

# Bringing Assemblies to your School

## The Vision

The vision and desire behind this strategy is to simply see local church youth ministries, para-church youth organizations, and individuals concerned for our community schools to unite together to make a positive difference in your area. This strategy begins by utilizing secular school assemblies during the day and doing a city-wide youth event at night. When a coalition of various ministries, individuals, and organizations catch the vision of what they can do together, other creative events and outreaches will follow.

## The Purpose and Objectives

### The School Assembly....

- Occurs at the school during school hours, is sanctioned by the school, and is attended by a large group or the entire student body.
- Although secular in nature, imparts a positive moral message of hope that every student can connect to. Without hope for the future, young people have no power to live in the present.
- Will build and reinforce a positive school learning environment.
- Motivate students and educators to give or maintain their best efforts in academics and life.
- Empowers students and equips the school administration to avoid the negative pressures and influences that are relevant in their school and/or culture through positive choices.
- Builds a bridge where the Christian community (ex. Bible Clubs, Churches) can be a positive influence and contribute to the school.

### The Evening Youth Event....

- Draws youth and adults to a Christian meeting where, perhaps for the first time, they will make the ultimate choice: Invite Jesus Christ into their lives.
- Allows the school assembly speaker who connected with students earlier in the day, can share how Christ changed their life and how Christ can be involved in the life of the students.
- Builds awareness of the church and its concern for the schools and community.
- Provides an opportunity for Christians to unite and reach out to their schools.

## Your Initial Steps

Great school assemblies and evening youth events don't just happen. They are a result of prayer, commitment, and considerable preparation by everyone involved.

**Step One - Prayer:** Campus/youth ministry, church and community leaders should pray daily for direction in selecting a speaker and location for the school assemblies and evening youth event.

**Step Two - Speaker/Contact:** If you are looking for a school assembly speaker call the Youth Alive office, 1-800-315-4723, to bring one of our statewide tours to your community.

**Step Three - Develop a Coordinating Team:** The coordinating team should represent a cross section of the Christian community. A unified effort will strengthen the impact of the assembly and evening youth event in both the school and the community. This is important if you are working in a large community that has a distinction of inner-city and suburbs.

### **What is needed in a coordinating Team Member?**

The members need to have an unselfish desire to make a lasting impact on your community for Christ. Here are a few types of people who would be great to make up this team:

- Pastors (youth and senior from all denominations)
- Credible Christian individuals with contacts at schools (involved parents, teachers, PTA members, school members, etc.)
- Christian businessmen and women who might be willing to contribute and/or approach other businesses.
- People with a variety of backgrounds, talents and vocations.

### **What will coordinating Team Members do?**

The responsibilities of the members will vary. You may want to assign members to the following:

- Coordinate prayer support (contacting churches, bible clubs, etc.)
- Coordinate the school assemblies (contacting the schools)
- Coordinate budget and fundraising efforts
- Coordinate promotional efforts
- Coordinate evening event and follow-up
- Coordinate transportation of speakers for the day(s)

### **In the first meeting, discuss the following areas:**

- Present the vision, the need, and the possibility of having an impact at the local campuses. Stress the importance of unity and involvement for maximum effectiveness.
- Present the ministry of the proposed speaker. Show a video of the speaker doing a school assembly and read excerpts of recommendation letters from school personnel and pastors.
- Discuss the costs of the assembly and evening youth event and ask for a commitment to be involved in raising this budget.
- Assign assignments of those who wish to become part of the Coordinating Team.
- Begin to pray for the success of this venture.
  - Pray for favor with school administration.
  - Pray for unity among local youth ministries and organizations.
  - Pray for great success in the school assemblies.
  - Pray for the salvation of many at the evening youth event.

### **Step Three - The Two Important Initial Things to do following your Coordinating Team Meeting:**

- Meet with school officials immediately. This meeting is vital. No assembly means no outreach.
- Begin to look and secure your evening youth event location.

# Caring for Speakers

**Hotel Accommodations:** Middle to upper class. These people travel year-round. The road is difficult. They need a good rest.

**Meals:** Feed them well-good food, not necessarily "the Ritz", but with quality nutrition.

**Recreation:** Many speakers are on a regular exercise program or like recreation. Check to see if they would want to schedule time for racquetball, golf, weight training, etc.

**As Host:** Make sure you are kind, courteous and helpful. Traveling full-time is not easy! Do your BEST for them. Make sure their experience is enjoyable too.

**Schedule:** Schedule your assemblies as close together as possible, allowing time for transportation and set-up/tear-down. Any open times will allow the speaker to rest.

