



Woodcraft Folk
Education for Social Change

**YOUTH IS
NOT WASTED
ON THE YOUNG**

Growing Groups: Group Night Activities

Today Woodcraft Folk has over 2,850 members, with an estimated additional 1,600 volunteers, engaging nearly 10,000 children and young people per annum. However, Woodcraft Folk need to grow to be sustainable. Woodcraft Folk suffered a decline in numbers in the late 1990s and early 21st century, but have largely been static in membership and group numbers since 2007.

To meet our aims and principles we need to grow at all levels e.g. new members, active volunteers, larger and more groups. The priority to grow is driven by many agendas:

- Empowering children and young people, influencing new generations and communities
- Better known and understood, a widely recognised movement for social change
- Reaching out to new communities, achieving our ambition to be open and accessible to all
- Sustainability of the organisation, including its financial security

As such General Council have set the movement a challenge to grow by 10% per annum, which for most groups may mean only recruiting 1 new member and 2 or 3 children each year. For more information about the growth targets watch our Chair here: www.woodcraft.org.uk/images/grwoth-numbers-video

To meet this target General Council and the staff team plan to:

- Continue to develop volunteer recruitment materials for local use e.g. Volunteer Opportunities Guide
- Work with 17 Co-operative Schools in the Bradford & Leeds area to deliver the National Citizen Service scheme to Venturer age young people
- Young Leader Training in the summer, working with 3 London Districts who have established waiting lists
- Promote TREE's new 'Leading for the Future' scheme for Venturers and DFs, that helps young people to explore and develop leadership skills
- Offer training in 'Learn 2 Play' and 'Venturer Leader Training' around the regions

However we need local groups and districts to support these activities and to play their part in achieving these growth targets on a local level.

The following activities have been designed to engage children, young people, adult members and volunteers in exploring how existing groups and districts can grow. They include:

- Challenges to produce recruitment materials from poems to posters
- Community mapping tasks that identify under-represented groups
- Persuading others to join Woodcraft Folk
- Event planning e.g. Bring a friend, community stalls

If you need any support in growing your group or setting up a new group please do not hesitate to ask for help. Centrally we can provide:

- Promotional material
- Examples of successful funding bids
- Advice on venue selection
- Group night activities
- Access to a New Group Buddy
- Training materials on the aims and principles, safeguarding, play and youth work

For help or more ideas visit www.woodcraft.org.uk/growinggroups or contact Debs McCahon, Membership Development Manager on 0845 217 8939 (Deborah.mccahon@woodcraft.org.uk)

And finally, these activities have been designed to be used on group nights with Elfins, Pioneers, Venturers and adult volunteers to help you to increase number of adult members and children. They are offered to you as a resource – there is no expectation that all groups will make use, but if you do we welcome your feedback at the email address above.



Attracting new members

It has been identified that Woodcraft Folk needs to develop a range of targeted recruitment material, similar to the postcards, Venturer leaflet and DF Pack supported by the TREE programme.



Challenge activity 1: Recruiting new members

This activity is suitable for all age groups. The times are a rough guide, and will depend largely on the numbers of children and young people in your group.

What you will need:

- Some space
- Photos of Woodcraft Folk activities – to be used in making collages
- Paper
- Pens
- Glue
- Scissors

Energiser game "I like Woodcraft..." (10 minutes)

- Form a circle (standing or sitting), with one member nominated as the caller in the middle
- The caller reads out a statement, for example "I like Woodcraft because I enjoy camping" or "I like Woodcraft Folk because the people are friendly" or "I like Woodcraft Folk because leaders ask me what I think" or "I like Woodcraft Folk because all my friends come"
- After each statement, anyone in the circle who agrees with the statement needs to change places (if sitting, warn people not to be too energetic as they may fall over chairs)
- After a few statements from the nominated caller, invite others to say why they like Woodcraft or tell the group that the last person to find a new space becomes the caller and has to say why they like Woodcraft

You don't have to record what is said, but it would be interesting to collect the reasons children and adults attend and if they were shared by the majority of the group.

