



8. Food for Thought!

Taking a group of young people away? Self-catering can be a cost effective, fun and flexible way of doing things – though it does mean more hard work and preparation.

Venue and Facilities

Check what equipment is available at the venue - even down to the basics. If possible, make a visit to the venue. You need to take into account the available storage space, the size of the cooker, whether or not there is an oven, grill, freezer and what refrigeration space is there, as well as the size of the dining area. Find out what shops are nearby to top up supplies if necessary or to buy fresh produce each day. Do you need to supply your own cleaning items and/or equipment?

Outdoors

If you're camping - think basic, but this doesn't mean boring!! It's useful to have a separate catering tent into which the young people are not allowed - for obvious safety reasons. Take a fire extinguisher and a fire blanket and keep your cooking source away from the sides of the tent.

Barbecues

Disposable BBQ's are ideal and can be used to cook various foods. It's important to cook poultry, pork, burgers, sausages and kebabs until they are

piping hot all the way through, with no pinkness left. Light the barbecue well in advance, making sure you use enough charcoal. Wait until it's glowing red with a powdery grey surface before starting to cook. Move food around the barbecue and turn it regularly, to ensure even cooking. If you're cooking large amounts, you could start to cook raw meat on one barbecue and then move it onto another one when it is partially cooked, to help reduce the risk of cross-contamination. To ensure thorough cooking, you could cook meat indoors and finish it off on the barbecue for added flavour.

Leaders

It's helpful if 1 or 2 people can be responsible for over seeing the cooking and who are free from the demands of activities and general supervision. They need to be aware of the relevant legislation - the Local Environmental Health Officer is entitled to visit any establishment without warning. (See *Hygiene*). Is it possible to involve young people in the washing up? How can this be done safely? Who is going to serve the food? Perhaps have a Rota system or appoint a Serving Team. Will the food be served at the table or through a hatch? Who is responsible for setting and clearing the tables?

Equipment

This is a list of basic equipment that you may need. Keep your own check-list of things from one event to the next.

Pans and cooking tins

Mixing bowl

Cooking tools and spoons

Sharp Knives

Tea towels (have plenty of these, and clothes pegs for drying them, if camping)

Tin Foil & Cling Film

Matches

Tin Opener

Scissors

Crockery & Cutlery (remember serving spoons)

Storage containers

Black Bags

Kitchen Roll

Chopping Boards for meat and vegetable items should be kept and used separately

Dish Cloths and washing up Liquid

Washing up bowls—if camping

Water Container—if camping

If you don't have these available to you, could you borrow them from a well-equipped church hall?

Basic Food Larder

Cooking Oil

Milk

Salt & Pepper

Drinks—Squash

Coffee & Tea

Pasta

Sugar

Rice

Tomato Sauce

Baked Beans

Bread

Eggs

Butter

Cheese

Shopping

There are a number of places to buy your supplies. For large numbers try the Cash and Carry. Some will allow you a one -day pass, but you need to pay in cash and arrange it beforehand. You can get basic supplies at the Supermarket, along with any fresh produce you need. Can you get a discount for bulk orders and do you need to give any notice to the supplier for them?

Transport and Storage

Allow storage space when transporting the young people and your equipment to the venue. Usually the catering team will need to arrive on site well in advance of the rest of the group so remember to check with the Venue about possible arrival times and access to the kitchen facilities. Ensure frozen products are transported appropriately and in a safe time before they start to defrost.

Store raw food below ready-to-eat food in the fridge or use separate fridges for raw and ready-to-eat food. The coldest part of the fridge should be between 0°C and 5°C (32°F and 41°F). Once food is cooked, serve it immediately or keep it hot until serving. If you're cooking food in advance, cool and chill it quickly. You can make food cool more quickly by dividing it into smaller amounts and placing it in shallow dishes. If you are camping you need to make other arrangements for storage – so that the food doesn't get damp or invaded by wildlife!

Cleaning

Clean surfaces and equipment thoroughly before you start to prepare food and after they have been used with raw food. Wash your hands thoroughly after touching raw food.

Hygiene and Safety

Caterers should take due diligence in all aspects of cleanliness and hygiene. Food Safety laws require food handlers to be trained to different levels depending on the nature of the food and the task they are undertaking. Volunteers can be sent on a Basic Food Hygiene Course. Contact the local Environmental Health Department for information. Training opportunities begin from basic one-day courses. Consult them (or the area in which the event is taking place). Check with the

venue that the kitchen you will be using conforms to Environmental Health Department regulations. For professional up to date advice as well as information on training, check out: [:www.foodstandards.gov.uk](http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk) and also <http://cleanup.food.gov.uk> which has useful and practical tips. Or contact them on:

Food Standards Agency, Wales
11th Floor,
Southgate House
Wood Street,
Cardiff CF10 1EW
Tel: 02920 678999

Use different chopping boards and utensils for meat, raw and cooked foods to prevent cross contamination. Ensure a basic First Aid box is available in the kitchen.

Menu Planning

Before you decide what to eat remember 3 things:

- The number you are cooking for
- The facilities available
- The Timetable

Have a balanced menu with some fresh fruit and vegetable options. It's amazing what some young people will eat, or won't in some cases! Include fun things like biscuits and cakes as snacks, perhaps give them hot chocolate before bedtime, and have diluted drinks available throughout the day. Try incorporating one or more of the meal times into your activities. You may want a theme night or a party night, or get the young people to build their own pizzas, etc. This can be fun and help with group dynamics!

Presentation

It doesn't cost a lot to make the dining experience even more special! Present the food in an attractive way, and think about ways in which the tables can be decorated. Use things such as candles and flowers, folded serviettes, and even fun things such as providing menus and place cards. It's fun, too, to name your dishes!

Budget/Costing

Set a budget for the event and keep a written record of everything you spend – this will be useful when planning your next event.

Allergies

Find out if any of the young people have allergies – such as peanuts - or if they have dietary requirements such as Vegetarian or Gluten-free. Take trouble with these meals – don't just palm them off with second best!

Quantities

This depends on the age of the group but generally allow 40z/100g meat, half a pint of milk (and extra for such things as custard), two slices of toast, three each of fish fingers, sausages and burgers and about 2oz/50g of each vegetable per person. It's better to have too much food than not enough!

Breakfast

A good breakfast is important, and a cooked breakfast can set up you up for the day. Preparation the night before can speed things up in the morning and makes life a lot easier. Try things like Sausage and Beans, Tinned Tomatoes on toast, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon Roll, and Cereals. Often, it's cost effective to buy 'one portion' cereals, which offers more variety for the

young people and any unopened boxes can be stored and used for the next event – as long as they're used before the 'Use By' date!

Some Menu Suggestions

Here are just a few basic ideas for meals to use on a Residential.

Main Meals

Potato, Cheese & Sausage Pie

Curry & Rice

Pizza

Jacket Potatoes and Fillings

Pasta & Bolognese Sauce

Toad in the hole

Sausage and Mash

Cottage Pie

Barbecue

Desserts

Bread & Butter Pudding

Rice Pudding

Trifle

Sponge & Custard

Yoghurt

Tinned or fresh fruit salad

Finally

Enjoy the experience!

Whilst every effort has been made to offer accurate and up to date information the Llandaff Diocesan Youth Department can take no responsibility for omission or errors.

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