

Teens Cycle Two-Shift Eight

Student Outreach Event (with a Disciple Now Option)

Primary Objective

The goal is to provide student ministry events with an outreach focus that has tremendous potential to be a catalyst for students reaching other students.

How This Can Help You Reach Teens

For decades, student ministry has utilized events to carry out its mission. Sadly, there are times when events become the focus and a church can lose sight of its mission to make disciples. This should never become a reason to not use events. One could argue that effective student ministry cannot be accomplished without **strategic events**. Every event that is conducted should have a purpose. It may be fellowship, discipleship, or evangelism. Regardless, the event should align with your ministry's mission and help you get there.

Outreach events can be a means to make initial contact with unchurched students. Simply stated, they may be more likely to come to a fun activity with free food. This is an incredible way to introduce an unchurched person to witness an **authentic Christian community**. By modeling for them what life can look like when walking with believers, we can showcase how the body of Christ should share, love, and live.

Additionally, **shared experiences** can become a launching point for deep relationships. Prayerfully, that unchurched student will be drawn into a smaller group gathering or attend a worship service. Either way, the common, shared experience should facilitate the discipleship process and initiate a development of trust.

Suggested Strategy

Your approach to student outreach events should consider the following characteristics to increase effectiveness:

1. Funneled Approach

Disciple making is the biblically-mandated objective. While relational

discipleship is most effective, it requires trust and time. A funneled approach to student ministry can capture the attention of students and strategically draw them into a community for disciple-making.

Outreach events can serve as the largest part of the funnel. These events can be designed for fun and fellowship. For example, it is easy for a student in your group to invite their friend to a professional baseball game or a trip to a theme park. While there may not be a Bible study involved, this initial contact allows for the leader and other students to learn more about this guest, and a shared common experience can go a long way toward making them more comfortable in their first visit to church.

Sunday morning worship services, or your weekly youth worship service, can serve as the next layer in the downward funnel. Exposure to worship music, sound biblical preaching, and the liturgy of a church experience allows the visitor to begin to see God as the One who unites us together.

An invitation to small groups can further connect this student to the learning process and community. It is here, in a safe place, that trust can be further built, and their heart and mind can be exposed to the truth. Perhaps as they grow more comfortable, they can begin to voice questions about life and themselves in to better understand God's purpose for their life.

The final, and smallest, section of the funnel drives them into a disciple-making relationship. Perhaps a student leader meets with one or two other students and guides them through what it looks like to follow Jesus every day.

While much more can and should be said about a funneled approach to ministry, this overview shows how a student outreach event can be an effective launching point to a relational ministry of disciple-making.

2. Home-Based

Great outreach events don't have to cost any money. A pool party at someone's home or outdoor games at a home with a large yard can be a fun time. There is a level of intimacy that is visible when believers gather in a home. This Acts 2 model is simple and effective. Additionally, it can be a way to bridge families in the church to be involved in student ministry. For example, the pastor, or a deacon, may not have any regular interaction with the students, but hosting an outreach event in their home can go a long way toward building momentum in the church toward reaching the next generation.

3. Student Training

Your student must understand the mission and strategy of reaching students. Additionally, they must understand their role and be allowed to contribute to the

idea. When it comes to events, they know better than we do on what would appeal to an unchurched student. As it has been stated, students are the most equipped at reaching other students. With effective training, the students in your church can invite guests from one section of the funnel into the next.

Extra Mile Suggestions

1. Disciple Now

In its simplest form, a Disciple Now is a weekend retreat that focuses on disciple-making. Typically, this is a two or three-day experience with worship services, fun activities, and small groups. The small group experiences are vital to this weekend and provide opportunities for intense Bible study, usually centered around an event theme. It is common for these small groups to spend the night in the homes of church members, which is yet another way for the church to engage in the mission of reaching the next generation.

2. Community-Wide Events

Shared experiences can increase in effectiveness when they are shared among multiple churches across denominational affiliations. A community-wide Disciple Now, a community concert, and more are proven to be effective outreach events. Students can see the body of Christ work together in unity. Students are also able to meet other students who may go to their school. It is not uncommon to see increased activity in outreach at school when students learn of more of their friends who are following Jesus.

Key Steps for Preparation

1. Be Intentional

Events for the sake of events are not purposeful. Any event that is conducted should be tied to a purpose and desired outcome. Certainly, students highly value social interaction and some events will have a focus on fellowship. No matter what the event, be intentional and seek balance. If all events are fellowship-focused, a ministry can quickly fall out of balance. Events that are designed for outreach and discipleship are also highly valuable.

2. Be Prayerful

A prayer focus and strategy should undergird any ministry effort. Particularly, an outreach event is intentionally stepping “behind enemy lines”. Expect the Enemy to work against your intentions. Walk in a prayerful spirit.

3. Strategically Use the Calendar

The balance that was encouraged in the comments above on “intentionality” can be accomplished and maintained with effective calendaring. By developing a 12-18-month calendar, one can monitor the overall balance of events centered on fellowship, discipleship, and outreach.

4. Utilize Student Leadership

It is highly recommended that every student ministry integrates a student leadership team. This model ensures buy-in from students and gives them ownership in how events are implemented.

Resources

1. SWAT Ministries

SWAT Ministries is an all-inclusive Disciple Now service ministry. Using qualified college students, this ministry can come alongside and help create a complete weekend package. For more information visit, www.swatministries.com

2. Lifeway Resources

Lifeway is known for the Bible study curriculum they produce, but you may not know they create content exclusively structured for Disciple Now events. A visit to www.lifeway.com followed by a site search for Disciple Now will lead you to several curriculum options, including a valuable **free event planning guide** to walk you through the steps needed to plan a successful Disciple Now weekend.

3. Student Discipleship Ministries

SDM is a non-denominational ministry that exists to provide biblically-based evangelism and discipleship resources. You can find out more information by visiting www.gosdm.org.

4. Your Georgia Baptist Student Groups and Faith Development Office

Feel free to call us anytime. With decades of student ministry experience, we have led many Disciple Now weekends and would gladly assist you in anyway. We can be reached at 1-800-RING-GBC.