as varied as flood victims in Pakistan, or to raising the profile of the Blythwood Shoe Box Appeal. One secondary school group made and sold "Pancakes for Pakistan" at interval time to a hungry mass of peers and staff.

7.6 Leading a school assembly

Many primary schools hold regular weekly assemblies and it is quite usual for pupils to be involved in leading part or all of the assembly. Assemblies in secondary schools happen less frequently than in primaries, but pupil involvement would usually be very welcome. SU Groups very often take a turn in leading an assembly by way of telling or performing a particular Bible story or perhaps by raising awareness of a Christian charity at work in a relevant part of the world e.g. TEAR fund in Africa. It would be best to speak with the appropriate member of the school management team some time in advance of such an event as schools often make up their assembly calendar well in advance for the term or indeed the year.

7.7 Social events

Sometimes it is good for an SU Group to organise an event for nothing more than a bit of fun for their fellow pupils and staff, though such events often work better when linked into national charity days such as Red Nose Day or other non-uniform days. The focus should be on fun and on planning something meaningful and memorable for the school community. Primary SU Group leaders have also helped in the organising of summer fetes and other school events

7.8 Serving the school community

There are many ways that an SU Group can serve the school community. Some SU Groups have been involved in litter picks for a whole term and others have offered to wash staff cars. It's not so much the activity that your group decides to do that matters, it's the manner in which they carry it out to reflect something of God's love and care for humanity. Projects such as these encourage pupils to be "effective contributors" and "responsible citizens" which are two of the four capacities which encapsulate the purpose of Curriculum for Excellence. (See Section 9)

Serve your local school is an initiative led by SU Scotland alongside the Baptist Union, the Church of Scotland and CARE Scotland; you'll find more ideas on how to serve your school on the initiative's website – www.syls.org.uk

7.9 SU Residential Holidays

Scripture Union groups can take a major lead in promoting SU Holidays, either by word of mouth recommendation or by speaking at classroom or year group assemblies. This can be done in conjunction with your local staff member who would welcome an opportunity to come into school and support individuals or groups with this very important task. Young people very often listen much better to their peers and relate better to the experience of a known individual rather than an outsider. Your local staff member will also provide you with resources such as brochures, postcards and promotional presentations to increase the effectiveness of your promotion in school. Please also see the SU Holidays website for more information www.suholidays.org.uk

7.10 Questions

Before doing any outreach event, it is essential to ask yourself and your team a few questions.

1. How can you prepare your current SU Group members for outreach?
2. Who are your key contacts inside and outside of school who could be asked to train or assist?
3. To what extent does this verse define how you do outreach in your school?

"And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But you must do this in a gentle and respectful way."

1 Peter 3:15b-16, New Living Translation (NLT)

Section 8 Mentoring and developing pupil leaders

8.1 Introduction

In running an SU Group we will often look out for others to join the team of leaders. In secondary groups this might be pupils and in a primary SU Group we might be aware of secondary pupils on a shared campus who could come and be a part of the work. Primary pupils are more used to sharing and taking responsibility than you might remember. Don't underestimate their potential.

We must remember at the outset that it is an exciting privilege to be involved in the life of a young person when we can be used by God in their mentoring and discipleship.

8.2 More than Finding a Leader

Growing pupil leaders is something that will require an investment of time but it need not be hours and hours out of our week. What will make the difference is when we have an interest in the young person as an individual and as a Christian who is in the process of understanding more about their faith and how it is lived out amongst their family and peers.

It is right that we help the pupils develop their skills in area like leading a quiz or giving a short talk from the Bible but we should not overlook their Christian character and walk with God. This could mean, where appropriate, spending time over a coffee exploring areas such as:

- Where are the places that they are in fellowship with other Christians?
- What are they reading in the Bible at the moment?
- What are they praying about and where have they seen prayer being answered?
- How are they living out their Christian life in situations away from the SU Group and church?

Take time to talk to your church leader / youth worker or local staff member about how you might develop this. SU Scotland's COMMISSION programme has training and discipleship events for S4-6 pupils throughout the year. These events not only equip pupils but also help them to meet other pupils in the same situation as them.