Circle (10 minutes)

Tell the group that Woodcraft Folk wants to attract new members, children and adults. Ask the group for suggestions as to how they think they might be able to get more members e.g. bring a friend night, produce a poster, have a stall at the next school event.

Record all the suggestions, and prioritise those that the group feel are achievable. One simple way of prioritising as a group is to give everyone a sticker and ask them to place it next to their favourite suggestion – those with the most stickers are chosen. Alternatively a show of hands can work just as well.

Craft activity (30 minutes)

In small groups of 4 or 5 ask members to work on the ideas they came up with in the circle or to produce a poem, poster, postcard or leaflet to attract new members.

Remember to ask them to decide who they are targeting e.g. Elvins, adult leaders.

The groups can then write a poem, produce a collage of their favourite activities or simply draw a picture of what they like about Woodcraft.



Closing circle (15 minutes)

Ask individual groups to share what they have produced, highlighting why they think it will attract new members.

Ask individuals if they would like to send their ideas to national Woodcraft Folk. If so, please submit any design or content suggestions to chloe.darlington@woodcraft.org.uk

All designs will be uploaded on to www.woodcraft.org.uk/ilikewoodcraft; designs will also be reviewed by the TREE Communications group with the intention of producing materials for use across the country.

Challenge activity 2: Mapping communities

This activity is suitable for Pioneers and above, and will help to identify those who are not currently involved in Woodcraft Folk and develop a plan for targeting their engagement. The times are a rough guide, and will depend largely on the numbers of young people and supporting adults in your group. It is possible to break up this activity over a number of group nights, for example:

1. Session on similarities and diversity amongst the group,
2. Session on mapping our local community and where we live,
3. Session on identifying 'Who is in? Who is out?' e.g. represented and under or un-represented groups
4. Session on action planning for future targeting and joint working with either under or un-represented groups.

What you will need:

- Some space
- Street map of the local area
- Coloured stickers
- Post-it notes
- Large pieces of paper (one per small group)
- Pens

Energiser game 'The Sun Shines On...' (10 mins)

- Form a circle (standing or sitting), with one member nominated as the caller in the middle
- The caller reads out a statement, for example "The sun shines on everyone wearing trainers" or "The sun shines on everyone with blond hair" or "The sun shines on everyone who goes to St Marks School" or "The Sun Shines on everyone who has a ponytail"
- After each statement, anyone in the circle who fits that description needs to change places (if sitting, warn people not to be too energetic as they may fall over chairs)
- After a few statements from the nominated caller, invite others to say something or tell the group that the last person to find a new space becomes the caller and has to say "The sun shines on...."

Circle (10 mins)

In the circle draw the groups' attention to the similarities and difference amongst the group identified by the game e.g. we all live in the same District.

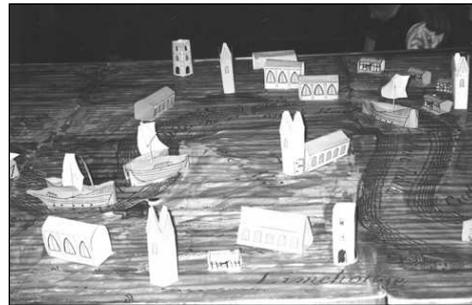
Share with the group that Woodcraft Folk wants to be 'bigger and better' and seeks to attract new members, and especially that Woodcraft Folk wants to be 'open and

accessible to all'. Tell the group that these two ambitions are the core part of Woodcraft Folk's national plan, and that as a local group tonight's activity will explore if and how you can achieve them.

Mapping activity (5 mins, longer if group members need to draw the map)

In small groups of 4 or 5 ask individuals to draw or look at a local street map, placing sticky labels on where they live. Record where leaders live – is this in the same geographical areas?

If group members are drawing/making the map, ask them to record key places e.g. schools, places of worship, community centres.



Who is in? Who is out? (20 mins)

Looking at the map ask the small groups to write down on post-it notes what community groups attend Woodcraft Folk group, and which don't e.g. teenagers, pupils from a particular school, families from a particular district, different ethnic groups etc.

