
THE MAGNET EFFECT



Designing Outreach
That Draws Kids To Christ

BARRY ST. CLAIR

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ISBN: 9781610472678

Published by NOVO Ink – www.novoink.com

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First and Second Editions published by Reach Out Youth Solutions, 1994 and 2003

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WHO DESERVES CREDIT FOR THIS BOOK?

Writing a book becomes a mind-numbing, body-exhausting, spirit-depleting experience, especially when the deadline is staring you down. Not only do I pay a price, but those who live with me every day have to endure me. Thanks to my family who allowed me to give my attention to this project instead of to them. And thanks to my staff at _____ who have covered for me in my absence.

Writing a book is a team effort. On this particular one I've had help from some people who co-labor with me in youth ministry. They inspired me because they have practiced with excellence what I wrote in this book. They supplied ideas, information, and illustrations for this book. They motivate me because of their long-term commitment to fulfill the Great Commission among the younger generation. Thanks, my good and faithful friends.

Eric Ball
Bo Boshers
Matt Brinkley
Jim Burns
Rick Caldwell
Alan Daniels
Sam Davis
Paul Fleischmann
Jeff Hodges
Michael Holt
Joe McAllister
Roger Palmer

HOW TO MAX OUT THIS BOOK

Designing outreach that actually reaches lost kids takes mega-effort. *The Magnet Effect* offers motivation, a strategy and a step-by-step plan. It helps you know where creating an outreach opportunity fits into your ministry and then shows you how to break it down into “bite-sized chunks.” With this book you can do outreach without burning out. In fact, when you use the approach in this book, eventually you will have so many people involved it will take less effort on your part!

So, how do you get the most of what is in here?

First, read all of Part 1. That will give you the “big picture” and the “nuts and bolts.”

Second, work through “The Outreach Planner” by applying it to one of your outreaches. Work on each aspect of it until you get that part completed. Then go on to the next part. Do not skip over one part to get to another. If you have not done each aspect, then you will have a crack in your building that will eventually cause it to collapse. As you read through it you will think: “This will take me forever.” Well, it won’t take quite that long. But as the old saying goes: “If it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right.”

If this process moves slower than you think it should, remember your ultimate objective. It will keep you motivated: *to reach every student in every school with the life-changing message of Jesus.*

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PART 1

ONE

Hit the Bull's-Eye: Targeting Kids

Ricky, his brother, and his sister each have different last names. His mom got pregnant with his older brother when she was a teenager. The father never stayed around, so no one knew him. Then his mom had Ricky. He, too, was born out of wedlock. Ricky's father stayed with his family a couple of years, but it didn't work out. Later on Ricky's mom married a man who abused her. She endured that for a year before she left. Now Ricky is a senior in high school and the only child left at home. His mom has a new husband, the fourth man in her life. His brother and sister refuse to speak to Ricky because he refuses to get close to his stepfather. His comment: "You know, after having so many dads, it's hard to get close."

Hurt. Disappointed. Stressed. Depressed. Dysfunctional. Angry. Frustrated. Bitter. Insecure. Sexually active. Rebellious. Undisciplined. Uncommitted. Drinking heavily. Pressured. Distrusting. Suicidal. Kids experience incredible pain today. Outwardly they appear normal — friendly, open, cool, eager, funny, energetic. But just below the surface they desperately struggle with themselves and their relationships.

You can connect names and faces to students who fit these descriptions.

A whole generation of students desperately needs the touch of Jesus Christ. That will happen when an army of people who have had a life-changing encounter with Jesus (the true church) sees teenagers the way God sees them, and seeks teenagers the way God seeks them.

SEE KIDS THE WAY GOD SEES THEM

Traveling in Romania with a group of twenty-three high school students can get a little ragged at times. On planes. Off planes. On buses. Off buses. On trains. Off trains. That's where it gets hairy. Usually the train stops for two to three minutes. All kids and all luggage need to get on or off quickly, very quickly. On more than one

occasion I got on the train, which was already moving down the tracks, and wondered: “Did we get everybody and everything?”

On a trip like that, one bag inevitably has essentials, such as passport, visa, money, message notes—irreplaceable stuff. One particular night we had all boarded the train in the dark and in a big hurry. Somebody else put my bags on the train. After all the bodies settled, I began to look for my backpack with the essentials. Nope. Not in this berth. Must be in the next one. Not in this berth either. “Has anybody seen my backpack?” Now I was scrambling, searching, frantically asking, “Where’s my backpack?” I looked everywhere. No backpack. IT WAS LOST!

My panicked tone of voice moved all twenty-three students into action, looking for the backpack. My mind raced: *What if it was left at the train station. I’ll never see it again. You can get lots of money for an American passport. I was pacing, wringing my hands, and feeling nauseated just thinking about it. No passport or visa, I may never see my family again. All that money. . . My message notes, years of work down the drain. I can never replace it. And it’s lost!* I yell out: “Look again! We’re not going to rest until we find that backpack!”

Similar emotions (without the panic) must have motivated Jesus since His entire purpose for coming into this world as the Son of Man was “to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Jesus looks at today’s generation of students and sees them the way He saw Zacchaeus that day he sat in the tree—**lost!** He is still on a search-and-redeem mission. God desires that we see kids the way He sees them—**lost.**

Unlike my search for my backpack, from God’s perspective, lost doesn’t have to do with distance, but with relationship. Jesus told a series of three parables with one point masterfully woven together to describe the nature of a person who is outside of a relationship with God. Certainly Luke 15 describes the present “lost generation” of young people.

Looking down the corridors of time at the younger generation, Jesus pictures them as **lost sheep**. A sheep puts his face down in the green grass and begins to nibble. Enjoying the green grass in front of him, he wanders around doing what satisfies him at the moment. He has no sense of purpose. A dog, a cat, a horse, a cow will all

come back. Not a sheep. He keeps on nibbling until he nibbles himself over the side of an embankment. At that point he becomes a “cast” sheep.

Philip Keller, in *A Shepherd Looks at the 23rd Psalm*, describes a cast sheep. If a sheep loses its balance, it rolls over on its back and cannot get up. The sheep paws the air frantically to get back up, but cannot do so. Gases build up inside its body. Circulation is cut off from the legs and, unless the sheep is rescued, it dies.¹

Jesus sees the younger generation as sheep who have “gone astray and turned everyone to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). Nibbling only at the pleasure in front of them, with no sense of purpose, they wander farther and farther away. Teenagers today, like cast sheep, are in grave danger.

Again, looking at this generation in Luke 15, Jesus describes it as a **lost coin**. A coin is not supposed to get lost, but instead it is supposed to be invested or spent. Its purpose is to turn a profit. But when it gets lost, it becomes “unprofitable.” That’s how the Apostle Paul describes a person outside of Jesus Christ: “All have turned away, and together they have become worthless” (Romans 3:12).

Like the woman searching for the coin, Jesus holds this generation in high value. God created today’s teenagers to be invested or spent for His glory - His profit. But because they are outside of Christ they have lost their usefulness. Why did the woman light a candle? Because the coin got lost in a dark place. Why did she sweep the floor? Because the coin got lost in the dirt. Kids in this generation have gotten lost and in the darkness and dirtiness around them they have lost their usefulness.²

Then again in Luke 15 Jesus describes the current youth generation as a **lost son**. The Prodigal Son wanted to spend his inheritance immediately. He got what he wanted and split. At first he lived “high on the hog.” But when he had squandered his inheritance, he fed the pigs. He was desperate, depressed — in the pits. He set out to “get it all,” but lost everything. What a vivid picture of this generation.

Lost. Yep. We all agree. The vast majority of this generation is lost. But, on an individual basis, what does that mean? Just as Jesus picked out Zacchaeus as an individual, He sees each one in the younger generation individually. And each one is lost individually. But what does a teenager who is lost look like? Can we get a composite that will help us understand more clearly how God sees each one, and how we need to see them?

MENTAL — Experiences low self-esteem and boredom with life, resulting in depression.

EMOTIONAL — Feels aching loneliness and distrusts love, leading to stress.

PHYSICAL — Lacks self-control, resulting in poor habits such as abuse of alcohol, sex, and drugs.



SOCIAL — Interested in relationships, desperately wanting acceptance and performing to please peers; but short-circuits them by putting self first.

SPIRITUAL — Crippled by guilt and fear of death, leading to hopelessness.

As a result of these debilitating problems in their lives, a “philosophy of life” has developed that most students follow:

- *There is no right and wrong.* Students have no absolutes, only opinions and circumstances. They are their own value system. What they think and believe is the ultimate authority.
- *If it feels good, do it.* The value used to be: “If it feels good, do it; as long as no one gets hurt.” Now that value has been twisted into “If it feels good, do it; who cares who gets hurt.”
- *The mind does not matter.* Due to the influence of MTV, CD’s, and television, entertainment is more important than education. The continual drop in SAT scores underlines this.
- *Relationships are important if they help me.* And it follows then that “If they do not help me, I get out.” They have learned this from parents who get divorced and from living in a “throw away” environment.
- *I’m my own boss.* Authority makes no sense. Some young people actively rebel against it. Others just don’t pay any attention to it. What parents, teachers, and

police say has no bearing because peer authority reigns. "I make my own rules."

- *I'm living for today.* Having not fulfilled their dream of "personal peace and affluence," they try to enjoy life today with no thought for tomorrow.

From this composite we can see why kids have such serious problems individually. When we multiply this to every student in the nation and in the world, it becomes clear that we have a mess on our hands. What underlying issues aggravate their problems?

The Apostle Paul got to the heart of it when he exclaimed, "We have worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). In Romans 1 the apostle goes on to explain what happens as a result of that root problem.

Education without Truth. Paul says that "wicked men suppress the truth [v. 18] . . . their thinking became futile [v. 21] . . . although they claimed to be wise they became fools [v. 22]." Because the environment that our kids live in every day has forsaken the search for the truth, anarchy reigns in our school systems. In jest students used to sing the old grade-school song:

We have gathered here together for the burning of the school.
We have tortured every teacher, we have broken every rule.
We have set the school on fire, we have killed the principal.
Our truth is marching on.

That song is a joke no longer! The National Institute of Education estimates monthly

- 5,200 junior and senior high teachers are attacked.
- 6,000 students are robbed by force.
- 282,000 are assaulted.
- 112,000 robberies occur.³

A generation ago the top offenses in the public schools were:

1. Talking
2. Chewing gum
3. Making noise
4. Running in the halls
5. Getting out of turn in line

6. Wearing improper clothing
7. Not putting paper in wastebaskets

Today the top public school offenses are:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Rape | 10. Vandalism |
| 2. Robbery | 11. Extortion |
| 3. Assault | 12. Drug abuse |
| 4. Burglary | 13. Alcohol abuse |
| 5. Arson | 14. Gang warfare |
| 6. Bombings | 15. Pregnancies |
| 7. Murder | 16. Abortions |
| 8. Suicide | 17. Venereal disease ⁴ |
| 9. Absenteeism | |

As a result education has been significantly disrupted. In a survey of 17-year-olds conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress:

- One-third thought Columbus reached the New World after 1750, and the same proportion couldn't identify Abraham Lincoln.
- Sixty-two percent were unable to place the Civil War in the years between 1850 and 1990.
- Half could not calculate the area of a rectangle, and one-third could not identify the countries the U.S. fought against in World War II.
- One-third did not know that the Mississippi River flows into the Gulf of Mexico, and only 20 percent could write a simple one-page letter to a local supermarket manager applying for a job.⁵

Atlanta journalist Dave Sloan attended high school graduations for three straight days and reported that "the vast majority of graduating seniors were unable to add $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4}$ ".⁶

The same lack of knowledge exists among teenagers concerning biblical information. Some of their humorous statements include:

- Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree.
- Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.
- Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day and a ball of fire by night.

- Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.
- Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says, “Do unto others before they do one to you.”
- The men who followed Jesus were the twelve disciples, and the epistles were the wives of the apostles.
- Jesus said a man should have one wife. This is called monogamy.

It doesn't take much research to conclude that many, even most, teenagers have a weak grip on knowledge and biblical truth.

Sex without purity. Very logically the Apostle Paul shows us the results of lostness when he says, “Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity . . . and shameful lusts. Women (and men) exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones and received the due penalty for their perversion” (Romans 1:24-27).

As a result of living in our sex-crazed society, kids participate in sex at younger and younger ages. By their 18th birthday, 6 in 10 teenage women and nearly 7 in 10 teenage men have had sexual intercourse.⁷ Nationwide, 6.6 percent of students reported initiating sexual intercourse before the age of 13.⁸ Nearly one million teen girls get pregnant each year. Nearly 4 out of 10 young women get pregnant at least once before they turn 20. Each year the Federal Government alone spends about \$40 billion to help families that began with a teenage birth.⁹

And so the sad story of students lost in the wrong use of sex goes on.

Society without God. Our society and its effect on the younger generation line up pretty well with what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1.

“He gave them over . . . to what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity” (Romans 1:28-29).

A society that fits this description has produced the present generation of students. Four primary forces shape their lives. One is their peers, which we will not discuss here. Certainly the other three have a dominant effect.

Parents. With well over half the teenagers living in single parent homes, and over 65 percent of all mothers working outside the home, it is little wonder that parents don't spend time with their kids. According to George Barna, among teens whose father is present in the home, the average amount of time discussing things that matter is less

than 40 minutes per week. (Ten percent say they spend no time at all in such discussions.) In homes where the mother is present, the amount of time spent with her discussing matters of interest to the teen averages 55 minutes per week.¹⁰ Only 52 percent of 15- to 18-year-olds say they are satisfied with their current family situation.¹¹

William Bennett, former Secretary of Education, summarized the situation this way:

Where are the fathers? Generally, the mothers are there struggling. For nine out of ten children in single parent homes, the father is the one who isn't there. One-fifth of all American children live in homes without fathers. . . . Where are the fathers? Where are the men? Wherever they are, this much is clear: too many are not with their children.¹²

It doesn't take long for kids to realize "If I'm going to survive, I had better look out for me."

Television. The American Academy of Pediatrics urges that children should not watch television more than two hours a day in order to limit the damage caused by violence and sexual programming. On average, young people watch 16 to 17 hours of television weekly, beginning as early as age two. When video game and videocassette usage are added, some teenagers may spend as many as 35 to 55 hours in front of the television set. While watching television, young people view an estimated 10,000 violent acts and 15,000 sexual references, innuendoes, and jokes. Furthermore, alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs are present in 70 percent of prime time network dramatic programs. And for every "just say no" or "know when to say when" public service announcement, teens will view 25 to 50 beer and wine advertisements.¹³ No wonder such heavy exposure to television sex, violence, drugs, and alcohol results in kids imitating those same acts in real life.

Rock Music. The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians reports that music plays a significant role in adolescent socialization between grades 7 and 12. The average teenager listens to 10,500 hours of music, which is slightly less than the cumulative hours spent in the classroom from kindergarten through high school.¹⁴ Evidence is rampant that certain types of music contribute to emotional dysfunction in kids, including drug abuse, premarital sex, and violence.

As I write I'm staring at a *Newsweek* cover entitled "When Is Rap 2 Violent?" Featuring the latest popular rapper, the cover comments: "His album hits the top of the charts this week. Last week, he was indicted for murder." It's not hard to figure

EVERY 24 HOURS ¹⁵

17,297	students get suspended from school
7883	students are reported abused or neglected
4248	students get arrested
2861	students drop out of school
1329	babies are born to teen moms
367	students are arrested for drug abuse
180	students are arrested for violent crimes
9	students are victims of homicide
5	students commit suicide
1	student dies of HIV infection

* Based on calculations per school day (180 days of seven hours each) © 2002 Children's Defense Fund

out why kids are killing each other, and why others are frightened to walk down the hall at school or go into the restroom.

Without much effort we could get depressed about this generation. But a more proper response is to get our heads out of the sand, see the situation in our society as it really is, understand the intense pressure kids face as a result, know from the biblical perspective that they do not have the internal resources to handle it because they are lost, and then take the challenge to help “find” them through introducing them to Jesus Christ.

We can do all this with great confidence because, in spite of all the complications in kids' lives, Jesus really is the only answer. Pascal, the great French scientist and philosopher, was correct when he said: “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man that cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.”

As we see teenagers the way God sees them—**lost**, with all of the accompanying pain and hurt—He will give us a deep desire to seek them the way He seeks them, so they can be found!

SEEK KIDS THE WAY GOD SEEKS THEM

On that train in Romania, frantically searching for my valuable backpack, all of us tore up the place to see if we could find it. We were intense, focused. We had our “game faces” on. We organized into teams, each team taking a berth. All of us, at the same time, were focused on the same objective—find the backpack.

And we did! It had been placed behind two or three other boxes and suitcases. When we found it we shouted, then we laughed. I let out a big sigh of relief. I was excited to have it back. Finding that backpack made my day.

Those same kinds of emotions must have flooded over Jesus when Zacchaeus came down from that tree. The Bible says that Zacchaeus received Jesus “joyfully.” Certainly they rejoiced together when Jesus said, “Today salvation has come to this house” (Luke 19:9).

When something or someone is lost, we see a pattern:

Intense concentration ⇒ Joyful celebration.

Isn't that true with the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son? After the intense concentration to find what was lost, Jesus says, “there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10).

Finding what is lost is God's nature. Adrian Rogers put it this way:

When we see Jesus going out after the sheep, we see the rescuing nature of Jesus. When we see the woman with the lost coin we see the revealing nature of the Holy Spirit. When we see the father welcoming the son back, we see the receiving nature of God the Father.¹⁶

When we have had our lives radically changed by the seeking Savior, then we too have built into our new nature that same desire to see people who are lost become found.

What distinguishes one youth leader from another? Both have the same gifts and abilities, both have the same human resources, but one attracts kids like crazy and the other one does not. What is the difference?

A burden for those who are lost!

The following graphic story illustrates where many of us are in our burden for the lost.

As I watched the evening news, a young man named Cecil walked into the picture. Suddenly, he sat down on the curb in front of the whirling camera and set himself aflame. When the pain became more than he could bear, he jumped to his feet and raced down the street. Before the camera turned away, all one could see was Cecil totally engulfed by the flames. I sat there stunned. Then the question! Were the cameramen more interested in taking a picture than in saving Cecil from the horror of being burned alive?²⁴

That story nails many of us! Indifference indicts us. How strangely different Jesus' burden was from that of many twentieth-century youth leaders.

- “He had **compassion** on them, because they were harassed and helpless” (Matthew 9:36).
- “Jesus **wept**” (John 11:35).
- Jesus was “**deeply moved in spirit and troubled**” because of the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:33).
- Jesus cried out: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. . .how often I have **longed** to gather your children together” (Luke 13:34).

Not allowing the love of the Spirit of Jesus to flow through us, we express apathy about Christ and about people. Therefore we come across to lost students in a way that causes them not to want to be found! Yet when we are empowered by the love of the Spirit, we are charged with enthusiasm about Christ and we find ways to love other people. Therefore we become attractive to lost people who, then, want to be found. When we are empowered by the Spirit we exhibit the qualities of Galatians 5:22-23.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Dr. William Abraham focuses the issue for us in his remarkable statement:

We live in a world where people are addicted to drugs, to greed, to racism, to terrorism and to a host of sins that will not be tackled without the fullness of the reign of God in our midst . . . What is needed is not just more talk, or more programs - - - but the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit....

As we allow the Holy Spirit to empower us, He will release in us the love and compassion that will give us that burden for students. Then we can pray this profound prayer:

LORD, break my heart with the things that break your heart.

I have experienced the reality of that prayer. Having completed my message to a group of 600 students at a Christmas conference, I watched them as they responded. It was beautiful to see all those potential-laden lives so eager to please God. I was ready to sit down when suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, emotion overwhelmed me. I began to weep in front of those kids. It took several moments to bring myself under control. Through tears these words came out: “I want to ask you to forgive me and my generation for leaving you the lousiest legacy in American history. Your generation has some severe problems because of what we have done to you. But I want you to know that I, for one, have committed my life to see that you become whole again. I believe that God not only wants to restore you, but also to release you to become the generation that finishes taking the message of Christ to the ends of the earth—that fulfills the Great Commission.”

None of that was planned or contrived. Simply, God was breaking my heart with the things that break His heart. I realized I had a burden for those students and the generation they represent. God desires for us to see kids the way He sees them, and then to seek them the way He seeks them. When we do, they will become our target and we will become their magnet that draws them to Christ.

ACTION POINTS

1. Spend an hour alone with God this week asking Him to help you see kids—particularly lost kids—the way He sees them. Write down what He shows you.

2. Spend another hour with God asking Him to break your heart for kids—or continue doing so—in a way that will cause you to seek kids the way He seeks them. Write down what He tells you to do.

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14. Matthew and John Clarke, IAFP Annual Meeting 2002. Illinois Academy of Family Physicians, www.iafp.com/Annual%20Meeting/teensmoke.htm viewed on 12/11/02.
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TWO

Look Right Here: Focusing on Fruit

“Mike, a high school senior, visited our mid-week outreach for the first time a year ago.”

That’s how one youth pastor started the story. Then he told of an incredible chain of events that have taken place since then. He said that Mike came to the outreach because Ricardo, a young man the youth pastor was discipling, invited him. After Mike attended for three weeks, Ricardo led him to Christ and into the church. Shortly after that, Mike began to reach out to his friends with the gospel. He eagerly attended an evangelism seminar and learned more about how to share his faith.

Mike’s fresh, new faith and radical lifestyle change got the attention of his parents and older brother. None of them attended church nor were they professing Christians. Within a short period of time all three of them received Christ and now actively serve the Lord. Mike’s parents have recently volunteered to become youth sponsors in the ministry and his brother has gotten involved in a ministry group on his college campus.

This summer Mike reached out to a good friend named Greg. He brought Greg to the same outreach event where he met Christ. Greg received Christ. He then led his two friends, Kelly and Ken, to Christ. Greg, Kelly, and Ken have recently reached out to two other guys, inviting them to an outreach. Now all five of them have formed a ministry team that comes early every week to set up for every outreach. In one year this exciting process has resulted in seven significant, long-lasting conversions.¹

Probably nothing gets talked about more, but gets done less, than genuine, life-changing evangelism. We expend incredible amounts of energy on rallies, crusades, tours, concerts, church-league softball (or a myriad of other sports), trips, camps, retreats, skiing, and on we go, ad infinitum, ad nauseum. But how many young people actually hear, understand, and respond to the message of the gospel? How many

have a genuine, life-changing experience with Jesus through these events and are living for Him three weeks afterward?

One youth pastor expressed his frustration over spinning his wheels:

For years I busied myself with “the good things” of youth ministry instead of slowing down to face the reality that my ministry was almost ignoring “the best thing” that Christ called us to do. . . that thing is life-changing evangelism. It was after coming face to face with the reality that I was working myself to death, yet failing to change the lives of youth for eternity, that I began to get serious about the role of life-changing evangelism in youth ministry.

So how can we change the focus of our events to genuine evangelism?

FOCUSING ON FRUIT

Rather than focusing on the number of students who attend the outreach, or the number who respond, as important as those might be, the outreach is designed to accomplish two objectives. First, produce *life change* in the lives of the young people who attend. In other words, we genuinely desire that they have a serious encounter with Jesus Christ. Secondly, help students—those who are Christians already and the ones who newly meet Christ—to become *life changers*. After they encounter Christ, we equip them to influence their peers for Jesus Christ.

Changing lives goes far beyond an initial response at an event. It centers in on the complete reconstruction of the person. As we think about the focus of an outreach, teenagers need to experience salvation—the kind Jesus describes in John 15:16, “You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.”

Counting decisions, filling out cards, or joining anything has little value unless kids encounter Jesus in such a way that Christ captures every aspect of their lives.

As Jesus expounds on “fruit bearing,” He tells us what brings about such an encounter. He expresses a good word to us in youth ministry about how our outreach should touch kids’ lives in a fruit-bearing way.

Connection with the Vine. Jesus said, “I am the vine: you are the branches” (John 15:5). As we think about putting together an outreach, this relational reality moves us quickly away from desiring any superficial response from kids and toward helping them come into a vital union with the Vine. That doesn’t preclude fun and crazy stuff, but it does mean we know what we want to happen to kids.

Cutting away the worthless branches. Jesus said, “He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he trims clean so it will be even more fruitful” (John 15:2). Jesus wants to cut out of students’ lives anything that will hinder them from producing fruit. Kids come to an outreach with some pretty severe struggles, ideas far from the truth, and way-out lifestyles. As we address their needs, struggles, and issues, and as they see Jesus as the Need-Meeter, they will rid themselves of their old lifestyles that “bear no fruit” and become grafted into Christ, who will conform them to His image and make them “even more fruitful.” Youth ministry generally and outreach specifically prepares us to operate as “hedge trimmers” in kids’ lives.

Control of the fruitful branches. Jesus said, “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me” (John 15:4). “Remain” means to stay put. Once a teenager responds at an outreach he must have the kind of personal help that will allow him to “stay put” in his walk with Christ as he faces life’s pain and pressures. Only in a youth ministry environment of nourishment, encouragement, and accountability will he be able to “remain.”

Focusing on “fruitbearing” will help us produce the kind of excellent outreach that helps kids change and gives them the opportunity to pass that change on to their friends. This kind of focus will move individual students as well as the entire youth ministry through the progression that Jesus outlines in John 15:

- “No fruit” (v.2)
 - “Fruit” (v. 3)
 - “Much fruit” (v. 5)
 - “Fruit that will last” (v. 16)

The focus of the outreach is to present Jesus Christ in such a way that students will *change*—from “no fruit” to “fruit that will last.” Fruitful attitudes, actions, habits, and lifestyles will produce Christian kids with a credibility that will cause non-Christian kids to respect them for the *life change* they have experienced and then listen to their message.

Without this kind of focus you will work with uncommitted or partially-committed students who will drain your time, undermine the credibility your youth group has with non-Christians, leave you as the Lone Ranger to pull off a highly

labor-intensive event, and create an atmosphere that resembles a funeral.

Let's put this in perspective. Would you rather have 1,000 cars that take you 100 miles each, or one car that will take you 100,000 miles? What a hassle if you had to change cars every 100 miles—walking back to get the other car. You wouldn't get anywhere. If you "buy" the right focus from the beginning, then you won't have continual "breakdowns." Nothing short of fruitful, changed lives will get the job done. Even though you will want as many students at the outreach as possible, the focus is on fruit.

PROGRAMMING WITH PURPOSE

If our focus is fruit—encouraging life change and producing life changers—then we need to *program with purpose*. In order to have programs with a fruitbearing purpose, it stands to reason that we need to know the specific purpose of the outreach.

Until we see God's purpose, we will struggle with our motivation for creating outreach. And certainly that struggle will carry over to our volunteers, parents, and students.

Many youth leaders complain about the apathy of their students, parents, and volunteer leaders.

- "Too busy."
- "They only come because their parents make them."
- "Kids are apathetic because their parents don't care."
- "All they do is goof off."
- "They complain, 'This is boring. When are we going to do something fun?'"
- "They aren't interested because we can't entertain them like the world entertains them."

So kids drop in if it suits them, or they don't if that suits them better. They have no real excitement about the youth group. When they do come, it's like they have parked their bodies at the meeting but their minds are somewhere else. They keep asking, "When is this going to be over?" So you keep trying to think up bigger and better gimmicks, games and group trips in order to keep them entertained. And in the process you burn out.

Is it possible to motivate those same apathetic students and then challenge them

to bring their friends at school to hear about Jesus Christ? The answer is yes, if

- you have a compelling burden for lost kids (chapter 1);
- you have an overall strategy for your youth ministry (chapter 3);
- you have the purpose for your outreach clearly in mind (this chapter).

You've begun the process of developing a compelling burden for lost students. Now let's deal with getting your outreach purpose clearly in mind.