Key Question – What is more important to you... getting someone to do jobs in the group or taking the time to help a young Christian grow in their faith?

8.3 Identifying Pupil Leaders

Who might be the young people you could mentor as pupil leaders? You are not looking for young people who are 'finished articles.' Instead you should be on the lookout for those who show evidence of Christian faith, a love for Christ and gifts and skills, even if they have yet to recognise these themselves.

Growing young leaders does not happen overnight – **it is an on-going project.** Young leaders might be grown from those currently in your group or perhaps there are others who have yet to identify with the group that you could purposely invite.

8.4 Helping Pupil Leaders

8.4.1 Getting Started

It is important to chat through with the pupil why you are asking them to formally be a part of the running of the group. This could include:

- The gifts and experiences the pupil has – where do they feel gifted and what have you recognised in them, even in a small way?
- They will have your support and encouragement
- The opportunity that they have to positively influence other members of the group by their example
- Being given responsibilities that it is important they take seriously

8.4.2 Planning

Talk together about the overall vision for the group and how this is going to be worked out for the term / year. This will mean doing planning ahead of time and not leaving it to the night before! It is important that we model good leadership and this includes planning.

What does good planning look like?

- Knowing the programme from week to week
- Knowing the different elements in each week's programme? (e.g. game, quiz, Bible talk)
- Specific task(s) being delegated to the pupil
- Your expectations of the task(s) including resources and time available
- The pupil understands what is being asked of them
- Checking if there is a need for some training for this task (e.g. if they are going to share their testimony how do they speak clearly and what is it appropriate to include?)
- Your availability if they need to come back to you about the task(s)
- **Make sure that you don't throw your young people in at the deep end without a life belt!**

Key Question – Does the way you plan the SU Group help or hinder the pupil in what you are asking them to do?

8.4.3 Feedback

After the task(s) has been carried out, take time to give constructive feedback to the pupil. A good model for this can be two things that went well and one thing to improve on next time. It is important to make sure that the pupil is encouraged but also that they are helped to develop their skills.

Is there a place that the pupil could also use this developing skill? (e.g. church youth group)

Key Question – When have you experienced good feedback that has helped you grow in your skills and be encouraged?

8.5 Conclusion

It is important to remember that as we encourage pupil leaders in their on-going and long term discipleship, we also need to be intentional about our own on-going and long term discipleship. We need to keep on being learners as well.

Key Question – In what ways are you being intentional about your own on-going discipleship?

Section 9 **How do SU Groups contribute to Religious Observance and Curriculum for Excellence?**

More and more SU Groups – and other school activities – are being led by volunteers with no formal background in education. If you are one of these people, you may well find it useful to use the “Jargon Buster” on the “Get Started” page of the “Serve Your Local School” website – www.syls.org.uk. For more information on “Serve Your Local School” see point 9.6 below.

9.1 The Validity of SU Groups

SU Groups are positively encouraged within the informal curriculum.

The current letter of Guidance from The Scottish Government issued in February 2011 states:

Members of the school community, including pupils, parents and representatives of faith groups and communities, may wish to have opportunities for organised acts of worship within the informal curriculum of the school. Ministers would encourage headteachers to consider these requests positively and make suitable arrangements if appropriate support arrangements can be provided. (Para 21) www.educationscotland.gov.uk/images/roletter_tcm4-650445.pdf

9.2 Group contribution to Religious Observance (RO)

Religious Observance is a legal requirement for all schools under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. SU Groups could positively support schools in the delivery of this statutory duty.

For a fuller understanding of the RO requirements download these documents

- Religious Observance Review Group Report (May 2004)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/05/19351/37062
- Circular 1/2005 (Feb 2005)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/37428/0023554.pdf
- RO letter of guidance (Feb 2011)
www.educationscotland.gov.uk/images/roletter_tcm4-650445.pdf
- Your local staff member

SU Groups could contribute to RO, with the agreement of the Head Teacher and the RO group within the school. Examples are:

- Acting out plays or sketches, singing, Bible Reading or other small sections at assemblies either supporting chaplains or other input.
- Sharing what has been learned in an SU Group or at residential event in an assembly
- Linking with a local charity for distribution of foodstuffs collected at a harvest assembly
- Assisting in presentation and delivery of shoebox appeals
- IT operation to support presentations
- Leading assemblies on schools values (see www.barnabasinschools.org.uk for some examples), Commemorative events or Community Calendar events

9.3 Group and Team Leader contribution to RME

Religious and Moral Education (RME) is a statutory requirement under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. The difference between this and RO should be understood. The letter of guidance of February 2011 contains the current advice and can be found at:

http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/rmererletter_tcm4-650439.pdf

Within the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) "Experience and Outcomes" document for RME includes curriculum areas on Christianity and the Development of Belief and Values. This latter category replaces what was previously called "Personal Search". The opportunities for SU Groups and leaders to contribute to this may be limited. However, where, for example, the curriculum area such as Philosophy debates/ethics & morals requires the authentic voice of a Christian e.g. chaplain/student/former pupil/scientist, a contribution can be given; or, where pupils need support in development of their belief and values, then a valid opportunity exists. These occasional opportunities might have to be sought and availability indicated. This is for those who feel able to do this and remember, your local staff member is there to help you.

The RME "Es & Os" document also stresses in the appendix explanations "the importance of close liaison with local faith representatives" recognising that school staff may not have a background in the faith being studied. SU Group leaders and members may well be seen as "local faith representatives" alongside Chaplains and others who can offer resources, understanding and illustration as necessary. Group Leaders have been part of school inspections for this important subject area.

9.4 SU Scotland's COMMISSION Programme

The development of senior pupils to take responsibility in Mission is at the heart of the COMMISSION programme. The training provided makes huge contributions to the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence and this has been recognised by individual schools as well as nationally. Look at the "information for schools" section on the COMMISSION pages of the SU Scotland website for a copy of the SU Scotland page from the Youth Work Scotland report on youth organisations engaging with Curriculum for Excellence – www.suscotland.org.uk/commission



9.5 SU Groups within the wider framework of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

Schools are encouraged and indeed expected to work in partnership with the local community to deliver the best quality education for its pupils. A school may only have the opportunity of an SU Group when it welcomes other members of the local community in as partners.



SU Groups may take many forms in a school and, as with church based youth work, cannot afford to try and be all things to all people. A group cannot justify its existence by ticking boxes for CfE but having established what the greatest need or opportunity is within the school then an SU Group may fulfil any one of these functions or more:

- A Bible study and discipleship group will help pupils to be more confident as individuals and in a group, secure in their values and beliefs as they develop and communicate their own beliefs.
- A wider ranging discussion group may encourage those with an openness to ideas to learn as part of a group and apply what they learn to different life situations.

SU Groups allow for informed choices to be made by exploring the Bible and responding to the significance of Jesus. Group members must be able to respect each other even though the views expressed will not all be given the same level of validity or exposure within the group.

The best SU Groups, will have a partnership of leadership and responsibility; ideally this will involve pupils, school staff and very often other members of the wider community. Pupils will have the opportunity to take the initiative and lead both strategically and operationally as they work in partnership and relate to others.

9.6 Serve Your Local School (SYLS)

SYLS aims to help churches in Scotland see the potential to play a part in their local school community and to make a real practical difference for the teachers, staff and pupils in the school. The SU Group may well be able to identify needs within the school and enable local church members to help meet those needs. Alternatively you might find folk in your area who want to serve the school and you could be the beneficiaries of their service; they could prepare and serve baking at your SU Group cafe or stall for example; they may assist in travel arrangements to other SU events. There are simple, medium and grand ideas on the website – www.syls.org.uk – and advice on how to approach schools to offer this support.



Section 10 Being part of Scripture Union

Scripture Union Scotland has always made schools work, such as SU Groups, a high priority. More than this though, we have found that the more we can integrate children and young people into other areas of SU's ministry, the more they benefit from the experience. We would encourage all school group volunteers to help their children and young people to engage in SU Residentials (Holidays and Weekends), Holiday Clubs and missions (at local churches), and mission and discipleship events such as the Go Conference or the COMMISSION Programme.

