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# DRUMMING & PERCUSSION GUIDE



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Drumming & Percussion Guide

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# ▶ DRUMMING & ◀ PERCUSSION GUIDE

## OVERVIEW

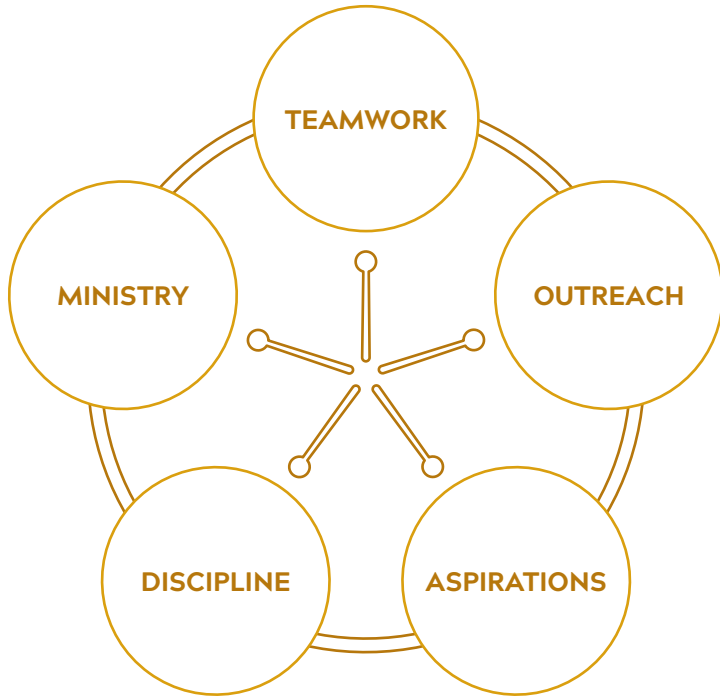
The Drumming & Percussion Guide is more than just a guide. It is a comprehensive resource that equips you with the theoretical knowledge and practical insights you need for effective ministry. This guide reflects the inspiration, dedication, and commitment the drum corps ministry represents as Christ's ambassadors. With this guide, you are fully prepared and empowered to fulfill your responsibilities in the drum corps ministry, feeling both supported and ready.

Therefore, it is highly recommended for club leaders and instructors across all levels of Pathfinder ministry to delve into this guide. It not only underscores the vital role and purpose of the drum corps ministry within the Pathfinder Club but also serves as a clear roadmap for its establishment and nurturing. Crafted to offer clarity and instruction, this guide is your companion in the developmental journey of a drum corps ministry.

I trust this book will be invaluable, providing leaders with the necessary tools to guide our youth through drum corps ministry. May our Lord and Savior's blessings strengthen your ministry and endeavors as you shepherd His youthful army.

Gregory M. Carmichael  
Drum Corps Instructor  
Raleigh, NC

# FUNDAMENTAL PILLARS OF DRUM CORPS MINISTRY



## CHARACTERISTICS OF DRUM CORPS MINISTRY

Pathfinders have marched in sync with drum corps cadences for years, spreading their message near and far with uniformity and precision. Over time, the drum corps ministry has evolved significantly, empowering youth to carry on the tradition of sharing the gospel of Christ through the sounds of the drum.

The drum corps plays a unique role in the ministry as a percussion and brass precision marching unit within the Pathfinder Club. A well-functioning drum corps ministry can potentially leave a lasting impact on the club and the surrounding community.

While the drum corps may attract many Pathfinders and youth who are not yet Pathfinders, it is essential to recognize that its ministry operates within the broader scope of the entire club rather than existing independently.



The development of the drum corps ministry emphasizes refining essential character-building traits. These traits are pivotal in establishing a cohesive drum corps focused on ministry, starting from scratch or reaffirming the existing mission.

A solid foundation must be laid before a drum corps can effectively serve its ministry. When developed properly, these characteristics contribute to the excellence of any drum corps, regardless of skill level. Here are just a few positive attributes of a well-structured drum corps ministry.