Any time we put on an outreach, the following overarching purpose can drive everything we do:

**To present Jesus
through culturally-relevant outreach opportunities
to which people bring their lost friends.**

To present Jesus. Your outreach exists for the purpose of communicating the claims of Christ clearly. It sounds simple enough, but it's not as easy as it sounds. Several challenges stand in our way.

Knowing the message. If the life, death, resurrection of Jesus, and release of the Spirit to change lives is fuzzy to us, then certainly it will be fuzzy to our kids.

Preparing the message. "Chasing around like a wild man (woman)" because your priorities are out of order squeezes out time for preparing a clear message.

Communicating the message. Even if we know the message and have prepared it, one of our hardest tasks is taking what would be clear in the adult world and bringing it to the level that kids can grasp. As somebody once said, "We need to get the cookies on the lower shelf so the kids can reach them."

The Master Teacher tells us how to present the claims about Himself. We see how He did it from His example in John 7:37-39: "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.'"

In the midst of a large crowd at the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem, Jesus proclaimed who He was to the crowd. He presented Himself clearly so that people could understand and respond.

The Feast of Booths was a ceremonial reminder that the children of Israel had

been wanderers in the desert where water was precious and difficult to find. During the ceremony a priest took a golden pitcher, walked down to the Pool of Siloam, and filled it with water. He carried the water back through a special gate used just for this ceremony—the Water Gate—while the people recited Isaiah 12:3: “With joy will you draw water from the wells of salvation.” He carried the water to the temple and poured it on the altar as an offering to God.

The whole ceremony dramatized thanksgiving for God’s good gift of water, a prayer for rain, and a remembrance of the water which sprang from the rock when Moses struck it with his staff. During this ceremony, perhaps at that very moment, Jesus’ words rang out: “If a man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.”²

Jesus spoke clearly in a language that every person there understood. No one missed the message that He was the Living Water symbolized in that ceremony. On that hot and dusty day He invited them to come and have their needs met—have a drink. Then He made a promise that whoever believed would have rivers of Living Water flowing through him! WOW!

The challenge for us is to present the claims of Christ in such a compelling way that young people will understand who Jesus is and will want to drink. We want to make our outreach such a magnet that kids are drawn to the Living Water.

Through culturally-relevant outreach opportunities. Your outreach is not for the pastor, deacons, elders, or parents. This is a “wild and crazy” meeting for kids.

Christian kids need to feel comfortable bringing their friends. If a student thinks that what happens at these meetings is “dorky,” then you can know that he will not bring anyone whom he likes to this meeting. He might bring someone he wants to mug! For that reason, creating a positive atmosphere is crucial. Let’s look at what Levi did in Luke 5:27-32 to see a great model for how to do that.

First, we see that Levi had just met Christ himself: “After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. ‘Follow me,’ Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him” (vv. 27-28).

The best and widest path back to the world of lost kids is young people who have just recently come from that world. When a teenager has “left everything and followed him,” he or she will have a deep desire for friends to do the same.

Second, Levi, now a believer, wanted his friends to know Jesus, “Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others

[sinners] were eating with them” (v. 29). Levi had a party! He designed this party to share the new life he had found.

Fun is a value held in high esteem by kids. Yet most students, when asked what it means to be a Christian, will tell you something like this: “Following a bunch of rules.” “Going to church.” “Doing good things and not doing bad things.” That is why it is so important to present Jesus in a context that is not dull and boring. When we put together an outreach, kids need to walk away saying, “Wow, that was great! That was sooooo much fun!” We can communicate that, “Hanging around Jesus is the greatest fun you will ever have.”

Finally, notice that Levi set an atmosphere where he felt comfortable having Jesus around his friends and his friends around Jesus. Christian students need to feel comfortable bringing their friends to an outreach. That will hinge on whether or not we can create a magnetic atmosphere where warmth, acceptance, and love will draw kids to Jesus Christ.

Non-Christian students need to feel comfortable coming. To help non-Christians feel comfortable we need *to create an environment with high energy enthusiasm.* Levi’s banquet wasn’t just your normal banquet—it was a “great banquet.” And it wasn’t just a little group of friends, it was a large crowd. Imagine the energy in that room.

The very word *enthusiasm* means “in God.” It seems only natural to have a bundle of enthusiasm at a Christian meeting, especially with kids. The MTV generation feels very comfortable in that kind of large, loud event.

That sense of enthusiasm arouses the interest of lost kids, just like it did on another day, at another time, when Jesus taught by the lake: “The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water’s edge” (Mark 4:1). The enthusiasm of the people expressed itself at such a high level that they almost pushed Jesus into the water. I’ve always seen this as one of the humorous incidents in the Gospels. The more Jesus taught, healed, and delivered people from the demonic, the more excited they became. As they crowded in on Him, He had to backpedal. Soon He was at the edge of the water and had no place else to go. One more step and He would have been soaked. Either someone saw the situation and brought a boat, or one was already there. At just the last minute Jesus deftly made His move into the boat, avoiding a dunking.

Your outreaches can create that same kind of enthusiastic excitement.

Another way to help non-Christian kids feel comfortable is to *take the gospel to the streets*. Notice that Jesus took his message outside the four walls of the church (the synagogue) into a home and by a lake among crowds of ordinary men and women.

Many youth workers struggle with this because they have ministered only within the four walls of the church, a setting which is comfortable and familiar.

I grew up in the church. The only outreach opportunities I had ever seen invited people to come inside the church. For me, one of the greatest eye-opening experiences I have ever had came when I was in college. I led a “club” every week that met in the living room of someone’s home. Kids, mostly non-Christians, came—ones that others and I had built relationships with at the school. Every week was wild. I didn’t always relate well. I had a lot to learn. But in this “baptism by fire” I discovered how to present Christ outside the religious confines of the church. Just the other day I saw a youth minister who reminded me that he came to Christ in one of those meetings.

Later I discovered I was in good company with my struggle. John Wesley had a difficult time moving outside the church setting. He was a faithful servant of the Church of England. West of London, in Bristol, his friend George Whitefield was preaching to the miners. As many as 20,000 at a time listened in the open air. His hearers were coming to Christ by the hundreds, so he sent for John Wesley and asked him to preach outdoors.

Wesley hesitated. He wrote, “I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, a handsome pulpit.” Open-air preaching offended him. He said, “I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way—having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.” But Wesley realized that outdoor preaching brought people to Jesus. He said, “I cannot argue against a matter of fact.”³ And, as they say, the rest is history.

The only “culturally-relevant outreach opportunities” most lost kids will relate to will be what we do outside the confines of the church. But practically speaking, we may not be able to have some outreaches outside the four walls of the church. While it is best to have these events in a neutral, non-church setting, the option remains to have them inside your church building. If we are giving the non-Christian student the priority in planning the outreach, and if we are building relationships with them,

meeting their needs, talking to them in their environment and inviting them to come, whether the outreach is outside or inside the church building, then “if we build it, they will come.”

To which people bring their lost friends. An outreach becomes a magnet because we welcome all students, regardless of culture, background, or level of commitment. For many in a traditional local church context this is a huge statement to make. Sometimes the church can be the biggest barrier that keeps people from Christ.

Jesus knew that better than anyone. It was the “religious establishment” (scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin) who resisted Jesus, even hated Him, and eventually killed Him. Now that is a sobering thought for some, because you know you have people in your churches who are just like that. Any time you even think about coloring outside the lines, you get your hand slapped. If kids come to your meeting who have purple hair, four earrings in each ear and one in each nostril, and who smoke and leave the butts in the parking lot, you know you are in trouble. I have no easy solutions for that one. But Jesus has been there before you, and He fought negative attitudes toward outsiders every step of the way.

You also have fine, well-meaning Christians who, like the disciples in Mark 10:13, want to protect Jesus and themselves from “sinful people.” People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

I have found that often parents and church people get up in arms when “different” kids start hanging around. They want to protect their kids from these “evil influences,” forgetting that their kids hang around these evil influences six to eight hours a day at school.

Steve, a seminary student at the time and now on our staff, was working on the staff of a church as a youth intern. He met some guys at school who hung out at a kids’ night club. So he started going there to relate to those guys. They suggested that Steve start a Bible study on Monday nights at the night club. He did and lots of kids came. In a couple of months over thirty had accepted Christ. That’s great. What was not so great was that when he brought those kids to church the parents got mad, the church kids rejected them, and the deacons voted that those young people could not come to the church any more.

That sad commentary is the result of actions by well-meaning Christian people.

Why did they do that? They had never thought through the implications of the gospel, which says, “whosoever will may come.”

Look at how Jesus handled the “kids’ situation” in Mark 10.

When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And He took the children in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them (Mark 10:14-16).

Jesus welcomed the children with open arms. This incident took place when Jesus was on His way to the Cross. The shadow of the Cross could never have been far from His mind, but He still took time for kids. He made time to take them in His arms, smile at them, and play with them for a while. The disciples wanted to keep them away from Jesus to protect Him and His precious time from people who were not important enough. But Jesus knew better. With the little time He had left, He still said, “Let the little children come to me.”

Like the disciples’ response, it is easy for the church culture to categorize groups of students as “not good enough.” Because of their background, race, culture, color, age, attitudes, dress, and habits we fall into the trap of excluding people from the gospel. Yet Jesus welcomes everyone. And as representatives of Jesus, as people who have His Spirit living in us, we must say along with Him: “Come!”

In summary, here’s the bottom line: *focus on fruit and program with purpose*. Then you can turn your weekly youth meeting, or any outreach for that matter, into a magnet that draws kids to Christ.

ACTION POINTS

1. From what you have discovered in this chapter, write out a one-sentence purpose statement that clearly sets out your desire to focus on fruit and to program with purpose in any outreach you do. Work on it at least 30 minutes every day this week.

2. Go over your mission statement with at least two trusted friends to get their feedback. Then revise it on the basis of their input.

3. Prepare your mission statement for a later presentation to your pastor and your youth leaders. Type it up and put it on Power Point.

1. This story is from Rick Caldwell, who over the years has had a phenomenal ministry of putting what's in this book into practice.
2. Adapted from William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 1., rev. ed. The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975).
3. Adapted from William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark*, rev. ed. The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975).

THREE

Lay Tracks to Run On: Setting Out a Strategy

After graduation from seminary, I became director of youth evangelism for my denomination. Although I had worked with kids for several years both in church and parachurch ministries, I had never directed anybody.

At 26 years of age and inexperienced in youth ministry I came quickly to the stark realization that I had no idea what to do. Not wanting to appear too stupid, I decided to take some survey trips to learn from what other people were doing. One of those trips took me to California. Several people asked me, “Have you talked to Chuck Miller?” “No, I’ve never heard of the guy.” When his name kept coming up I decided to call him. He suggested that I meet him at 6:00 AM on Tuesday at a breakfast for kids. Sorry I asked! I tried to suggest another time, but he insisted. The real kicker was that I was on the other side of Los Angeles, which meant I had to get up at 4:00 AM.

Do you ever get up in the morning and do “bedside battle”? The alarm goes off. Unconsciously you sit up on the side of the bed. In a stupor you begin to semi-reason with yourself: “I’m so tired. I have to drive in the smog. This bed feels sooo good. Only three snotty-nosed kids will show up for this anyway. I love to sleep. This guy won’t tell me anything new. This is a great pillow.”

My sense of obligation finally got to me. I got up, drove across L.A., and walked into the church. Three hundred kids were eating pancakes off paper plates! (We’re talking big-time mess.) I couldn’t believe it. “They must have a hot music group coming for a concert,” I figured. Actually, they had no big production—a few songs, announcements, skit, a message, and a response time. That’s all. And off the students went to school. *What’s going on here? Why did those 300 kids come?* I asked myself.

Later that morning Chuck and I ate breakfast (a real breakfast) at a little café and talked. He showed me how his highest priority was his own worship and walk with God. Then he described his leadership team of about twenty adults. After that he helped me see how those twenty adults disciple six to eight students each. From there

he sketched out how each of those students has taken the responsibility to bring two or three of their friends each week. With each concept he pointed out how Jesus and/or Paul had initiated that concept in the New Testament.

For the first time in my life I saw that *youth ministry is not an event but a process*. Instead of stringing a bunch of activities together and calling it a youth ministry, as I had done, I began to see that the real ministry takes place week to week in relationships. Instead of running myself ragged trying to get kids to come to an event, I could multiply myself through my leaders and disciplined kids. For the first time it dawned on me: *This is God's strategy for fulfilling the Great Commission!*

In order for any outreach, of any size, to be effective, it has to be built on the focus of the last chapter—*producing life change and equipping life changers*. In light of that, then, you need to ask the serious question: “Is my ministry structured to produce life change and life changers?” For some this will require a major paradigm shift from *programs to relationships*. Your ministry needs a strategy designed to move leaders and students from one life-changing step to another. They need a track to run on. I call it *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry*.

FIVE CORE PRINCIPLES

The New Testament lays out that Jesus-focused track for us. In the process of the Christian life a person moves, according to his or her own growth, from one phase to the next. The process may be represented as follows:

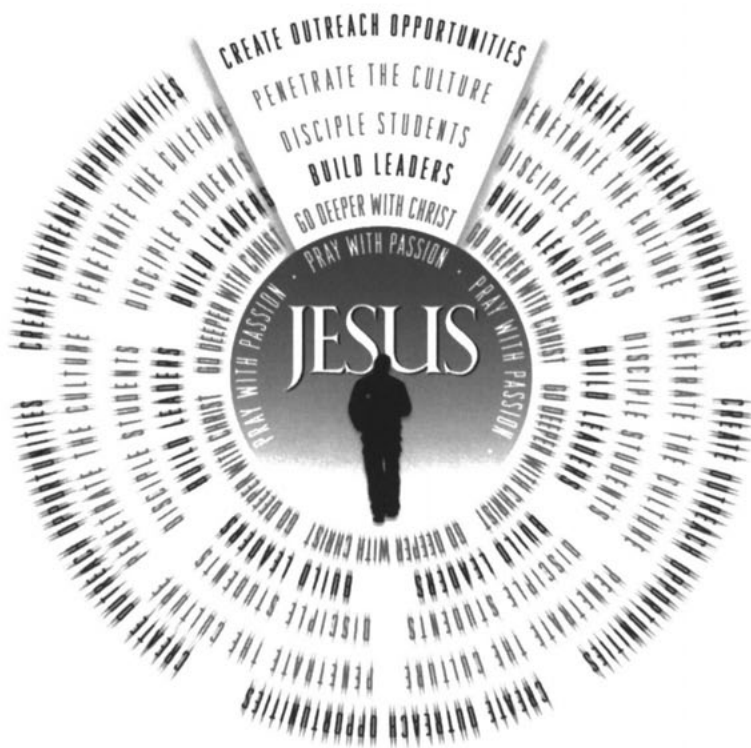
NON-BELIEVER ➤	CONVERT ➤	DISCIPLE ➤	WORKER ➤	LEADER
Goal:	Goal:	Goal:	Goal:	Goal:
Evangelize	Establish	Equip	Execute	Extend

I like to call the foregoing elements the five essentials of Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry. Implementing these principles in your ministry is essential. “Essential” means non-negotiable, absolute, have to, no other way, got to do it, no way around it. My years of experience have shown me that we will not have a Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry over the long haul unless all five of these essential core principles are evident in a finely-tuned balance. For the *five core principles* to work for us, we need to lay them out into a Jesus-focused strategy that works.

One of the tragic flaws of youth ministry is to believe that everyone in the group has to go and grow together—at the same time, at the same rate. Such a growth pattern has never happened before. It is not happening now. And it will never happen. That is because believers, even at the same age, are not at the same stage. Because of that we need a strategy to help people grow, whatever their level of maturity. For example:

- If a student is lost, the goal is to introduce him to Jesus Christ.
- If a student comes to Christ, the goal is to get him started in his walk with Christ.
- If a student starts growing, the goal is to help him move toward maturity and ministry.
- If a student matures, the goal is to make him a leader.
- If a new leader leads, the goal is to multiply his ministry through others.

Reversing the above process, let's see what Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry looks like in the following diagram.



In an environment of passionate prayer, the five core principles lay out as follows.

LEADER

Go deeper with Christ.

Extending your ministry under the lordship of Christ



WORKER

Build leaders

Executing the ministry with volunteer leaders



DISCIPLE

Disciple students

Equipping students to move toward maturity and ministry



CONVERT

Create outreach opportunities

Establishing students in their faith



NON-BELIEVER

Penetrate the campus

Evangelizing lost students

Let's pause right here and make sure we're all on the same page. I am not offering you five easy steps to youth ministry success. How many times have you ordered a manual, or something that came in a box promising "Seven Easy Steps to the Largest Youth Group in the Western Hemisphere"? Though slickly packaged and containing some elements of truth, more often than not, the promises prove hollow. Like a \$23 suit, the fit just isn't right for your situation.

Instead, this approach has its roots firmly planted in the soil of the New Testament. Its base is the local church. And it is a strategy, not a program. A program has the same application in every situation. A strategy looks at needs, sets goals, and then makes application based on New Testament principles – Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry. That is why it works in large churches and small ones, in urban and suburban settings, and across cultures around the globe.

Before you jump into making a big splash with a series of big events, it is crucial that the five essentials of Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry operate with excellence in your ministry. Otherwise you will overextend yourself, doing yourself, your family, and your church more harm than good. Think of these five essentials as the best and fastest highway to get you to your destination.

GO DEEPER WITH CHRIST

If a pen doesn't write, what do you do with it? People have interesting responses. Some shake it. Some lick it. Some burn it. Some keep it. (We have an entire drawer at our house for pens that don't write.) Most toss it. Whatever your response, we all agree that if the pen doesn't write, even if it's an expensive pen, it is not accomplishing its purpose.

Your life is your ministry. If the ink of God's love is not flowing through you to make its mark, then you are not accomplishing your purpose. You can have all of the high-tech toys, big budgets, nice facilities, even a new church van, but without a life worth imitating, all of that goes down the tube.

Think of it this way: our primary role in youth ministry is to be a model, an example for students. "Okay, tell me something new." What's new is what that really means. The Apostle Paul expresses it clearly in 1 Timothy 1:5: "The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

What's the goal? Love. What do we model? Perfection? Performance? External behavior? No. As my friend Dave Busby used to talk about "the heart of the matter," the heart of the matter for us is love. We model love. Is there anything that kids need today more than love?

The apostle describes that love as agape love. Picture God's love as a big shower. Agape love means that He has turned on the big shower and He is letting the love flow. Since He is the source of love (1 John 4:8), it never stops flowing. Problem! Often I step out from under the shower of God's love. I need to let it continually flow on me.

That takes us to the second meaning of agape. God pours out His love, but I need to receive it. If I don't, it doesn't change my heart. Jesus expressed the issue well in John 14:21: "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show

myself to him.” As I open my heart to Christ, and obey Him, then His love will flow through me. I will experience the Father’s love continually.

At this point the third meaning of agape kicks in. If God has poured out His love and we respond with obedience that allows His love to flow through us, then that love will flow right on out to others. We won’t have to try to splash a drop of love here and an ounce of love there, but rather it will flow all around, touching every life that our lives touch. John was right: “We love because he first loved us.”

What is at issue here? How do I become a clear and unclogged channel of God’s love? The Apostle Paul answers that with three phrases in 1 Timothy 1:5.

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

A pure heart. What does it mean to have a “pure heart”? The apostle has two meanings in mind. First, he has a clean heart on his mind. Imagine a spotless dish. At our house we leave early almost every morning. If the cereal bowl doesn’t get into the dishwasher, then the sun bakes that cereal onto the bowl. Then the bowl needs an air hammer to blast away the Cherrios that night. We need to confess sins quickly before they harden on us. The writer of Proverbs expressed it this way: “He who covers his sin shall not prosper; but he who confesses it and forsakes it shall receive mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

Do you have anything in your life right now that keeps you from having a clean heart?

Second, Paul is thinking of a *single heart*, meaning “unmixed motives.” To have a pure heart means that my whole heart desires to know God and to love Him. It is the kind of attitude the psalmist expressed in Psalm 63:1: “O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you.”

Count Zinzendorf, the eighteenth-century German Christian leader, was a man like this. Young, intelligent, well-educated, and affluent, he said, “I have but one passion; it is He, He alone.”

No wonder the Lord used him to start a movement that would send more than fifty percent of all of the missionaries ever sent in church history. He disciplined Peter Bohler, who influenced John Wesley in a way that caused Wesley to have his heart “strangely warmed” at Aldersgate. Zinzendorf started a prayer meeting that lasted 24

hours a day for one hundred years. God used him because he had “but one passion.”

Are there good things in your life, but not the best? Is there anything that keeps you from having an all out passion for God?

A good conscience. What does having a “good conscience” mean? The apostle speaks of a good conscience as having no wrong relationships—not with parents, brothers and sisters, children, fellow church members, former friends, employers, employees, or teachers.

In Acts 24:16, Paul expresses it another way: “So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men.”

One Sunday afternoon I was working on a science poster on our patio. I asked my sister to get me a drink. I was sixteen. She was thirteen. She brought the drink. But I didn’t take it. Finally she dumped it all over my almost-finished science poster. I was ticked. I stood up and slapped her. She ran inside. I ran after her. I was going to hit her again. From that point our relationship drifted apart. I could never do anything right for her. It was always the wrong size, the wrong date. Some time later when my sister was struggling with some issues, she told my mom, “Barry has been a crummy big brother to me.” When my mom told me, it broke my heart. I knew I needed to get that right.

One night I visited my sister at her apartment. We sat on opposite ends of the couch. I said to her, “Cathey, I have been a crummy big brother to you.” I listed several reasons why. Then I said, “Will you forgive me?” She sat there for a moment. Then, with big tears in her eyes, she slipped across the couch and put her arms around me. We hugged and cried.

All the barriers came down, and within six weeks I was able to help her directly with the issues she was facing. If my pride had stood in the way, I would have cut off the possibility of helping her. Who knows what turn her life would have taken.

Do you have any relationships that need your forgiveness—either to ask forgiveness or to extend forgiveness?

A sincere faith. What is “a sincere faith?” The ancient idea of sincerity was “without wax.” In those times sculptors would arrive in town and create a piece of art. Someone would buy it and decorate his home with it. But every now and then a pretender would arrive. He would break off a nose or an elbow from the sculpture and replace it with a wax nose or elbow. A person would buy the sculpture, assum-

ing it was the real thing, but when he got home and the sun shone on it, the nose or elbow would fall off. It was a worthless piece of junk.

To be sincere is to be without wax. It means no hypocrisy. Total obedience expresses the idea pretty well.

In the church today we need to get our obedience level up to our knowledge level. When we do we will be sincere. One friend of mine says it this way: "You put into practice what you believe every day. All the rest is just religious talk."

That became a reality to me several years ago when I was leading a conference for youth leaders. The Lord was trying to speak to me. I had refused to deal with one issue because of the pain and embarrassment of it. But every time the speaker mentioned sin, the Lord brought this issue to mind. Finally it became clear that God would not use me anymore unless I became sincere about this situation.

I had cheated on some tests when I was in college. With all of the courage I could muster, I confessed this to God, to my understanding wife, and to this group of youth workers. But the hardest part of all was calling that professor. I'll always remember the day I went into my office to call him. I was so nervous. When I talked my voice was shaking. I said, "Sir, when I was in your class I cheated on some tests. That was wrong. I want to ask you to forgive me." He did. And I almost floated out of the room. Because I had sincerely obeyed, I never had to deal with that issue again. Nor did I ever have to hide from it. The shades were opened. The light was let in. It was dealt with.

Do you have any areas of disobedience in your life?

The love of God is already flowing. When we unclog the channel, His love can flow freely through us. The channel gets unclogged when we honestly let God search our hearts to discover any place where we don't have a pure heart, a good conscience, or a sincere faith.

Your life is a most valuable tool in God's hands. Like the pen, you have a purpose. When His love flows freely through an unclogged channel, He will accomplish His purpose of using you to change the lives of others especially the younger generation!

BUILD LEADERS

The church always struggles with the leadership crunch. "Somebody please take

the 10th-grade boy's class." No one responds because the last person who had the 10th-grade boys had his house rolled every Friday night. Most lay youth workers feel totally inadequate. Yet instead of training them, we give them unfulfilling tasks like keeping the kids out of the bushes on the retreat. At one point the church realizes, "We need something more for our young people." So they hire you, Yogi Youth Pastor. Then they expect you to do it all! "He's the youth pastor. That's what we hired him for."

With leadership defined simply as "influence," we can say with confidence that one of our major goals of youth ministry is *to train leaders to influence the younger generation.*

Without such a goal your ministry will never be more than mediocre, even if you have excellent skills with kids. Your success becomes your failure. Even if you are the "Pied Piper" with kids and scores of them love to be with you, there is only so much of you to go around. Soon you begin to feel like you are working eight days a week.

On the other hand, with a Leadership Team your ministry potential is unlimited. You will train a multiplied number of skilled leaders for a personalized ministry to students.

The Leadership Team's Purpose. If you minister in a program-oriented church, you know that the church can use people up and spit them out. But in a relationally-oriented church a different dynamic exists. Let's look at what was on Jesus' heart as He prayed for His disciples then and now. He asked the Father that His disciples would be

- committed to Christ,
- committed to one another,
- committed to a ministry to the world (students).

When you have your youth leaders together, what do you do with them? Is it administrative and program-oriented? Or is it geared to give spiritual nourishment and personal encouragement? Nobody wants to come to another meeting. If you even suggest it, they dig in their heels. Can you blame them? But a relational get-together isn't just another meeting.

Bob was a dental student at Emory University in Atlanta. I had led him into a committed walk with Christ. He decided to come to our Leadership Team after I

challenged him to do so. In the meetings he was pretty quiet, until one night. That night Sandy came in late with tears in her eyes. She had just found out that her mother had cancer. Bob was sitting beside her. For the first time he reached out to minister to someone else. He prayed the sweetest prayer for Sandy. It was a precious moment. That experience was the catalyst that got him going. The group proved to be a very special experience for him. So much so that when he set up his dental practice, he called me and said, "Barry, that time of growth meant so much to me that I want to do all of the dental work for you and your family for just what it costs me as long as I am in practice here." And that is exactly what he does! And years later he still works with me in our ministry.

Once members of your Leadership Team come a few times to a meeting that is geared to meet their needs, you won't be able to keep them away.

Doing the Ministry of Jesus. Jesus took his disciples through a four-phase process over the three years he was with them.

I do it. Jesus set the pace.

I do it and they are with Me. Jesus almost always took His disciples "with Him."

They do it and I am with them. Jesus let His disciples try the ministry.

They do it and I am in the background to encourage. Jesus left His Holy Spirit to empower them to do the very ministry He did.

What is "it?" What did He teach them to do? What He did. And what did He do? To discover that, let's do a progressive Bible study. Look up the following verses and write down what Jesus did.

Isaiah 61:1. When the promised Messiah came, He would

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Look at verses 2 and 3 for the incredible results, especially as applied to kids today.

Luke 4:18-19. Vaguely familiar? Now the Messiah has come to do what?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Turn the pages of the Gospels. Jesus does the very things He said He would do.

Mark 6:12-13. Ah ha! Now the disciples are doing what Jesus did. And what was that?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

John 14:12. Now for the big kicker. What will we do that Jesus had been doing?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

What a promise for you, your youth leaders, and even your middle school students!

We have the incredible privilege of doing the ministry of Jesus! And we get to raise up volunteer leaders, and they, in turn, raise up young people to do the same.

If that doesn't fit your theological mold, then break out of it long enough to look at the kids described in chapter 1. Without good news, healing, and deliverance how can they possibly come out of their pain and into wholeness?