Encourage the group to record their ideas and not to worry about using the "correct language" (that can be another exercise a different time).

On the large piece of paper ask the group to draw a circle and place their post-it notes inside the circle if members of that community attend group and outside if they don't.

Feedback circle (20 mins)

Ask individual groups to feedback their circles of who is in and who is out. Encourage the group to show their agreement or disagreement with suggestions, producing a collective record of which groups are engaged and which ones are currently under-represented or not present.

It is unlikely that you will have time for the next activity in one group night, but tell group members that you will revisit the results of the discussion and explore how the group might target under-represented communities either to become members or to explore opportunities for joint working.

Action planning

Reflecting on the circle created, ask group members to prioritise one group to target. Action plan: How you would target the group? How you would do it? When you would do it? And what the benefits might be?

Challenge activity 3: Persuading others

This activity is suitable for all ages, although Elbins may require more support to appreciate the barriers to participation faced by some groups.

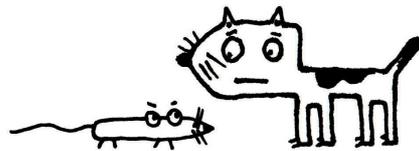
What you will need:

- Some space
- Talking stick (possibly)
- Paper
- Pens

Energiser game 'Cat and mouse' (10 mins)

- Divide the group into pairs, and spread the pair out around the room.
- Nominate one pair to be the 'cat' and the 'mouse'.
- The 'cat' chases the 'mouse'. If the 'cat' catches the 'mouse' they swap roles. (so the previous chaser becomes chased)
- When the 'mouse' gets tired of being chased, they simply link arms with any pair around the room. The individual on the other end of the pair then becomes the 'cat' and chases the 'mouse' (who had previously been the 'cat').

This is a fast and energetic game – confusing and lots of fun.



Circle (5 mins)

Introduce the activity by asking group members if they have ever been persuaded to try something that they thought they wouldn't like; only to find they love it!

'Broccoli ice cream' debate (15 mins)

1. In the circle ask group members to indicate if they are in favour or against the idea of broccoli ice cream
2. Simply divide the group into two groups, those who will argue for broccoli ice cream and those against.
3. Give the group 5 minutes to prepare their reasons 'for' or 'against' broccoli ice cream. You may wish to share the following suggestions to help them explore the issues:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
It could be one of your 5 a day	Ice cream is fattening
Green is a Woodcraft colour	It would be green!
Everyone likes ice cream	We can't afford it
We could make it, and make other seasonal flavours	Who produces it? Would it be fair-trade and sustainable?
Ice cream can cool us all down after an energetic game	It would make a mess
Ice cream would give us energy and will stop us being hungry	How would it be kept cold?
It might make other children want to come along	

Support the groups to stage a debate – both sides presenting their arguments. When the groups have exhausted their rationale, ask the group to vote again either for or against broccoli ice cream.

Circle reflection (10 mins)

In a circle ask the group to reflect on:

- Did they change their view as a result of the arguments they heard?
- How easy or hard did they find it to persuade people they may like something they have never tried before?

'Woodcraft is for you' debate (20 mins)

Repeat the above exercise but for Woodcraft Folk, one group presenting the reasons why someone should join and another group exploring why Woodcraft may not be right for everyone.

Support the group to explore potential barriers to participation in Woodcraft Folk activities e.g. age, meeting time, venue, disability, cost

Closing circle (10 mins)

As a group agree how to share the reasons why someone should join Woodcraft e.g. display, article or just word of mouth/tell friends.

Challenge activity 4: Recruitment event planning

This activity is suitable for all ages.

What you will need:

- Some space
- Scissors
- Photos or magazines
- Glue
- Paper
- Pens

Energiser game "Fruit Salad" (10 mins)

- The object of the game is to get people running around and mixing.
- Ask the group to stand in a circle. Number the group 1-4 (or just 1-3 if less than 12 members), repeating until every member has a number.
- Tell the number 1s they are apples, numbers 2s they are pear, number 3s they are oranges and number 4s they are bananas.
- Nominate a caller, who can call 'apples', 'pears', 'oranges', 'bananas' or 'fruit salad'. When the caller calls a fruit everyone in that team must swap places, when the caller says 'fruit salad' everyone must swap places.