### **Encourages Teamwork & Skill Development**

Although teamwork is developed over time, it requires patience. Each drum corps member must understand that not everyone begins or continues at the same skill level. Each member must contribute by learning to work together and assisting in developing each other's skill set. This approach often supports the formation of a basic foundation required to maintain a functioning drum corps ministry.

No section of the drum corps or individual player is given special privileges over another. Each section must blend, forming one cohesive sound. A single player should not carry the entire corps. Each section performs its part, creating the cadence's clear-cut and distinctive sound.

The team-building skills that Pathfinders acquire through their experiences in the drum corps will prove beneficial as they transition into adulthood. Drum corps members must grasp the importance of setting clear, achievable goals. Each member must actively participate in the planning stages to ensure the success of the drum corps.

### **Encourages Team Morale**

As drum corps members unite in ministry, they embark on a journey of team morale development. Through shared experiences, they gradually recognize the significance of working together, fostering a sense of camaraderie and collective purpose. These evolving dynamics bolster team morale and enrich

the club experience, infusing club activities with renewed passion and dedication.

### **Builds Aspirations**

Hard work and commitment are common traits among aspiring drum corps members, driven by the pursuit of excellence.

This mindset, alongside the invaluable life lessons gained, will seamlessly transition into their young adult experiences, fostering the cultivation of higher ambitions. Consequently, it becomes imperative for the drum corps ministry to lay a sturdy groundwork that empowers its members to reach for greater heights.

### **Discipline, Precision, and Protocol**

Discipline, precision, and adherence to protocol form the core of a robust structured framework within your club. These principles assume an even more significant role for drum corps members, shaping the foundation of their practice sessions. Mastery of cadences with clarity and precision, coupled with strict adherence to protocol and instructions, is indispensable for the success of a drum corps.

As the percussion unit of the Pathfinder club, the drum corps is held to a heightened expectation level. The discipline, precision, and protocol standards set the bar exceptionally high, as every movement and cadence is executed precisely. Those who march to the drum corps' rhythm rely on the unwavering execution of these attributes, expecting nothing short of excellence.

### **Outreach Ministry to the Community**

Pathfinders often find themselves presented with numerous occasions to showcase their talents and acquired skills. Whether performing beyond the confines of their local community or engaging in outreach activities, the cadence of the drums and the distinctive attire of their Pathfinder uniforms leave a lasting impression on all they encounter. Such endeavors frequently serve as platforms for witnessing, offering Pathfinders the chance to embody the values of the Pathfinder ministry and extend the outreach of the broader church community.

## **Ministry to its Members**

The formation of a drum corps can serve as a vehicle for connecting with young people spiritually. Specific departments within local churches sometimes face challenges involving youth in ministry activities. Your drum corps could offer a unique opportunity to address this gap by participating in community events and using its musical talents to share the message of faith.

## **Encourages Participation in Church Ministry**

Participation in the drum corps equips Pathfinders with essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, and self-discipline. As their confidence develops, these abilities prepare them for meaningful engagement across various church departments.

The drum corps ministry provides Pathfinders with firsthand experience of its capacity to support and uplift other church ministries. For instance, the community service department benefits from the Pathfinder Drum Corps' involvement in parades, amplifying the ministry's outreach efforts. Through their training within the drum corps ministry, Pathfinders emerge as effective contributors to their local church's mission, empowered to make a tangible difference in people's lives.

## LAUNCHING A DRUM CORPS MINISTRY

Pathfinders remain keen on joining drum corps, drawn by the prospect of active participation. However, proficiency in a diverse skill set that embraces discipline, drumming, marching, and coordination is essential. The first steps in launching a drum corps ministry necessitate unwavering dedication and perseverance, qualities imperative for laying a solid foundation in the program's initial phases.

The resounding rhythms of the drum corps represent a thrilling highlight within the Pathfinder ministry. Yet, it is evident that this endeavor is not without its challenges, particularly when starting from scratch. To alleviate some of these burdens, the following recommendations are tailored to offer guidance, empowering anyone passionate about cultivating a drum corps ministry to do so effectively.

### Create an Interest

An essential aspect of the drum corps ministry's success hinges on increasing visibility and active involvement in various church ministries. Building and nurturing this relationship is crucial to garnering the local church community's support, as moral and financial backing becomes increasingly essential.