No dull administrative meeting here! When leaders themselves begin to practice

ministry as Jesus did it, they won't be able to wait to get together to report on the things that God has done. When that happens not only will you have a powerful spiritual dynamic at work, but also you will have reproduced yourself by the number of people on your Leadership Team. Powerful, multiplied ministry will take place.

DISCIPLE STUDENTS

When I talk to youth leaders I hear the same refrains over and over again.

- “I can't get my students motivated.”
- “They will come for concerts and fun, but”
- “Our group has no interest in Bible study and spiritual things.”

Most of the lack of spiritual interest has to do with the lack of focused vision for our students. Do you know what you want to come out at the other end of the tube? When a student comes into your ministry in the 7th grade, what do you want him to look like in the 12th grade? What are you trying to produce?

To answer that, let's go back to what we decided earlier. Our goal is to produce *life change* and *life changers*. For that to happen we have to have a long-range plan. Not one that moves students from event to event, but one that moves them through a week-to-week process of spiritual growth. Some of you are saying, “But I don't have any (or many) young people who want that.” Yes, you do. They just don't know it yet.

If you set up a ministry of discipleship based on the principles of 2 Timothy 2:1-2, you *will* have students to disciple:

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Principle #1: Receiving Grace. Why do so many students who grow up in church drop out at about age sixteen? Why do so many students walk out the door to go to college, leave their “religious bag” behind, and go absolutely berserk when they get to college? Simple. The church has communicated to students that following Jesus is rules and religion and not a dynamic relationship with the living God. Not growing in grace leaves students without the strength and conviction to follow Jesus.

Grace is God's supernatural ability in us through the Cross and the Resurrection. All believers have the dynamic resurrection life of Jesus living in them through the Holy

Spirit.

Discipleship can easily become non-grace oriented—legalistic. “I don’t listen to rock music or chew tobacco.” “I memorized four verses—how many did you memorize?” When we disciple kids, we must appeal to that embryonic Spirit living in each one of them—even the 8th-graders. (We could do a chapter on the subject “Do 8th Graders Have Souls?” but we’ll save that for a later book.) When we appeal to kids on the basis of internal conviction rather than external behavior, we operate on the basis of grace and not legalism. *Discipleship creates an atmosphere where we trust the capability of the Holy Spirit to speak to each person in the group.*

Principle #2: Relationship Investment. The Apostle Paul says, “You . . . me” in 2 Timothy 2:2. A relationship existed between Paul and Timothy. Paul knew that *discipleship is investing your life in close personal relationships with a few others.*

When I led my first discipleship group, I wasn’t aware of that definition. I led the group like a classroom situation with the chairs lined up and a weekly lecture. After we stopped at the end of twelve weeks, I found out that one of the boys had started going to the Jewish synagogue and attending confirmation classes. Joining the synagogue was not my goal for the discipleship group! So I decided to get with Lee. We began to talk. I discovered that he had low self-esteem and that he had never really committed his life to Christ. I led him to Christ. As I learned about investing in relationships, I really did disciple him this time—through high school and college. Several years ago he called me on Thanksgiving night to tell me how grateful he was that I had taken the time to invest my life in his—that it had made an eternal difference. When I hung up the phone I yelled, “Yes! This is what the ministry is all about!” Lee Grady is now the editor of *Charisma* magazine. He grew as I invested in the relationship. Your kids will grow the same way.

Principle #3: Reflecting Christ’s Character. Paul uses the word *entrust* in 2 Timothy 2:2. It means a sacred trust. It is like going to the safety deposit box at the bank. (All of you rich youth pastors identify with this illustration.) You have your key and the banker has his key. It takes both keys to get out all of your stocks, bonds, securities, silver holdings or maybe just your baseball cards. In the same way, when we disciple someone, we bring our lives and the young person brings his or her life. We enter into a partnership in the Spirit. Each one puts his key in, and that opens up the riches of Christ.

Discipleship is a *partnership in the Spirit to produce the character of Christ in the lives of others.*

What changes lives? We can teach *information*, but we know people who have been hearing the Bible every week for forty years and yet they are no different. We can train in skills like quiet time and Scripture memory, and that is good, but it doesn't get to the heart of the matter. What changes lives is when we build *character* through applying grace in the context of relationships. Only then will kids make decisions daily to follow Jesus, be motivated to go after God and to reach their friends for Christ. Only then will they go out on a *mission*.

Be aware that this takes time. Miles Stanford said, "It takes six months to grow a squash, but it takes a lifetime to grow an oak tree." Do you want to produce squash or oak trees?

Principle #4: Reality Living. Using the phrase "many witnesses," Paul's meaning is "many life situations" in 2 Timothy 2:2. *Discipleship only works in real life situations.*

This stark reality hit home with me one night when I had asked Kent, a high school student I was discipling, to help me move some furniture. We moved a hide-a-bed away from the wall. Cookies, molded raisins, toys, and other "stuff" were behind there. If you have children, you understand this. If you don't, then you don't have a clue. Kent looked at me as if to say *What is this junk?* We moved this piece, then opened it to check it. All the stuffing in the back fell out. Kent looked again, as if to say *cheap furniture.* Then we tried to move an 86" x 37" couch through a door that was 79" x 29". We pushed and pulled. We sweated. Kent jammed my finger against the wall. I let him know how bad it hurt. Then he scraped my newly painted wall with the couch, scarring both. At this point I really lost it and had a few choice words for him. We never did get the couch through the door. In fact, I was so frustrated I refused to touch it for two weeks.

Whatever spiritual pedestal I was on with Kent before, I fell off that night. But I learned some valuable lessons. First, I'm not perfect, and kids don't expect me to be. Second, all of the ground is level at the foot of the Cross. No Christian is in a higher class than another Christian, no matter what the age or maturity difference. Third, when I am human, kids can identify with me. They say, "If he fails at some things, maybe I can live the Christian life, too." Fourth, Jesus is the master discipler. I'm not the big-time discipleship leader; rather Jesus is the one who is discipling us both to

be more like Him. That night 2 Corinthians 12:9 came home to me: “[God says] My grace is sufficient for you. [I say with Paul] I will all the more gladly boast in my weakness that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Principle #5: Recruiting Reliable People. When the Apostle Paul makes reference to “reliable men” in 2 Timothy 2:2, he had in mind what some have called **FAT** people—Faithful, Available, and Teachable. In other words we look for students to disciple who are 100 percent sold out. They have the hunger and desire of the psalmist: “As the deer pants for streams of water so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God” (Psalm 42:1.2).

You say: “Big problem! I don’t know any kids like that.” That’s because most kids are like I was in adolescence—the kind of kid that youth leaders loved to hate. I disrupted every meeting, chased girls all over the church, and got into pencil fights. (I still have scars in my arm and on my back side.) One of the deacons told my dad once: “Your son is either going to prison or becoming a preacher, and the verdict is still out on which one.” Why was that? None of the principles we have discussed were applied to me. I had huge amounts of unchanneled energy. And I was underchallenged.

It does no good to insist that kids come up to our level. To produce “reliable” disciples we must begin with them where they are, peel back the layers, and get into their hearts. *Discipleship works best when we accept students where they are, and then take them where they need to be.*

Principle #6: Reproducing by Multiplication. In 2 Timothy 2:2 we find four generations of discipling—Paul, Timothy, reliable men, others also. We can conclude from this that *discipling by multiplication is God’s best way to fulfill the Great Commission.*

Bill attended Georgia Tech. I met him during his sophomore year, and soon after, began to disciple him. A few months later he met John. Bill ate a hamburger with John every week before a class they had together. Through their friendship Bill led John to Christ and then Bill began to disciple him. That continued on into the summer while they were both on a student exchange program in the former Soviet Union.

One Sunday they attended the Moscow Central Church. After the service a young Russian approached them. He had heard that they were Americans, and he

wanted to speak English with them. In the conversation Bill and John discovered that Eugene had come to church because he was searching for meaning and purpose in life.

Bill and John took Eugene back to their room, and John spent the rest of the day talking to Eugene about Christ. However, Eugene was not ready to make that kind of serious decision. But a few months later Bill and John got a letter that said in part, "I cannot wait to tell you about a magnificent experience I had. I repented on August 18 and received the Lord. . . . It is through your effort that another prodigal son has returned to the Father in heaven."

Later Eugene Grosman obtained an exit visa, came to the United States, and studied Bible and communications. In the last years of Communism he spoke on a radio program that reached between 10 and 15 million people each day in the Soviet Union. One of the highlights of my life happened when I gave this illustration to 300 youth leaders we were training in Moscow. I had the privilege of having Eugene Grosman as my translator.

God has placed us where we are for a reason. He wants us to bloom where we are planted. When we disciple students where they are, then we will enjoy the thrill of doing our part toward fulfilling the Great Commission.

PENETRATE THE CAMPUS

Emory, a youth pastor in Texas, went through The *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry* training. At first it made no sense to him. Then about the third day the lights came on. It changed his thinking so much that he called his pastor and apologized for wasting the church's time doing youth ministry the way he had done it before. He went back and soon began to go to the school campus. When he walked into the gym he saw one student named John sitting by himself in the bleachers. He talked to him that day on the campus. Later Emory invited him to an outreach, then led him to Christ. John went through the process of discipleship, leadership training, and internship. Today he is youth pastor of a youth group of 600 students. It all started with one youth pastor penetrating the campus.

In order to penetrate the campus we need to know our objective:

*Going where young people are to build
relationships for the purpose of sharing the gospel.*

It takes a special commitment to go where students are. Adults who will do that

have a calling that involves some special desires.

A desire to be with young people. Like Jesus' desire to "pitch his tent among us" (John 1:14), we need to have a desire to move out of the secure, comfortable environment of the adult and/or church world into the world of the school campus and local hangouts.

After visiting a campus one youth leader reflected: "The thought of going into their territory is a little overwhelming. It can be scary when you begin wondering if they'll accept or reject you. But when I got there I was surprised at how many new relationships can be built by being on campus."

A desire to win the friendship of young people. Being on the campus does not mean jumping on the cafeteria table and thumping our Bibles. Rather, we spend time with students building friendships. Paul expressed the significance of this approach when he said, "So being affectionately desirous of you, we gave you not only the gospel, but our very own lives as well" (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

As you show concern for students as individuals, learning of their interests and needs, not only will your friendships deepen, but you will discover the points of pain in their lives and find ways to apply the gospel to them. As one youth leader put it: "[This] gives us credibility with students who are outside of our church. If the only time they see us is on Sunday, it is easy for them to think that we don't understand what's going on in their lives and therefore don't care about them. Going to the campus makes students feel like they are important to us."

A desire to see young people come to know Jesus. Availability on the campus and significant relationships focused on the needs of students eventually provide the opportunity to share Christ openly. Moving from building the relationship to sharing Jesus will come from a heart's desire that Paul expressed in Romans 10:1: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved." One youth leader described his motivation this way: "Nothing is quite as exciting as sitting down with a student one to one, telling him about Jesus Christ and then helping him ask Jesus into his life."

Students today have a tremendous need for love. They are crying out through all sorts of weird behavior for real relationships with people who care, and ultimately for a relationship with Jesus who will make them whole.

CREATE OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

When all of the other essentials of Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry are in place, then, and only then, is the time right to put the essential principle of creating outreach opportunities into operation. The information you need to design outreach opportunities you possess in your hand now. Read on!

This brief discussion of the five core principles of *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry* is only an introduction. To discover how to implement this approach in your ministry, order *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry*. This self-training kit with a workbook and audio CDs will redirect your vision, realign your priorities, and provide you with practical youth ministry tools.

Lay the tracks in chapters 1-3 before you burn yourself out trying to put on events that are not connected to a process.

ACTION POINTS

1. Order *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry*. Call 1-800-473-9456 or visit our website at www.reach-out.org.
2. Go through the *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry* self-training, and then call us. We will help you implement these five core principles in your ministry.
3. Fill out the “Five Essentials For Excellence” on page 138 of “The Outreach Planner.”
4. Take your volunteer leaders on a vision retreat and challenge them to implement *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry* with you. End the retreat by giving them the opportunity to become part of your Leadership Team.
5. With your team, implement *the practical steps and action points* of this strategy. As you do, you will lay the tracks to run on to make your outreach opportunities fruitful.

FOUR

Strike the Deadly Blow: Smashing Resistance with Prayer

At our church we had started the youth ministry from scratch. In about two years we had 125 kids coming to an apartment clubhouse every week for an outreach. We had moved out of one place and into another because so many kids came. Every week we had a high-energy gathering that kids really enjoyed. About seventy percent of them were non-Christians from the Stone Mountain campus; however, with all of the positive things happening, we noticed that many of the kids were resistant to the gospel. The ones who did receive Christ didn't seem to stick. Even some of the stronger Christians were struggling.

After scratching our heads over the situation for a period of time, we finally figured out the problem. *We had created all of this without serious prayer.* Realizing our mistake, we initiated an all-out prayer focus that included the entire church. Three weeks after we began this intense prayer effort, the resistance to the gospel disappeared. Kids started coming to Christ. We had seventeen in one month who became Christians. Sixteen of those stuck with Christ over the long haul. The older Christians began to have a new hunger. Because we struck a big blow through prayer, the whole ministry turned in a fresh, new direction.

To do excellent outreach you must strike a big blow through prayer. That means involving yourself, your leaders, and your students in a powerful prayer strategy that will rock Satan's socks—turning back the kingdom of darkness and bringing in the kingdom of light. When people gather in prayer, your group is poised with that powerful weapon that smashes Satan's resistance and releases students from their indifference and hardness. As you persevere, God will enable you to conduct your outreach in ways that produces lasting fruit and not just energized fluff.

PRAYER MOMENTUM

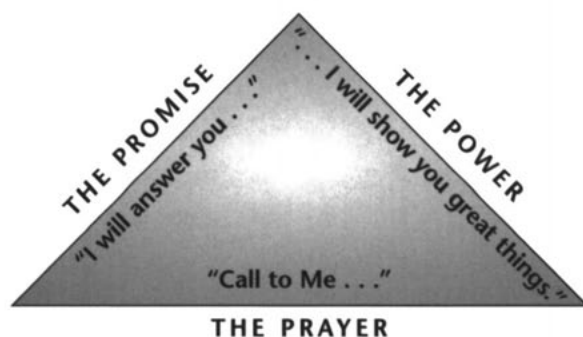
John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress* and a powerful man of prayer, said: "You can do more than pray after you've prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."¹

That statement sets our priorities for us. The better part of our energy for an outreach needs to go toward prayer. In order to do that, it is essential to have an ongoing prayer strategy for your overall ministry, but specifically for your outreach. *Awesome Way to Pray* provides an overall prayer strategy based on mobilizing your leaders and students into prayer triplets. Two other resources will help:

(1) *Penetrating the Campus*, Barry St. Clair and Keith Naylor. (Chapter 3, "Bending Your Knees on Campus")

(2) *Taking Your Campus for Christ*, Barry St. Clair and Keith Naylor. (Chapter 5, "Passionately Romantic" and Chapter 6 "Ultimately the Power Weapon")

In *Awesome Way To Pray* I develop a specific prayer strategy for your outreach based on Jeremiah 33:3: "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." Out of this great verse God gives three sides of the prayer strategy triangle that we can use for our outreach.



The Prayer. The Lord says, "Call to me." God pleads with us to do this, but we spend so little time at it. As a result, we cut off God's presence and power and are left to do God's work, man's way. David Bryant in *Concerts of Prayer* suggests four reasons that keep people from making prayer a priority.

Lack of appreciation. Often people just don't have a sense of how awesome God is. Jeremiah recognized God's awesome power when he said, "Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm.

Nothing is too hard for you” (Jeremiah 32:17). The more we understand the awesomeness of God, the more we will pray.

Lack of desperation. As programs fail and burnout sets in, I’ve observed that youth leaders become more desperate. One veteran youth worker who has a huge youth group and all the high-tech gadgets that go with it, told me: “With all we have, none of it helps kids respond to God unless we as leaders are coming to God continually in total and utter dependence.” That attitude unleashes God’s unlimited resources to work in our behalf. We need to cry out, like the psalmist, “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (Psalm 42:2).

Lack of dedication. People would pray more if they were more whole-hearted toward God’s cause. God is not going to entrust His power and kingdom resources into the hands of someone who is not 100 percent sold out to Jesus Christ and His cause. Our degree of dedication needs to fall in line with what Jesus laid out for us: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

Lack of conviction. Maybe you have never seen God work in powerful answer to prayer. Or maybe you prayed for something and it just didn’t happen the way you had hoped. You might think, “I know God *can*. I wonder if He *will*?” Since faith is “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1), ask God now for one thing you can trust Him for that will build your conviction that He is able.

If you realize the need to have a stronger prayer emphasis in your personal life and in your ministry, the solution is to pray. S. D. Gordon challenges us:

The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; but I mean those people who take time and pray. These are the people today who are doing the most for God: in winning souls; in solving problems; in awakening churches; in keeping the old earth sweet awhile longer.²

Jesus gave us that same challenge in Matthew 7:7-8: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Specifically what Jesus desires for us to do in prayer is this:

Ask. Align yourself with God by agreeing with him. “Father, I want what you want.” Then the only thing outside the reach of your prayers is anything outside the will of God.

Seek. Stand for others. Align yourself with those who cannot pray for themselves: family, friends, kids from broken homes, and secular kids who do not know Christ.

Knock. Press for change. Persistently pound on the door. When you knock with perseverance it means that you have a burden in prayer. “Father, You must act, and I will pray until You bring about a change.” Pursue God relentlessly until His will is carried out fully.

This kind of prayer is illustrated by my friend whose son was running away from Christ. Bob told his son that he was going to fast and pray until his son came back to Christ. He did that for several weeks, and his son responded. That’s the kind of prayer you need for your outreach—serious, persistent prayer.

The Promise. God’s promise that “I will answer you” gets repeated over and over again in the Bible. And on what condition does God fulfill His promise? We must abide in Him. Jesus re-phrases the Jeremiah 33:3 prayer when He says, “If you remain [abide] in me, and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” Why is that so? Because what we want will be what God wants. When we pray according to His promise, and He answers according to His promise, then the result is that we will bear much fruit and glorify the Father” (v. 8).

Sometimes God answers quickly. When Bobby called me on Thursday and asked me if I would come over to his house and pray for him on Sunday, I said I would. He told me that the doctor had found cancer in his foot and leg and that they were going to amputate his leg at the knee the next Thursday. That Sunday I went to his house. His family gathered around and we prayed. We laid hands on him and anointed him with oil. His son-in-law prayed a particularly fervent prayer. On Thursday the doctors took a slice of his toe to do a pathological report before they took off the lower leg. They found some cancer cells. Then they took another slice and found none. Upon further research they found that the cancer had disappeared! That was over three years ago.³

Sometimes God doesn’t seem to be in a hurry. Some prayers I’ve prayed for months or years, and it doesn’t seem that they have an answer yet. But the Bible says that “God is not slow as some count slowness” (2 Peter 3:9). He is on a different clock.

My father-in-law prayed for the salvation of one man in his city every week for eighteen years. He saw him every week and witnessed to him many times. No response. Then in the eighteenth year, the man turned around and came to Christ.

I don't pretend to understand how God works on these things. But I do know that He has made some pretty amazing promises to us. And so often the issue is that "we have not because we ask not" (James 4:2).

The Potential. If we know that God is going to show us and tell us "great and unsearchable things you do not know," then what is the limit to our prayers? The only limit is the narrowness of our vision and the smallness of our prayers. Billy Graham said that we cannot expect great answers to prayer unless we offer great prayers for God to answer.

As you look at your situation and consider what you want to happen through your outreach, clarify what you are praying toward. Two sweeping themes of the New Testament provide direction.

Pray for God to fulfill the Great Commandment. Jesus told us that the greatest commandment was to "love the Lord your God with all your heart. . .and to love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-38). Pray that an attitude of loving God and loving others will sweep your group, but also the schools, the hate groups, the gangs, the druggies, the partiers, and other groups.

Pray for God to fulfill the Great Commission. When Jesus said, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20), certainly He was not teasing us with the impossible. Because "all nations" are on God's heart, we need to have that on our hearts, too. Pray for the evangelization of the world, starting with the students in your youth group and at the schools in your community.

Frank Laubach, the renowned literacy advocate and missionary, said that "prayer is the mightiest force on earth." If enough of us prayed enough we could see God's will done "on earth as it is in heaven." If you have "enough people praying enough" in your situation, then God will move heaven and earth on your behalf.

In a practical application of Jeremiah 33:3, let's develop a two-level prayer strategy for your outreach.

PRAYER POWER TEAMS

The concept of the Prayer Power Team comes from Matthew 18:18-20—"where

two or three come together in my name.” When we pray according to these verses, getting into groups of two and three, He comes into the group and makes His presence and power available to us. He moves all of heaven and earth on our behalf. Then He sends us out in His name “to bind and loose,” to be the answer to our own prayers. Incredible!

To build a student prayer base for your outreach opportunities you will want to challenge your kids to pray in Prayer Power Teams.



Awesome Way To Pray will give you a specific plan to develop your Prayer Power Teams.

PRAYER PACESETTERS

Before we can ask kids to pray, we, as adult leaders, need to set the pace for them. If it doesn't happen with us, it will never happen with them. We need to take the same challenge that they take—to become a part of a Prayer Power Team.

The concept is the same, with a few twists unique to youth leaders.



3 Christians. Write down your name and the names of two other youth leaders with whom you would like to pray. If you are a professional youth leader then I highly recommend praying with youth leaders from another church, preferably with someone from another denomination. That will begin to build unity and a network with other churches, so when you are ready to do a multi-church magnet outreach, you will have the relationships and the spiritual base in prayer.

Meeting 3 Times a Week to Pray. Write down the best times for you to pray. You can arrange your schedule however you want. If it is better to meet once a week for an hour, you can. Or if it will work better for you and the other youth leaders, you can meet three times a week for a briefer time. You might consider meeting early at the school to pray, implementing some of the creative ideas mentioned later in the chapter. Feel free to flex here. Confirm with your other two friends when you will meet.

3 Non-Christian Friends. You can start by praying for three lost kids each, but then you will want to expand your praying. Focus your praying in two areas:

(1) Pray for spiritual awakening among the Christians on the campus. As you pray for Christian students by name, envision them praying, serving, and witnessing lovingly and boldly.

(2) Pray for lost students. Pray for them by name. You can use a yearbook to pray for a wide variety of kids. Pray that a movement of God's Spirit will sweep across the campus drawing students to Christ.

MEGA IDEAS FOR CREATIVE PRAYING

To keep prayer a central focus for the outreach opportunities, you can use these creative ideas or put together your own unique approach for your situation. Instead of taking responsibility for all of this yourself, you will want to set up the Prayer Team as discussed in chapter 9.

- Create a 12- or 24-hour prayer chain with students signing up for 15-minute segments. If you have enough students involved in the Prayer Power Teams, you could have each team take a 30- or 45-minute segment. You might try this for a limited time period, like a week before a big outreach opportunity. Then if it goes well, expand it.

- Pray over your meeting room. Assign a different group of students each week to come and pray. Have a format or a prayer list of the different items you want them to pray for. Invite the presence and power of God into the room.

- Gather all of the Christians on the campus for prayer once a month. You can involve several other youth leaders in this with you. Meet at a neutral site close to the campus.

- A parents' off-campus prayer meeting can draw together concerned Christian

parents in that one school. This will afford an opportunity for parents to meet each other. One of them could carry on the prayer meeting from there. Each time you have an outreach you can mobilize them to pray for that particular school.

- During your outreach set up a prayer wall of parents, youth leaders, and kids who surround the entire room or building praying for the meeting as it is happening.

- Use a Target Prayer Strategy. In the room where you have your youth group, but not where the outreach is being held, have the students and leaders write the initials of the three people they are praying for in their Prayer Power Teams on a “prayer bullet” (a paper identification tag available in an office supply store). Have them write their names on the other side. Then each student pins the tags to the outer ring of a target you have put in place. Once the student has shared the gospel with his non-Christian friend, he moves the bullet to the next circle. When that person accepts Christ, the bullet is moved to the center of the target and turned over, so the name of the new Christian faces out. This visual target creates excitement about and encouragement to pray for and share with lost students.⁴

- Build prayer into the HIT Team meetings (see chapter 9). Each team that is responsible for one area of the outreach can build prayer into its preparation. Either keep prayer on the agenda of the HIT Team leaders or appoint a person on each HIT Team to be responsible for prayer.

- Set up a prayer walk. This can take several different forms. It can be done by parents, youth leaders, and/or students. When people arrive to pray, divide them into teams. At this point you can choose between two options. (1) Assign each team to a school. They will go to the school and walk around each building praying for God’s presence and power to operate there. (2) All of the teams together can do a Jericho Walls March. The teams march seven times around the building where the outreach will be held. As they march, each team has different prayer assignments—the set-up, the music, students to come, and so on.

- Invite students to prayer parties the week of a special outreach. The concept is the same as the cottage prayer meeting of generations past. Along with refreshments and fellowship, have a concentrated period of prayer for the outreach. Plan for several different locations so that students can do this in their neighborhood or area of town.

- Design a prayer breakfast on the morning of the outreach or the day before.

You can use this to build momentum for the outreach as well as communicate any information about the outreach. You might have music, but the primary purpose is prayer.

- Use your Sunday School time to build a prayer emphasis. You can have students pray in small groups or by classes. Having a prayer card with requests and information would be helpful to give to each teacher. This could be the place you use the Prayer Target.

- Give each student a card with a breakdown of each hour of the day (8:00 A.M. through 8:00 P.M.) and a prayer request listed beside each hour. They will have one issue to pray for each hour of the day of the outreach.

- Prepare a prayer calendar with one prayer request for each day of the month. Encourage the students to carry the card in their wallet and pray for one request each day. A variation of this would be to prepare a small notebook quarterly that would include all of the prayer requests for the youth group that quarter. At the end of the month after the outreach you can go back over each request and rejoice over the specific prayers answered.

- Start a Moms In Touch group that meets every week to pray for the schools, the youth ministry, and particularly the outreach opportunities.

- Prepare cards with the name and picture of each student in the school. Add to each card any prayer requests for that student. Pass these out to parents who would be interested in praying for them.

- Hand out cards of each student in the youth group to senior adults (or even younger adults). Have them pray secretly for this one student for a semester. At the end of the semester have a banquet that invites adults and kids together. At the banquet they share the requests and answers to prayer.

- Set up forty days of prayer like in Acts 1-2. You might do this forty days before you launch an outreach on a regular basis, or before some particularly significant event.

- Include a prayer, a prayer reminder, or a prayer quote in your weekly or monthly e-mail or mailout to your students.

Well, no lack of ideas here! You can use some, any, all, or part of them for your outreach opportunities. Do this keeping in mind that this prayer saturation isn't just

to keep people occupied, but to *cover every aspect of your outreach in prayer so that the presence and power of God can be manifest in that meeting.*

ACTION POINT

Incorporating what you do already in the area of prayer, as well as what you have learned in this chapter, write out your prayer strategy for your outreach opportunities. Include your personal strategy, a strategy for your leaders, and one for your students. The sheet to guide you is on page 142 of “The Outreach Planner.”

1. John Bunyan, “Reflections on Prayer,” quoted in *Tabletalk* (February 1987), 5.
2. S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer* (Westwood, NJ.: Fleming H. Revell, 1967), 11.
3. Several years later Bobby’s cancer returned. Eventually he died. All of us eventually face death. However, he had good health for a long time due to God’s intervention in his life through prayer.
4. “Using a Prayer Target,” in material created by Billy Beachum for Super Summer. For more information write Student Discipleship Ministries, P.O. Box 6747, Ft. Worth, TX 76115.

