

## C-Bridge Cycle Two-Shift Seven

### Investing in Younger Teens

#### Primary Objective

The objective is to assist local churches seeking to utilize area college and university students, as well as the single young adults in your church to leverage their influence over 13-17 year-old-teens within the local church. These college and university students would seek to strengthen younger teens in their commitment to Christ and disciple them in the areas of personal evangelism, discipleship, missions, and churchmanship.

#### How This Can Help You Reach Post High School Young Adults

“There are boundless opportunities for collegiates to experience such growth within your church’s student ministry. Many college students feel they live in a world in which there are few ways they can truly make a difference. As a result, many become spectators in an adult world; and we, in turn, criticize them for being lazy and uninvolved. Moreover, churches are guilty of not expecting and not challenging this emerging generation to invest in Kingdom growth. Yet, there are wise churches that have tapped into this incredible spiritual resource.

It is important to realize that the most likely ministry in which to involve college students is your church’s ministry to teens. There are several very legitimate reasons this is a natural fit.

1. College students are **in tune with the cultural norms** of communication, fashion, music, art, and so forth. They understand the thinking patterns and social axioms of students. This is critical if we are to reach youth for salvation and ongoing discipleship.
2. Involving college students in youth ministry **provides a seamless transition** from high school to college. If strong interpersonal relationships can be established between college students and teens during the later stages of the teens’ involvement in the student ministry, it ensures an easier transition into the collegiate or young adult ministry. If the graduate moves away, the chances of him

searching for church involvement and relationships similar to those he or she has experienced over the past few years greatly increase.

3. A benefit of involving collegiates in student ministry is the **duplication process of transforming discipleship**. Because of a college student's investment, students mature in their faith walks. These former youth can duplicate the discipleship process with students in the church's current student ministry.

4. College students can **establish mentoring relationships** with two or three students in your ministry. Mentoring will help collegiates honestly evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses as disciples." (Jeffrey Wallace, June 17, 2009) *College Age Leadership for Your Student Ministry*.

### **Suggested Strategy**

Stage 1- Begin with an "IronWorks" event. This can be a one-day local mission project where collegiates and teens go to a local park to clean up litter, serve in a soup kitchen, clothes closet, etc. The goal of this first event is to get teens to see college and university students getting their hands dirty for Jesus and investing in a Saturday to developed relationships with teens.

Stage 2- Begin a weekly "small group" centered on Bible study, food, and fellowship to deepen the "student to student" connections and begin the student to student mentorship that will follow.

### **Extra Mile Suggestions**

As "IronWorks" events develop, consider moving from a local setting to possibly developing a network of churches within a region. Partnering with other Georgia Baptist churches and associations could expand the total discipleship experience. Another possibility would be to develop a statewide or overseas mission project, thus deepening the mentoring and missions aspect of "IronWorks".

### **Key Preparation Steps**

Pray. Remember the wise words of Oswald Chambers, *"We tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defense. We pray when there's nothing else we can do, but God wants us to pray before we do anything at all."* Prayer must be in the "DNA" of all elements of "IronWorks".

Examine. Make sure you observe the spiritual maturity of the college and university students who will be working with your teens. Be certain of their personal salvation, commitment to the Lordship of Christ and that they have a "servant's heart". Be certain they have a balanced and biblical understanding of prayer, evangelism, discipleship, missions, and churchmanship. Remember, they

will not only be hanging out with the teens but, more importantly, they will be a great influence upon your teens.

Resources. Do this to enable those involved with reaching and keeping your teens connected to the local church, growing in their personal relationship with Christ. Even though, resources of people and finances may be limited but, the future health of the church is at stake. There are creative ways to develop and replenish the necessary resources and the Georgia Baptist Mission Board would be glad to assist with ideas and prayer in these matters.

### **Looking Ahead**

Preview: (9) *Leadership Focus*

Plan: (8) *Outreach Event*