This partnership is integral right from the start. Parents of drum corps members can provide invaluable assistance to the corps and its leadership, especially those invested in their child's development. The offering of support for drum equipment, uniforms, travel expenses, and other related costs exemplifies how this support network can benefit a well-established drum corps ministry.

In addition to local church support, there are several creative approaches to generating interest:

- Compile a presentation showcasing drum corps performances from previous events. Ample material is readily accessible from different sources for this purpose.

- Organize outings for Pathfinders to attend events like Pathfinder days or community gatherings featuring drum corps performances. This firsthand experience allows Pathfinders to witness the effectiveness of drum corps ministry and the dedication required.
- Extend invitations to established Pathfinder drum corps to perform at your events. This can spark interest among Pathfinders and garner support from their parents and other members.
- Arrange for a guest drum corps to facilitate a drum clinic or workshop for Pathfinders. Preferably, select a group familiar with the Pathfinder ministry, well-established and versed in leveraging drum corps to enrich overall ministry efforts.

### **Establish Terms of Eligibility**

It is strongly recommended that eligible drum corps members are not selected solely based on their drumming proficiency. The Pathfinder Club's principles and regulations must take precedence above all else. These foundational principles dictate the attitude and character expected of potential members.

It is essential to remember that fancy drill teams, color guard teams, and drum corps are extracurricular activities or extensions of the Pathfinder Club ministry. Under no circumstances should the role of a team overshadow the role of the Pathfinder club, nor should it become the primary focus of the club's existence. To adopt such an approach to launch a drum corps ministry risks undermining its foundation and structure.

### **Create a Mission Statement**

After the drum corps has been formed and practice sessions have commenced, the leadership should consider drafting a mission statement outlining the overarching goal of the drum corps ministry. As part of their training, every member should grasp this mission statement thoroughly and embody its principles during practices and club gatherings and in their daily lives.

## **Skill Level Evaluation & Trial Period**

New Pathfinders will continually express interest in joining the drum corps, while others may depart for reasons such as pursuing further education or changing priorities. The drum corps must be well-equipped to handle such transitions to maintain the continuity of its ministry. Furthermore, members may aspire to transition to different corps sections as they progress in skill through dedicated practice.

The assessment of each member's skill level is crucial during the initial stages of organizing the drum corps ministry. Given the potential for growth or unexpected changes, ongoing skill evaluation is necessary. To facilitate this process, every member has a sheet containing the Seven Essential Rudiments for individual practice, even without an instructor.

A trial period between 12 and 24 weeks should be allotted, during which members are encouraged to practice at their own pace with regularly scheduled practice sessions. They should have access to practice drumsticks and practice pads, initially utilizing tables for practice sessions. The trial period allows members to become proficient in the Seven Essential Rudiments, with detailed guidance readily available in this guide's 'Rudiment Fundamentals' section.

## **Section Leader Appointments**

The snare and multi-tom sections of the drum corps typically select individuals proficient in executing the seven fundamental rudiments. These sections in particular, demand a deep understanding of rudimentary principles and their variations and the ability to perform them swiftly in a 'Closed' manner (rapidly) rather than an 'Open' manner (slower).

On the other hand, the bass section is designated for Pathfinders capable of shouldering the bass drum for prolonged periods without significant risk of injury. Although bass drum sizes vary, it is essential to note that our Pathfinders are not seasoned professionals. As such, it is crucial that they diligently practice proper bass drum handling and playing techniques.

The cymbal section is usually assigned to Pathfinders who may not have the physical strength to carry traditional drum equipment but excel in maintaining a steady cadence while marching. Despite not being drums, members of this section must grasp rudimentary concepts.

Once practice sessions are underway, selecting section leaders becomes crucial. The allocation of section leaders often hinges on the drum corps' overall size. A larger corps with diverse sections benefits more from appointing section leaders. The drum corps Instructor(s) typically appoints these leaders from each section.

These leaders typically meet with the Instructor outside of regular practices to learn cadences. When the entire drum corps comes together for practice sessions, each section refines the cadences for performance. Additionally, section leaders oversee their section's development within the drum corps. Beyond the club's criteria, a section leader must:

- Lead by example
- Maintain discipline within their section.
- Follow directives from the instructor.
- Educate their section on all necessary material.
- Earn respect from their peers.