FIVE

Ride the Big Wave: Gathering People for High-Energy Momentum

Shawn did a good job in youth ministry. He had been at it for a few years. The church liked him and he liked the church. Then he went through the Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry training highlighted in chapter 3. That put together some missing pieces of the puzzle for him. He knew he had “the tracks to run on.” He had taken the challenge to customize a prayer strategy for the youth ministry, too. In fact, after the training he set aside two days of prayer to determine how this fit together in his situation. In those two days the wave began to gather strength, creating a high-powered momentum that would later crash the shore with great impact.

He began the two days by putting butcher paper all around the room. He listed the five core principles from chapter 3 and began to pray: “Lord, show me how everything I do fits around these five principles.” In the process of categorizing every activity and event, the Lord reminded him of seven people whose names he had written during the training because he had offended them in some way. Immediately, he obeyed God. He got up, made the contacts and asked forgiveness of each person. He came back with a fresh sense of God’s presence. He felt greatly relieved to have that behind him. He got everything laid out, deciding what could stay and what needed to go. He set his priorities and made a timeline so he wouldn’t feel he had to do it all at once.

Shawn set up a vision retreat for all of his youth workers. Seventeen came. He began the retreat telling about how the Lord reminded him to call those seven people he had offended. Some of them were on the retreat. He shared how God had worked out those relationships. That set the tone for a time of confession, praise, and prayer that lasted long into the evening. Shawn reported,

God moved. We had a spiritual awakening right there. All seventeen committed themselves to be on our Leadership Team. Since then we have

developed a prayer strategy and a people strategy. Preparation of our leaders and students is underway to reach kids at school who need Christ and to bring them to our outreaches. We definitely have the momentum.

In order to design outreach that gathers and then maintains momentum, we must bring all of the key players together in unity. Everyone has to be on the same page. Several key individuals and groups have to move along together. Who are they? And how do they do that?

THE LEADER: THAT'S YOU!

Students need leaders. As the youth leader in your church, now more than ever before, you have the opportunity to lead not only Christian students, but secular students as well. To prepare yourself to take advantage of this vital opportunity, you must take some critical steps.

Define your philosophy of ministry with outreach to secular students in mind. Build into the heart of what you do an intense focus on lost kids. Certainly from reading the first several chapters you have that focus clearly in your scope. The Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry strategy discussed in chapter 3 will give evangelism its proper perspective and place in your ministry.

Articulate your philosophy so you are not the only one who knows where you are going. Before you articulate it orally, you need to have it written down. Let's pause here to acknowledge that most youth leaders fly by the seats of their pants, operate off the cuff, wing it, are "led by the spirit" (which "spirit" is up for grabs). So writing down your philosophy and strategy of ministry may not be number one on your list of favorite things to do. However, I am making a plea to you to write it. Not only write it, but refine it so that it is in an excellent form to communicate to others. When you do that you will have a tool that will serve as your "north star." It will not only keep you on course, but also it will provide direction to your pastor, adult leaders, and students regarding youth ministry. (See "The Outreach Planner" for a sample written philosophy.)

Expand your vision with your whole city in mind. You will limit your outreach only by the size of your vision. Before beginning, try to see the potential from God's perspective. Leadership that imposes limits on God can, and has, stunted many outreach opportunities.

- Maybe you have seen outreach as your kids bringing a few of their friends.

- Maybe you have thought you would be successful if your group grew by, let's say, twenty in the next year.
- Maybe you have looked at your youth group of thirty and have not seen that your parish is the high school of 3,000 down the street.
- Maybe you have seen one school, when ten schools exist in your city.
- Maybe you have thought that your church could reach every student without considering the necessity of networking with other churches.
- Maybe you have thought that your denomination was the only one doing anything, without considering how you could partner with some churches of other denominations to get the vision accomplished.

Ask God to expand your vision. See yourself actively involved in reaching out to *every student, in every school with the life-changing message of Jesus.*

To get a handle on your vision, write down your wildest dreams concerning what God can do through your outreach opportunities. Then condense your dreams into three or four sentences based on the following criteria: (1) Are my dreams consistent with my overall philosophy of ministry? (2) Are my dreams consistent with Scripture? (Support your main points with biblical principles or illustrations.) (3) Do I have the spiritual maturity that allows God to fulfill these dreams through me? (4) How do my pastor, church leaders, and more spiritually mature friends evaluate my dreams?

Check out your dreams in all of these areas. After you have revised them, then adapt them into a solid, Scripture-based vision for outreach. Now that you have God's vision, ask Him to fulfill it. Include it in your philosophy of ministry above.

Share ownership of the ministry with other leaders and students. This can't be your vision only. Others must know that they "own" the vision too. For all of you Star Trek fans, fulfill your fantasies and pretend you are Captain Kirk of the Starship Enterprise. You have Mr. Spock and all of the others under your command. Each one knows his ongoing mission: "to explore new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations and to boldly go where no one has ever gone before." Each one plays a role in carrying out the mission. All work together to fulfill the mission and to do whatever necessary to defeat the Klingons.

That is the kind of focused, tight-knit team you want to build. In order to do that you have to share ownership of the mission. This does not mean that you turn

all of the responsibility over to someone else. But it does mean that as you guide the direction of the ship, adult leaders and students will take major roles of responsibility in the mission. Wouldn't it be great to say "Beam me up, Scottie" and all of it would be done. That is where the analogy breaks down. (Maybe you think it already has.) To build a team that shares ownership takes mega-effort on your part. But it will take you "where no one has ever gone before" in your church, on the campus, and in your community.

Model a lifestyle of evangelism. Some youth workers fall into the do-what-I-say-not-what-I-do syndrome. Kids see right through it. Most Christian kids are surrounded by more non-Christians than they will ever encounter again. Deep inside, most of them want to live for Christ and share their faith. Your role is to model the courage it takes to do that.

Picture your youth group like an arrow. You are the tip of the arrow, setting the pace and providing direction. They are the shaft, following your lead. Some will be right behind you. Some will be "way back there." But they all need someone to look to, in order to know how to relate Christ to their friends and to share their faith on campus.

For them to "walk the walk and talk the talk" they need someone who can set an example in "walking" and "talking" for them. One of the primary reasons students don't share their faith at school is that they have never seen anyone do it on a consistent basis. And so, quite frankly, they don't know how. Unless they have had someone model it and work with them to instill confidence, even something as simple as inviting a friend to an outreach opportunity can scare them to death. One youth pastor, when asked why his kids boldly share Christ, responded: "They do it because I do it."

If your adult leaders and core kids don't have a heart for communicating Christ to their friends, and you have had contact with them long enough to influence them, then ask yourself some serious questions. Maybe their lack of zeal is reflected in your lack of zeal. But if you set the pace, you can know for sure that in time they will catch it.

One youth pastor, going regularly to the campus and from there meeting with kids to communicate Christ, established a 13-week training experience to help youth workers and students share their faith. Over a two-year period more than 125 workers and students completed this training. One parent of two teenagers, named Phil,

had been active in church leadership for twenty years, but had always lacked the confidence to witness boldly. Anxious to overcome this weakness, he signed up for the course. This youth pastor took this man with him to let him see how he communicated Jesus.

One afternoon Phil struck up a conversation with a 16-year-old runaway, Becky. She had returned home two days before after hitting rock bottom—strung out on drugs, malnourished, and pregnant. Much to Phil's surprise, Becky was eager and open to his "butchered" presentation of the gospel and gave her heart to Jesus. In the year since she became a follower of Jesus, she has completely recovered from her drug habit, has given birth to a healthy baby girl, has chosen to give the baby up for adoption, has enrolled in school, has become an honor student, and has led six of her classmates to Christ. Now she trains others to share their faith.

In light of what we have discussed, ask yourself the question, "What do I, personally, need to do to get ready to lead others in creating these outreach opportunities?"

THE PASTOR AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP: YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

In order to make youth ministry work over the long haul, you need the support of your pastor and church leadership. Good communication at this point and at this level will save you much grief later on. To communicate effectively with your pastor and church leaders you will need to pursue several important issues.

Pray for wisdom and insight. Before approaching the leadership of your church, recall the promise from Proverbs 2:6: "For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding."

As you pray about how to present your philosophy and strategy to the leaders, ask the Lord to prepare you and them. He will give you specific insights into the situation and actions to take that will help you communicate properly.

Your positive attitude will make a big difference here. You may have gone to church leaders before and gotten burned. Or you may feel intimidated because you are young. If you are thinking, "They won't listen to me," then remember the promise of 1 Timothy 4:12: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." You will be amazed at how far a positive, open attitude will take you in getting these issues worked out.

One youth pastor complained to me that his pastor wouldn't let him do any-

thing. Every time he tried to talk to his pastor he ran into a brick wall. He said he intimidated his pastor with his aggressiveness. But at one of our conferences the Lord revealed to him that he was the problem, not his pastor. Through this he faced the problem and confessed his sin. His attitude changed! He told the pastor that he wanted to work on his team, supporting him, praying for him, and encouraging him. As a result the barriers came down, and he and his pastor grew closer. Then, when a crisis hit their church, these two were able to stand together in a trusting relationship.

God wants to work in and through you as He prepares you to communicate.

Present your vision. When you meet with your church leadership, talk about two areas: (1) the needs of students generally and those in your city particularly; and (2) the church's opportunity to meet those needs.

To show the needs of students, gather some national and local statistics and news articles on teenage issues in your community. Obviously the ultimate solution to those needs is a relationship to Jesus Christ. That will lead you into the second area.

Present your vision for ministry. Show how your vision will meet students' needs. In the last part of the vision presentation, explain how the outreach opportunities fit for it. Prepare the presentation so that it looks sharp. Get someone to design graphics. This will communicate that you have thought through this thoroughly, that you know the issues, and that you take this ministry to lost students seriously. They will be impressed with your diligence and seriousness, and therefore, will more likely trust you to carry out this vision. (Again, refer to "The Outreach Planner" for a sample.)

To handle this properly, first make an appointment with your pastor. Explain everything to him one-to-one, getting his input privately. Get his direction on whom to communicate with next. Set up that meeting and go through the same process with that person or group of people.

Paint a realistic picture of what is involved. Help your pastor and church leaders see that secular students don't act like Christian students. Non-Christians act like non-Christians. We can't expect them to act any other way. Proverbs 14:4 gets the point across this way: "Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest."

If you want a clean church and no cigarette butts in the parking lot, then don't invite lost students. Digging chewing gum out of the carpet comes with the territo-

ry. But then, this proverb reminds us, if you don't take that risk, then don't expect new, young, vibrant believers in the church.

You might say to your leadership: "What is our focus? Is it a clean building and a calm, quiet atmosphere? If it is, we should never reach out to and invite secular kids. But if our focus is reaching the world for Jesus Christ, then we definitely need to invite and welcome all students—even if it means gum on the carpet."

Ask them to take the risk of being relevant. You are *not* asking the church leaders to compromise any basic biblical principles or convictions, but reaching lost kids means moving out of your comfort zone on some cultural issues. For example, one of the hot issues is music. For the outreach to be culturally relevant, you will need to play music that the students enjoy. The outreach is not for adults, but for kids. Just like students don't need to complain about the music in an adult meeting (Sunday worship, for example), the adults don't need to complain about the music in the kids' meeting.

If this music issue is particularly touchy, I would recommend that you read and then give to your pastor/leaders *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate* (Tyndale House) by Steve Miller. It provides the most balanced treatment on the subject I've seen anywhere.

The fruit of seeing students come to know Christ resides on the end of the limb. We have to climb the ladder—get away from all the church things that make us feel secure, and reach out to the end of the limb—if we want to pick the fruit. Never easy; always risky. We have to choose between our comfortable security and going out on a limb to pick the fruit in students' lives.

Invite their specific support. Ask your pastor and then the leaders to stand with you on what you present. Encourage them to make a verbal expression of support in three areas.

First, ask them to stand with you on the vision of ministry you presented.

Second, secure their prayers. Probably you will want to come up with one of the creative ideas from the prayer chapter, giving them a specific way to pray for you. You will experience greater success if you give them something written and then continue to supply reports and requests to them on an ongoing basis. The more consistently they pray for you, the more solidly they will support you.

Third, ask them for the finances you need. Be straightforward. Present your

budget, (See “The Outreach Planner” for a sample budget. If budgeting is not your forte, get an accountant in your church to help you put a realistic budget together). Ask the leaders to provide the budget you need for one year. Assure them that after that you will sit down and evaluate with them what the ministry has accomplished and how the budget needs adjustment.

Do not hesitate. Do not back down. Be humble and loving, but also be confident. Find out if they back you or not. If they offer their support, thank them and move ahead with confidence. If they do not, ask questions and discover why. Listen. God will teach you through them. At all costs, continue to submit to the authority of their leadership. Avoid any rebellious attitude or action. Remember, God is in control. You can trust Him. Perhaps He is protecting you from starting something for which you are not quite ready.

Or you might realize that in your situation two competing philosophies exist. The Bible teaches, “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?” (Amos 3:3). If you discover that you have a conflict on philosophy, not personalities or methods, then you need to begin to ask the Lord to lead you to another situation where you and the leadership share the same vision.

Invite the leaders to come. After gaining the support of your church leaders, give them the opportunity to come and observe what you do, especially at one of the outreaches. The more they get involved, the more enthusiastic they will become about reaching students.

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM: MOBILIZED FOR ACTION

Based on the assumption that you have assembled your Leadership Team and that currently you meet with them, we can move toward how to involve them strategically in outreach. They will make the greatest contribution in two critical areas.

Building Relationships with Students. No effective outreach takes place without a large network of relationships of Christians with non-Christians. Over the years the largest outreach events in the world have been the Billy Graham crusades. The heart and soul of their outreach strategy has been “Operation Andrew,” which is based on John 1:40-42:

Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

On a smaller scale but the same principle, the adult leaders set the example for your core kids on how to establish relationships with non-Christians. Then your students connect their friends to the outreach and ultimately to Jesus. One youth pastor, who has done highly effective outreach for several years, expressed the importance of these relationships.

I think most of us are being a bit idealistic when we expect large numbers of non-church-oriented pagan youth to flock to our weekly worship services, drop their emotional defenses, and embrace our messages with repentant hearts. Quite honestly, most non-church-oriented youth feel like fish out of water when they attend the average evangelical worship service . . . [or] even our high-energy youth meetings. I contend that a non-church-oriented student is like a newly captured animal in a cage. He is tense, on the defensive and frightened. His new environment threatens him and prevents him from being open or at ease. The one element that can make a radical difference in the non-church-oriented youth's anxiety level is the security of a familiar face, especially if it belongs to a person that has cared enough to initiate and develop a personal relationship. To break through the emotional walls surrounding most non-church-oriented kids' hearts, we must use relationships as our ammunition instead of religious rhetoric. This is perhaps the most challenging, but the most effective way to reach today's non-church-oriented young person.¹

An entire book has been devoted to helping you and your volunteer leaders know how to go to the campus and build relationships with non-Christians. Read *Penetrating the Campus*, especially the chapter that discusses how to multiply your leaders in relationships.

Playing a Vital Role During the Outreach. For the outreach itself, volunteer youth leaders help set the pace. Going back to the illustration of the arrow we used earlier, you are the tip, but your Leadership Team makes the tip of the arrow larger and more powerful. If you have invested in them, then they will be able to do what you do. At that point you have multiplied yourself because you have much more maturity, skill, and manpower available when you have trained leaders to help you in this highly labor-intensive outreach.

Depending on abilities, spiritual gifts, and personal preferences, your leaders can fill a wide variety of vital roles. In later chapters these roles will become clearer, but for now let's address three broad categories.

Invite. Either from their position inside the church working with Christian kids or from the vantage point of being on the campus working primarily with non-believers, your leaders will have relationships that will allow them to offer an invitation to an outreach that students will take seriously. You can show them how to do that so neither they nor the students feel awkward. Encourage them to invite only students within their sphere of influence.

When they invite students, sometimes it is helpful to offer to pick up those students, especially ones in junior high who do not yet drive. Leaders can view this either as a nuisance or as a significant serving ministry. When I spoke at one church in California at a 6:30 A.M. outreach breakfast, the leaders started picking kids up at 5:30. After the breakfast they took responsibility to provide them a ride to school. Three hundred students attended the breakfast!

Attend. Obviously if the leaders invite students, then those leaders need to attend the outreach themselves. If they bring students with them, then they need to take responsibility to make sure those kids are taken care of and are having a good time. In the process of doing that the leaders can both introduce those students to some other students they know, and/or meet the friends of the students they brought. Both of these opportunities broaden the network of personal relationships, which is at the heart of what will take place at the outreach.

HIT. No, we are not advocating abusing ninth graders. HIT stands for High Impact Teams. These teams take specific areas of responsibility for the meeting—publicity, music, set-up, and so on. (We will describe all of the details of these responsibilities, in chapter 9.) For now you need to understand that each of your youth leaders will be on one of these teams. The core kids will carry out the actual ministry, but each team will have an adult leader to guide, direct, advise and coordinate.²

Only with your Leadership Team mobilized can you carry the load that will sustain a labor-intensive outreach ministry. When your adult leaders join your team and move with your vision, then you will have multiplied yourself by the number of people on your team.

THE STUDENT TEAM: YOUR CRITICAL MASS

Christian students, particularly the core of kids being disciplined, provide the critical mass to reach non-believers. It makes sense. Students spend six to eight hours a day, five days a week with their friends. Middle school and high school students are the real

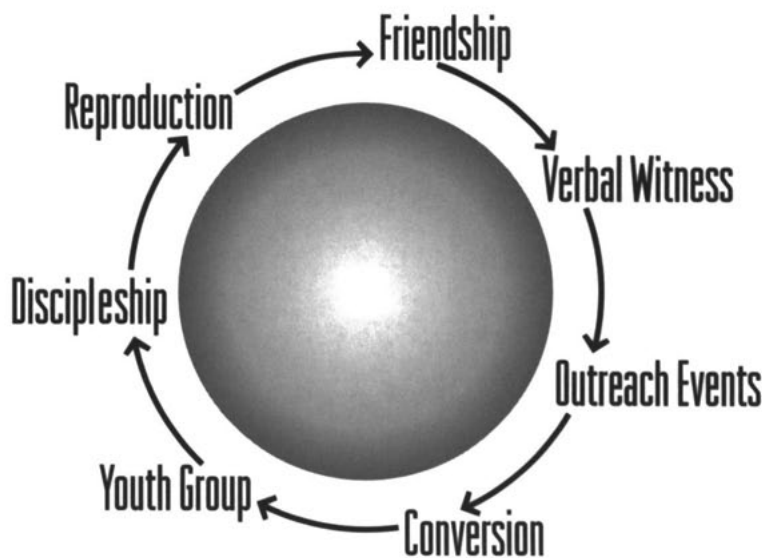
evangelists. If they don't catch the vision of reaching their friends and act on that vision daily, then both campus ministry and outreach opportunities will ultimately fail.

Personally, I believe that God is raising up a generation of kids in whose hearts He is placing the desire not only to follow Him, but also to take the message of Christ to their generation. John Dawson put it this way:

The emergence of a worldwide urban culture is setting the stage for the world's first truly global awakening... this global unification of mission fields, especially among youth, represents a significant new development... evangelists will emerge who are of junior high age.³

In light of the prophetic truth of that statement we need to get students on the Great Commission team. How can we do that?

Equip Students for Evangelism. Once teenagers move into the discipling process, then they need the challenge to communicate their faith to others. This is not a one-dimensional, Bible-thumping approach. The process begins with friendship and goes full circle, with outreach opportunities playing an important role by providing a place where students can bring their friends and know that others will love and accept their friends. Also, the outreach opportunity becomes a place where Christian students can express their faith. The following diagram gives the big picture not only of what's involved in kids sharing their faith, but also how outreach opportunities fit into that faith-sharing.



Friendship. All students hunger for love and relationships. When Christian students radically love their friends, they earn the right to talk about their faith.

Verbal Witness. As friendship and trust grow, a non-Christian will become receptive to an honest conversation about Jesus Christ. Encourage students to talk about Christ early in the relationship. The big problem: most Christian students have no idea how to approach the relationship or what to say when the opportunity comes.

In my own experience, with a sincere heart, and a real desire to see my friend come to Christ, I started talking to him about Christ soon after I had become a believer. He was antagonistic. I was defensive. It ended in a shouting match. I was totally unprepared to communicate with him about Christ. All of this points out the value of training students to witness.

Outreach Events. When students receive training, they catch the vision for how God wants to use them at school and how they can share Christ. Outreach opportunities serve as a focal point—a place they can bring their friends, where non-Christian friends experience a Christian atmosphere and hear positively who Jesus is and how He can change their lives.

Conversion. Also, the outreach serves as a platform for ongoing conversation about Jesus Christ. At the end of the meeting, later that night, or at school the next day, the Christian student will have the opportunity to discuss the gospel. In this kind of atmosphere, eventually the Christian student will have the opportunity to lead his friend to Christ.

Youth Group. Immediately after conversion, the Christian student invites his newly converted friend to the youth group. This provides the new believer with the opportunity to experience fellowship with other Christians, to grow spiritually, and to learn how to function within the body of Christ.

Discipleship. The next step for this new believer is to be discipled personally. The student who led him to Christ can take him through *Getting Started*. Then the new believer can move into the structure of your discipleship process.

Reproduction. In the follow up and discipleship process this new Christian will grow into maturity in Christ and take the challenge to share Christ with his non-Christian friends.

The process has come full circle. Repeated enough times by enough students, they will move forward fulfilling the Great Commission among the young people in

your community, the youth culture of America, and ultimately students around the world.⁴

Challenge Students to Ownership and Responsibility. This is the students' ministry, not yours. To succeed, your vision must become theirs. Most students are not challenged enough. That is why they need you to keep coming on like gangbusters with your vision and with ways they can get involved in it.

The Challenge. Many youth workers are afraid to challenge students out of fear of alienating them. But you challenge them by helping them look beyond themselves. The average middle school or high school student is bored with talking on the phone and cruising Main Street. They are bored with church, too. Check your attendance records. In their junior year, they start dropping out like flies.

A teenager wants something beyond his present experience. To take a student beyond himself, you must view him with an eternal perspective. That means simply seeing the student's potential—viewing him as God does. Accept him where he is, while seeing beyond where he is to what he can become.⁵

The Ownership. If the outreach is staff-planned, staff-produced, staff-directed, staff-evaluated—staff, staff, staff—it won't work. Even if you put on a quality event, it won't work because students will evaluate everything you do by MTV standards. When they come to your outreach, they will have just seen a \$150-million movie a few days before. When you show them a \$15 video they will sit back and say, "Okay, I'll give you a D on that one."

However, when students own it, a meeting can be a D presentation but they will give it an A, because they are evaluating their peers; and they compare their peers, not with MTV, but with themselves. Even if Eric stands in front of his peers and says, "Um, er, um, I ah, um I love, um, er God," his friends will say, "Hey, dude, great talk." Why? Kids think, "That's my friend up there, and he said he loved God in front of 150 kids. That's cool." That's one reason why student ownership is so important.

That's not to say that you don't need to have a standard of excellence. Having an attitude that "Anything done for Jesus is Okay" will not cut it. It is not Okay. You need to communicate to students Colossians 3:23: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

But students can do it with excellence. Work with them, not over them, to cre-

ate an outreach that has a high standard of excellence.

The Responsibility. Often adults do not trust students with responsibility. Yet for the ministry to multiply your core students must take responsibility for the outreach. By giving students responsibility you communicate, “I believe in you. I trust you.” They will respond eagerly.

Allow for failure, too. They are young, often immature. Someone once said, “He who never makes mistakes, never makes anything; and he who never fails, never does anything.”⁶ If we expect students to grow, we need to allow them to fail. Continued trust in spite of their failures provides powerful motivation.

With your visionary leadership, the Leadership Team gets motivated and moves into action, and your students own the outreach and take responsibility for it. At that point the wave swells and rises to its crest. Then you can let that momentum carry you into successfully creating outreach opportunities that make a real difference for the kingdom of God.

Available tools from _____ **to help your kids live out and articulate their faith:**

Jesus: No Equal, a small booklet for students to help them articulate the gospel message clearly. Also you can give it to a non-Christian to help him or her understand how to begin a relationship with Christ.

Getting Started, a six-session booklet that helps new believers successfully begin their walk with Christ. For Christians this booklet will help them follow up with students they have led to Christ.

Giving Away Your Faith, a 10-week discipleship course that guides students on the wild adventure of overcoming their fears and taking the risk to boldly communicate Christ.

Taking Your Campus for Christ is a radical idea for students with radical love. In this book, students find out how to have radical love and how to give it away. It contains six sessions of “Dynamic Discussion Starters for Outreach to Your Friends.”

ACTION POINT

To assess your readiness to begin creating outreach opportunities, evaluate your level of momentum right now, and then do what you need to do to get totally prepared. To do that, use the “Outreach Readiness Assessment” on page 143 of “The Outreach Planner.”

1. This quote came from a paper entitled “Evangelism Through Youth Ministry” by Rick Caldwell, 14-15.
2. The HIT team idea came from my friend, Andy Stanley.
3. John Dawson, *Taking Our Cities for God*, 64-66.
4. Adapted from Don Cousins “Full-Cycle Evangelism” in *Working with Youth*, comp. Ray Willey (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books) and re-published as *Josh McDowell’s Youth Ministry Handbook*, compiled by Sean McDowell and Ray Willey, Word Publishing, 2000.
5. Chuck Klein, “Leading and Motivating Students,” in *Working with Youth*, comp. Ray Willey (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.) and re-published as *Josh McDowell’s Youth Ministry Handbook*, compiled by Sean McDowell and Ray Willey, Word Publishing, 2000.
6. Ibid.

SIX

Shout It Out: Spreading the Word

“When people think God, I want them to think about our youth ministry and our church.” One youth leader said that to me when the school administration called him to bring his adult leaders to the school to counsel students after a suicide.

When I asked him how he got people to think about his ministry, he gave me a constant stream of creative ideas. For example, they put ads in the school paper with a picture of a high school student, his favorite thing to do, his favorite song, and some other trivia, then a five-or six-sentence testimony about his relationship to Jesus. Then they put the time and place of their outreach, inviting people to come.

Once, they put a mobile sign across from the school with a message like, “Susan Hernandez knows Jesus and wants you to know Him, too. Come to _____ at _____ to find out more.” Then at their outreach Susan gave her testimony. Every student in the school knew about their youth ministry.

This youth leader did what you want to do: *creatively spread the word in your school(s) about outreach opportunities that help students know Jesus Christ.*

How can we “shout it out” so the message is loud and clear?

CREATING A WITNESS AWARENESS

Communicating Christ is something every student can do! As youth leaders we are responsible to make certain that our students know that and can do it. Note that the emphasis does not revolve around the more surface issue of bringing their friends to a meeting; rather our focus is on helping them communicate Christ to their friends. Their friends need Christ and they are God’s primary tools for helping their friends know Him.

How can you positively motivate your students to share their faith story and bring their friends?

Focus on encouragement, not guilt. Concentrate on their identity in Christ, not what they ought to do.

Love and acceptance. When we connect God's story and our students' stories with real needs, their non-believers will listen. Those needs fall into three categories.

(1) *Personal needs.* Every student needs to be loved and to love others.

(2) *Family needs.* As we help them to understand their relationships at home, to deal with the pain often associated with family relationships, and respond properly to their parents and other family members, God will bring about a dramatic attitude change. That change will dramatically affect their relationship to God.

(3) *Spiritual needs.* When students understand the following motivating truths, they will more freely express their faith in Christ.

- I am totally accepted because of what Jesus did for me (Ephesians 1:4-6).
- God loves me unconditionally (1 John 4:10).
- I have a relationship with God that cannot be broken (John 10:27-28).
- I am as important to God as any person in the universe (Romans 5:8).
- I am a person of infinite value and worth (Psalm 139: 13-16).