10.1 SU Residentials

Each year thousands of children enjoy getting away at an SU Holiday or Weekend. Holidays are longer, usually for 5-8 days, in the Easter, summer or October holidays whilst weekend breaks occur throughout the year. Holiday brochures are available from January; and the SU Holidays website (www.suholidays.org.uk) is open for bookings in late December. Your local staff member will also organise a weekend away, aimed at your pupils and can pass you publicity for the event.



Time and time again we hear stories of young people returning to school having had a life-changing experience at an SU residential. We know, from years of experience, that taking young people away can have a profound effect on their faith, and commitment to Christ. However, there are a number of young people, at SU Groups, who show great reluctance to come. Often, they will only try it for the first time, if a group of them agree to go together and if their group leader agrees to go with them (especially for a first weekend). From there the prospect of a week long holiday may not be so scary but may still need support.

10.2 Local Church Missions

SU Scotland runs about 30 Missions a year, in partnership with local churches. Nearly all involve a primary-aged holiday club, and some run youth work too. We often meet children from SU Groups coming to these events and they can gain so much encouragement from the event as well as helping their whole family establish a relationship with the local church.



It is not uncommon for an SU Group to be launched on the back of a successful local mission, or vice-versa! Of course, there are dozens of other, very similar, mission events, run by local churches that would be equally beneficial for your SU Group members.

10.3 Training and Discipleship

These are a series of events, aimed at S4-S6 pupils, to help them grow as disciples and be trained as young leaders.



Coming under the banner of **COMMISSION**, these events seek to present opportunities for mission and evangelism for young people.

1. **Go Conference** is our national youth conference for those S4 – S6 pupils ready to make a difference in their school, community and church.
2. **Christmas Houseparty** (S4-age 19) is a 2-night break between Christmas and New Year. It has a more relaxed feel; and focuses on encouraging each other in our Christian faith.



3. **Basecamp** is for S5-S6 aged young people who wish to serve as Trainee Leaders on a team leading a mission or residential event. There are 3 different **Basecamp** events to choose from.
4. **On Track** is a similar event to **Basecamp** and is designed for young people, from an urban background, who wish to serve as Trainee Leaders on missions or holidays.
5. **LeadUP** is for those who have done **Basecamp** or are 18+, training them in the next level of leadership.
6. **Basecamp, On Track** and **LeadUP** delegates meet up for a **COMMISSION** Review Weekend around *The Big Celebration* in August after they have served as a team member in the summer.

In places where local churches struggle to establish Bible study groups for teenagers, SU Scotland has often set these up. There may already be a group operating in your area, or we can provide the support to set one up.

In all this, we believe in the importance of investing in young people, as growing disciples and young leaders. So, another significant way we can work with a young person who has left school is through our **Gap Year**. There is the option to work at one of SU Scotland's residential centres or to work alongside a staff member for a year, or to do a 50:50 mix of both.



10.4 Pray for Schools (Scotland)

Pray for Schools Scotland is an initiative of SU Scotland with the aim of seeing every school in Scotland covered in prayer i.e. "making every school a prayed-for school".

We ask people to register with us so that we know the progress towards this target and can provide information and resources to stimulate this prayer. We have many stories of schools situations experiencing answered prayer, including opening up to SU involvement for the first time, because of a local prayer group.



10.5 Questions to consider:

1. What support do your young people need to help them attend a weekend or Holiday? How can your local staff member help you to come with them?
2. What church mission events are happening in your local area; and how are you linked in with them?
3. Do you know who the other SU Group leaders are in your cluster of associated primary schools plus secondary school? (Sometimes called a Learning Community).
4. Do you know if someone is registered on the Pray for Schools network to pray for your school? Are you in touch with them, offering them prayer points? What about a joint prayer event?
5. If you have S4+ pupils, how can you help them to go on a COMMISSION event; and then support them in putting what they've learnt into practice when they return? Many young people, who show such potential, will be really encouraged to be part of these programmes if their adult leader personally invites them. Who could you approach?

