

A Guide For Coordinating Youth Pointe

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The mission of Youth Pointe is to provide our younger members with educational opportunities by engaging them in SCA activities suitable for their ages. I have listed some general guidelines that will be helpful in coordinating and running Youth Pointe. Please expand on these as you see fit. I have listed these ideas below and they are followed by a check list.

The most important thing to remember when organizing any youth activity is to remain FLEXIBLE.

Communication – Express yourself. It is very important to keep the lines of communication open between you and the event Autocrat, your instructors, volunteers, and the any other event activity coordinator that Youth Pointe might affect or be affected by (i.e. youth boffer, youth archery/thrown weapons, Youth Craftsperson’s Faire, Page for a Day, etc.).

Plan Ahead - It is all in the timing. It is best to make arrangements for location, budget, instructors, and volunteers at least three months before the event. You should keep in contact with all of them to make sure there are no surprises at the last minute. Always have a back up class or two prepared in case someone is sick – or just does not show up.

Instructors and Assistants – No man is an island. You should not attempt to run Youth Pointe alone. First of all it is against the rules. Have as many assistants as possible. Without enough help you will be exhausted by the end of the day and not able to enjoy the rest of the event. Also, by running Youth Pointe repeatedly without enough help you risk developing “burn out”. Not just on running Youth Pointe but on everything else in the SCA. You must make plans to step back and let someone else run things for a little while. This can be accomplished by asking your instructors to bring their own non-related legal adult assistants for their classes or by arranging for two or more non-related legal adult assistants to take shifts though out the day. Make sure you go over the schedule with your instructors and assistants so everyone knows when they are supposed to be at Youth Pointe. REMEMBER: You have to have at least two non-related legal adults at youth point at ALL times. The more students you have then the more adults you must have. Your instructors can count as one of these non-related legal adults. Don’t forget to have a copy of Society and Kingdom Youth Policies on hand for quick review by instructors or assistants that have not yet had the opportunity. Please see Supplies – Not just Glitter and Glue anymore! for more information on classes and supplies for instructors.

Paperwork - The dreaded paper trail. There are just a few items that you HAVE to have at Youth Pointe. That would be a copy of the Society and Kingdom Youth Policy, sign in sheets, and name badges. However, I recommend that you have a schedule of activities for the event, and site map, and the Youth Pointe schedule printed out and available for reference. Don’t forget to turn in the Youth Pointe paperwork to the event autocrat at the end of the event.

The Schedule – Are you coming or going? - Once you know what hours the event will run you can set your hours. As a good rule of thumb you should open Youth Pointe no less than an hour after troll opens (because everyone will be busy signing in, setting up day camps, and chatting with friends – not to mention that most are not waiting outside the event for troll to open – we tend to take our time getting to events). Set your closing time an hour or so before court or feast whichever is first. This will allow you to clean up Youth Pointe and get ready for court. If Youth Pointe will be open for more than six hours you may wish to arrange for an hour lunch break halfway through the day.

Location, location, location – It really is everything! Work with the event staff to put your activities in a visible location. Weather permitting - open areas outside are great because there is room to run around and play group games – and a little fresh air never hurt anyone. Make sure there are chairs and tables available even if Youth Pointe is located outside. If you are inside you will still need a pretty good space for everyone to move around in and not be on top of each other. In the “Youth Pointe Check List” I have included a list of important things you need to ask for when discussing the location of Youth Pointe with the event autocrat.

Advertising – Oyey! Oyey! We’re over here! Advertising Youth Pointe activities can make or break attendance at Youth Pointe and often at an event in general. If you advertise ahead of time you might draw in parents that are looking for an event that is holding quality youth activities. Also, there are adults and children out there that are still unaware that we have youth activities at almost all of our events. Send Youth Pointe information to the event autocrat to be included in the online event site and in the event flyer. Also send it to all the email lists to which you belong letting people know what youth activities will be available at the event. You will need to include your name and contact information and a schedule of the classes at Youth Pointe. Make posters and/or handouts and stick them EVERYWHERE. Troll and door ways to major event activities are great location but my favorite place is on bathroom doors – because everyone will visit the bathroom at least once during an event. Ask the heralds to announce (loudly and frequently) when and where activities are to begin. Sometime parents and children get caught up with other things and forget to keep up with the time so announcing the beginning of an activity will not only remind them things are about to start but it will help you keep Youth Pointe on schedule by not having everyone show up late for a class. Some heralds will let you give them a schedule of your times and events and they will automatically make the announcements for you so you do not have to leave Youth Pointe to find a herald. If not, you can sometimes ask a parent or assistant to help you find a herald for the announcements. Don’t wait until the last minute though because it may take a little while to find a herald.

Supplies – Not just Glitter and Glue anymore! The purpose of Youth Pointe is not to occupy the children so the parents can play. Youth Pointe is an opportunity for our youth to learn about our society, the middle ages, the renaissance, honor, gallantry, arts, sciences, shall I go on? This is not daycare! It is possible to teach our youth about the things we in the SCA hold dear and still make it fun for them. Don’t think that weaving, calligraphy, illumination, embroidery, etc are beyond their abilities because they are not. You just have to be willing to try to share these skills with them. With all of that in mind you will still need some basic supplies for those that are just too little or are just not interested in the class. These are not meant to be the mainstay of Youth Pointe - they are only extra activities. The general supply list is in the “Youth Pointe Check List”.

Rules – Oy Vay! The fine print! Make sure you and all of your volunteers are familiar with Society and Kingdom Youth Policies. Make sure everyone follows the policies! If you ever have any questions contact your local, regional, or kingdom Minister of Youth.