When a student embraces those true statements and accepts them as the truth about him, then you can say, "Let's dream about how God can use you!" How much better than burning students out on false guilt for not sharing their faith. Using guilt, they may talk about Christ in order to please you once or twice, but it will never be a consistent motivation. Only with these truths as the basis of their lives will they get fired up about their faith and stay that way.

Grace motivation. Let's use the definition of grace mentioned earlier. Grace is "God's supernatural ability in me through the Cross and Resurrection." When our students begin to understand the resources they have in Christ, and the love and power God desires to release through them to their friends, they will have a high degree of internal motivation and confidence.

I've seen this in my son Scott. He has had a powerful, consistent witness since he was 15. That year he almost died. As a result of that trauma, he had a genuine encounter with Jesus. Since then he has never wavered in his faith even in the face of his mother's death. His witness has been a challenge to me. He was the only Christian in his college fraternity. One time, Bernie, the president of the fraternity, came to Scott's room and said, "Scott, I want you to come to my room." He told Scott how he had accepted Christ when he was in high school, but had put that rela-

tionship on the shelf while in college. Then he said, “Scott, I’ve been really empty for three years. I’ve been watching you. I know you are a follower of Christ. Would you help me get back on track with God?”

Practical tools. Once a student has motivation, you can offer some practical tools to equip him to *share his faith and bring his friends*.

Love others. As you model love for Christ, for him and for non-Christians, then that love will spread and will create the atmosphere in your youth group in which kids who come from the outside will feel accepted and loved. Usually this is one of the biggest hurdles. How many times have I heard, “Our kids are in cliques. They won’t even speak to anyone besides their friends.” These chapters of preparation will break the neck of this problem. Students will discover security and freedom in Christ to love other people’s friends. That is an adolescent miracle!

Invite peers. Plan several training sessions to equip your students to relate socially. Because of immaturity and insecurity, most students feel socially inept. Help them overcome their fears by teaching them simple skills such as how to remember names, how to ask good questions, and how to listen. Use role playing and skits to demonstrate how to do this. Have one group do it incorrectly, making someone feel awkward, embarrassed, frustrated. Then go back and do it correctly, making the person feel, loved, and encouraged (but not in an insincere, Eddie Haskell sort of way!). After that, show them step by step how to invite a friend and express their faith.

Help them to understand that they succeed if they invite someone with love—whether that person comes or not. For most of them this means taking a real step of faith. Many of them will have to move out of their comfort zones in order to offer the invitation. Help them see that once they do this a few times, it will become a normal part of what they do every day. After you have given encouragement and instruction on this, have them practice on each other several times. Then give them the assignment to try this with one friend they have prayed for in their prayer power teams.

Be flexible and persistent. Show them how to anticipate a non-Christian’s response. Non-Christians will not necessarily act like their Christian friend in the practice session. Teach them how to roll with the punches—to accept people where they are, regardless of their attitudes or behavior. Encourage them to keep on building the relationship and keep on inviting. Studies show that it takes seven contacts

with a non-Christian before a person responds. Prepare them to invite their friends in the context of an ongoing relationship, rather than a hit-and-run approach.

Identify with Jesus Christ. Your students must grasp that when they invite someone it is not just a “social thing”; rather, it is a “Jesus thing.” Teach them to get the name of Jesus out in the open. Don’t hide the real purpose of the outreach. Sure, they can talk about who will be there, and how much fun it will be, but also they can let their friends know that they will talk about Jesus.

For your students to mention the name of Jesus probably will be their first big step toward sharing the gospel with their friends. For some that will come easily. For others, because of temperament, personality, or where they are spiritually, it may take some time. Challenge them to see that no matter how long it takes, speaking Jesus’ name boldly takes the first big step in leading someone to Jesus.

Share the Gospel. Let’s say the conversation opens up and the person expresses a real interest in Christ. Show your students how to take the tools available to them and apply them in this situation. In *Giving Away Your Faith* they can learn skills like asking questions, telling their story, sharing the gospel, and leading a person to receive Christ.

Since repetition rules, practice these skills over and over. Create an opportunity to experiment with their new skills. Take them to practice in a place where kids hang out. As scary as that is, they will learn quickly.

Consider a couple of options to carry out this equipping process. Use a retreat setting, but one close enough to where teenagers hang out, so you can go out and practice. Or use your weekly meetings to train them in one skill each week. You will know how this equipping will work best in your situation. Practice each skill until they have mastered it.

Once equipping like this begins, then bold and contagious communication about Jesus follows. That is the built-in publicity for an outreach. The rest of getting the word out becomes relatively easy.

BUILDING ROADS TO PEOPLE

With the car engine running, we need to construct several highways that help students connect to their friends. It happens best *person-to-person*.

They had no billboards, radios, TVs, newspapers or magazines, yet in Jesus’ day

“news about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee” (Mark 1:28). From person to person the news spread so that larger and larger crowds came to hear His message.

Today advanced technology allows us to “get the word out” more quickly, more creatively, and more powerfully than they ever did in Jesus’ day. “Okay, Simon, your job is to tie into the computer bulletin board and let them know I’ll feed 5,000 next Thursday at... let’s see, dinner is around 6 o’clock.” Can you imagine? Even with all of our high-tech toys, nothing can beat word-of-mouth publicity.

People attend an event for a variety of reasons, but statistics show that at least 75 percent of those who come to church are personally invited. To maximize the potential of this very personal approach, construct these roads to help your kids connect to their friends.

Changed lives. If it’s true that a picture is worth a thousand words, then a changed life is worth 10,000 flyers. When Jesus changes a student’s life and his friends see that change, then they will either run away from Jesus or be attracted to Him. Life change creates either disdain or curiosity.

We see the positive impact of this kind of approach in the account of the woman at the well (John 4). After Jesus had transformed her life, John says: “Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony” (4:39). And later “many more became believers” (v. 41). When Jesus changes a life, the word spreads rapidly. When students encounter Jesus through the witness of your students on campus or through your outreach, word will spread, students will know, and they will curiously want to find out what is happening.

Discipleship groups. Because of the high level of motivation and accountability in discipleship groups, you can give disciplined students the assignment to bring at least two of their non-Christian friends to the outreach. Potentially three times the number of students involved in your discipleship groups will attend the outreach.

Youth group. Although the youth group does not have the same level of commitment as the discipleship groups, you can still challenge the students to bring their friends to the outreach. Motivate them by helping them see how they can influence their friends.

Specifically challenge your students to participate in a prayer power team. After praying for their friends, they can then invite one of those friends to the outreach.

Using another approach, help your students make a seating chart of one of their classes. They can choose a name from the list to pray for – one they feel might be most open—and invite that person to the outreach. (See the accompanying chart.)

John	Sue	Jerry
Melissa	ME	Jack
Dawn	Bill	Sam

Or you can use the prayer target idea to create spiritual awareness. (See page 57 for more ideas.)

Since students tend to forget things, you need to keep the awareness level high in your group about the outreach. Make announcements each week using funny skits. Put up posters. Put a table in a conspicuous place with flyers and posters. Communicate to the church and the youth group using the church bulletin, the church paper, the youth group e-mail, and any other means possible. Don't re-design your approach for each outreach. Use the same publicity approach each time, only adding a different twist.

Leadership Team. Assign members of your Leadership Team a certain number of students to invite and bring. If they minister at the schools, have them personally invite students from the campus. If they lead a small group, have them personally invite those students. They need to offer to pick up the students they invite and bring them to the outreach.

Structured personal contact. A more formal structure for personal contact helps in some situations. This involves setting a specific time when all of the group gathers to contact their friends. You can structure this before or after an existing meeting or at another time. You can use this in a variety of methods according to your specific situation.

Many youth workers have used the hour before the youth group or before an outreach to mobilize students either to invite their friends or to do personal evangelism

or both. The advantage of this is that it provides students with a scheduled weekly time slot to share their faith and to invite friends.

For this to work effectively, begin an hour and a half before the next event. Have everyone meet in a designated place on time. Give them specific direction.

- *Instructions:* Each week remind them of their purpose in going. Give them inspiration by sharing brief testimonies from the week before. Offer one biblical principle and one practical tip on how to express their faith clearly. Feel free to repeat things they have heard before. Give them a few minutes to practice what you taught them on each other.

- *Partners:* Link kids who are spiritually more mature and more skilled with younger and weaker ones. The more mature ones will have the challenge of helping the younger ones. The younger ones can learn how to express their faith better from the older ones. Also consider who they are going to see. Friends should go to see friends. This can get a little tricky, so have it well organized.

- *Assignments:* The teams need to know exactly who they will contact and where they will meet them. They can go to their homes or they can meet them at some hangout or fast-food place. If they are going to a home, you need to have names, addresses, and phone numbers on cards so they can know exactly where to go. You will need adult leaders to serve as “captains” over several teams. These adults will take the responsibility to know who is on what team, where they will go, who they will meet. For younger kids who don’t drive, these adults will need to transport them. You can use church vans, the church bus, or individual cars. Give them an exact, specific time to return.

- *Prayer.* Pray together in teams before you go. Pray for boldness in sharing and for receptive listeners.

When a team connects with their friends, after a few minutes of casual conversation, your students need to go ahead and invite their friends to the outreach. Use this as an opportunity to tell personal stories and share the gospel if their friends seem open. Have them pray for their friends before they leave. They can ask a simple question like, “Would you mind if I prayed for you before we take off?” If the outreach immediately follows this time, invite the friends on the spot to go to the outreach.

Telephone. With teenagers at home, every house does well to have two phone lines plus cell phones. Even with that, often it is impossible to get a call through.

Why is that? Kids fanatically, intensely, and enthusiastically use the phone!

You can take advantage of this phenomenon to spread the word about an outreach opportunity. Mobilize kids to do something they like to do already – use the phone.

Secure a list of the telephone numbers of students at the school(s). Students usually have a directory.

Ask students to volunteer to make calls. Divide the students who sign up into teams. To make this experience really fun, have the teams meet at someone's home. Create a party! The teams can have as many people as there are phone lines in the house, plus cell phones.

Each team needs a leader who will take responsibility to distribute the names and to do follow up. Assign your core students or adult leaders to this responsibility.

When students arrive, assign them students to invite over the phone. Make sure they call everyone on their lists and make notes. Conduct the following telephone survey.¹ Have them personalize the conversation as much as possible. When they call, have them give their full name, and what grade they are in. Then follow the survey.

The callers can then take the conversation as far as it can go. Urge them to be bold, yet sensitive, to talk about their relationship to Christ, to allow the person on the other end to open up and share problems, and to lead the person to Christ if he or she shows that kind of interest.

At the end of the survey, if a student has shown an interest in spiritual things:

- ask that person if you could meet at school and talk some more.
- set up a time and place to meet the next day.
- get an email address and/or phone number. Do this by offering yours first, asking for it in a friendly way, not a formal way.

If appropriate at the end of the conversation ask: “Would you mind if I pray for you?” Offer a brief but personal prayer.

STUDENT TELEPHONE SURVEY

I would like to get your opinion and advice on several questions about religion. Would you be willing to give your response to ten brief questions?

- Are you a member of an organized church or religious group? If yes, what denomination/group? _____
- How often do you attend church/group services?

<input type="checkbox"/> More than once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a month
<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/> A few times a year
<input type="checkbox"/> Twice a month	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
- How often does your family engage in religious activities at home? (If needed, give an example: Bible reading, praying)

<input type="checkbox"/> Very frequently	<input type="checkbox"/> Often
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely
<input type="checkbox"/> Never	
- In a sentence, what do you think the Bible is about? _____

- In your opinion, who is Jesus Christ? _____

- How much do your religious convictions influence your daily life?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very much	<input type="checkbox"/> Some	<input type="checkbox"/> A little	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all
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- If available, would you join in voluntary religious activities at school? (If needed, give an example: Bible study, fellowship group.)
- If available, would you be interested in voluntary religious activities outside of regular school hours? (If needed, give an example: concerts, retreats, youth group.)
- Do you believe Jesus Christ's death has anything to do with our relationship to God?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
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- Would you say that you are in control of your own life or that you know Jesus personally and He controls your life?

<input type="checkbox"/> Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Jesus
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COVERING THE CAMPUS

Students spend seven or more hours a day at school. Therefore it stands to reason that we want to use this forum to invite the students to outreach opportunities.

Create a positive image. Keep in mind that you want to create a very positive image in the minds of the school administration and the students. These people will perceive what you do either positively or negatively. For that reason it is very important for you to think through your approach to spreading the word. Take the slant that you will speak to the needs and issues of the students at that school. Design your publicity to communicate that—

- This outreach is THE place to be.
- Kids will have fun.
- Their friends will be there.
- They will experience a first-class event.
- They will learn about Jesus Christ.

In order to accomplish these publicity objectives, use the following guidelines.

- Target the audience. Decide before you do any publicity who you desire to reach. Determine the specific groups within the student population and then design your publicity to reach the ones the Lord impresses you to reach. Consider strongly the groups your core kids belong to, contacts you already have with the leaders of those groups, and which groups seem most open to the gospel. To do this accurately you can use the “School Survey” on pages 66-70 in *Penetrating the Campus*. Target your publicity to appeal to the groups you are most likely to reach. If several youth groups in your community cooperate on the outreach, you can cover every group on the campus.

- Communicate person to person. Students inviting their friends far exceeds the effectiveness of any other type of publicity. All of these other ideas only serve to supplement the person-to-person approach.

- Create sharp publicity. Have someone, preferably one of your students skilled in graphic design, to create a sharp logo for your overall ministry and unique art for each outreach. Use your general youth ministry logo on every piece of publicity you produce so that students will identify your ministry with that logo.

- Follow school rules. When you consider publicizing on a school campus, you

need to make absolutely certain that you do not violate any school rules. In order to achieve that, obtain permission beforehand. If you already have a ministry on the campus, this should not create a problem. If you do not have a ministry on campus, you definitely need to walk lightly. Your legal boundaries are that students can put up posters and hand out flyers on the campus, but you or your volunteers cannot. Even if you are within your legal rights, get permission so that you guard your relationship, not to mention the church's relationship with the school.

- Consider your budget. Good publicity can cost, so plan your budget carefully. Find the balance between extravagance and excellence. You don't have to be extravagant to be excellent. The emphasis is on quality. But quality doesn't necessarily mean expensive. Avoid "the cheap church stuff" syndrome. If you believe that spending a large sum of money in one area will prove effective, go for it. Just make sure the money is in the budget and that you have thought through the effectiveness of this expenditure.

- Think beyond your budget. Often local Christian merchants who want to get their message out through advertising, will work with you to do an "ad campaign" for an outreach or a series of outreaches. For example, you could work together on a "bleacher seat" for athletic events. On one side, the merchant advertises the business, on the other side you advertise the outreach(es).

Focus your approach. Think creatively and brainstorm ways to communicate, but then narrow your ideas. As you filter through the proposed ideas, use one or two of the best ones instead of trying to do them all. Once one has succeeded, try another one, or substitute one for variety's sake. The following list expresses only a sampling of ideas. From your creative times of brainstorming, you, your leaders, and your students will come up with much better ideas than these.

- Posters. Depending on the situation, you can create your own (think cheerleaders!), use a "professional" poster that you design, or obtain one from the group coming in for your outreach. Either way you go on this is fine. When you create your own, it is labor intensive. My daughter Katie was a cheerleader. The number of hours she spent working on creative posters was astronomical! You will need a team in your youth group who does this kind of thing well.

- Tracts. As a creative option, print a personalized tract. Use photographs of four Christian students on the campus, along with a two-line testimony from each one.

Use one section of it to briefly announce your outreach. In using this approach, keep the reader guessing. Avoid Christian predictability. Consider having several versions with a variety of students testimonies. Because of its personal nature, your students will not be shy about passing it around.

- **School newspapers.** Many middle schools and high schools publish a school newspaper. Any business or other group that wishes to pay can advertise in these publications. For a small amount of money you can advertise your outreach. You can use the testimony idea here as well. If it will help your budget, you can get one of the businessmen in your church to underwrite this and then use that company's name in the ad. In putting the ad together, work with a professional graphic designer so that the message comes across clearly.

- **Public address announcements.** If someone in your youth group (like a student government leader) has access to the school announcements, that person can announce the outreach. The boundaries are that a student needs to make the announcement, and a specific church cannot be the sponsor. Keep it generic and neutral. You can try another angle on this by having the announcement made at the school sports events—both varsity and junior varsity. Usually schools have someone who announces the games. Make certain that whoever writes the announcement gets your approval on it since your reputation is on the line at the school.

- **Flyers.** Put together a 4" x 6" or 5" x 8" flyer announcing the outreach. Use the same graphic design you used for the above ideas. Give the flyer to your youth group to hand out at school. On the day of the outreach encourage students to give them to people at school and personally invite those people to attend. *Warning:* make sure that your kids do not trash the school with these flyers! In order to maintain your positive image with the school, it is imperative that someone take responsibility to pick up the discarded flyers after school. You can work with the custodian on this.

- **Mailings.** Sending out information and invitations through mailings and E-mails creates a broad and general awareness of your outreach. Never count on this to bring anyone specifically to the outreach. It won't. However it will inform. It does create an image. And it opens the door for you and your students to invite people personally to the outreach. Look at the entire school year and your budget, then decide how many mailings or E-mails you will do.

If you have a weekly outreach, E-mail is a good option. You can E-mail information every month with a sharp presentation of all that is happening during the month. E-mail to sections of the student body so that a certain number of students get invited each week. That piques the interest of other students who have not gotten an E-mail. Create your own strategy for your unique situation. Don't overuse this or people will dismiss the emails as SPAM!

- **Special group invitations.** Invite different groups, clubs, and school organizations to come to the outreach. If you do an outreach weekly, you can invite different groups to come on different weeks. For example, you can invite the drama team one week and the track team the next. Schedule these at least a month ahead of time with the group leader so that the group can get the event on its schedule, promote it within the group, and plan on how it will handle transportation. All of this will ensure a larger representation.

To make certain that the situation is handled without communication breakdowns, give the responsibility to a student in your church who is a part of that group to serve as a liaison. One student or a team of two students who belong to that club, organization or team can take that group on as their responsibility. The goal: to get members of the group to come as a group to every outreach.

Advertise creatively. This section covers a wide variety of publicity options that will allow you and your students to use creativity to communicate an awareness about your outreach opportunities.

- **Trailer signs.** Rent trailer signs and place them strategically across the street in front of the school. Put slogans on the signs using the names of your strong Christian kids. For example, one youth minister had a girl in his group named Donna Eagle. He designed the sign to read: "Donna Eagle Goes to NiteLife. She's No Turkey." Obviously you will want to get the student's permission before you do this! In your youth group have a contest to come up with the most clever slogans to put on the sign.

- **Book Covers.** Before the school year begins, design a book cover that your students can use that tells about the outreaches you have coming up during the school year. Put the time, place, and any other useful information on these covers. Do not include any information that will go out of date quickly. The book cover should include your logo. Your youth group can work on this as a project during the sum-

mer. After they get the information, then take it to a graphic designer and a professional printer to get it completed with graphic excellence.

- T-shirts. Put your logo and the event on a T-shirt design. Include the time and place.

- Buttons. Like the book covers and T-shirts, you can advertise your outreach with buttons. But with buttons you can do it less expensively. Ask your kids to wear them on the day of, or week of, your outreach.

- Community Advertisements. Students hang out in many different places and get their messages from numerous sources. That is why you will find it important to advertise in the general community, focusing on those places where students hang out, such as fast food restaurants, rec centers, cruising strips, skating rinks, pools, beaches, and/or malls. One team of students can take on the responsibility to hand out flyers and put up posters in these places.

- Local newspapers. Depending on the size of your community and the newspaper's policies, you can place articles and/or pictures in the local newspaper about a community-wide event. Write your own press release; then invite the religion editor or a writer from the paper to interview you and some of your students. Better yet, invite the reporter to the outreach. When you place an ad, design it yourself. If you put one in once a month or on four consecutive weeks leading up to an outreach, then you will need to design several ads to create variety. Ask the newspaper to put the ad in the sports section, not stuck in a section of the paper that no one reads. In a smaller paper and with more personal contacts, you have a better opportunity to place regular articles and ads. At a larger paper you compete more for space. Plan your approach accordingly. Check the cost on all of this and reconcile it with your budget.

- Radio and television. Use public service announcements for your upcoming outreach. Write your announcement, then call it in to the local radio and television station. To put a creative touch to this, have your kids write the announcement and then record it. You can do the same for TV if you have the equipment and students who do drama. Try another angle by getting you and your students on local talk shows to talk about the upcoming outreach. Or if you are having a guest speaker or artist, have the station do an interview with him or her, either by phone for radio, or on a TV show on the day before or day of the outreach. If you have a contact at the

radio or TV station, that person can help you know exactly how to approach this to bring about the best results in your situation.

ACTION POINT

Out of all that has been presented to help you “shout it out,” design your own personalized strategy to fit your own unique situation. Plan your strategy for an entire year. Use “The Outreach Planner – Publicity Plan,” on pages *144-146*.

1 Survey contributed by John Musselmann, formerly youth pastor at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and now the director of The Jackson Institute in Atlanta, Georgia.

SEVEN

Deliver the Knock-Out Punch, Part 1: Planning the Program

In the middle of the “cruising strip,” on a mall parking lot, they set up for a Saturday night outreach. Even before the band began to play, over 100 kids had gathered, just because they saw people unloading sound equipment.

As the band began to play, about 250 people crowded around. The vast majority of them were smoking and drinking. The band from the church played for twenty minutes, then the leader gave a clear expression of his conversion and commitment to Jesus Christ. Many of the students knew about him from his involvement in a rock group when he was in high school. They listened intently to his powerful but non-threatening presentation.

Just before the intermission the band announced it would come back in fifteen minutes to play again. Then they told the crowd that during the break each person would have the opportunity to talk to someone about knowing Jesus Christ. As soon as the break began, the young people from the church turned to the people around them to talk about Jesus.

By the close of the evening, nine people had expressed a desire to follow Christ. Behind the sound equipment truck a counseling area had been set up, where those nine people and others talked further.¹

We can use the description of this unique outreach to stimulate our thinking about how to put together the outreach program. Whether the outreach occurs occasionally or on a regular basis, several very important suggestions can guide our overall thinking.

Center on evangelism. The clear purpose of the above outreach was to reach kids with the gospel of Christ, not to entertain. For that event one hundred students with a burden to reach their friends received training to mix with the crowd, build a rela-

tionship, and discuss the message of Christ with students who had a desire to talk.

Use variety. Avoid locking into one format. Obviously the above format would not be used on a weekly basis in a youth group setting. You will discover from the ingredients in the next two chapters that you will have a wide variety of options for both weekly and one-time outreach opportunities. Be creative. Keep them guessing. Use the element of surprise.

Prepare properly. The leaders in the previous illustration had worked on the details of the program for a week. Earlier in the evening 100 kids met for prayer and for a thorough explanation of what would happen at the outreach. Everyone knew where to go and what to do. The leaders had covered all details, such as taking proper security measures and making necessary legal arrangements.

Follow up. Each person who attended was made to feel important. Each one had an opportunity to engage in conversation about Jesus. Several decided to follow Jesus and the others were challenged to keep thinking about the gospel. The Christian students were prepared to follow through on new relationships. Those who decided to follow Christ had a friend assigned to get with them the next day to help them get started in following Christ. Because of that, almost all of those nine students got involved in the church.

Let's discuss in greater depth what it takes to put together the program for an outreach like this. What do we do?

GETTING YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW²

No matter what size the church, the budget, or the resources, every one can produce a program for an effective outreach by implementing these seven steps of development.

(1) Purpose. In the outreach, you can't do everything. So narrow your purpose. Later in this chapter and in chapter 8, we will see all of the options for a program. You will have many more than you can use in one outreach. If you know your specific purpose, you will be able to choose the right ingredients to make your program work properly.

You can determine the purpose of the outreach by considering these three questions:

- Where does this outreach fit into the strategy/vision/mission of our youth ministry?

- What message does God have for the students in our community right now?
- How does this outreach fit into the schedule/calendar year?

In light of your answers to these three questions, write the specific purpose for this outreach.

(2) *Target.* The old saying goes: “If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time.” In light of that, determine your target audience. You may say: “My audience is kids!” Great. What kids?

You can determine the specific answer to that by answering these questions:

- Who will be in the audience?
- Where do they stand spiritually?
- What are their felt and real needs?
- What age are they?
- Where are they developmentally?

In light of your answer to these questions, describe your specific audience.

(3) *Theme.* “Don’t cast your message to the wind, rather let the wind catch your message.” In other words, don’t pick some theme out of the air. Instead focus your theme. In prayer ask the Holy Spirit to show you exactly what the students who come will need to experience.

You can decide the overall thrust of your theme by answering these questions:

- What does the Holy Spirit seem to be saying?
- What do the students need to hear?
- What message will meet a specific, focused need?
- What will express spiritual authenticity?

In light of your answers to these questions, write down your theme.

(4) *Goal.* Within the general theme, we need to ask, “What is our *one* goal?” That goal should target an emotion, a feeling. When that has been decided, then you will have narrowed your focus to the degree that you can enable your audience to understand, and you can help convince them to respond.

You decide that goal by asking yourself these questions:

- What emotion/feeling do we want to target?

- What is our rationale for communicating that emotion/feeling?
- What one thing do we want to say about that emotion/feeling?

Write out your specific goal in one sentence.

(5) *Ideas.* Now we need to put flesh on the bones. What ideas can you use to communicate your goal? To come up with these ideas, rely on a team of people, not one person's ideas. Brainstorm, acknowledging that no idea is a bad idea. Encourage creativity. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the right ideas.

You will have more ideas than you can use if you ask yourself these questions:

- What have we seen at the mall that relates to our goal?
- What have we read in kids' magazines that relates to the goal?
- What desires do kids have that relate to the goal?
- What TV/commercials/MTV relates to the goal?

In light of your answers to these questions, write your ideas related to the theme and goal.

(6) *Resources.* Quality and depth come with the resources, yet we must cultivate those resources. People, musical talent, trained leaders, student disciples, videos, drama talent, speakers, counselors: all of these resources can enhance the outreach. Depending on the situation you may have limited or vast resources available to you. Either way, determine what they are; then figure out ways to broaden and expand your resources. Each time you plan an outreach, you will call on some or all of your resources. Determine what you need for each outreach.

You will have a realistic assessment of your resources if you answer these questions:

- What resources exist currently?
- What resources do I need that I don't have?
- How can I secure the resources I need, but don't have?

In light of your answers to these questions, list the resources you need for this particular outreach.

(7) *Production.* Now to put all of the pieces together. The program leader (probably that's you) or a program task team will need to look at the big picture and bring the program together.

To do that, use the “Program Flow Chart” in “The Outreach Planner” on page 148. This approach forces you to plan ahead. You will go through this process about one month before your outreach. An outreach that occurs every week makes the planning process more intense.

When you finish answering all the questions above succinctly, you will have the outline for the program. (Use “The Outreach Planner – Program Plan” on page 147 to answer the questions for each of these seven steps and for an ongoing guide to plan your program.)

As time consuming as it is, going through this process will produce a program of excellence and quality so that “God may open to us a door for the Word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ” (Colossians 4:3).

CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

How many times have you heard people say, “When I walked in the room I could feel something special.” You want students to make that statement and the kinds of statements made in one outreach-oriented youth group.

“I sensed love. People came up to me that I didn’t know and began to talk to me. I even saw a girl that I used to do drugs with. She came over and hugged me. She seemed really different” (a 17-year-old runaway).

“It felt good at first. Kinda felt at ease by the welcome I received and the fun music, but then things began to get serious and I felt funny. It was heavy, like God was speaking to me inside” (a 15-year-old boy who had never been in church before).

