

Aim: To teach the boys various life skills

Sew on a button

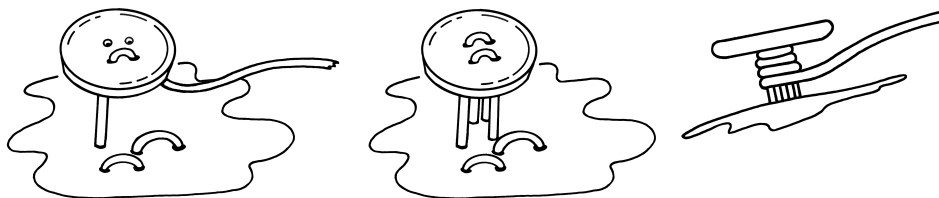
This is a valuable skill, and one that will come in useful whether it be to sew a button a shirt, jacket or coat. The initial reaction from the boys is that this is not their job, and someone at home does it when it needs to be done.

Equipment: enough for one for each boy

- Needles and sewing thread
- Buttons
- Fabric
- Scissors

Instructions:

1. Choose the cotton to match the fabric, remove any old threads, but take care not to loose the position of the button.
2. Thread the needle with the cotton; tie a small knot at the end of the thread. For heavier fabric use double cotton.
3. Sew several stitches into the reverse of the fabric to anchor the stitches, then bring the needle through the fabric.
4. Thread the button onto the thread and make several stitches using all the holes in the button, taking care to match the pattern of stitching as on the other buttons. Don't pull the threads too tight.
5. For heavier cloth you may need to add a 'stem' as pulling the button tightly to the fabric can make it difficult to fasten. To make a stem, add several turns of cotton between the button and the fabric.
6. Finish off with a couple of stitches into the fabric.
7. Carefully cut the cotton off close to the fabric.



As an additional activity, boys could make a picture out of buttons; perhaps making the BB Anchor out of coloured buttons, or all sewing onto one larger piece to make a collage. Buttons of all sizes can be taken from old shirts and clothes etc.

An activity game can be played as a 'beetle drive' with boys adding up their scores for a needle, thread, button, and then so many stitches according to the points scored etc.



No maximum number depending on adequate supervision



10-15 minutes per activity



Careful supervision is required for the use of sewing needles and a hot iron. Care will need to be taken with boys using shoe polish to make sure they do not get this on their clothes

Shoe Cleaning

With 'velcro' fastening trainers and all weather shoes, there is often less inclination to clean a pair of shoes with brushes and polish, however leather shoes do need regular polish to help them keep their appearance. Boys may better understand the need for their trainers to be cleaned regularly and for them to be well aired! You could choose to clean trainers instead of shoes.

Equipment:

- Shoes or trainers
- Appropriate coloured polish
- Cleaning brushes, one to remove any dried mud or dirt, one to put polish on and the other to polish it off
- Dusters

Instructions:

1. Use a stiff brush to remove any dried on mud. If shoes are very muddy, then a plastic knife can be used to remove dirt. If shoes are very wet, they should be filled with newspaper to draw out the moisture. Shoes should not be dried by a fire or radiator.
2. Put on the polish with a soft brush paying attention to the area around the back of the shoe and the heel, and to the 'welt' of the shoe (where the top meets the sole). And if the shoes with a leather sole, to the 'waist' of the shoe (the part of the underside of the shoe between the heel and the sole. Do not put polish onto the heel or sole as this can cause a person to slip. Carefully polish around the laces.
3. Then, using a polishing brush or soft duster, buff the shoes to a nice shine.
4. If you are cleaning trainers, use a neutral coloured polish and pull out the tongues of the shoes to help them air.

A number of companies have used shoe cleaning to help raise money. Shoe cleaning features as one of the activities in the BB 'Streetwise' project which focused on the plight of street children in South Africa, see BB web site for details: <http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/international/streetwise.htm>

Shoe cleaning can be made into a relay game with members of the team running in turn to place a shoe in a circle or hoop and hopping back, the second 'leg!' is for the boys to run and fetch their own shoes, return to the group, sitting on the floor, with shoes correctly tied.

Set a Table

When setting a table it is important to make it look neat and tidy. Knowledge of which cutlery to use at certain points within a meal can also be taught at the same time. There are some regional variations but the diagrams below give the most common arrangements.

Equipment:

- Various items of cutlery and crockery, a tablecloth and paper napkins. See template with table layouts.

Knives and forks should be placed the width of a dinner plate apart, with the blade of the knife facing inwards. Dessert spoons and forks may be placed either across the top of the plate, or parallel with the knife and fork. If the meal is to have several courses, the cutlery is arranged so that the items on the outside are used first. For a formal dinner, the soup spoon, the fish knife and fork, the meat course knife and fork, the dessert spoon and fork, or pastry fork and knife would be used in that order as on the diagram.

Boys can be encouraged to fold a napkin to enhance the appearance of the table. You could also link this to an origami activity. You might have someone in the church who is an expert at folding napkins who might be willing to teach the boys the various ways this can be done.

Setting a table could be easily made into a relay game with boys running to collect the various items and then laying these out on a small table next to the team, or a game of 'beetle' could be devised in order to collect the correct items.

Breakfast



Lunch



Afternoon Tea



Dinner



Ironing a Shirt or T shirt

This is best done in small groups of two or four boys. Care must be taken in using the hot iron.

Equipment:

- Ironing boards and electric irons, a board and iron between two boys
- Shirts or t shirts (get boys to bring in one of their own)

Instructions:

1. Set up the ironing board and iron, making sure that any trailing wires are safe.
2. Check the label on the shirt or t-shirt for the heat setting for ironing, and set the iron to that temperature.

There are several methods of ironing a shirt, one of which is as follows:

First iron the collar. Iron the back of the collar, then the front. This gives the collar a smoother, crisper look. Next, iron the front of the shirt. Iron both sides of the front of the shirt, especially the placket (where the buttonholes are on the front of the shirt). This makes the placket smooth and pucker free (make sure all seams are ironed smooth). After you have fully ironed the front of the shirt, iron the sleeves and the cuffs. Iron the inside of the cuffs first and then the outside. Next, iron the yoke of the shirt (the area across the shoulders) and the back. Finally, lightly iron the front of the shirt again if needed. The benefit of ironing the collar and front of the shirt first is to insure that they are ironed while still moist, getting the smoothest results possible.

Keep in mind:

- During ironing, if the shirt begins to dry out, re-moisten it with a shot of water spray then continue ironing.
- Never allow the hot iron to rest in one spot on the shirt otherwise it will scorch the fabric; keep the iron moving.
- The cotton setting is usually the highest heat setting on the iron and is meant only for pure cotton shirts. Shirts with polyester content require lower heat settings – follow manufacturer's care recommendations carefully; these are usually shown on the label.