Circle (10 mins)

Introduce the activity, by telling group members that Woodcraft Folk is seeking to recruitment new young members. Share with the group example case studies:

Community fairs: Twickenham recommend organising activities at community events that include free activities - simple craft activities for children to do and take home with them. A favourite is also 'What's in the tent?' - A memory game with a Vango with about 20 random objects scattered inside. Children had one minute in the tent, then came out and had to remember as many objects as possible. We offered a £5 book token prize to the 6-9 year old and 10-12 year old who remembered the highest number of things (families had to leave contact details if they wanted their child to be considered for the prize). We followed up all the families who left details with more publicity as well as sending the prize to the two winners.

Free taster evenings: Bromley offer free taster sessions to children at community events in the form of vouchers.

Targeted recruitment of young people: Lewisham & Greenwich spent their Halloween group night visiting houses with pumpkins to provide treats and invitations to Woodcraft Folk. The children enjoyed dressing up and offering treats instead of tricks, and the adults enjoyed making contact with new families in a unique and targeted way.

Online: Ealing recommend being listed on local websites e.g. 'what's on; sections, Netmums and children's services. Ealing also have a blog that proves popular, it's great when people ask what we do to be able to direct them there and see for themselves.

More case studies are available online: www.woodcraft.org.uk/groupsupport

Ask the group to comment on the case studies or share their ideas for how they might like to be involved in recruiting new members.

Planning activity (30 mins)

In small groups choose to prepare for a recruitment activity e.g. bring a friend event, play day in the park

The activity should involve preparing something to communicate the event, for example:

- Producing an invitation to a play day or bring a friend night
- Designing a poster to promote a play day

As part of the activity you will need to explore:

- When the activity will take place?
- Where the activity will take place?
- Who should be involved?
- What types of activities/games would be most interesting to new members?

Circle (10mins)

Share materials produced and agree a timetable for the planned events.

Challenge activity 5: Woodcraft Take over TV!

This activity has been designed for Elfin, but can be done by older children. The activity will help promote discussion about why we come to Woodcraft.

You will need:

- Woodcraft props e.g. guitar, songbook, bed sheets to make tents
- An assortment of percussion instruments
- Anything that is important to your group
- Something that will record the final masterpieces (phone, video camera)

Warm up activity (10 mins)

The challenge is to get the group to stand together.

1. Divide the group into pairs. Get them to sit facing each other with their feet flat on the floor, the ends of their toes touching and holding hands.
2. They must try to stand up with their toes still touching and still holding hands.
3. Once they have mastered this, they can try to do the same thing in groups of three, four and upwards. Find out what the largest number that you can do this with might be.

Circle (10-15 mins)

- Talk about how it is good to learn new ways of doing things at Woodcraft, for example learning to stand up together. Then introduce the topic of the night e.g. exploring what we like about Woodcraft Folk. Ask the group:
- What words they would use to describe Woodcraft Folk to their friends? Record these on a large sheet of paper so that everyone can see.
- Challenge the group to produce an advert for Woodcraft Folk. Start by getting them to discuss adverts: What are their favourite adverts? What makes a good advert (music, style, and voiceover)?

Group activity (10 mins planning, 20 mins to view the results)

In small groups, tell the children that they are going to create an advert for their group, one that will encourage more people to join Woodcraft Folk.

Encourage the use of props. If children are shy about acting, get them to do sound effects or take on other roles. It is important that all children are involved.

When groups are ready they can showcase their advert!

Closing circle (10 mins)

Finish with a group discussion looking at what all the adverts shared. How did they differ? Were any important aspects about Woodcraft Folk missing?

Ask the group to think about whether or not they would like to perfect their performances and invite their parents/carers and friends to view their adverts at a future session?