“I feel loved here, accepted, safe. Things are pretty bad around my house” (a senior abused by a parent).

“Right in the middle [of the meeting] I began to realize I didn’t have Christ in my heart. I’ve been counting on my church membership to get me to heaven, but the more I was around the kids in the youth group I began to notice something missing in my life” (a girl who accepted Christ right after the meeting)³.

I’ve spoken at events with elaborate facilities and high-tech gadgets, and sometimes the environment felt as cold as ice. On the other hand, I’ve spoken in some “barns” where electric excitement ruled. What made the difference? Just like lamps, plants, and pictures in a room give it warmth, certain essential, well-placed decorations create the kind of warm atmosphere that draws students. Assuming that you

have applied the earlier chapters so essential to creating the right atmosphere, place these five intangible, but essential, decorations to create environment.

Compassion. Kids can “feel” whether they are loved or not. Most of them don’t feel that they are. In an ABC News survey of thousands of students, 90 percent could not answer “Yes” to the statement “I have at least one person who I am convinced really loves me.” If we love and accept them—no matter what they think, say, do, or believe—the feeling of caring, openness, and friendliness will prevail.

A car cannot be towed out of the mud without someone going to it, hitching it to another vehicle, and pulling. Students cannot be led out of the spiritual mud if we do not go to them, find the common link, and pull. Touching their lives with compassion provides that link.

That “loving link” won’t just happen. You must structure it. Here’s how you can make certain that every student who shows up has a friend.

- Adult leaders invite students they know from the campus or church, and then take responsibility to introduce them to others.
- Discipled kids bring at least two friends each. At the meeting they stick with them like glue, making sure they get introduced to students they may not know.
- The program includes interaction that allows for relationships—crowd-breakers, mixers, and/or discussions.
- Students are prayed for so that they will sense God’s Spirit.

Communication. When a student comes to a “religious” event for the first time, he probably expects to be bored or scared. He will have his guard up until he feels comfortable. Therefore we need to make the effort to communicate to secular kids right where they are. Work hard at eliminating the “churchy” things that cause non-Christians to feel uncomfortable and turned off. Add elements that awaken their imagination and interest without compromising your convictions. You can do that by asking yourself these questions:

- What behavior or practices can we identify that might turn off secular students?
- How can we replace that with something that will awaken their imagination and interest?

Place the plants of communication throughout the program.

Connections. You can stage phenomenal programs, but you can't compete with what Hollywood can put in their hands for \$9.99! They can stick in a video for that amount or less any time and beat your most extravagant effort. The program is not your connection into that secular student's life! Relationships are! If a student comes on the basis of an entertaining program, then the first time he doesn't like it he won't come back. But if he comes on the basis of a relationship, he will keep coming back because of that relationship.

To build a vast network of these connections, challenge your core students to bring their friends.

- Give them the specific challenge to bring the non-believing students they pray for in their prayer power teams.
- Encourage them to take these friends home after the outreach and discuss the outreach topic.
- When a non-Christian expresses an interest in knowing Christ, resist the temptation to lead that student to Christ. Allow the student who brought him to do that.
- Assign the follow up responsibility for the new Christian to the student who led him to Christ.

All of these steps build a natural bridge between the campus and the church, between the secular student and fellowship in the body of Christ.

Hang the pictures of relationships all around the room of your outreach program.

Creativity. Most people don't view themselves as very creative. However, if the creative God created you, and the creative Holy Spirit lives inside of you, then, even if you don't have natural creativity, you can call on the supernatural creativity God has put inside of you. *You are creative.* Tap into it.

To get started creatively use the following ideas.

Provide "energy release" time. Kids have mega-energy. Allow them to release it at the outreach. You can channel it into a competition, crowd-breakers, mixers, or music.

"Salt" students. That means that you create in them a thirst to hear and respond

to what will be communicated in the message later. Students need to hear the message, but before they will listen receptively and respond, they must sense the need for what is being offered. Jesus created a desire in the Samaritan woman by expressing his own need for a drink, by asking her penetrating questions and by telling her how many husbands she had (John 4). Using films, skits, dramas, video testimonies, and any other creative means can create a similar thirst in students. It will happen most effectively when you address their felt needs.

Involve students. As you create the program, plan as much student participation as possible. Put students up front. Use a student emcee or emcees so they can play off of each other in making announcements and moving the program along. Kids love to see their friends up front, and they like the “hands on” involvement when you program for their participation.

Scatter the knick-knacks of your creativity all over the place.

Content. Most students either do not know or cannot articulate their real needs. But they can readily identify their felt needs—dating, sex, friends, parents, self-esteem, popularity, peer pressure, and so on. Through their felt needs you will be able to get to their real needs for faith, hope, and love through Jesus Christ.

Base your content on the Bible. Students need to know that the Bible relates to their felt needs as well as to their real needs. They are fascinated when they see that the Bible relates to who they are and how they live. If we appeal to the “3 E’s”—emotions, entertainment, and experience—then it becomes easy to manipulate students. The church has manipulated students in the past to gain quick converts. It’s sad to see kids come so close to the truth, only to walk away without it. When they are manipulated into a decision, they cannot be found three days later. Kids see through this and resent it. They want you to address their problems and issues, help them discuss solutions, put it all in their language and let them make their own decision. When you do, they will hang on every word.

Put down the rug of God’s Word in your program.

When you decorate the room with these “essential intangibles,” you will create the kind of atmosphere that will draw kids to Christ. They will come again and again because you have created something special that makes them feel loved, accepted, and safe. What a great atmosphere to meet Jesus Christ!

STRUCTURE THE MEETING

Probably you have an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes to accomplish your goal in your outreach. Because you cannot cram every element into each outreach, you must choose carefully which elements will move you toward the goal for the outreach. The following sampling of ideas function as “starters” to stir your creative juices and to provide resources.

Crowd-breakers. To break the ice, expend energy, release tension, and enhance relationship building, the crowd-breaker offers an excellent device. Designed for fun, the crowd-breaker can disarm fearful, tense, or skeptical students quickly.

Resources:

- *Ideas Library CD ROM version 2.0 (or higher)* – www.youthspecialities.com
- *The Best of Play It* by Wayne Rice and Mike Yaconelli – www.youthspecialities.com

Games and Competition. Like crowd-breakers, games build energy and enthusiasm. Maximize the effect with competition. Compete between grades if you have only one school represented, or compete between schools if you have several represented.

Games and competition can develop a sense of team spirit, unity, and belonging for individual students. Once the teams are divided, have each of them choose a name, a color, and a cheer. Award competition points for this. If you do an outreach event on a regular basis, organize one or two competitive games over the next four to eight weeks. Announce the scores each week. At the end the winning team receives an award such as free ice cream or a scholarship to camp.

You need to choose and create balance between two types of games: observation games and participation games. Observation games involve only a few people while everyone else watches. For example, an old standby is “The Cracker Eating Contest.” Call a representative from each grade or school to the stage. Each one eats a pack of crackers, then drinks a soft drink to wash it down. The winner is the first one who can eat the crackers and whistle.

Participation games, on the other hand, involve everyone in semi-athletic competition. Ample space and high ceilings are needed for most of these games. They work best in a warehouse or gym. When weather permits and it fits your goals, take the games outdoors. An example of a participation game is “Knock Your Bag Off.” Each person has a paper bag that fits over his head and a few pages of a newspaper

rolled up as a “whacker.” Divided into two or more teams, the players try to knock the opposing team members’ bags off their heads without losing their own bag. The team that knocks all of the other team’s bags off first wins.

Encourage your core kids and leadership to jump into this with great enthusiasm to draw in the reticent, “too cool” skeptics. Be careful that this does not get out of hand, especially with the guys getting too “into it.” Don’t emphasize athletic skill, but rather participation. Work hard to find a balance between doing games that challenge the more athletically inclined, while being interesting enough to attract the kids who care less about any competition.

Resources:

- *Ideas Library CS ROM version 2.0 (or higher)* – www.youthspecialties.com
- *Gigantic Book of Games for Youth Ministry* (Vol. 1 & 2) – www.grouppublishing.com

Skits. Fun summarizes in one word what skits do for an outreach. Like crowd-breakers and games, they bring high energy. If you do your research you can find skits that communicate the theme of the event.

Depending on your theme and goal, you have several options as to the kinds of skits you use—reading, scripted, no script, or ad lib. Preview the skit beforehand in order to time it and check out its content. A skit that is too long or creates an embarrassing situation can dull the sharp edge of your outreach. Plan carefully here.

Resources:

- *Ideas Library: Dramas, Skits, and Sketches* (Vol. 1, 2, & 3) – www.youthspecialties.com
- *Hilarious Skits for Youth Ministry Package* – www.grouppublishing.com
- *Outreach Skits for Youth Ministry* – www.grouppublishing.com

Announcements. To communicate upcoming opportunities you need to make announcements. Use them to inform your kids and to draw kids on the fringe into other ministry opportunities.

If presented haphazardly, in large numbers, and in the read-it-off-the-sheet style, then announcements become boring and are quickly forgotten. Carefully-selected and properly-prepared announcements, using creativity and humor, will present clear information about future opportunities in a fun and memorable way.

To ensure that students do not forget the announcements, you can use these creative options.

Skits. Use a skit from a skit book, or help students creatively write their own skits. For example, if you are having a swimming/water skiing outreach, design a skit in which students come into the meeting outfitted in water skis and life jackets.

Puppets. Every age loves puppets. When puppets speak cleverly and clearly, students listen. Make sure to design the announcement so that the students remember the announcement, not just the puppets.

Newscasts. Create an announcement scenario in which two students act like a news anchor team. Show slides behind them to highlight the message and provide humor. Mix spoof stories about people in your audience into the announcements.

Talk shows/TV shows. Students design the announcements around a talk show, soap opera, or sitcom format.

Songs. Write a song about the upcoming outreach and have some students sing it. To create humor and unpredictability, select students who cannot sing well.

Characters. Create a character who will give the same announcement several weeks in a row. He comes barging into the meeting several weeks in advance looking for the bus to camp, for instance. He has his suitcase, sleeping bag, inner tube, one ski, and bunches of clothes. He has on his body everything needed for camp. And he wants to go right now. Someone interviews him every week for the next several weeks about camp.

Resources:

- Use the resources from the skits section to help with announcements.
- Having your skit team make up their own skits is usually more creative, unique and fun than anything else.
- *Ideas Library CS ROM version 2.0 (or higher)* – www.youthspecialties.com

Dramas. Moving from the fun to the serious, drama can introduce the theme of the meeting and provide an excellent means to “salt” the students. Often drama becomes your most powerful tool of communication.

To do drama well you need someone with experience to lead the drama team and kids with some degree of talent and/or experience to participate.

A drama poorly performed has little or no effect, and actually takes away from positive communication. When you do it, do it well.

Resources:

- *Ideas Library: Dramas, Skits, and Sketches* (Vol. 1, 2, & 3) – www.youthspecialties.com
- *Youth Ministry.com website* – www.youthministry.com/drama

Visual Media. Videos, slides, films, and other visual media not only “salt” students for the message to come, but can pack a powerful wallop by themselves. Select film, video, slides, sections from cartoons and movies that carefully communicate the event’s theme.

To maximize the use of visual media consider these approaches.

Create your own slide presentation or video. Kids talented in this area can take pictures on campus, interview students around the theme of the outreach, edit the slides or video, and then put music behind it that also communicates the theme.

Students like nothing more than seeing their faces or their friends’ faces on the screen. Remind the visual media team to film a variety of students, so that the presentation is ethnically, culturally, and spiritually diverse.

Create announcements using slides or video. To create interest in upcoming opportunities—camp, a retreat, a seminar or other activity—film the previous event. Using about ten rolls of film and a 35-millimeter camera or a video camera, take a variety of action shots of kids in both fun and serious situations. After the outreach, edit it and show it to the kids, then put it away to use to promote the same outreach the next time it comes around. For these kinds of high-energy, fast-paced productions, you will need to plan ahead to include them in your budget.

Show clips from old shows or movies. To enhance communication about the theme, take a scene from a secular film, TV show, or cartoon that illustrates your theme. The possibilities here are endless. Keep the clip in the four-to seven-minute range.

Show a full-length film, a video series, or multimedia show. Obviously, if you use this approach, it becomes your entire program. That is fine if it communicates your theme. Make sure that the film expresses the message you want to communicate. Always preview the material beforehand. Often this approach lends itself to a lively discussion afterward. Prepare the exact questions to discuss and either hand them out

or put them on Power Point. Give a challenge at the end of the presentation to follow Christ.

Music video. Armed with the latest music videos you can do some serious damage in communicating topics and themes. Students love these. But don't overuse this form of communication.

Resources:

- *Just Shoot Me* by Jay Delp and Joel Lusz – www.youthspecialties.com
- Media Shout – for creative presentations – www.worshipmusic.com
- Adobe® Premiere® – software for advanced, in-house video editing – www.adobe.com

Stories/testimonies. When students stand in front of their peers and tell about their relationship to Jesus Christ, they bring Christ from the abstract to the concrete, from principles to personal challenge. Spiritual power is released at peer-to-peer level.

In order for students to express Christ well, they need to prepare well. To help them prepare, follow these suggestions.

Watch closely. Stay tuned in to which kids receive Christ and which ones are experiencing life change. Pick out kids whose lives are changing in the same area as the theme for the event.

Select carefully. Nothing will harm the witness of the youth ministry more than putting a compromising student in front of the meeting, especially if the others look up to that student. Check out his consistency and dedication by asking the student and several of his friends how he is doing with the Lord. Put a student up front because Jesus is changing his life, not because he is a good speaker, popular or funny.

Share briefly. When you invite a student to share a testimony, and when you introduce him at the meeting, ask him to share briefly. Give him a time limit and help him prepare to remain within that time limit.

Write concisely. Using the outline and suggestions in *Giving Away Your Faith*, help him write out his testimony several days in advance. Go over it with him several times. Help him stay within two to three minutes.

Speak freely. Students come into this nervous, ill-prepared, and inexperienced. But if this is their ministry, then it needs to rise and fall on them. When they finish,

no matter how they do, find some positive comments to make about their presentation. Help them work through how they can improve.

Use variety. So you will not become predictable, use various types of testimonies.

- The three minute. One or two students tell their story in three minutes apiece.
- The one sentence. Numerous students pop up and say, “Jesus is changing me by...”
- The finish-the-phrase. Several students complete the sentence, “I know I am a Christian because. . .” or other sentence completions that would relate to the theme.
- The prayer request. Students stand and say, “I need prayer for...”
- The confession. Students say, “I need God to help me as I struggle with. . . .”
- The thanks. Students say, “I thank God for. . . .”
- The praise. Students say, “I praise God for. . . .”
- The small group. Pre-assign groups and have your core kids give a testimony about what God is doing in their lives.

Because students can identify with each other’s struggles and stories, non-Christian kids will see “salt and light” in the testimonies of the Christians. These testimonies will draw them to follow Jesus.

Resources:

- *Giving Away Your Faith*, Barry St. Clair. This book devotes an entire chapter to helping students prepare their testimonies.

We will discuss the other outreach elements in the next chapter.

ACTION POINTS

1. Work through “Get Your Ducks in a Row,” the Program Flow Chart and the Environment Evaluation in “The Outreach Planner” on pages 148-149.
2. Gather the resources listed in this chapter so that you have them ready in your library. Decide what resources you need and how you will pay for them.
 1. This story was given to me by Rick Caldwell and occurred as an outreach of his church.
 2. The material under this heading was adapted from Bo Boshears, Student Impact, Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois. Used with permission.
 3. Quotes from students who came to Rick Caldwell’s outreach.

EIGHT

Deliver the Knock-Out Punch, Part 2: Carrying Out the Program

The building had 800 students jammed into it. The room felt electric with energy and excitement. As the guest speaker, I had only one responsibility, so I sat back and watched how the meeting unfolded. Stuart, the youth pastor, only a year or two out of college, seemed to know what he was doing. Prayer had permeated the preparation. All that I described in the publicity chapter, he had done. You don't have 800 kids without doing the publicity right! The program had a positive mix of the ingredients discussed in the last chapter. And the purpose, theme, and goal were clear even to a casual observer. It didn't surprise me, then, that when I gave the opportunity, huge numbers of students responded. At that point leaders and core kids identified their friends and talked to them.

As a speaker, nothing delights me more than to speak in a situation like that. As I reflected on so many of the things that Stuart had done well, I recalled many other times when a youth leader told me how many students he expected to participate, then when I got to the meeting, that number could be cut by three-fourths. As I reveled in the moment, I thought about how many times I had had to dig myself out of a hole when I got up to speak because of terrible music or the video didn't work, or the outreach was ill-conceived from the beginning. As I watched the counseling, I remembered meetings where total chaos reigned because the leaders had not prepared for the response. Catching Stuart's eye, I smiled. I was having fun in this youth communicator's paradise.

So your outreach can have the same quality Stuart's had, let's finish figuring out how to carry out your program. We will pick up where we left off at the end of the last chapter.

Music. Surrounding students every day and often defining their lives, music reaches into their emotions and communicates to them in a way distinct from all

other verbal expression. Since music permeates the student culture in modern America, it seems like an obvious move to capitalize on students' natural receptivity by weaving it into our presentation of Christ.

Music is a delicate tool. If performed excellently, it can contribute a special quality to the outreach like nothing else can. But if executed poorly, it can cripple the entire program. *Quality* is the operative word. Quality has to do with *talent*. The people on your music team must be able to produce musically. Quality also has to do with *worship*. Much of what students get today only entertains, even from Christian musicians. Yet a student's greatest need is to learn to encounter God in worship. Your musicians need to be able to help students do that.

You need to reach your own place to stand on the music issue and come to an understanding with your church on this issue. Therefore, think through your stance beforehand to avoid controversy and misunderstanding. I know significant controversy exists today over music in the church. If this issue looms large for you, please read Steve Miller's book *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate*, available from Tyndale House. It will clear the musical fog.

Once you have settled where you and your church stand on the music issue, then you can make good decisions about the music you will use in your outreaches. The following options will help you make those selections.

Select Your Options. Since youth groups vary in their range of talent, evaluate your talent level and decide which of the following approaches you will use in your situation. Then put your music team together.

- **The Lead Musician.** You need at least one person who can lead the music area effectively. This person will stand in front of your students consistently and will conduct a large portion of the meeting. As well, he will coordinate the music each time you do an outreach. He is the one to whom all of the other musicians are accountable. Therefore, this person must have talent, leadership ability, and a heart for worship.

- **Instruments.** If you have the talent to do so, put together a group of students who play instruments—guitars, piano, synthesizer, drums, and other instruments.

- **Band.** Add to the lead musician and the instruments some vocal talent. Then blend the sound of all of these together. Be careful here! Your lead musician holds the key to creating the sound you want. You do not want to sacrifice quality just to have a band up front. But if you have the people to pull it off, give it a shot. You might

consider not only using younger students, but also college students and adult leaders. Another option: recruit a band from another church or even another town to help you. You will need to work out an agreeable contract with them.

- Soloists. Weave these people into the music when a solo will express your theme best.

- CDs. If your group is small or not musically talented, you can rely on CDs and music videos. In this case have someone act as a disc jockey playing a selection of music videos and/or CDs.

- Guest Musicians. Inviting a guest musician will give variety and create an air of excitement. If the musician is particularly well-known, you can create publicity to take advantage of that fact. You have to decide, in light of your goal, how much music you want the guest to do—from one song to a full concert. Make sure that your guest understands that this is not about performance, but about participation. Request that he bring the students into the music.

Music Preparation. To have quality music you must prepare. Consider these issues in your preparation.

- Equipment. Depending on what you possess already, consider purchasing a good sound system with all auxiliary equipment. Consider a system larger than what you need currently so you won't outgrow it too quickly. Consider its flexibility, adaptability, and transportability. Other basic equipment you will need in due time: music for the band, Power Point projector, video projector, and other equipment that doesn't exist now, but will by the time this book gets published.

- Budget. According to what you want to accomplish in music, set a budget figure. In your budget, build in the cost of all of the equipment above. Note: You do not need all of this to begin. You can purchase it gradually. Some of it your students will have.

- Copyright permission. For the sake of integrity, get permission from the music companies who have the copyright on the music. Simply write letters asking for permission. With that taken care of, then create a Power Point for each song using excellent graphics. Type the words out in large letters so students can read them from the back of the room. Equipment exist now to do all kinds of high-tech magic.

- Musicians. For the musicians to communicate effectively, they must prepare musically and spiritually. Musically, hold them accountable to practice a certain

number of hours each week. Have them follow the charts in “The Outreach Planner” on page 151 in order to coordinate their musical selections with the theme of the event. Spiritually, since these students are so visible to their peers, they need to be healthy, growing Christians. To help them keep an attitude that they are not performers, but servants, allow them to lead in music only if they participate in a discipleship group. You may want to consider a discipleship group designed uniquely for the musical team. For the group to gain the proper focus, have prayer times at each practice and conduct prayer before the event. Don’t wait until the last minute to do this and then allow it to get squeezed out. Make prayer a priority. Do it before they set up.

The Event. Once prepared, what does the music team do at the outreach? Use these suggestions to help the music team function effectively at the event.

- Play musical transitions. Play the instruments between songs so the flow of the program is not interrupted. Avoid dead spots as people come on and off the stage. Strongly suggest that the musicians not talk between songs. Make transitions as quickly as possible.

- Involve students. Since “hands on” participation adds value, make sure the musicians get the kids involved. They have to model this participation for the kids. If they want them to clap their hands and stomp their feet, then the music leaders need to set the pace. Also think of creative ways to involve the students. One music team has an old guitar with no strings. The leaders invite a series of students to come up and help play. Figure out fun and creative ways to get students “into it.”

- Learn new songs. Nothing is more boring than to sing the same songs over and over. And nothing is more frustrating than singing a new song and then moving on before it is learned well. Find a balance. To teach a new song, prominently display the words on the screen. Announce it as new. Take time to sing it through for them. Sing it through several times until they get the hang of it. Use it several weeks in a row until it is not new anymore. Then bring it in periodically.

- Worship the Lord. Bottom line, worship is the goal of the music. Worship does not have to be soft and quiet to honor the Lord. Help students worship God with their own music, even the ones who don’t know Him—yet!

Resources:

- *Vertical Life* by Vertical Music and Youth Specialties — www.youthspecialties.com

- Youth Ministry.com website – www.youthministry.com/worship
- Inter'inc – www.interlinc-online.com
- CCM Communications – www.ccmcom.com

Message. “It is a sin to bore kids with the gospel,” said Jim Rayburn, founder of Young Life. Certainly Jesus never bored people. When He spoke, He had such power and authority that His words changed people’s lives. The apostles presented the message of Christ in such clear, natural, enthusiastic, and bold expressions that their words pulsed with power and life. For them Jesus Christ was always the focal point. And our messages to students through the Holy Spirit must have the same power and life that characterized the words of Jesus and the apostles.

To express the message of Christ powerfully to students, we must communicate through two channels—nonverbal and verbal.

Nonverbal Communication. I hear students say, “I don’t remember what you talked about, but when you spoke that night it changed my life.” They mean that they “feel” the message of Christ more than they understand it intellectually. Adolescents respond more as “feelers” than as “thinkers.” Therefore, nonverbal communication of actions, attitudes, intensity, enthusiasm, and the quality of my life in Christ will come across more strongly than any particular words.

Positive nonverbal communication springs from five places in your life and ministry.

- **Attitudes.** Attitude communicates more than anything else when we stand in front of students. What attitudes do kids catch from you—love or harshness, kindness or cruel humor, patience or yelling at them, joy or anger, faith or cynicism? The Apostle Paul defined our goal: “The attitude you should have is the one that Jesus Christ had” (Philippians 2:5). Make it your daily prayer for the Lord to conform your attitudes to His. Then when you communicate with students, the attitudes of Jesus will flow out of you.

- **Reflection.** When you know God, your students will want to know Him. When you love God, your students will want to love Him. When you hunger for Him, so will your students. To deepen your passion for Him, build a special time with God into your schedule every day. Begin with 30 minutes a day for 30 days to make it a habit. As you reflect on Him, you will reflect Him when you get with students. In fact, as this habit deepens and expands, you will find that almost all of your

messages to students will come from notes, thoughts, and answered prayers from this time. As you experience God, you will desire to pass that experience on to your students.

- **Ministry.** To speak to kids at the point of their need, we must live in their world. Spending time with them every week outside the context of the church will put you in touch with their needs. As you experience life on campus firsthand, you will have a feel for what topics to speak on, what points will be relevant and what illustrations will inspire them. Then when you speak, they will listen. Why? Because you show interest in them personally, and you understand life on their level.

- **Prayer.** Prayer releases power when you speak. Pray for the students to whom you will speak. Praying will develop a deep compassion for them. Set aside at least one hour each week before you speak to connect the students you will speak to and the message you will deliver to the God who can change their lives.

- **Anointing.** Ask God to pour out a special portion of His Spirit as you speak. He will only do that when you desire only His glory. Ask the Lord to make your messages like the Apostle Paul's when he said, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Begin to pray for that anointing every day. When you speak in His anointing, God's Spirit will flow through you in power to students.

Verbal Communication. Lies bombard students from every angle: media, music, peers, even teachers. To overcome these lies with the Truth is our task. When we speak we want them to "know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

Many youth leaders question their adequacy to stand before students and proclaim the Truth. But one of your primary roles is to proclaim the Truth—to explain the Word of God to students. Your gifts and talents may or may not lie in the area of proclaiming. **YOU ARE STILL A TRUTH PROCLAIMER!** Speaking is the verbal extension of living. Public speaking is a broader extension of private speaking. When you speak, Christ living in you will speak. For that reason, speaking is miraculous, supernatural. The Holy Spirit can communicate through you.

Speaking is truth coming through your personality—your convictions, your walk with God, your mind, your spirit, your body. It takes hard work to learn to speak to students effectively. I'm convinced, however, that if you can speak to kids effectively,

you can speak to anybody!

To move toward powerful verbal communication, you will want to keep three simple principles in mind that will guide your speaking.

- **Simplicity.** “Keep the cookies on the lower shelf where everyone can reach them” describes our approach. The man on the street understands only two percent of the words in the dictionary, and the educated man understands only three percent. I wonder what percent students understand! In speaking to students, remember the familiar KISS approach: “Keep it simple, stupid.”

- **Authority.** Your authority to speak to students comes from your walk with Christ, your understanding of the Scripture, your rapport with kids, and the release of the Holy Spirit in you. When you bring this to your speaking, you will have credibility.

- **Focus.** One man said, “Nothing is so dangerous as to preach about God and perfection and not to point the way which leads to perfection.” Make Jesus Christ the heart and soul of every message.

This combination of verbal truth and nonverbal love will make a powerful impact on students when you speak.

Preparing the Message. When I stand before a group of students to present the good news of Jesus Christ, I feel an awesome responsibility. When you speak to them, I know you feel it, too. The Apostle Paul sensed that responsibility as well when he said, “We speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 1:4). The following detailed practical steps will help you prepare to fulfill this awesome responsibility.

- **Plan ahead.** In order to get the big picture on your messages, plan in advance. Put together a long-range plan. At the beginning of each year, sketch out your yearly speaking plan. Get by yourself and then meet with your outreach team to pray through and fill out the “Yearly Message Planner.” In working on your weekly plan, use the “Message Outline.” You will find both of these in “The Outreach Planner” on pages 158 and 153.

