

## **Creating an Environment for Youth Evangelism and Discipleship**

There is never enough time! You want to reach more students for Christ, but what would you do with them? You already have more students to disciple than you know what to do with. The balance between evangelism and discipleship is indeed a difficult one.

Creating the right environment can really help. It will allow you to see the big picture of what you are doing and where you are going. At the same time, it will let you see the needs of each individual student. Every student can be involved no matter where they are in their walk with God. Those who want to grow can be sufficiently challenged and those who are not as committed yet will not feel left out.

### **The Right Ingredients**

But before you begin, you need to have the right ingredients for your environment:

#### **1. Right Priorities**

Students are often like sponges. They will pick up those things that are important to you. Even with limited time, you can have a great impact if you emphasize the right things.

Here are some winners you will want to put at the top of your list to teach them:

- **Faith — trusting Christ for every detail of your life and ministry.**  
Are you modeling faith steps in your life and ministry? Remember, Hebrews 11:6 says, *“Without faith, it is impossible to please God.”*
- **Evangelism — leading people to Christ.**  
Evangelism is the “spark plug” of your ministry. Nothing will increase faith and vision more than sharing Christ and teaching your students to do the same.
- **Ministry of the Holy Spirit — our resource for living the Christian life.**  
We need to be daily filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk with God and serve Him. We need to be teaching our students how to do this as well.

#### **2. Relationships**

How well do you know your students? Are you close to them or are you just a teacher who shows up once a week to impart truth? Do they feel free to open up to you? It is very important that you not only train your students, but build deep and lasting relationships with them.

Influence comes through relationships. Relationships open the doors to learning and commitment to Jesus Christ. It has been said that if they love you, they will love your message. But, be careful. There is a fine line. The key is to focus your relationship on Christ, not yourself. The students are not looking for another “buddy,” but rather someone who will love them and lead them.

This does not happen all at once and is not always easy. It takes time and creativity.

### **3. Programs and Activities**

Many people would put this as the first ingredient in the environment, but it shouldn't be. Without a foundation of right priorities and relationships, the events are hollow. They can become activity just for activity's sake. Be sure to lay the foundation first.

Then as you plan your program, you will want to organize a combination of things that will allow you to win students to Christ, build them up in their faith and send them out to multiply their faith by reaching others for Christ.

## **Different Levels of Ministry Activities**

The following are the different levels to include in your ministry activities.

### **1. Sowing**

- Your Role – At this level, you should plan events that will expose a large variety of students to you and your ministry. This can include Christian students, but should focus on those who don't know Christ yet. Your goal should be to sow broadly and expose as many students as you can. We are not necessarily sharing Christ, but relating to the students and building a curiosity for the things of God.
- Students' Commitment – None
- Example Activities – Classroom speaking, motivational talks for club or sports teams, surveys, meeting students at games and other school events.

### **2. Evangelism**

- Your Role – In this level, activities should present the claims of Christ and allow students an opportunity to respond.
- Students' Commitment – Come and Listen
- Example Activities – Meeting individually or in small groups with students, inviting student to a pizza party after speaking in a classroom or to a sports team, organizing a large outreach meeting.

### **3. Growth and Follow-up**

- Your Role – In this level, you should help students make the major transition in their lives of putting their trust more and more in Jesus Christ. This is a critical time. They have recently received Christ, now they need to begin to grow. Teach the basics!
- Students' Commitment – Come and Learn
- Example Activities – Personal appointments, small group Bible studies, large group studies/ meetings

### **4. Discipleship**

- Your Role – In this level, you want to help students develop their walks with God, adopt spiritual disciplines and be trained to reach out to others.
- Students' Commitment – Come and Do
- Example Activities – Conferences, large group meeting and training, involvement in helping with outreach and follow-up.

### **5. Leadership**

- Your Role – In this level, students are encouraged and trained to take leadership. They have graduated to being a servant of all (Mark 10:44). It is important to chose students who will become examples to the other students.
- Students' Commitment – Come and Lead
- Example Activities – Leadership group/study, planning and leading outreaches and discipleship, mission projects

## **Benefits of These Levels**

Here are some benefits of planning these levels into your environment:

### **1. The Big Picture**

You can see how activities fit together to give your ministry a balance between evangelism and discipleship. It will guard against too much of one and not enough of another.

### **2. The Process**

You can see how to lead a student from someone who is not a Christian to a spiritual leader.

### **3. An Evaluation Process**

You can see were any student is in their relationship with Christ and what activities would best meet their needs. Not all students will grow at the same rate. You do not have to bunch all students together for all your activities. This usually results in some being bored and others being over-

whelmed. You can assume that where the greater commitment is, fewer students will be involved. You can also evaluate activities to see whether they are actually meeting the needs at where the students are.

#### **4. Holy Spirit Reliance**

It is the Holy Spirit who is ultimately responsible for the changed lives of the students we care about. He gives the motivation and understanding to help our students trust their lives to God. Your task is to provide an environment in which He can work.

If you are just beginning your ministry, you do not need to be concerned about providing a variety of activities, nor do you need activities at every level. The important thing is that you focus on the best activities in light of your time and the needs of the students.

Later, as your ministry grows, you can add more opportunities for your students' growth. To do this, you may need others who can team up with you.

Remember, this is not to judge students in order to determine their worth to the ministry. It is simply a tool to help you determine the needs of your students and to determine whether an activity is meeting their needs.

*Recommended Reading: "Master Plan of Evangelism" by Robert Coleman*

*From Student Venture ©*

*Call 800.699.4678 or visit [www.studentventure.com](http://www.studentventure.com)*

*This material is available on the "ALL That" CD-ROM. 1.888.ALLIANCE • [www.gocampus.org](http://www.gocampus.org)*