## **Membership Guidelines**

First and foremost, all Pathfinders who wish to join the drum corps must maintain good standing within their local club and abide by its rules and guidelines.

Participation in the drum corps is a privilege, so Pathfinder Club staff should treat it accordingly. To ensure membership integrity, the drum corps should establish its own set of guidelines, which all members must agree to before being granted membership. These guidelines must be clearly outlined and strictly adhered to.

Outlined below are sample points that could be incorporated into the drum corps' guidelines. Note that these are suggestions to consider when formulating the guidelines:

- Regular church service attendance is required.
- Approval from the Pathfinder Club Director is required.
- Possession of the complete Pathfinder Class A drum corps uniform is mandatory. Refer to the 'Drum Corps Pathfinder Uniform' section for detailed dress code guidelines.
- Active participation as a current club member in good standing is obligatory.
- If available, attendance at drum corps workshops/clinics sponsored by the church, region, area, district, or conference is encouraged.
- Attendance at scheduled practice sessions.
- Maintenance of a respectable scholastic GPA as set by the Pathfinder Club is expected.
- Self-discipline is required for practicing and mastering the required material.

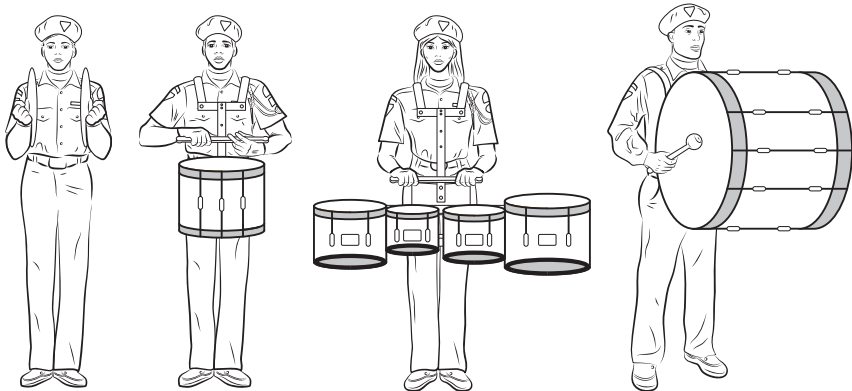
These guidelines must be well-defined and comprehended by all potential and current drum corps members. Adherence to these documented guidelines fosters a culture of discipline and respect within the drum corps.



# DRUM CORPS PATHFINDER UNIFORM

## Class A Drum Corps Uniform

The Class A Pathfinder uniform symbolizes the core values of youth ministry and reflects the principles upheld by the Pathfinder ministry. It visually represents our identity as Pathfinders and our commitment to serving our Lord and Savior.



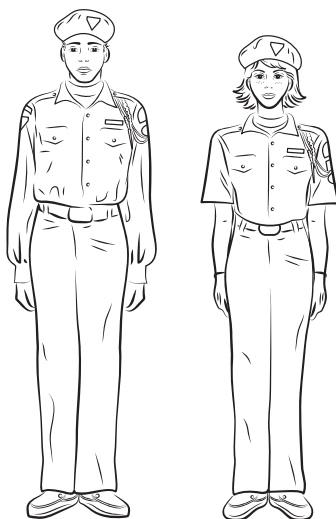
The drum corps may be called upon to participate in events where special uniforms are permitted. These could include Pathfinder days, induction services, exhibitions, or outdoor missionary activities. Such occasions are reserved for wearing distinct team uniforms by drum corps members. While uniform accessories are allowed for drum corps members, it is crucial that the main components of the North American Division standard Class A uniform remain visible at all times. The uniform should not be overshadowed by accessories to the extent that it becomes challenging to identify drum corps members as part of the Pathfinder ministry.

Furthermore, the uniform sash should not be worn with drum corps equipment. If drum corps members use sling straps or carriers to hold the drum, these should be positioned over the right shoulder, where the sash would typically be worn. Pins or other accessories that could cause discomfort should be avoided if drum carriers are used.