- **Commit to study.** Do your homework. Just as teachers know if students do their homework, your students will know if you do yours. Spend no less than five hours preparing each message, using the standard of Colossians 3:23: “Whatever you

do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”

- Choose the topic. Writing down the topics relevant to students can create a long list. In order to determine what topics you will speak on over the year, survey your group to discover its real and felt needs. Think through what you talk about when you have conversations and do counseling with your students. Ask them to write down the 10 most important issues they face in their lives. Then, prayerfully, select your topics using the “Yearly Message Planner” on page 158.

- Focus on one passage. A topical approach can make rather superficial use of the Bible unless you focus on one passage. Digging into one passage exposes your kids to the richness and depth of the Bible. To study the passage in preparation for your message, use the “Message Research” on page 152.

Brainstorm ideas. Put down every idea that comes to your mind as you read through the passage. View the passage from the perspective of the characters in the story or of the writer. Let the ideas flow as you read the passage again and again.

Ask questions. Read the passage again asking the questions who, what, where, when, why, and how. Try to understand every word, action, and thought.

Check the cross-references. Following the cross-references through the Scripture will give you a feel for “the whole counsel of God” across the entire Bible.

Check objections. Think about the questions your students will have about the topic and the passage, and answer those questions on paper.

Read the scholars. Make this your last step, not your first one. Resist the temptation to take the easy way out and get the scholars’ viewpoint first. This is like eating food that someone else has chewed! Your best insights will come from what the Lord shows you, not what He has shown someone else. And by the time you get to this point, you will have more material than you can possibly use. Check the commentaries to insure the accuracy of your ideas. My two favorite commentaries are *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* and *The Daily Study Bible* by William Barclay, although you have a wide selection of other commentaries from which to choose.

Knowing the passage thoroughly will give you confidence when you speak, and will establish credibility with the audience.

- Select one point. To clearly state your point, write down a goal statement. Use this little tool to help you:

“Every _____ can/should _____.”

For example, using the sample talk on parents in “The Outreach Planner” on page 155, the goal can be: “Every teenager can respond to his or her parents as Jesus did.”

That one statement will determine what you include and exclude from your talk, and it will keep your talk on target as you prepare.

- Use powerful illustrations. Students will remember your illustrations long after they have forgotten the points of your talk. Illustrations will make your message come alive. You can select your illustrations in this descending priority order.

Firsthand experience. The best illustrations come from personal experience – getting caught in the electronic door at the airport. What happens to you in everyday life will serve as your richest source of illustrations.

Secondhand experience. Stories about other people you know or stories they tell you provide your second-best source of illustrations. For example, I can tell about how my friend Tommy grew up with an alcoholic father, or how a girl in the youth group of a friend of mine was healed after a severe accident.

Book experiences. To make book illustrations work you have to pick the inspiring ones that are down on the students’ level. For example, I love to tell the story from Chuck Colson’s *Loving God*, of Telemachus, a monk who as one individual stood against the Roman Empire and through his death stopped the carnage of the gladiators forever. Told in descriptive terms, it serves as a powerful illustration about standing alone for Christ.

- Write the message. To ensure clarity in the present and to use this message in the future, write it out first in outline form and then sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph. As you write, break it into three elements, using your goal statement to guide you.

Introduction. A good introduction gets you out of the blocks by arousing the interest of the students and getting the group involved from the start. Try one of these communication devices to effectively open your talk.

Ask a question. For example, “Do you think Jesus Christ ever had problems with His parents?”

Tell a personal experience. Share something funny or embarrassing that relates to

your topic. For example, when I talk about peer pressure, I read the menu from “The Roadkill Grill” and then talk about how kids in the middle of the road are set up to be spiritual road kill.

Involve kids in a demonstration. Bring kids up and get them to help you illustrate your point. For example, I love to bring up one guy who weighs 165 pounds and one who weighs about 85. The big one presses the little one over his head. Then I bring up someone over 200 pounds. The 165-pounder presses him (or tries too). Kids go crazy cheering for the 165 pounder. My point: God is so much bigger and greater that we can't press Him, we can't control Him.

In the introduction make certain that you establish the point you want to focus on through the rest of the talk.

Body. Spend about three-fourths of your time developing the passage that illuminates your topic. These suggestions will help you make your message clear and memorable.

Prepare thoroughly.

Make one point clearly.

Outline your message concisely.

Explain the Scripture simply.

Use illustrations powerfully.

Often it helps students to follow along if you give them a handout or prepare a Power Point presentation with your outline on it. You will find an example of that in “The Outreach Planner” on page 153.

Conclusion. Briefly restate your main point and then apply it. Apply is the operative word. The students need to walk away knowing exactly what to do as a result of what they have heard. When your conclusion is clear, then you pinpoint your message for your students. They can walk away remembering the message exactly. At an outreach I have found it very positive to end with a question, repeated several times. For example, if the message is on sex and I've talked about how far is too far, then I can pose the question: “How far is too far for you?” You can instruct your core kids to use the final question as a discussion starter to talk about Christ with their friends on the way home or during the week.

Use the Message Outline in “The Outreach Planner” to help you work through

these steps. See the “Sample Message Outline” in “The Outreach Planner” to get a feel for how to put the outline together so students will remember your points.

- Learn the message. Once you have the entire manuscript written, read back through it.

As you consider how the students will hear it, trim out the irrelevant material or rephrase it to relate to the way they will understand it best.

Get the outline and illustrations firmly planted in your mind. Memorize your outline.

Pray through each point, asking the Holy Spirit to anoint it and to use it powerfully.

- Deliver the message correctly. A few basic reminders about public speaking will help you to communicate with the fewest distractions. Do these well and your speaking skills will improve dramatically.

Relax! Be yourself.

Establish eye contact. Look at individuals in the audience. Scan the room frequently, front to back, side to side.

Speak distinctly. Do a sound check beforehand to get the right amplification level on your microphone. Then speak clearly. Make sure you can be heard clearly by those in the back of the room.

Communicate enthusiasm. A high energy level and a fast pace capture and retain the audience’s attention.

Speak simply. Use simple language that everyone in the audience can understand.

Commend your listeners. People don’t change in an environment of criticism, only in an environment of encouragement. Speak positive and encouraging words.

Love the audience. As you let the love of Christ flow out through you, they will sense that love and respond accordingly.

Take your time. Pause after certain important points to let your point sink in. Use silence, pauses, and proper timing to bear down on important points.

Listen to your audience. Watch the reactions of the audience to your words, to adjust your talk to their responses.

Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. As you speak, the Spirit will guide you to

leave out a point, to include a new idea, to slow down or speed up. Follow the promptings of the Spirit.

- Evaluate the message. Critiquing your own message is not easy. Set aside a brief time the day after the message to reflect on it. Be honest with yourself. Get a couple of people whose opinions you respect to advise you on how to improve. Tape the message and listen to it to discover how to make it better. Try to hone in on one thing you can improve between now and the next time you speak. Use the “Message Evaluation” in “The Outreach Planner” on page 157 to help you.

When you complete these steps, then you can stand with confidence before students in a powerful, authoritative, convicting manner and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

Resources:

- *Dynamic Communicator’s Workshop* by Ken Davis – www.youthspecialties.com
- *Dynamic Communicator’s Workshop: Participant’s Workbook* by Ken Davis – www.youthspecialties.com
- *Secrets of Great Communicators* by Jeff Myers – www.inspiredleadership.com
- *Everyday Object Lessons for Youth Groups* by Helen Musick & Duffy Robbins – www.youthspecialties.com

Invitation. Invitations to come to Jesus Christ in the New Testament are as numerous as the people invited. Sensitive to the needs of people, the inviter designed each invitation uniquely for that situation.

Looking at the invitations given in the New Testament, we see that they fall into three broad categories. People were invited to *come* (Matthew 11:28; 16:24; John 7:37). Others were invited to *go* (Matthew 19:21; John 8:11). Still others were encouraged to *believe* (Acts 2:37-38; 16:31).

We need to have the same sensitivity and uniqueness that the New Testament conveys when inviting students to come to Christ. No matter what approach we use, the invitation exists for those without Christ to receive Him. We can’t make disciples, build the body, equip the saints, or grow the church if we do not first invite people to Christ. The invitation becomes the very important knob on the door that allows people to walk through the door to Jesus Christ. With that in mind, then, we can

conclude that we need to extend the invitation at every outreach.

Four words help us define the invitation:

(1) *Clarity*. To ensure a long-lasting, fruit-bearing response, clarify what you are inviting your listeners to do. Usually I try to state that at the beginning of the message, somewhere in the middle, often at the end of each point, and at the end of the message. Write what you are inviting them to do in one sentence on your speaking notes.

(2) *Reflection*. In quietness give kids the opportunity to reflect on what they have just heard and to answer for themselves, “How does Jesus Christ relate to my life?” Then, rather than a shallow, emotion-filled response, they will make a deep, serious decision.

(3) *Response*. In some way students need to answer the question, “What do I need to do?” The invitation gives kids the opportunity to take action on that question.

(4) *Application*. The invitation should encourage students to take specific action as a result of the message. Usually that will fall into two categories: receiving Jesus or responding in obedience to Jesus in an area of their lives specifically addressed in the message.

With the invitation defined, we have the option of offering four different kinds of invitations, depending on the situation.

(1) *Come forward*. Used traditionally in crusades and rallies, this invitation has the advantage of calling kids to courageously step out in front of their peers and take a stand for Jesus Christ. Used properly it can evoke a deep, solid commitment from kids. The problem is that it has been misused and overused, and as a result it has lost some of its effectiveness. Rather than an everybody-who-can-spell-‘God’-come-on-down invitation, you want to use this when you give a narrow and specific appeal. Thinking out your exact approach ahead of time, explain to the kids exactly what you are asking them to do. You need to consider how to use this invitation so students will not experience embarrassment, but rather so they will receive the proper counseling when they come.

(2) *Fill out the card*. At the end of the talk ask everybody to fill out a card, including leadership, core kids, and visitors. They leave the card in their seat. The follow up team picks up the cards and sorts through them. Students who indicate they accepted Christ, or that they want to talk about their relationship to Christ, need

someone from the follow up team to make an appointment with them. The quicker the appointment, the more positive the response. To the degree that you have trained people committed to the follow up process will this work well. To have a stack of cards, which represent people's eternal destiny, sitting on someone's desk for several weeks doesn't cut it. Use this invitation only if you have a team doing immediate follow up.

(3) *Counseling room.* At the close of the outreach, people who have decided to follow Christ or who want to talk about it, can come to a designated room, or corner of the big room. Trained counselors stand ready to talk to students. The disadvantage: peer pressure can keep kids away. The advantage: students take the initiative to seek help. You may consider using this invitation all of the time in conjunction with one of the other options. That way the kids know they can talk to someone any time.

(4) *Divide and conquer.* When the speaker has asked the specific question at the end of his message, then the trained core kids say immediately to a friend they brought: "And how would you answer the question he asked?" Let them talk. When the friend finishes talking, have them say, "Can I tell you how I would answer the question?" and give their response. Then the Christian student asks, "Have you ever asked Jesus Christ to control your life or are you still thinking about it?" From that point they ask, "Could I share with you briefly how I received Jesus Christ?"

In my opinion this approach has the most effectiveness because it hands evangelism back to the students. They have a personal relationship with God and with the friends they brought. They have prayed for their friends. For this to work you have to have a strong core of kids who have a genuine burden to reach their friends for Christ.

You can use any one of these approaches or a combination of them. As you consider your approach, make certain that you have planned thoroughly so that this will function smoothly and not detract from what the Holy Spirit is doing in students' lives.

Resources:

- *Jesus: No Equal*, a booklet to explain the gospel and to lead students to Christ. Order from Reach Out Youth Solutions – www.reach-out.org.
- *Getting Started*, a six-week follow up tool to help new believers successfully

begin their walk with Jesus Christ. Order from Reach Out Youth Solutions, – www.reach-out.org.

follow up. *Don't let people slip through the cracks.* Lack of planning in follow up often negates the wonderful things God did in the outreach. Continual care greatly encourages the new believer to succeed in the Christian life. It takes time, energy, effort, and consistent love for a new believer to become enfolded into the body of Christ. Our objective: to encourage students to make decisions that will help them become disciples. The Apostle Paul placed focused energy on this point when he said:

We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. (Colossians 1:28-29)

With this serious business in mind, how do we do effective follow up on students? These practical suggestions will help you implement successful follow up and counseling.

(1) *First-time visitors.* follow up begins with each visitor who attends the outreach. The week after they visit they should receive:

- A letter or E-mail thanking them for coming.
- *A Jesus: No Equal* booklet with a challenge in the letter to read it.
- A contact by a person who has a relationship with him during the outreach time. This contact gives the first-time visitor an opportunity to hear the gospel and respond. This personal attention will communicate a sense of concern and will build a bridge to the youth group.

(2) *Second-time visitors.* Once a student attends your outreach the second time, have his friends call him and invite him to the youth group at your church or to an evangelistic discussion held at school.

(3) *New Christians.* When a student responds to Christ at an outreach, then immediate follow up must take place. The percentage of people who follow through with Christ is much higher if each person receives immediate attention. The student who led this person to Christ should meet with him two or three times the first week and then once a week after that. If, for some reason, that student cannot meet with the new Christian, then immediately assign him to someone else. The following steps will bolster the new convert.

- Review *Jesus: No Equal* booklet in detail, explaining each point and looking up each reference. This repetition will give him a better understanding of what happened to him when he received Christ.

- Give him the *Getting Started* booklet and work through the first session with him so he will feel comfortable doing it. Give him two days to finish that lesson, then get with him again for session two. Go all the way through the *Getting Started* booklet this way.

- Give the new Christian a Bible. Even if he has one already, this is a nice gift that is a symbol of the decision to follow Jesus. Challenge him to begin reading the Gospel of Mark.

- Involve him in the students' ministry at school and in the activities at the church.

Resources:

- *Jesus: No Equal*, a booklet to explain the gospel and lead kids to Christ. Order from Reach Out Youth Solutions, www.reach-out.org.
- *Getting Started*, a six-week follow up tool to help new believers successfully begin their relationship with Jesus Christ. Order from Reach Out Youth Solutions, www.reach-out.org.

Counseling. Kids live in incredible pain. They need to work through not only their new decision for Christ, but also the problems and struggles they have that could keep them from going on with Christ. Providing a counseling resource is essential for youth ministry today. Use the counseling room option discussed above to give students a doorway to get help. Train counselors in how to deal with the issues. You will want to build a counseling team of professional counselors, trained lay volunteers and peer counselors. (See the resources below.)

In order for follow up and counseling to work, we have to train people. You know it won't happen magically! Scheduling time to do this and then having kids take the time to follow up will present one of your biggest hurdles. But this has great value in that it teaches students how to take responsibility for their ministry and the people in it. To nail down the scheduling, set up these four options.

(1) *Offer a counselor training seminar.* Do this Saturday morning or another time if it suits your schedule better. In this clinic, teach them how to follow up. Hopefully

you will have a large group who will want to do this. Cover the following issues and have them practice on each other.

- **Decisions.** Go over the invitation options above and discuss the types of decisions that students make and how to handle each one. Help them see the importance of follow-through on the decisions to receive Christ even if those students go to church. No person should ever assume by appearances only that a student is a Christian. Address the issue by asking, “How has following Christ worked out in a practical way in your life?”

- **Testimony.** Teach counselors how to write down and express their personal testimony.

- **Gospel.** Show them how to go through the *Jesus: No Equal* booklet.

- **Bible.** Show them how to give away the Bible as a gift, then how to help a new Christian know where to start and how to read it.

- **Follow up.** Show them how to work through the *Getting Started* booklet. Have them work through all of the lessons. Help them work out when they will do this in their schedules. Provide the outreach time each week as a regular opportunity to get this done.

- **Difficult problems.** If a problem is more complex than leading a person to Christ, show counselors how to refer this person to you, so you can refer him to a professional counselor.

(2) *Have a “Giving Away Your Faith” discipleship group.* In it teach your kids in-depth how to lovingly and boldly share Christ with their friends. Take them through *Giving Away Your Faith* by Barry St. Clair over a 10-week period. They will learn every aspect of how to communicate Christ in this experience.

(3) *Set up a training course to train your core kids to be peer counselors.* Show them how to help their friends who are having problems.

(4) *Have a weekly contact time.* Put this in your weekly youth ministry schedule. Use the first 10 minutes of this time each week to teach or review something with the kids that has to do with sharing their faith, follow up, or counseling. Make it “hands on” and let them practice it.

When a student leads one of his fellow students to Christ, follows up with him, or takes responsibility to help with a problem, you will see a high degree of motiva-

tion and a dramatic increase in the growth of his own life. No more of this “Our kids are apathetic.” When they see God use them, they will be fired up and their faith will deepen. Use this opportunity to its fullest potential.

Resources:

- *Jesus: No Equal*, Reach Out Youth Solutions, www.reach-out.org.
- *Getting Started*, Reach Out Youth Solutions, www.reach-out.org.
- *Taking Your Campus for Christ*, Reach Out Youth Solutions, www.reach-out.org.
- *Giving Away Your Faith*, Reach Out Youth Solutions, www.reach-out.org.
- *Handbook on Counseling Youth* by Josh McDowell, www.josh.org
- *Comprehensive Guide to Youth Ministry Counseling*, www.grouppublishing.com.
- New Life Ministries Treatment Centers 1-800-NEW-LIFE or, www.newlife.com.

When you have invested the time and effort to implement all of the ministries explained in these two chapters, you will have one incredible outreach ministry to the students in your community.

ACTION POINTS

1. Work through “The Outreach Planner” material for this chapter on pages 150-159.
2. Schedule an outreach.

NINE

Hit the Road, Jack: Mobilizing Students for Action

Dashing in the door, he grabbed a quick bite to eat before heading out the door again. He had just come in from a day that started at 7:00 A.M. with a 35-minute drive to school, and ended after basketball practice and another 35-minute maneuver through Atlanta traffic. After such a long day, where was he going? “Gotta get to NiteLife. We’ve got a skit tonight and I need to make sure everything is ready.” My son Scott went through that routine every week, because he knew that he was part of something fun, something with his friends, and, most importantly, something that communicated Christ to his non-believing friends every week. Each week when he got home, he gave a detailed report about what happened to “Ned (the Nerd) Newschool” in his skit and about people who heard the gospel and accepted Christ.

What made a student, who already had his plate full of activities, make the sacrifice to get to that crazy outreach every week? Simple. His youth leader motivated him with a vision to reach his friends for Christ, and mobilized his group to do the same. The leader wasn’t foolish enough to think he could do it all himself. No, he equipped the students to own the meeting. From bringing their friends to running the program, they did it all except for the speaking (and sometimes they did that).

Everything you plan to do with the information in this book will go down in flames unless the students own it. When they own it, they will get off of their duffs of apathy and onto the front line of ministry.

And what about you? When you let other people own it, where does that leave you?

One night I spoke at a very large church with a very large outreach each week. The youth pastor picked me up at the airport, took me to my motel, casually ate din-

ner with me, and then took me to the church. The meeting started in forty-five minutes. He gave me a tour of their youth facilities, and introduced me to several people. When the meeting started, he sat beside me filling me in on what was happening and why they did each of the segments of the program. The entire evening he stayed with me. He did not have a single responsibility except to introduce the speaker! WOW! How did he do that? He shared ownership!

For most of us this poses difficulties: Either our personal insecurity or job security causes us to do it all ourselves. We have not learned to delegate well. We don't think someone else will do as good a job as we will. It seems easier to take the approach: "I'll just do it myself." That may work in the short run. But in the long run not only will you burn out, but also you miss a prime opportunity to develop leadership on your students.

Why do so many adult leaders drop out of youth ministry? Apathetic kids. Why do so many kids drop out? Irrelevant, adult-dominated ministry. How many juniors and seniors are actively involved in your youth group? Where are they? Why aren't they there? Because we spoon-feed them like we did when they were infants. They need the opportunity to flex their spiritual muscles, to take on a challenge, to try out their leadership wings. Whether or not students will own the outreach creates a critical decision for you.

So, hit the road, Jack! As you hit the road to take less ownership, challenge students to hit the road to take more responsibility. The vehicle you will use to hit the road will call the HIT Team.¹ (You can name it whatever you want). The HIT Teams handle the various areas of responsibility for the outreach. By continual exposure to the responsibilities of planning and executing their tasks, through the HIT Teams, students develop in spiritual leadership.

THE TEAM CONCEPT

Note that the HIT Team derives from a team concept. A group of students, not just one person, takes responsibility for an area of ministry. An adult from your Leadership Team will need to serve as leader/advisor for each team. The HIT Teams take shape according to talents, gifts, and interests.

The number and size of the teams depends on your youth group. Involve every willing student on a HIT Team. When you do that you will experience some very positive benefits.

- Your personal load lightens in administration giving you have more time for building relationships and preparing messages.
- Peers will reach their friends more quickly.
- The decline in student involvement in the later years of high school comes to a screeching halt.
- Students build confidence and stretch to take risks. As they see God working through them, their lives change.

You will discover how the HIT Teams function through the following explanation.

The Covenant. To serve on a HIT Team requires a commitment to a consistent ministry. Through the HIT Teams, students will grow in faithfulness— taking on a task and following through with it. For that reason you will want to request that the volunteers sign the HIT Team Covenant. (See “The Outreach Planner,” page 162.)

The Organizational Big Picture. Check out the organizational chart for an outreach on the following page.

Remember that an adult advisor leads each student leader. Then each student leader leads a team of students.

The Planning Meetings.

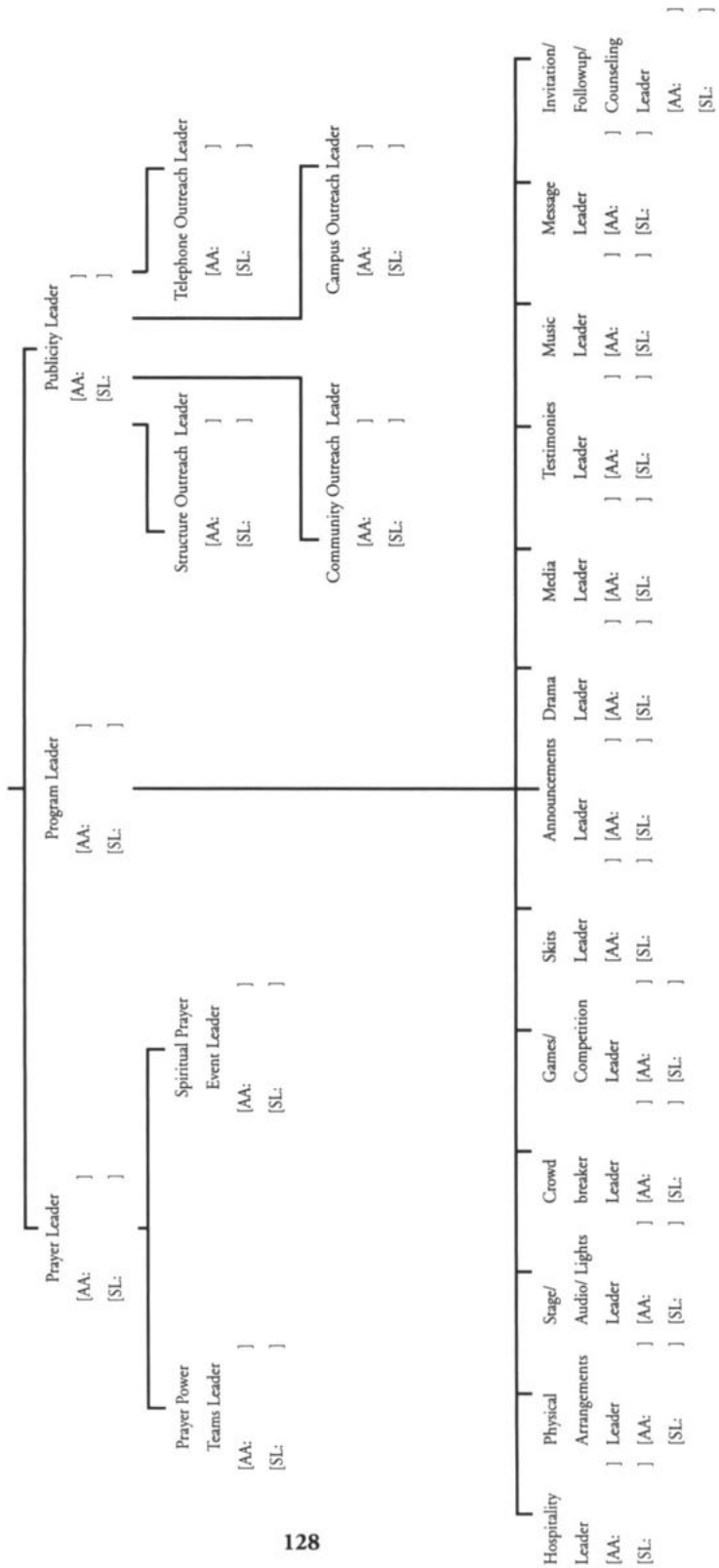
The Leadership Meetings. The HIT Teams leaders get together in one meeting with two agendas.

(1) Plan ahead for the HIT Teams. This part of the meeting consists of putting together the “Getting Your Ducks in a Row” sheet. Do this well in advance and on a timely basis so that each HIT Team will have the information they need to plan their part of the program.

(2) Set the final plan for the outreach. Spend most of the time putting together the final program so that the parts fit together cohesively. They will need to work on transitions in the program as well. They will complete the “Program Cue Sheet,” and the “Rehearsal Schedule.” (See “The Outreach Planner,” pages 163 and 164) A finely tuned program should result from this meeting.

THE OUTREACH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

(The Youth Leader)



Make any final assignments to complete before the outreach.

The Team Meetings. Each team will meet weekly if you have a weekly outreach, or at the appropriate time to plan for a periodic outreach.

- The HIT Team leaders will provide each team with the “Get Your Ducks in A Row” sheet already filled out for them down through #4.

- From that each team fills out #5-#6 as they brainstorm ideas and resources.

- Each team needs to come out of that meeting with their “Individual HIT Team Plan” sheet filled out. They need to bring to the meeting the specifics of what they will do. For example, if the “Skit Team” has specific skits they want to bring to the table, then they need to have those skits in hand with a copy for everyone.

- Each teams’ part of the “Meeting Structure” sheet needs to communicate the three specific contributions their team might make to the outreach. Obviously many of those plans will get amended as the planning gets more focused.

Follow this list of specific team responsibilities:

(1) Prayer Power Team.

- Beginning Prayer Power Teams on every campus with every person who wants to participate.

- Communicating with the Prayer Power Teams so they do not lose their motivation.

- Furnish the Prayer Power Teams with the specific prayer requests for the outreach.

Review Chapter 4 of the book for details. Use *Awesome Way To Pray* as the tool to get prayer triplets launched.

(2) Special Prayer Team. This team calls the church and the students to pray for this *specific outreach*. They carry out the special prayer plans discussed in Chapter 4.

- Determine which prayer approach they will use for the outreach.

- Lay out a specific plan for accomplishing that prayer strategy.

- Coordinate the prayer plan with the church leadership, the youth ministry, and the outreach schedule.

- Carry out the prayer plan.

(3) *Structured Outreach Team.* You and/or an adult leader need to have strong input with this team. However, let the students do the planning and organizing. This group will take responsibility for maintaining your visible, ongoing evangelism structure.

- Work with the youth leader to organize the outreach time to meet the needs of your unique situation.
- Link the partners each week.
- Make assignments each week that encourage each person to see nonbelieving friends with whom they have a relationship.
- Design an accurate record-keeping system and keep it up to date every week. Your church probably has a database system for this task. Plug into that.

(4) *Telephone Team.* The students who sign up for this need to have no fear of talking to strangers. They might need some training in telephone manners.