Section 11 Child Protection In Schools

11.1 SU Groups in Schools

Scripture Union groups meet in school at the invitation and approval of the Head Teacher. Recent Government documents give the role of SU Groups in school a much clearer mandate:

In many instances, when a new group is being set up, a Head Teacher will fail to raise the topic of child protection. Yet we believe it is extremely important that SU Group Leaders understand clearly the expectations of the Head Teacher, and policy of the school if there should be any concern of a child protection nature from within the SU Group.

11.2 What does an SU Group leader need to know?

If an SU Group is meeting at lunchtime and on school premises, then it is likely to be viewed as an activity within the informal curriculum of the school. This group is taking place in school time and we would therefore expect it to come under the school's child protection policy. This however, does need to be clearly established when setting up a group.

As a Group Leader, you should clarify with a Head Teacher the procedure they would expect to be followed should there be a disclosure or concern within the SU Group. Scripture Union would expect, in most instances, that a similar procedure to those outlined below is followed:

- Report any disclosure or concern to senior management or person on duty before you leave the school. Be clear with any administrative staff about your concern – stating that you must speak to someone because of a child protection concern that has arisen. This approach should ensure that you are able to speak to the appropriate person with this responsibility. Asking if someone is available to speak to at that point may not be focused enough.
- If you are unable to speak with someone immediately you should write down everything that was said. Include: location, time, who was present and as far as possible everything that was said using the words of the child. If the disclosure was made to one of your team members then they should write this down rather than your version of events
- Do not discuss the incident with others on your team to ensure confidentiality
- Ensure that you have not made any promises to keep the incident a secret
- Inform SU of any disclosure which has been made – we may not ask for details but will offer support. It could well be that the Head Teacher or a parent may choose to make contact with Scripture Union and we would rather be made aware of a situation in order to be professional and offer appropriate and helpful response
- Do not expect to be given any further information by the Head Teacher. Sometimes it will be appropriate for the Head Teacher to assure you that everything has been dealt with. On other occasions, what you have become aware of may be part of something much larger in the life of a young person and the school management will be unable to disclose further details to you.

11.3 Excluding a pupil from an SU Group

Sometimes, we have young people in our SU Groups who have a poor reputation in school, who struggle with behaviour and, in some instances, may have experienced periods of exclusion from the school community. Whether you are a teacher or a volunteer going into school you have no authority to decide that this person should be excluded from the SU Group on a permanent basis. This decision can only be made by the school management. If you have any concern regarding a pupil in your group this should be discussed with a member of the school management team, and

they should take responsibility for communicating a decision about attendance to parents/carers of a pupil. It would also be helpful to alert your local staff member about the issue but they cannot make a decision about the removal/exclusion of a pupil from the SU Group.

This problem should not be confused with a need for a young person to leave a group meeting because of poor behaviour but allowing them to return the following week provided their behaviour has improved.

11.4 Out of School SU Groups

Some SU Groups meet at the end of the school day within the school building. You should clarify with the school management whether the school is willing to take full responsibility for the group, and whether the school sees this as a group meeting within the informal curriculum. If this is the nature of the relationship with the school then the above procedure is relevant.

However, if the school feel they cannot accept full responsibility because of the time when the group meets, or if the group meets away from school premises in an evening then the group falls fully within Scripture Union Scotland's Child Protection Policy. Your local staff member will be able to give you a copy of this policy and work through good practice with you.

In your role as Team Leader of the SU Group you carry responsibility for ensuring that your team are briefed adequately, and that the highest standards of care are observed. Should an incident happen during a group meeting, then you should contact SU Scotland's emergency number (07770 483 623) where you will be connected to the duty member of staff who will offer guidance and advice. The SU Scotland Volunteers Handbook provides the SU Scotland Code of Good Practice which is an invaluable tool to work through with your team. This handbook is issued to SU accredited volunteers.

11.5 Out of School Events

From time to time SU Groups like to involve their group in activities out of school such as swimming, bowling or a pizza night. We ask all groups running these kinds of activities to submit an "Out of School Event" form available from your local staff member. This is both for your protection and for the protection of the young people, and ensures the SU duty staff member is aware of this activity taking place in the event of receiving a phone call from you seeking help or advice. Taking your group away for a weekend is NOT covered by these procedures and all SU residential events are led by approved residential leaders only. Your local staff member will be able to provide you with information about a range of SU weekends and holidays that will be available for your group to participate in.