At special events, outings, or services, Pathfinders are generally expected to wear the full Class A uniform unless instructed

otherwise. It is encouraged for Pathfinders always to maintain their uniforms and accessories in clean and proper condition, ready for service.

The Class A uniform adheres to the regulation standards outlined in resources available from the North American Division Club Ministries and the Pathfinder Uniform Guide, providing clear guidance on its composition and appearance.



### Uniform Accessories

Union and local conferences have adopted various standards for uniformity within drum corps. Drum corps are encouraged to explore alternative uniform accessories to distinguish their members and uphold the elevated standards and ideals they embody as ambassadors of the Pathfinder ministry.

As the uniform is one of the most prominent and recognizable symbols of the Pathfinder program, the drum corps takes pride in making subtle adjustments. The following alternative uniform accessories are permitted for such adaptations:

### Ascots

The ascot presents a noticeable enhancement to the drum corps uniform, substituting the uniform yellow neckerchief and slide of the

Pathfinder Class A uniform. To wear it properly with the Class A uniform, the first button of the shirt or blouse should be undone, allowing the ascot to be draped around the neck and tucked inside the shirt. However, when the drum corps is not in active service requiring the Class A uniform, members should revert to wearing the standard yellow neckerchief and slide.



## Spats

Most drum corps use spats, an easy-to-clean vinyl material considered a footwear add-on. Spats add flair and color and promote uniformity within the drum corps lineup. All drum corps members can wear spats, which are usually worn beneath the pants and covering the ankle.



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## Citation Cords

The citation cord is a popular optional accessory among Pathfinder drum corps. Most corps that incorporate it tend to favor the **double-stranded single-color**

design. Placed on the left shoulder, it is a notable enhancement to the Class A drum corps uniform. Various colors and styles are offered for the cord, along with the option of a silver or gold finish on the metal tip for a more distinguished appearance.

**Please note that double-stranded multi-colored designs are reserved for ranking local club/ conference-level staff in the Pathfinder ministry.**



## Berets

While berets are optional uniform accessories, the drum corps must wear them uniformly if they opt to incorporate them. Various colors are utilized for special performances instead of the standard black beret. Typically, drum corps opt to coordinate the color of their beret with that of their ascot. Additionally, if the beret features a



triangle patch, it is conventionally worn and positioned over the left eye.

## Gauntlets

Gauntlets are gloves with an elongated cuff that extends over the forearm. When a drum corps decides to incorporate gauntlets, they often coordinate the color with that of the ascot



and beret. While gauntlets can enhance the visual appeal of the lineup, it is important to recognize that they may hinder a player's performance, depending on the instrument. Therefore, drum corps are encouraged to practice with gauntlets beforehand to assess any comfort or interference issues they may pose.

## Marching Band Grip Gloves

While gloves are optional uniform accessories, their utilization is highly recommended. Drum corps will benefit greatly from the adoption of rubberized palm grip gloves. These gloves offer a significantly improved grip when handling sticks, mallets, and Cymbal straps or wood handles, especially during prolonged use.



# THE DRUM CORPS INSTRUCTOR

## GUIDANCE ON ACQUIRING A DRUM CORPS INSTRUCTOR

The process of securing a qualified drum corps instructor can be a challenging endeavor. Some Pathfinder clubs are lucky enough to have access to individuals who can easily take on the role. However, other clubs may not have such resources readily available. If a Pathfinder club chooses to form a drum corps, it might need external assistance to secure solid instructional leadership and expertise.