- Obtain the phone directories of the various schools.
- Train the team in how to use the survey.
- Set up a plan to distribute the numbers and make the calls. (The easiest approach is to photocopy the sheets from the directory and pass them out to the team.)
- Keep accurate records. Have each calling team be responsible for recording the results of their calls on the database record-keeping system.

(5) *Campus Publicity Team.* As this team carries out its responsibilities, it will help each person to read *Taking Your Campus for Christ*. This book offers a plan for becoming a “spiritual influence” on the campus.

- Work with the youth leader on the “School Survey” in *Penetrating the Campus*.
- Use the “School Survey” and the information in Chapter 6 of this book to decide your target audience and how you will communicate with them.
- Communicate with the youth group about how they can get the word out person to person.
- Communicate with the principal/administration at the school to get permission to get out the publicity.
- Design, print, and distribute the publicity pieces needed.

(6) *Community Publicity Team.* You will need some mature students on this team. They need to relate to the adult community.

- Coordinate their plans with the Campus Publicity Team in order not to duplicate efforts.
- Write a press release for the outreach (see page 146.)
- Invite the local newspaper to do a story on the outreach.
- Call radio and TV stations to request public service announcements for the outreach. Explore the possibilities of appearing on a local talk show or of doing an interview.
- Work with local businessmen to get them to sponsor some of your publicity efforts.

(7) *Hospitality Team.* Outgoing, friendly students who take initiative to welcome others need to staff this team.

- Decide together how they will make people feel welcome. They will need to keep in mind important “mixing skills” such as remembering names, introducing people to each other, and expressing a genuine interest in other people.
- Spread out in the parking lot, in the halls, and around the room.
- Make sure to greet everyone and include each one.
- Spread out during the meeting and enter into every activity with enthusiasm.
- Speak to as many people as possible when the outreach is over. Thank them for coming and invite them back again.
- Provide refreshments when needed and appropriate.
- Call all of the first-time visitors during the week.

(8) *Physical Arrangements Team.* People who sign up for this team need to take pride in the way things look.

- Arrange the facility the way the youth leader wants.
- Decorate the room so that it is warm and inviting.
- Gather all equipment: furniture, props, pencils, paper, invitation cards, book table, sign up table, handouts, projector, etc.
- Complete all of this thirty minutes prior to beginning.

(9) *Stage Team*. These people take responsibility for the lights, audio, and video.

- Know the technical schedule thoroughly in order to have all sound and lights coordinated with the schedule.

- Do a sound/light/video check 30 minutes before the outreach begins.
- Wire the speaker with his microphone.
- Prepare all Power Point graphics. Make them sharp and large enough to see.
- Take down all lights/sound/video after the outreach and store them properly.

(10) *Crowdbreaker Team*. Students who feel comfortable in front of people and who know how to create high energy excitement need to sign up for this team.

- Research all of the crowdbreaker resources and gather them into a small library to have available every week. (They should work with the youth leader to secure the money for these books.)

- Decide which crowdbreakers fit the theme and goal for the outreach.
- Gather all of the equipment and props needed to make the crowdbreaker work.
- Prepare, practice, and carry out the crowdbreaker with excellence.

(11) *Games/Competition Team*. A variety of kids need to compose this team, not just the competitive ones.

- Research all of the games/competition resources and gather them into a small library to have available every week. (They need to ask the youth leader for help in purchasing these items.)

- Decide which games/competition fit the theme and goal of the event.
- Determine the proper setting for the games (gym, large room, etc.).
- Gather all of the equipment and props needed for the games/competition.
- Prepare, practice, and carry out the games/competition with excellence.

(12) *Skits Team*. Humorous and funny students who can ham it up need to join this team.

- Research all of the skits resources and gather them into a small library to have available every week. (Work with the youth leader on where to get the money for these resources.)

- Decide which skits fit the theme and goal of the event.

- Gather all of the equipment and props needed for the skits.
- Prepare, practice, and carry out the skits with excellence.

(13) *Announcements Team.* You can combine this team with the skits team if needed. Creative, up-front, humorous people need to join this team.

- Brainstorm all of the different ways to do announcements, then gather any needed resources.

- Get the announcements from the appropriate person in writing in order to communicate what they want communicated.

- Prepare the announcements creatively with skits, interviews, etc.
- Practice and carry out the announcements with excellence.

(14) *Drama Team.* The students on this team either have some drama experience or have a real desire to get started in it. To do this well you will need a director who has dramatic skills. This person will set the level of excellence for this important team.

- Set up times to rehearse.
- Research and gather all needed dramatic resources and make them available every week. (Work with the youth leader on how to pay for these resources.)
- Clear any necessary permission forms and fees with publishers.
- Decide realistically how many dramas you can do in a month.
- Meet with the youth leader to determine the theme and goal of the outreach.
- Gather all of the props needed for the drama.
- Coordinate with the Light/Sound/Video Team their responsibilities for the drama.

- Prepare, practice, and carry out the drama with excellence.

Realize that this team will take more time than some other teams.

(15) *Media Team.* The people on this team will need expertise in video and photography.

- Gather all of the equipment needed to function properly. This can get expensive, so be creative. Use equipment that the church or a person in the church will lend. Gradually add to existing equipment so that the group doesn't need to depend

on other people's equipment.

- Determine needed video/photography footage and music resources far in advance so their use can be maximized.

- Decide what video/photography you will need to fit the theme and goal of the event.

- Videotape and photograph ball games, school events, interviews, retreats, camps, and any other student events.

- Finish any presentation at least a day before the outreach so the leaders can review it and see how it fits the program.

- Prepare and carry out the presentation with excellence.

(16) *Testimonies Team*. This team does not give all of the testimonies. Rather they select the people who will give them and work on their testimonies with them.

- Prepare their own personal testimonies according to the guidelines in *Giving Away Your Faith*, then present them in public.

- Keep an eye out for people in whose lives God is visibly working. Ask these people to relate what God is doing in their lives. Keep a list of people who would make good candidates for telling their story.

- Determine what kind of testimonies fit into the theme and goal of the outreach. Use variety and creativity.

- Select the people who will give the testimonies.

- Rehearse with the people who will give testimonies. Team members need to feel free to critique the testimonies and suggest improvements.

(17) *Music Team*. Obviously people with musical talent will make up this team. If you have only a few people with talent, go with a small number to insure quality. If you have many talented people, then either make up two bands or shift people in and out of one band.

- Research all music resources and gather them into a small library that can be available every week. Team members will have to be selective, choosing music that fits the kind of program you will do.

- Create a practice schedule for the team. Everyone on the team must commit to attending the practices. The music team will have a more extensive commitment than

most other teams. Everyone on the team needs to make sure they can and will come to the practices.

- Meet with the youth leader to get very specific directions on the kind of music desired.

- Meet with the youth leader to determine the specific theme and goal for the outreach.

- Meet with the Stage/Audio/Lights Team to communicate your needs.

- Set up all equipment two or three hours before the outreach.

- Do a sound check one hour before the outreach.

- Practice, prepare, and carry out the music with excellence.

- Coordinate the talents of any guest musicians with the closely-defined theme and goal of the event. Make them aware of the kind of music needed, the time they have, and the type of audience. The team should help with their equipment, sound system, lights, and other needs.

(18) *Message Team.* The people on this team consist of the speakers. That will include the youth leader but also some others who have gifts in this area. Encourage people to join this team who aspire to communicate Christ and then give them an opportunity to do so. You can use this as an opportunity to mentor young communicators.

- Decide how the message fits into the overall theme and goal of the outreach.

- Prepare and deliver the message at the outreach. The message may not always express itself as a talk. Explore creative alternatives such as films, videos, interviews, panel discussions, or a variety of other formats.

- Set aside the time needed to prepare and practice.

- Follow the speaking suggestions on pages 152-159.

- Critique the talk afterward so everyone on the team learns how to improve their speaking skills.

- Assist any guest speaker. Determine topic, time, and any other needs and expectations.

(19) *Invitation/follow up/Counseling Team.* All of the counseling does not fall on this team. This team trains and prepares others who will either discuss the invitation

with their friends, follow up with the people who respond, or do peer counseling in the counseling room.

- Prepare all resources needed for the invitation—cards, pencils, *Jesus: No Equal* booklets, *Getting Started* booklets, and New Testaments.

- Meet with the speaker to decide how to handle the invitation. Decide this on the basis of the theme and goal.

- Train all of the counselors in three levels of training:

- (1) How to follow up at an outreach. Accomplish this in a training seminar.

- (2) How to share one's faith successfully. Accomplish by going through the ten-week *Giving Away Your Faith* discipleship group.

- (3) How to counsel one's peers. Accomplish through a 10-week peer-counseling course.

- Secure access to professional counselors in case they are needed. Check with your pastor and community resources for Christ-centered counselors. Make a list of names and phone numbers.

- Show all of the counselors what to do and how to respond at the invitation. Meet with them for a few minutes after a youth group meeting to go over this. Give them all of the material at that time. When no public invitation fits the outreach goal, then remind the counselors to discuss the conclusion question from the message with the friends they brought.

When you have this many students in direct, frontline ministry either weekly or on a regular basis, then you will make a high impact!

ACTION POINTS

1. Create signup, ideas, and responsibility sheets for each of the nineteen teams. See "The Outreach Planner" for examples of these forms. If you do not have enough students to fill up these teams, then figure out which teams you need the most and design sheets for those teams. You can combine several of the teams or leave out some in order to fit your situation.
2. Have students sign up for the teams. Publicize sign-up times. Set aside a few weeks as sign-up weeks.

1. HIT stands for High Impact Team. This idea came from my friend Andy Stanley.

PART 2

THE OUTREACH PLANNER¹

Photocopy multiple copies of “The Outreach Planner” and “The Citywide Outreach Planner” to use in your ongoing planning for outreach.

PREPARATION PLAN

MY BURDEN FOR KIDS

(See Chapter 1 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Write down the burden God has given you for lost kids.

1. How God wants me to *see* them.

2. How God wants me to *seek* them.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

(See Chapter 2 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Write your ministry purpose statement, then go over it with two trusted friends. When you get it in its final form, present it to others.

FIVE ESSENTIALS FOR EXCELLENCE

(See Chapter 3 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Go through *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry*. This self-training tool will help you fill out this page. Write down what you plan to do to implement the *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry*. Be specific.

1. Go deeper.
2. Build leaders.
3. Disciple students.
4. Penetrate the campus.
5. Design outreach opportunities.

VALUABLE RESOURCES

Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry provides a self-training kit that gives you the pegs on which you can hang your entire ministry. We suggest that you go through this kit before you read and implement this book.

Building Leaders for Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry will equip your adult youth leaders to join you in creating outreach opportunities. We suggest that you start taking your Leadership Team through this before implementing *The Magnet Effect*.

Moving Toward Maturity Series: This eight-book progressive discipleship series will move students toward spiritual maturity in Christ.

- *Getting Started* helps new believers successfully begin their walk with Christ.
- *Following Jesus* builds a solid foundation for a life-changing relationship with Christ and for becoming a disciple of Christ.
- *Spending Time Alone with God* deepens students' relationship with Jesus by learning how to spend time with Him.
- *Making Jesus Lord* challenges students to obey Jesus and give Him control in the day-to-day issues they face.
- *Giving Away Your Faith* guides students on the wild adventure of overcoming their fears and taking the risk to boldly communicate Christ.
- *Influencing Your World* shows students that they can become influential leaders through serving the needs of the people around them.
- *Time Alone With God Notebook* gives students practical tools for guiding them in their adventure with God.
- *Moving Toward Maturity Leader's Guide* gives the group leader all that's needed to lead a lively and life-changing discipleship group. This book contains the leader's material for the five main books in the discipleship process.

Penetrating the Campus gives an in-depth, practical approach for communicating God's love to students. The detailed strategy will help you bridge the gap between your ministry and the public school campus - probably the most important mission field in America today.

You can order these and other ministry resources:

SAMPLE VISION AND STRATEGY STATEMENT

PHILOSOPHY AND STRATEGY OF YOUTH MINISTRY FOR

(name of your church)

THE NEED

Young people today are in crisis.

- 3.3 million of 17 million teens are alcoholics.
- 1 in 5 twelfth graders have tried crack or cocaine.
- 1/2 of the one-million teenage pregnancies end in abortion.
- Three times as many teenagers will commit suicide this year as the number of Americans killed at Pearl Harbor.

These and other negative statistics have names and faces. Many of them live in our community and go to our schools.

God has commissioned us to **go** to these young people with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. And He has commanded us to give them an opportunity to **grow** through discipleship. The Lord has called us to help students experience *life-change* and become *life-changers*.

OUR MISSION

GO to students with the life-changing message of Jesus and help them **GROW** to become life-changers with their friends.

OUR STRATEGY

In order to accomplish our mission, our church must have a Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry. That means that every aspect of the youth ministry must come from Jesus' model of ministry and then find expression in practical ministries to students.

Go Deeper

As I, the youth leader, the adult leaders, and parents go deeper with Christ, then our teenagers will have the opportunity to see the reality of Jesus Christ worked out in practical obedience and practical living. That works itself out through

- confessing and repenting of sin regularly,
- making any wrong relationships right,
- obeying Christ fully and completely, and
- praying for the young people.

Build Leaders

God has called some people to work specifically with young people. These adults need encouragement and equipping. We will nurture them in their commitment to Christ, encourage them in their relationships with other youth leaders, and train them in the skills they need to work with students. They will learn how to express the life and ministry of Jesus to kids. This will happen through a weekly Leadership Team gathering.

Disciple Students

To motivate and mobilize students to follow Jesus, we must do with them what Jesus did with his disciples—disciple them. In an environment of prayer and personal relationships, we will help students experience Christ, grow in Him, and then give that faith away to their friends. In this process they will move toward maturity in Christ.

Penetrate the Campus

The campus is a hostile, pressure-packed battle zone and is the most challenging mission field in America today. Young people spend most of their time on the campus. Every day they face overwhelming emotional, social, and spiritual challenges. We need to reach them where they are. We will train and mobilize lay people and college students to build relationships with non-Christian young people in order to lead them to Christ. As adults do this, then our core of young people will have the courage to follow in our footsteps and boldly share Christ with their friends.

Create Outreach Opportunities

Non-Christian students need Jesus Christ. They need a place to come, hear the message of Christ, and respond to it. Christian students need to feel comfortable bringing their friends. Therefore, we desire to creatively present the message of Christ to young people in a culturally-relevant outreach opportunity to which people bring their nonbelieving friends. These outreaches require intensive labor, much preparation, and the involvement of the church. We will follow a step-by-step plan to reach students through these outreaches.

OUR GOAL

To reach every student on every campus with the life-changing message of Jesus.

PRAYER STRATEGY

(See Chapter 4 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

My personal prayer strategy

My volunteers' and parents' prayer strategy

My students' prayer strategy

OUTREACH EVENTS READINESS ASSESSMENT
(See Chapter 5 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Category	Momentum now	Actions for total momentum
THE YOUTH LEADER Philosophy and strategy defined Vision written Ownership by leaders and students Evangelism modeled consistently		
THE PASTOR AND CHURCH LEADERS Leaders prayed for Vision presented Church counted cost Relevancy issue addressed Specific support secured Leaders invited to attend		
THE LEADERSHIP TEAM Leaders meeting for equipping Leaders' roles communicated Leaders relating to non-Christians		
THE STUDENT TEAM Students being disciplined Students equipped in evangelism Students responsible for ministry		

PUBLICITY PLAN

(See Chapter 6 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

The plan to create a witness awareness in the youth ministry:

The plan to practically equip students to communicate Christ and bring their friends:

To express love and openness

To develop social skills

To train to communicate Christ

The plan to publicize the outreach:

Changed lives. Who are they?

Discipleship groups. Who will they bring?

The youth group. What specific approach will we use?

Leadership Team. Who do they invite?

Structured outreach. How will we organize it?

Telephone survey. How will we organize it?

Campus publicity. What options will we use and how will we use these?

- Posters
- Tracts
- School paper
- Public address announcements
- Flyers
- Mailings
- Special group invitations
- Advertisements
- Youth hangouts
- Local newspapers
- Radio and television

A SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

(Your Logo)

(Address)

For Immediate Release

(Date)

"The students of America desperately need something," says a local church youth leader, and that includes students in Toledo.

Jeff Hankson, the youth minister at Toledo Community Church, says, "More than 5,000 teenagers commit suicide each year. Out of the one million girls who will get pregnant this year, roughly 800,000 will be unmarried. And statistics like these go on and on, covering every area: abortion, drinking, alcoholism, drugs, violence, and the occult."

"We can't close our eyes to these statistics, because they point to real problems for real kids here in our own town," he said.

Hankson and his church have developed a plan to address these issues. They have committed \$32,500 this year to help area students. Specific opportunities planned for this year include a Christian music concert at Hensley Park, a week-long summer camp, small groups for building relationships, and a weekly Wednesday night meeting that attracted more than 150 students each week last year. "This all takes place in a friendly, student-oriented atmosphere," Hankson said.

"These outreaches present Jesus to students," said Hankson. "Students run the meetings, from planning the program to setting up chairs and to acting as emcees."

Jennifer Evans, a Setlin High junior says, "Most adults don't trust kids with real responsibility, but Jeff encourages us. Besides, it's great to have somewhere fun to go. Actually, that's what attracted me the first time. I was looking for something other than partying, and through this outreach, I accepted Christ."

Parents are being helped also. "This meeting is really making positive change in my student," says the father of a Setlin High senior. "Not only are kids getting off the streets, but their lives are changing. My son used to be rebellious; now he asks how he can help around the house."

These students meet every Wednesday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Toledo Community Church at 861 Redan Road.

For more information call Jeff Hankson at (301) 991-0091 or E-mail jhankson@aol.com.

Contact: (Name) _____ (Phone) _____


(Fax) _____

PROGRAM PLAN

GET YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW

(See Chapter 7 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Use the “storyboarding” method by writing each idea on a 4” x 6” Post-It Note and then tack it to a board.


- 
1. **Purpose:** What is the specific purpose for this outreach?
 2. **Target:** Who is the specific audience?
 3. **Theme:** What is the specific theme?
 4. **Goal:** What is the specific goal?
 5. **Ideas:** What creative ideas do you have? After storyboarding all of the group’s ideas related to your theme and goal, what are the five best ones?
 6. **Resources:** What specific resources will you need?
 7. **Production:** What will the program look like? (Use the “Program Flow Chart” on the next page.)

PROGRAM

PROGRAM FLOW CHART

(See Chapter 7 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Once you have worked through “Get Your Ducks in a Row,” you will fine-tune the outreach program with your “HIT Team” leaders. Have a typed copy of your “Get Your Ducks in a Row” notes.

- 
1. **Review.** Clarify your purpose, target, theme, and goal beforehand.
 2. **Brainstorm.** Continue to use the “storyboarding” method. Print out the ideas gathered during the “Get Your Ducks in a Row” session so everyone has a copy.
 3. **Create.** Taking all you have done to this point, create the program in detail.
 4. **Assign.** Make assignments of specific responsibilities to each of the “HIT Team” leaders.
 5. **Fine-Tune.** Meet two hours before to review the program and make final adjustments.

EVENT

ENVIRONMENT EVALUATION

(See Chapter 7 of *The Magnet Effect*.)*Circle your evaluation.*

COMPASSION

- Adult leaders inviting kids

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Discipled kids prepared to bring two friends each

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Interaction in the program

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Individuals prayed for

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

COMMUNICATION

- Barriers to non-Christians removed

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CONNECTIONS

- Students in Prayer Power Teams

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Students prepared to bring friends they have prayed for

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Students trained to do follow up

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CREATIVITY

- High-energy rowdiness time included in program

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- “Salting” of students built into the program

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Student involvement built into the program

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CONTENT

- Program solidly based on Scripture

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

RESOURCES SURVEY

(See Chapters 7 and 8 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Use this tool to determine what resources you have available.

Program Element	Present Resources	Resources Needed
Crowdbreakers		
Games and Competition		
Skits		
Announcements		
Dramas		
Visual Media		
Testimonies		
Music		
Message		
Invitation		
Follow up/Counseling		

MUSIC PLAN

(See Chapter 8 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Select Options

Who will participate on the music team?

- The lead musician
- Instruments
- Band
- Soloist(s)
- Guest musician

Music Preparations

What do you need to consider to prepare musically for the outreach?

- Equipment
- Budget
- Power Point presentation
- Musicians

Outreach Program

What issues do you need to address for the musical program to flow?

- Musical transitions
- Students involved
- New songs
- Worship the Lord

MESSAGE RESEARCH NOTES

(See Chapter 8 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

- The date of the meeting:
- The title of the message:
- The passage:
- The central truth:

- The outline of the passage:

Detailed Outline

Brainstorm

Questions

Cross References

Objections

Commentaries

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(See Chapter 8 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Title:

Message objective:

Passage:

Outline:

Introduction

Body

Points

Illustrations

Applications

Conclusion

MESSAGE WRITING

(See Chapter 8 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Use separate sheets to write your message out, sentence by sentence.

After you have written the message word for word . . .

- Prepare your speaking notes.
- Practice out loud 4 or 5 times.

SAMPLE MESSAGE OUTLINE

Handling Your Parent Hassle

Luke 2:41-52

Introduction:

The way we relate to our parents determines the way we relate to God.

Objective: To relate to our parents the way God desires.

Body:

The Problems:

Jesus, the Son of God, lived with parents who were flawed.

His parents:

1. Had a communication breakdown (vv. 43-44).
2. Panicked because of His absence (vv. 45-46).
3. Felt mistreated (v. 48).
4. Didn't understand Him (v. 50).

Identify the biggest, deepest problem you have with your parents.

The Solutions:

Make a decision to respond positively to those problems. Jesus responded properly to the problems with His parents.

1. He saw His parents' perspective (v. 41).
Have you been rebellious toward your parents because they have not done things your way?
2. He set out with pure motives (vv. 46-48).
Have your motives been to please God or to get your own way?
3. He searched for His personal identity (vv. 49-50).
How can you learn more about who you are through your parents?
4. He submitted to His parents (v. 51).
Have you been obedient to your parents in every way?

Determine what steps of action you will take to solve the problems with your parents.

The Results:

Because Jesus responded correctly to His parents, He matured.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mentally—"wisdom" | 2. Physically—"stature" |
| 3. Spiritually—"favor with God" | 4. Socially—"favor with man" |

Conclusion:

Ask God to show you one way you need to change in your relationship with your parents. Write down your prayer.

SAMPLE MESSAGE HANDOUT

Handling Your Parent Hassle

Luke 2:41-52

The Problems:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

The biggest, deepest problem I have with my parents:

The Solutions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

The steps I will take to solve the problem with my parents:

The Results:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

My prayer for what God will do in my relationship with my parents:

MESSAGE EVALUATION

(See Chapter 8 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Date: _____

Message Title: _____

Text: _____

Main Point: _____

Number Attended: _____

Place: _____

	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Use of Scripture				
Gestures				
Pitch				
Enunciation				
Enthusiasm				
Illustrations				
Applications				
Nervous Habits				
Overuse of Words				
Other Comments				

YEARLY MESSAGE PLANNER

(See Chapter 8 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Use this tool to plan your messages for the entire year.

Date	Topic	Theme	Comments
September			
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			
October			
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			
November			
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			
December			
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			

January

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

February

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

March

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

April

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

May

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

MEETING STRUCTURE

(See Chapter 9 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Each “HIT Team” leader takes responsibility for filling in the blanks for his/her team’s area. Also, that person comes to the meeting prepared to select the best idea from each category in light of the overall picture.

Event: _____

Theme: _____

Resource Location of Resource (Page #)

Crowd-breakers

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Games and Competition

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Skits

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Announcements

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Resource

Location of Resource (Page #)

Dramas

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Visual Media

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Testimonies

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Music

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Message

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Invitation/Follow up/Counseling

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

HIT TEAM COVENANT

(See Chapter 9 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

HIT TEAM COVENANT

*Whatever you do, work at it with all
your heart, as working for the Lord,
not for men . . . (Colossians 3:23).*

Realizing that my friends need to know Jesus Christ and that God has challenged me to reach them, I covenant with God, my youth leaders, and other HIT Team members to:

- grow daily in my relationship with Jesus through obedience to Him,
- participate in a Prayer Power Team,
- prepare for and attend the weekly planning meetings,
- carry out my responsibility with excellence, and
- participate in bringing my friends to outreach opportunities.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

PROGRAM CUE SHEET

(See Chapter 9 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Put the entire program on one sheet.

Date: _____

Purpose: _____

Target: _____

Theme: _____

Program Overview: _____

Time

Program Item

Person

|

|

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

(See Chapter 9 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Use this Rehearsal Schedule to let students know when they practice for the outreach.

Element	Day	Time
Crowd-breakers		
Games/Competition		
Skit		
Announcements		
Drama		
Media		
Testimonies		
Music		
Message		
Invitation/Follow up		
Stage		
Audio		
Lights		

THE PLANNING MEETINGS FLOW CHART

(See Chapter 9 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Yearly Master Planning Meeting
(Prepare general plan for the year.)



Weekly Leaders' Meeting
(1. Plan ahead for the teams.
2. Set final plan for the outreach.)



Weekly HIT Team Meeting
(1. Develop each team's plan.
2. Set final plan for the outreach.)



OUTREACH

INDIVIDUAL HIT TEAM PLAN

(See Chapter 9 of *The Magnet Effect*.)

Team: _____

Responsibility for the outreach: _____

Plan to carry out responsibility:

Plan	Resources	Person responsible	Deadline

SAMPLE HIT TEAM SIGN-UP SHEET

Telephone Team

The students who sign up for this team need to have no fear of talking to strangers. They might need some training in telephone manners.

Responsibilities:

1. Secure the telephone directories of the various schools.
2. Train the team in how to use the survey.
3. Set up a plan to distribute the numbers and make the calls. The easiest approach is to photocopy the sheets from the directories and pass them out to the team.
4. Keep accurate records. Have members of each calling team be responsible for recording the results of their calls on the central database system.

Team Sign-up:

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 11. |
| 2. | 12. |
| 3. | 13. |
| 4. | 14. |
| 5. | 15. |
| 6. | 16. |
| 7. | 17. |
| 8. | 18. |
| 9. | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

1. Some pages of "The Outreach Planner" were adapted from materials used by permission of Student Impact, Willow Creek Community Church, 67 East Algonquin Road, South Barrington, IL 60010.

*"It's so frustrating! We plan an outreach and non-believers don't show up!
What's that about? And how can we turn it around?"*

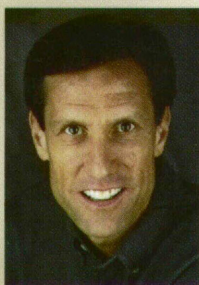
THE MAGNET EFFECT

Designing Outreach That Draws Kids to Christ

You can attract non-believing students to the gospel! *The Magnet Effect* will show you how!

The Magnet Effect offers simple yet powerful strategies and tools for outreach. It equips youth leaders, volunteers and students to work together for maximum outreach involvement. This book presents step-by-step plans to define the target audience, pray for the outreach, develop publicity plans, prepare a Jesus-focused message, plan and carry out the program and follow up with students. The thirty-page Outreach Planner provides extensive and practical tools to walk leaders through the entire process.

The Magnet Effect will help you create culturally and relationally-relevant outreach opportunities that will draw students to Jesus.



Dr. Barry St. Clair desires to influence as many teenagers as possible to become followers of Jesus Christ. As the founder and president of Reach Out Youth Solutions, Barry lives on the leading edge of national and international youth ministry. He speaks to and trains thousands of students, parents, and youth leaders each year in the United States and around the world. Barry, author of over 20 books, has written *Penetrating The Campus* and *Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry*. Barry has run the Boston Marathon and played on the number three basketball team in the nation. Barry and his wife Lawanna live in Atlanta and have a combined family of eight children.