

Mapping Your Campus

What is one thing that you will treasure when you leave high school? Here's a hint: It will collect dust and make your own children laugh in years to come. It's not your favorite outfit or a sports trophy, but – you guessed it: your school yearbook.

Start With the School Yearbook

Flipping through the yearbook tells all: what is happening at your school, who is involved in what activities, the values students have, and even the amount of school spirit. So if you want to reach your campus, the yearbook is the place to start. It shows you the different groups and students who make up the puzzle of your campus.

Map out the Different Groups

The Lord may choose to reach the whole school through an assembly or some other event. But most likely it will be in smaller parts at a time. In Acts 1:8, Jesus gave us an example of reaching the smaller areas in order to reach the whole. So, in order to reach your school, you need to map out the different groups. Your school yearbook will help you break down the whole into parts you can target to reach. See how many groups you can list.

Natural Groups

Gather some students and together go through your yearbook and list all the groups. Think about the characteristics and interests of the teens in the different groups you have listed. This will help you see the “natural groups” on your campus. Natural groups are those groups of students who know each other because of their common involvement in a class, activity, or social network. These would include band, sports teams, drama club, church, and groups of friends.

Unofficial Groups

Now break down what the unofficial groups on campus are by drawing a sketch of the tables at each lunch period. Start by writing down who sits where until you write as many names of students as you can think of, creating a map to guide your outreach plans.

Choose a Group to Reach First

Once you know different groups on campus, you can begin to choose which group you and your friends want to reach out to first. Consider which groups you are already a part of and can influence right away. After that you can pick more groups to reach out to as you think about their spiritual interest.

For example, the first table you see when you walk into the cafeteria is filled with freshman students. You know Jenny's little sister sits there and you've met a guy named Joe who sits there, too. Jenny is a Christian but you're not so sure about Joe.

How to Reach Out

To reach out to them, you could have a food fight (off campus, of course!) or play Water Wars (just make up water games using Super Soakers and balloons). After the games, you could give a talk on how life can be a mess if we aren't guided by God, the One who knows what is best for us. Then you can tell the students that you receive that guidance as you relate to God in a relationship. Tell them how they can begin a relationship with the Lord. Write out the points from a tract like "Knowing God Personally" on a big piece of paper so everyone can see the writing.

Another idea: Invite a large group of students to a 15 (or 50) foot banana split. A Christian student would then explain what the Christian group on campus can offer; announce upcoming events or Bible studies where they can discuss more about how God relates to life, and then explain a personal relationship with God to them. You could even use a questionnaire to lead into the gospel. (See 'Planning and Conducting an Outreach').

After sharing the gospel, pass out comment cards to find out what the students thought and if they would like to know more about how to grow in a relationship with God. Call those who want to know more and set up a time to meet with them (all together or in small groups). Follow up with them by teaching the basics of how to grow in Christ. (See 'Basic Growth Series.')

This will hopefully lead to a Bible study where you continue to help them mature spiritually. (See "How to Lead a Small Group.")

Many types of students are on your campus and there are many ideas to reach out to them with the love of Christ. Mapping the campus is a great way to find out "who's who" on campus and what their interests are so you can effectively reach them with the gospel.

Don't Go It Alone!

There are teens and adults (teachers, parents, youth pastors) who want to work with you to reach your campus for Jesus. Talk to Christian teachers or administrators. Find out what they think would interest a particular group on campus or how you can become a part of what that group does.

Ask a few spiritually mature teenagers to join you in mapping the groups on campus. Plan and pray together, asking God, the One who understands everyone, to guide your steps of faith. Now go for it!

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