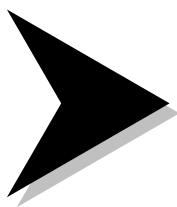


MAKING THE MOST OF THE 2012 GAMES

7 things

you and your church
can do with only



7 days

to go before the 2012
Games begin

The world's largest combined sporting event is on our doorstep.

This summer, Britain will experience the eyes of the world upon it for a whole six weeks. Councils and communities have been planning events for weeks, months and in some cases for years.

There are some within the Christian community who are coming to the party rather late but still desire to do something to engage with the Games at a local level. Keep calm. It's still not too late!

This document gives an overview of **seven simple suggestions** that Catholics as individuals, as a faith-filled community, or along with schools or other local churches can select from as a way of connecting with this summer's Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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Key

AB = anybody
ID = individual

CT = churches together
RC = Catholic community

GP = group
SC = school and community



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1 GET PRAYING

A 70-day cascade of prayer has been taking place across the British Isles since the arrival of the Olympic Torch on 18th May. Contemplative communities, churches, and individuals have been gathering to pray that God's light would shine, that everyone will be safe, that headlines will be positive, that the Olympic and Paralympic Values will be owned by all, and that the Golden Rule of faiths and religions will be applied, namely *Always treat others as you would have them treat you* (see Jesus' words in Luke 6:31, and Catechism of the Catholic Church CCC §1970).

Practical ways to engage:

- **Holy Hour / Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** – spend time in silent prayer and intercession before the Body of Christ, from whom the redemption of every person's body comes. Spend time each day or each week before the Blessed Sacrament, or take the time to pray before Christ present in the tabernacle.
- **Prayer walk your local area** – for many Catholics this might be a new concept. However, the underlying purpose of the Ancient Games was to build peace between nations. Catholics are encouraged to pray for peace within their own neighbourhoods. This can be as simple as reciting prayers such as the *Our Father* while walking or travelling around your neighbourhood by foot or by car.
- **Pray daily at 08:12 and/or 20:12 for peace and legacy** – join hundreds of others who have already committed to praying at these two points each day of the Games. Your prayer doesn't have to be complicated or long. A simple request to God from your heart, or a decade of the Rosary for God's protection on the Games is enough. And if 08:12 or 20:12 don't fit into your timetable, then pray as and when you can and not when you can't!

*I urge you then, first of all that petitions, prayers, intercessions
and thanksgiving should be offered for everyone (1 Timothy 2:1)*

*The Church invites the faithful to regular prayer: daily prayers, the Liturgy of the
Hours, Sunday Eucharist, the feasts of the liturgical year (CCC §2720)*

2 'OLYMPIFY' YOUR CHURCH BUILDING AND GROUNDS

For Baron de Coubertin, the Frenchman responsible for the modern Olympics, "the first essential characteristic of ancient and of modern Olympism alike is that of being a religion" – not a new religion, but the '*religio athletae*', whose concern should be with the *moral* value of sport.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games have the power to cause people to stop and reflect on their own God-given potential. But what if the Church seems indifferent to the Games?

Parishes in previous host nations of the Games that chose to 'make an effort' to join in with the Games all claimed to have had positive responses from inside and outside of their local communities. Foreign visitors have chosen to attend Masses, feeling that their passion for the Games is understood and even celebrated.

When your church building visually speaks of a relation with, and a respect for, the '*religio athletae*' then those who are passionate about sport are more likely to listen to the message preached within.

Practical ways to engage:

- **Colourful flags** – Put up bunting or different flags made up of as many of the 205 competing nations as possible either on the railings or outside of the church or in an appropriate place within the building or church hall. Make a simple 'welcome' sign even in as many languages as you can find. See www.flags.net.
- **Map of the World** – Create a world map in your church and invite parishioners to show where they are from, where they have relations living, or even where they have visited during their

lifetimes. The world can soon become a place that touches all of our lives creating a greater sense of unity. See www.mapsinternational.co.uk and www.elstead.co.uk.

● **Sporting wisdom** – Blessed John Paul II wrote about sport on 120 occasions. Why not consider placing some of his great sporting quotes into the parish newsletter or onto the parish or school website for the duration of the Games?

I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some (1 Corinthians 9:22)

Visible churches are not simply gathering places but signify and make visible the Church living in this place. . . the truth and the harmony of the signs that make it up should show Christ to be present and active in this place (CCC §1180-81)

3 PUT ON A SIMPLE BIG SCREEN EVENT

People love getting together to celebrate major occasions in front of a big screen. The Olympic and Paralympic Games will be no different.

The BBC is waiving the need for a special licence to show *live* footage of the Games. This is a great opportunity for churches and school with any type of hall to gather people to watch key moments of the Games with others such as the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the Men's 100m Final, 'Super Saturday' as it is known – 4th August when the Olympic Stadium starts to really warm up. You may also wish to invite extended family friends round to your own home to share the excitement of events as they happen.

The main points to note is that those broadcasting any BBC footage

- must themselves **possess a valid TV licence**
- must **not charge** to watch the broadcast, and that it
- must be **broadcast live** with no tampering and cannot be a pre-record

A free downloadable practical guide exists to help churches plan large events in celebration of the 2012 Games helping to solve the many practical issues involved. Those intending to show any of the major ceremonies live outdoors face the problem of daylight. The free guide suggests cost-effective answers as well as covering sound and lighting, health and safety, transmitting live footage and more.

The guide is based on the work and experience of the team at Event & Management Services. Since 1981 they have delivered events including village fetes, touring shows, corporate presentations and large Christian gatherings.