If your activity involves volunteers driving children in their car then we will also need to satisfy ourselves that insurance and other safeguards are in place using the SU Drivers Form.

11.6 Questions to consider:

1. Do you clearly understand the procedures to follow if a child makes a disclosure in your SU Group?
2. How do you plan to brief your team members about:
 - Good practice in their work within the group?
 - Good practice in the event of a disclosure?

Appendix 1 A protocol or basis for staff and volunteers working in Scottish schools

Volunteering with Scripture Union Scotland is about working to see children and young people exploring the Bible and responding to the significance of Jesus.

Our vision statement is true whether we volunteer on SU Holidays, SU Missions or in schools, but because the context of schools is quite distinct, it requires us to have a distinct understanding of what we are doing in schools and how our approach contributes to the education of children and young people. SU Scotland has been working with schools for over 70 years. We come with a serving attitude when we partner with a school; we work with the permission of the education authority and at the invitation of the Head Teacher. Proselytising within a school context is wholly inappropriate and it may well be that some church members and SU Volunteers will not find it possible to work within the parameters of schools work and should therefore volunteer in other areas.

Often our distinctive presence in a school is running an SU Group as part of the informal curriculum. This provides a place where children and young people can explore the Christian faith. There are currently around 500 such groups operating in schools across Scotland; and each should be led in a way which

All schools recognise the added value that partners can bring to the curriculum. ... There is scope for many schools to broaden the range of partners who support Religious and Moral Education to give children and young people broader insights into the range of religious and secular beliefs which are part of our diverse Scottish society. This would help to combat the stereotypical views of religious groups which children and young people are often presented with both in school and through the media.

Education Scotland, RME 3-18 Curriculum Impact Report, Feb 2014, p35

contributes to the development of those who attend. Curriculum for Excellence underlines the Scottish tradition of empowering children and young people to make and communicate their own decisions about belief and values; this would be our approach in SU Groups.

I can expect my learning environment to support me to:
• **understand and develop my physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing and social skills**

*Health and wellbeing across learning: responsibilities of all.
Experiences and outcomes*

SU Groups are open to all pupils to attend – those who have Christian faith and those of other faiths or none. We lead the group for the benefit of all children irrespective of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability or disability, age, political or religious persuasion. We believe that all children are of equal worth, made in the image of God, and that all have the right to hear about his love for them as expressed in Jesus Christ. We fully respect that individual children may commit to different beliefs and values, and although we are

happy to discuss the differences between Christian belief and other world views, we will refrain from criticising those who hold them.

Our activities should be designed to encourage pupils to ask questions and find answers about Christian belief. We want to give space for them to reflect and allow them to come to their own conclusions about meaningfulness and their own spiritual wellbeing.

As well as SU Groups, we work with schools and churches to deliver programmes that help pupils to experience an overview or significant areas of the Bible's story – such as Christmas and Easter.

We view all our activities as part of our contribution to the spiritual development of pupils through helping pupils learn about Christian beliefs, see authentic faith in practical action, and acquire critical tools which will enable them to develop an understanding of their own beliefs and the beliefs of others.

The Bible stories chosen would be appropriate to the context and the pupil. It would also be important to ensure that the 'message' in the story is a focus, ... stressing the importance again of close liaison with local faith representatives.

*Religious and moral education:
Experiences and outcomes, p10*

Appendix 2 SU Group Volunteer Registration Process (FAQs)

1. Why are SU Volunteers asked to fill in forms at all?

Scripture Union has a strong identity and profile in Scottish schools. When a Head Teacher agrees to an SU Group starting in their school, they have the right to expect SU Scotland to be adhering to best practice. We therefore have a responsibility to the school, the pupils and their parents to ensure that those representing SU Scotland in schools, are indeed appropriate for this work and are being recruited, monitored and supported with that in mind.

SU Group Volunteers need to have sufficient experience of exploring the Bible with children, and be able to do this appropriately in the school context. Organisations working with children and young people are required to have their own volunteering selection procedures in place prior to application for PVG membership or a PVG update being made.

