



Starting a Drum Corps Ministry



Detailed below are steps that can be used to assist the club Director or assigned Instructor/Section Leader. In order for your drum corps to maintain its momentum, by apply these steps to your club during the early stages of your program.

Create an Interest

There are creative ways to generate interest for starting a drum corps.

- Make a presentation of performance material from a past Pathfinder event that featured a drum corps.
- Attend a Pathfinder function or community event featuring a drum corps.
- Invite a well-established Pathfinder drum corps to conduct a performance.
- Invite a guest drum corps to conduct a drum clinic or workshop for your Pathfinders, preferably one who understands the Pathfinder ministry.

One key element in generating interest is to have your local church supporting your efforts. Your local church will become a major contributor and supporter, especially when the time approaches to purchase drum equipment.



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Determine Eligibility

Pathfinders requesting to be members of the drum corps must be in good and regular standing with their local club. Each member must adhere to the rules and guidelines that govern the club.

Eligible drum corps members should not be selected based on skill levels in drumming. The Pathfinder club is first, which defines the attitude and examples practiced by its members. Fancy drill teams, color guard teams, and drum corps are extracurricular activities or extensions of the Pathfinder club ministry. The role of these teams should never supersede the role of the club, nor should it ever become the primary reason the Pathfinder club exists.

Determine Skill Levels

This is one of the most important steps to consider in the initial stages of organizing a drum corps and will continue as an ongoing process. As new members join, current members may move into different sections of the corps while others may leave. Skill levels will increase as members continue to practice and show improvement.

Once the selection of players is complete, the process of selection should begin for each section. This process requires careful thought in order to create the best sound for your corps. For further information regarding this process, please refer to the 'Purchasing Drum Corps Equipment' or 'Sound vs. Size' section of this manual.



Note: The term 'Section' refers to the various parts that make up the drum corps. For example, a drum corps may have sections for the snare drums, tenor drums, multi-toms (trios, quads, quint, six-packs), bass, and cymbals.

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There are a number of ways to determine who plays what instrument in the drum corps.



Here are some suggestions to assist in this selection process.

A rudiment sheet containing the **Seven Essential Rudiments** should be provided to each member for practice. Each player should be given a trial period of 10 to 12 weeks to practice at his or her own pace, with regular scheduled practice sessions during that time.

All players should have in their possession a pair of practice drumsticks and a practice drum pad. It is strongly suggested that you begin your practice session on tables with these items.

At the end of the trial period, all players are required to demonstrate their knowledge of the Seven Essential Rudiments. Players who demonstrate their rudiments in good fashion are usually selected for the snare and multi-tom sections of the corps. These sections are rudiment intensive, thus requiring individuals who understand the basic concepts of rudiments, its families, and can execute them in a 'Closed' fashion (faster) as opposed to 'Open' fashion (slower).

Create A Mission Statement

A mission statement should be established, detailing the overall objective of the drum corps. As part of their training, each drum corps member should develop a thorough understanding of this mission statement and live its concept, not only during practice sessions and during club meetings, but also on a day-to-day basis.

Involve The Local Church

The building of a successful drum corps begins with firm support from the local church. This relationship will play a key role from the start of the ministry through its continuation. The parents of drum corps members will be of great assistance to the leader, especially those who take a keen interest in the development of their children. Assistance with funds for drum equipment, uniforms, travel, and many different types of expenses should be planned well, considering all supporters.

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Choosing Section Leaders

Once your drum corps is established and practice has commenced for some time, begin the process of appointing Section Leaders. Depending on the size of the drum corp, Section Leaders are assigned leadership roles with regard to their section. Normally, the drum corps Instructor (or a joint effort between the members of a section and the drum corps Instructor) selects a Section Leader from each section of the drum corps.

This person will meet with the drum corps Instructor to learn a cadence, and then teach it to their section. A later practice will be called for all sections to fine tune the cadence for performance. Section Leaders are responsible for the learning and development of the section as it relates to the entire drum corps. In addition to criteria set by the club, base the selection of Section Leaders on their ability to:

1. Maintain a level of discipline within their section.
2. Accept instructions from their Instructor.
3. Teach their portion of the cadence to their section.
4. Maintain respect among their peers.

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