

Simple Drill and the Basics of Figure Marching

BODY

fit for fun



Maximum of six boys
required for this activity



10 minutes over a period
of several weeks

Aim: To teach boys simple drill movements

This activity could be done over a period of several weeks with sessions lasting no more than 10 to 15 minutes. The basics of simple drill serve as an introduction to the Figure Marching activities that can be used for displays and parents evenings or for battalion competitions. Simple drill can be used as part of your opening and closing ceremony if your company chooses to do this. Some knowledge of simple drill is also helpful if your company takes part in a church parade.

The first task is to ensure that boys know these simple drill commands. Simple commands that could be taught include “attention”, “stand at ease”, and “left and right turn”. Once the boys are confident with these, move on to marching including “quick march”, “mark time” and “halt”.

“Simon Says” is good way to help teach simple drill – and it encourages the boys to listen to the person giving the commands. If an instruction is preceded by the phrase “Simon says...” and a boy doesn’t carry out the instruction, then he is out. Equally, if the instruction isn’t preceded by the phrase “Simon says...” and a boy carries out the instruction, he is also out. It is useful to have some activity available to occupy the boys who are out. If no other activity is available, the boys who are out could help you in keeping an eye on those who are still in to try and catch them out!

Equipment:

- Church hall or open space

Notes for Leaders:

Simple drill will cover these basic movements:

The following movements are carried out when the boys are ‘at the halt’ (that is when the boys are standing still):

- Attention
- Stand at Ease
- Stand Easy
- Right Turn
- Left Turn
- About Turn

The following movements are carried out when the boys are on the move:

- Quick March
- Mark Time
- Halt



Giving drill commands:

These movements can only be carried out if clear and correct words of command are given. Commands must be given so that all boys can hear them.

There are two parts to drill command:

The Caution which tells the boys what to do, and

The Executive which tells the boys when to do it

With '*the caution*' being given distinctively and '*the executive*' given in a short sharp tone which encourages a smart and immediate response.

So, as example:	<i>The Caution</i>	<i>The Executive</i>
	RIGHT	-TURN
	STAND AT	-EASE
	ATTEN-	-SHUN
	STAND	-EASY
	ABOUT	-TURN
	QUICK	-MARCH
	SECTION	-HALT

As the command 'HALT' *cannot* be split into caution and *executive* parts, the word, 'SECTION' should be used as the caution. So the command to halt is: 'SECTION-HALT.'

Timing of a command:

A pause should always be made between the end of the *caution* and the *executive*. The length of the pause should be the time of one pace in marching. So, the command for the section to come to attention, would be as follows:

(to match the tempo of marching paces)

Command:	STAND AT	-EASE
	ATTEN-	-SHUN
	ABOUT	-TURN

Before taking simple drill or figure marching with boys, it is advisable for the leader to practise giving commands to her/himself.



Simple Drill Positions:

'STAND-EASY' (from the 'STAND AT EASE' position):

- Feet should be about 15cm apart, measured from heel to heel, feet turned out at an angle of 30 degrees
- The limbs, head and body may be moved, but not the feet
- When 'standing easy' and the command, 'Section' is given (as one word), the position of 'Stand at Ease' is assumed

'STAND AT EASE' (from the 'STAND EASY' position):

'SECTION' (this is said as one word, not split into *caution* and *executive*) – Feet remain where they are (15 cms apart at the heels) so that the weight of the body rests equally on both feet; the hands are placed behind the back with the arms fully extended, the back of the right hand placed in the palm of the left, with fingers of both hands straight and thumbs interlocked. Head and eyes facing the front.

'ATTENTION' (from the 'STAND AT EASE' position):

'ATTEN-SHUN' – When coming to attention from the 'Stand at Ease' position, keeping the leg straight, the left foot is brought up to the right without stamping and the position of 'Attention' is assumed.

- Heels together and in line
- Feet turned out at an angle of about 30 degrees
- Legs straight, body straight and square to the front
- Arms straight as the natural bend of the arm will allow
- Wrists straight, hands clenched, knuckles outside
- Thumbs to the front, close to the forefinger and immediately behind the seams of the trousers
- Head and eyes facing the front
- The weight should be even on both feet, the body is NOT tensed, and the boys should breath easily!

'STAND AT EASE' (from the 'ATTENTION' position):

'STAND AT-EASE' – Keeping the legs straight, the left foot is moved about 15cms directly to the left, so that the weight of the body rests equally on both feet; at the same time, the hands are placed behind the back with the arms fully extended, the back of the right hand is placed in the palm of the left, with fingers of both hands straight and thumbs interlocked.

'RIGHT TURN' (from the 'ATTENTION' position):

'RIGHT-TURN' – Boys are at the 'Attention' position. The movement is done in two parts.

1. Keeping both knees straight and body standing straight. A turn is made to the right on the right heel and left toe, the left heel and right toe being raised in doing so, and the arms are kept close to the sides. On completion of this first movement, the right foot must be flat to the ground and the left heel raised; the weight of the body is on the right foot.
2. The left heel is brought smartly next to the right foot to assume the position of 'Attention'.

'LEFT TURN' (from the 'ATTENTION' position):

'LEFT-TURN' – When turning to the left, the movements are done in the same ways as a right turn, but with the left heel and right toe.





'ABOUT TURN' (from the 'ATTENTION' position):

'ABOUT-TURN' – Boys will act as for turning to the right, except they will continue the turn to the right, through 180 degrees until they face the opposite direction. Arms are not used to maintain balance and are kept close to the sides. This movement usually creates some amusement until boys get the hang of it, as it is easy to lose one's balance until the technique is learned. Be patient, the boys will get the hang of it!

Once the boys are happy with the instructions for simple drill, you can introduce figure marching sequences to music. These next instructions will become easier as the boys practise.

Marching:

'QUICK-MARCH' – Boys commence marching by taking a pace with the left foot. The right arm is swung from the shoulder as the left foot advances, as the right arm is swung forward, the left arm is swung back. The arms are straight, as their natural bend will allow; the hand is not raised higher than the waist.

Moving from 'QUICK MARCH' to 'HALT':

The word '**SECTION**' is given as the right foot comes to the ground, there is a pause in the command as the left foot comes to the ground; the word, '**HALT**' is given as the right foot then comes to the ground. (So the command is '**Section-Halt**'.) One more pace is taken with the left foot; the right foot is brought into line with the left foot without stamping. And both arms are brought neatly to the sides. Boys assume the position of 'Attention'.

Turning:

To achieve a good standard of figure marching, some instruction should be given to turning corners. As each boy reaches the 'turning point' (they should have clear instructions on where it is! Mark this on the floor with masking tape, or a chalk mark), the hands must be brought smartly to the sides and while marking time for two beats, he turns the inside foot on the first beat and outside foot on the second beat, stepping off with the full pace on the third beat, commencing at once to swing the arms.

If during the figure marching, all the boys need to turn at the same time to a given command, the procedure is as follows:

Turning on the MARCH:

'RIGHT-TURN' – The commands are given on the right foot. A pace forward is taken with the left foot (a check pace), then pivoting on the ball of the left foot, a complete right turn is made, moving the right foot forward a full pace in the new direction to complete the turn. The movement is made in the tempo of the marching.

'LEFT-TURN' – The commands are given on the left foot. A pace forward is taken with the right foot (a check pace), and then pivoting on the ball of the right foot, a complete left turn is made, moving the left foot forward a full pace in the new direction to complete the turn. The movement is made in the tempo of the marching.

The section on Figure Marching provides some tips and ideas of how to use this activity with your boys.