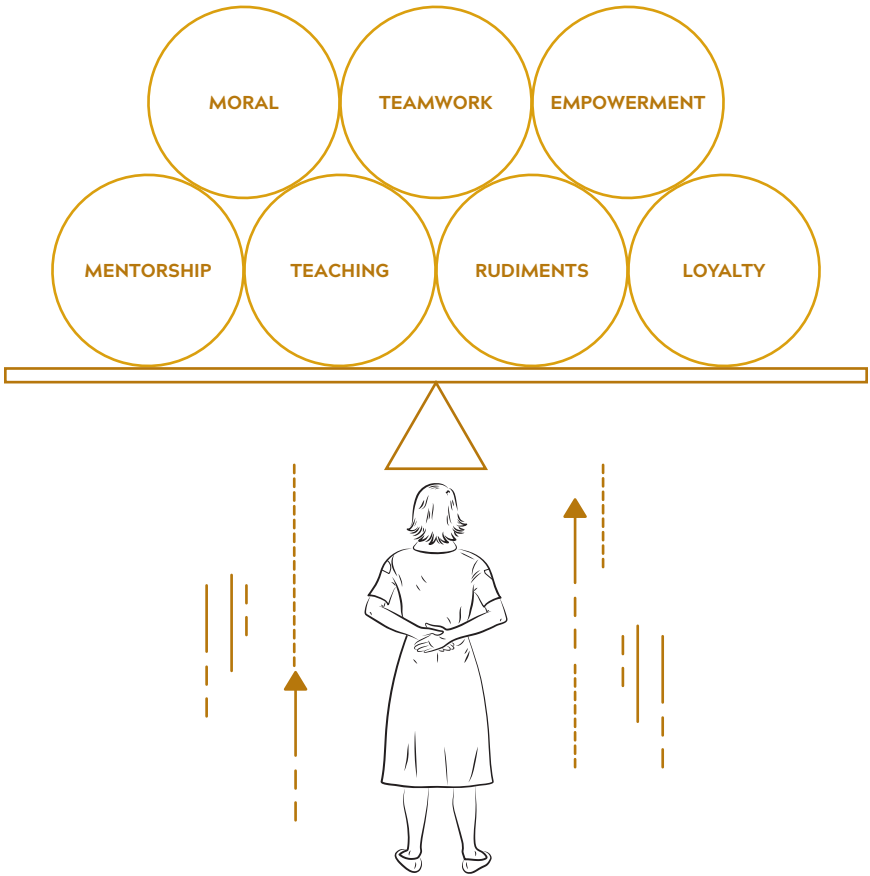
Given the crucial role of the Drum Corps Instructor in the success of your club, this section provides comprehensive guidance to Pathfinder club leaders. It is highly advised to thoroughly review this section before making any final decisions, ensuring the best possible outcome for your club.

Pathfinder leaders commonly express interest in establishing drum corps within their local clubs. The challenge arises in finding a skilled drum corps instructor willing, capable, and available to take on the role. Many drum corps have discussed this challenge internally and devised alternative approaches to fulfill the needs of the Pathfinders. Drum corps leadership has been acquired by:

- Partnering with a nearby school that has a marching band or orchestra
- Seeking assistance from a music teacher with industry connections
- Reaching out to a church musician who may know an instructor
- Gathering advice and recommendations on instructors from other drum corps
- Enlisting a talented church member willing to help
- Relying on a group of Pathfinders who can teach themselves
- Utilizing a conference instructor assigned to the specific area, region, district, or zone

Another approach might include sharing an instructor or skilled resources with other drum corps that are also facing challenges in finding an instructor or skilled resource. In this situation, it is important to note that some drum corps instructors may request compensation for their time and travel expenses for each session.

# DRUM CORP INSTRUCTORS QUALIFICATIONS



When the Pathfinder Club leadership embarks on the significant task of finding a suitable drum corps instructor, there are essential qualities beyond drumming skills that will appeal to drum corps members.

These key attributes offer direction on what to look for in a drum corps instructor. Remember, the aim is to identify someone who is committed to training young people to become 'Servants of God, and a friend to man.' In the Pathfinder ministry, drum corps is considered a form of ministry.

## Provide Mentorship

An instructor's role is crucial in the development of Pathfinders.

Demonstrating patience and a genuine willingness to engage with eager and enthusiastic Pathfinders is key. Pathfinders can quickly sense whether an instructor is committed to working with them. The level of feedback from the instructor often results in either a positive or negative reaction from the drum corps members. Constructive feedback can elevate the drum corps to new heights, while a lack of encouragement may stifle their motivation to improve.

A positive attitude can be a game-changer. Knowing someone willing to invest their time and energy can resonate deeply with Pathfinders. It takes a special and committed person to take on the responsibility of instructing Pathfinders. When a drum corps observes such dedication, it can motivate them to learn independently, exploring drum corps materials to share with their peers.