2. Why do I need to do an Annual Update Form and Reference?

Contact details, church involvement and personal information change and we need to give you the opportunity to keep us up to date with that information. We also need to ask for a reference from your church leaders as someone who sees you more regularly than we do, to confirm that you are an appropriate person to be helping children and young people explore the Bible and respond to Jesus.

3. Do I need a PVG from SU Scotland and the school when I already have one with my church?

All SU Volunteers and staff who work with children and young people, are required to give us access to their PVG Record by joining the scheme through SU Scotland or allowing SU Scotland to obtain a PVG scheme record update, so that we receive current Disclosure information from Disclosure Scotland. Without your signature on a form we have no right to your records; without seeing your ID we cannot prove that the correct person gave us the right to ask for your records.

Some schools and local authorities ask for PVG Membership, others just ask for assurance (or evidence) that SU Scotland has done that PVG check. We work with what the Head Teacher asks for.

4. I am a staff member in the school; do I still need to do SU forms?

Yes. The Registration process is about your appropriateness to represent SU and lead a group in the school as defined above. Being employed in the school is helpful but doesn't mean an automatic right or suitability to be part of the SU Group Leadership.

Without SU Scotland accreditation you'll be unable to be involved in other aspects of SU Scotland work, e.g. our Regional Weekends or SU Holidays alongside your pupils or a local SU Mission.

5. When do I become a fully registered volunteer with SU Scotland?

The Volunteers Unit will send you an email each year when your accreditation is complete. In the first year this will include the completion of a PVG form; in subsequent years this will be once the completed Annual Update and Reference are received.

6. Can I lead the SU Group before then?

We require Team Leaders to be fully accredited before the SU Group can start. We will work with Team Leaders to consider how to manage the introduction of new volunteers to the group. Volunteers who refuse to actively follow through the accreditation process will not be allowed involvement with the SU Group.

7. What do you mean by a Team Leader in school?

The Team Leader is the key contact for the school and for SU Scotland and, where appropriate, a local Associate Trust. They may lead a team of other volunteers or may be the sole leader of the group. As such they complete "SU Leadership" Forms and meet with a local staff member to discuss the starting of the group, or taking on the leadership of an established group.

8. Do all of us need to be accredited?

All those involved in the SU Group need to be accredited to allow us to fulfil our responsibilities to the school and to communicate effectively with all those who share our ministry.

9. If someone only agrees to help out for a few weeks to "try it out" do we need to ask them to fill in forms?

The Team Leader has the opportunity to bring Volunteers in on this 'trial' basis providing that they can give adequate supervision and support. This trial period could last up to one month.

10. A parent or teacher offers to help with the group but is not a Christian; can they still help out? What paperwork do they complete?

There is a place for such volunteers in various aspects of SU work as long as everyone is clear on the limits of such involvement. A team cannot carry a number of such volunteers nor should they be asked to deliver key aspects of the Bible teaching but rather be supported and monitored in their contribution in other areas.

They should be asked to complete those parts of the Volunteer Application Form that they feel able to, and referees will also be sought on the same basis. PVG Membership is still a requirement. Please discuss the involvement of any person who is not a Christian with your local staff member at an early point.

11. What sort of support can I expect by becoming an SU Volunteer?

You'll be joining a network of leaders from around 500 SU Groups with the opportunity to request local and national prayer for your group, be covered by SU's Public Liability Insurance, as well as access to resources and training identified by local staff and other volunteers. You'll also be able to be involved in our residential events alongside your group and other staff and volunteers

12. If someone helps out once a month on a rota basis, do they need to do forms?

Yes. They are a regular part of the team.

13. Does this volunteer process allow me to do anything else in SU?

Yes. All volunteers complete one set of forms per year and can therefore move onto Residential, Mission or other teams with the same accreditation. If you were to be involved in driving pupils or team members while at events, or creating your own "out of school events" then we have further paperwork to gather the appropriate information for us to support this.

14. How do I get in touch with SU Scotland?

In the first instance, most questions will go to your local staff member who gave you this FAQs sheet. Our Volunteers Unit in Glasgow can also be contacted on 0141 352 7610 or volunteers@suscotland.org.uk