The guide is available as a free download from www.morethangold.org.uk/free-resources.

The kingdom of God is very near to you (Luke 10:9)

The gathering together of the Church is, as it were, God's reaction to the chaos provoked by sin (CCC §761)

4 VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH LOCAL EVENTS

The service of others is a basic rule of the Catholic faith. Even though there are a record number of people volunteering to help out with the Games at every level, there will be always the need for an extra pair of hands. Offer what you can with your time and energy, and not what you can't. All sorts of wonderful doors open up when we put ourselves at the service of others.

Practical ways to engage:

● **Local Councils** - each council will be engaging with the Games in some way or other and is likely to need additional people to help set up, staff and clear up at local Games-themed events. Pick up the phone and at least find out what help may be needed. You can then make an informed choice.

- **Homeless Shelters** - some cities intend to open up existing shelters during the Games. Others are using the Games as a dummy-run in the lead up to opening a shelter through the winter months. Additional help may well be needed to ensure projects run smoothly.
- **Church Projects** - find out what is happening to support the Games within your own church and the other churches or groups in your local area and get involved. If nothing is happening, then consider what you can do simply and efficiently. Offering simple refreshments is a great starter – but remember to use *Fairtrade* products! (see www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/churcheventpack for more info)

I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25:40)

It is the duty of citizens to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. The love and service of one's country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity (CCC §2239)

5 PLAN AN ACTIVITY FOR 'SUPER SATURDAY'

Many people are focused on the Opening Ceremony as the big night of the Games, but this is only the start of all the fun. Research shows that *the big day* is actually the second Saturday of the Games, namely 4th August when 25 Olympic golds will be won, including Rowing, Swimming and Cycling.

Whatever you're planning – no matter how small – do TellTom@london2012.com about it and you will receive a limited edition pin badge to say thank you. There are lots of ideas to follow from bunting to baking, and posters to party hats by visiting www.london2012.com/join-in/local-leaders/. This is a great time to throw a party. Above all, *keep things simple* so that you too enjoy what you do.

Practical ways to engage:

- **Use the church hall/local community centre** - because we are so weather dependent, an indoor venue with some parking space if possible is a winner come rain or shine. Space for a screen (or large white bed sheets!) and an electricity supply for showing events live will help to gather people (see item 3 for more on using a Big Screen).
- **Open up your own home** - or use the garage even! People will hang around the most unusual places just to enjoy the company of one another so be creative in considering where to host a party.
- **Visit a local pub** - invite fellow parishioners (or staff from school) to join you in a nearby pub either you're dusting down the BBQ and inviting friends over, or decorating the sitting room with bunting and flags, we've lots of ideas for your party.

Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find (Matthew 22:9)

The invisible God, from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends, and moves among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company (CCC §142)

6 QUIZ NIGHT AT HOME OR IN A COMMUNITY BUILDING

A great way to build community around the Games is to put on a pub-style quiz, with questions based on the world's major sports event. With many areas having more sports clubs than churches this is an easy event to invite someone to who plays or coaches sport, or who simply supports their team.

People like that are among the friends of those in our churches. This can be a fantastic evening of friendship, fun and meaningful conversation. See www.morethangold.org.uk/outreach/guest-events/ for more information.

Practical websites to use:

- www.cafod.org.uk - discover Cafod's Olympic Activities and intertwine social justice into a fun evening of an Olympic Quiz specially put together by the official Catholic aid agency for England and Wales

- www.london2012.com/join-in/local-leaders/sports-quiz/ - take a look at The Big Games Quiz, written by the official organising committee of the Games
- www.quiz-zone.co.uk – make up your own selected questions or use this special Olympics 2012 Quiz, with eight rounds of questions, which include a Gold Medal Winner’s picture round.

7 BE HOSPITABLE!

Britain is expected to host the world’s largest sporting event only once during all of our lifetimes. Let’s not miss the opportunity to use the 2012 Games to see strangers and acquaintances become friends and for us to welcome Christ into our midst through others. Above all, let’s not miss the message from Catholics in previous Olympic host nations who said: “we missed our opportunity; make sure Britain doesn’t miss theirs!”

Practical ways to engage:

- **Athlete Family Homestay Programme** - basic hospitality is still required in the London area to host family members and friends of competing Paralympians. If you could host one or two people within your home then find out more at <http://staywimi.com/morethangold> which gives quick answers to questions and shows you the application process. Host responsibilities include picking up and welcoming guest(s) from a nearby Welcome Centre, providing bed and breakfast for 8 days between 27 August and 10 September, and being caring and helpful.
- **Simple Refreshments** – many parishes offer a great cup of tea and coffee after Mass on a Sunday. Why not consider a simple rota and offering to do this for a few hours on selected weekdays as well. Who knows what visitors the Games might bring into your area, who would benefit from a friendly cuppa and a meet with the locals.
- **Put on a Festival** – this can be for the family, for your neighbours, for your own parish, or for the whole neighbourhood. Get the young and old and everyone in between involved. To see what a festival looks like, which can include face painting, dressing up as Team GB, some catchy music, and for lots of tips on how to run a festival visit <http://fusionyac.org/2012/>.

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2)

The evangelical counsels manifest the living fullness of charity, which is never satisfied with not giving more (CCC §1974)

A final word – above all, keep things simple. And make sure to enjoy this summer’s celebrations as much as possible.

For further information on engaging with the Games, visit one of the following websites:
www.catholic2012.com ● www.morethangold.org.uk ● www.london2012.com



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