### **Dedicate Focused Sessions to Instructing**

It is the instructor's crucial role to allocate sufficient time to teaching the drum corps all fundamental concepts. Members can develop a stable sense of progress by consistently providing ample practice time. Neglecting essential rudiments, on the other hand, can hinder the development of a strong drum corps program. This, in turn, can make learning cadences more challenging due to insufficient time spent mastering core concepts.

As a staff member, it is important to remember these points. Less experienced drum corps often aspire to learn complex cadences from the start. However, it is crucial for them to understand their current skill level and the steps needed to reach their goals. Dedication, consistent practice, and knowledge sharing are key factors that will lead them to success. An instructor who understands this and prioritizes teaching the fundamentals during the early stages of drum corps will be instrumental to the program's long-term success.

### **Teach Drum Corps Drill & Marching**

Every instructor must have a comprehensive understanding of drill and marching protocols. This knowledge forms the foundation of all drill commands utilized by drum corps. Furthermore,



instructors must be able to apply this knowledge, as some fundamental drum corps commands are modified due to the use of instruments, drumsticks, and mallets. It is crucial that drum corps members receive continuous instruction on correctly executing drum corps drill commands and how they differ in execution from traditional drill and marching commands.

Drum corps members should not be trained using standards inconsistent with the guidelines in instructor guides authorized by the North American Division for the Pathfinder ministry. Such disparities can create challenges when drum corps perform drill commands differently. The Pathfinder Ministry maintains specific standards, and its drum corps instructors should comply with these guidelines.

## **Teach Drum Rudiments**

An instructor must possess in-depth knowledge of drum rudiments, including their families, and demonstrate their expertise effectively. They must be well-versed in the fundamental principles of the 7 essential rudiments, the 26 Standard American rudiments, and the 40 International rudiments. Without this knowledge, the drum corps would lack a solid base to build upon, as drum rudiments serve as the fundamental building blocks of percussion.

A structured approach to learning rudiments encourages an appreciation of the relationships between rudiment families, emphasizing how each rudiment builds upon the previous one. These teaching methods foster a deeper comprehension of how rudiments are combined to create more complex patterns. Therefore, the role of an instructor with a strong mastery of rudiments and the ability to teach these concepts effectively is pivotal in the drum corps' growth and development.

## **Stimulate Loyalty and High Morale**

Regardless of an instructor's expertise, loyalty cannot be achieved in just a few practice sessions. It develops gradually as drum corps members spend quality time learning alongside their instructors. In drum corps ministry, players naturally become loyal to their

instructors over time when they see the tangible results of their efforts.

Instructors who consistently demonstrate these qualities during their interactions with drum corps members set a strong example of dedication and lay the foundation for loyalty. When mirrored by each member, this dedication fosters loyalty and serves as a valuable lesson in ministry, inspiring them to extend this level of commitment to others.

### **Create a Desire to Join the Drum Corps**

Parades and performances often spark interest in joining the drum corps. Once a strong base has been established, both Pathfinders and those outside the club or church may be drawn to participate. In some situations, the drum corps ministry becomes the main reason some Pathfinders join the club and even the church.

Consistency, discipline, and adherence to protocols are attractive aspects that draw young people to the drum corps ministry. Observing these qualities in practice within the drum corps allows them to see how they can contribute to its activities. Consequently, leaders and Instructors should recognize the potential influence of drum corps ministry on young people and fully embrace its significance.

### **Place Emphasis on Teamwork**

An instructor should highlight the significance of teamwork in the drum corps. The focus should not be on one person or a select few but on the group as a whole, with each section contributing to the overall sound. Pathfinder ministry and its activities emphasize the value of working together. An instructor who misunderstands this concept may struggle to appreciate the importance of the drum corps ministry or the organization it represents.

Pathfinders must recognize the importance of teamwork in all situations. They must realize that collaborating helps everyone achieve their objectives regardless of the task. They will learn that drum corps ministry extends beyond instruments and cadences; it promotes good communication skills and fosters camaraderie.