**Sample itinerary:** As sample itinerary is provided in this packet as a sample of how to organize your school assembly tour information. It should include the school, people to contact, phone numbers, addresses, and approximately how many students will attend the assemblies.

## Developing a Budget/Fundraising

Most dreams of any size and consequence have risks. One of the hurdles to reaching the students in our community is finances. A Budget Worksheet is provided for you to calculate the costs for your event in your local area. Raising the finances could seem overwhelming but there are a number of options and avenues to raise the needed funds.

### A Church or Network of Churches

- A church or collection of churches could see this endeavor as an extension of their missions/evangelism strategy and giving. The church or churches underwrite all or part of the costs.

### School Organizations.

- Public Schools can usually receive a \$500 grant for a drug prevention program. You could ask if any of this money is available or is applied for.
- PTA/PTO (Parent /Teacher Assoc./Org.)
- PRIDE (Parent Resource Institute and Drug Education)
- DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)
- GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training)
- School/School Student Groups: Student Council, Honor Society, Bible Club, Beta Club, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), FHA (Future Homemakers of America)
- AODA (Alcohol Or Drug Awareness) - Some have a full /part time or volunteer who serve in this position to raise funds for programs/assemblies in the schools. Could be a great contact!

### Civic Clubs

- VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars)
- Rotary Club
- Eagles Club
- Elks Club

- Jaycees
- The American Legion
- Optimists Club
- Lions Clubs
- Kiwanis Clubs
- Chamber of Commerce
- Knights of Columbus

### Other Potentials

- Local businesses of all types (Insurance, Grocery Stores, Banks, etc.)
- Grants from local, state and national foundations. There are grant books at most
- Libraries which list hundreds of foundations offering grants by category.
- Individuals who have a reputation for investing in the future of the community.
- Concerned citizens

## Approach to Fundraising

### Make the contact

The contact can be made in person, by phone or in writing. Use the method that works best for you, but make sure to communicate the following:

- **Share the vision.** People need to be reminded of what is facing teenagers today and how many are giving up or wanting to. There are 18 suicides in the US every day and over 1,800 attempts. 60% of youth at some point consider death to be more appealing than life.
- **Look through the Newspaper.** Photocopy current examples, both local and national of struggling youth.
- **Present the information on your Speaker.** Share the connectivity that the speaker has with young people how the speaker's assembly will help benefit the students by dealing with the specific issues that your students in your area are dealing with.
- **Explain that students making right choices will help reduce crime in your community.** This concept alone will help businesses see the impact that can be made.
- **Offer to announce their support at the assembly.** When businesses or individuals contribute to your efforts in reaching out to young people, it is worthy of mentioning. You may want to print some business names or logos on promotional handouts and posters.
- **Ask for a specific amount.** Example: 25 business/individuals to contribute \$100, additional contributions mean additional school assemblies-impacting more lives.
- Give time to consider proposal.

### Follow-up on the initial contact

It is best to follow-up on the initial contact within a week, unless the person says that more time is needed.

- **If they contribute,** be sure to thank them for their part in helping people of the community and invite them to the assembly (with the school's permission).
- **If they cannot contribute,** be sure to thank them for their consideration, and invite them to the assembly. It may open the door for future contributions.

## Meeting with School Administration

It is said that a person will never get a second chance to make a first impression. This axiom is never truer than when it comes to presenting the possibility of having a school assembly to a school administrator. Please be aware of the following attitudes and administrative concerns.

### Attitudes

<b>Avoid negative attitudes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Defensive</li><li>b. Intimidated, fearful</li><li>c. Religious</li><li>d. Arrogant, overconfident</li><li>e. Salesman</li></ul>	<b>Maintain right attitudes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Servant spirit</li><li>b. Confident, enthusiastic</li><li>c. Polite, respectful</li><li>d. Affirmative, positive, creative</li><li>e. Empathy (understanding the principal's fears and concerns)</li></ul>
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## Know your stuff

**Know personal details and background of speaker.**

**Know content of the assembly presentation.**

**Have developed a school assembly promotional packet. This should include the following:**

- Bio and information on your speaker
- Principals' recommendation letters for your speaker and assembly presentation.
- Cover letter from you with phone numbers to contact you should the school elect to do the assembly and thanking them for their time.
- Video and/or audio copy of the school assembly presentation
- "Hosting a Successful Youth Alive Assembly"-covers details of the assembly. A copy is enclosed in this packet to give to your school administration.

**Make a personal appointment-do not send material and do not be late.**

**Take key people with you when you approach the administration.**

- Concerned parents, business people, influential people
- Concerned teacher
- Concerned students (student council, athletes, etc.)

**Explain in detail the assembly and evening youth event format.**

- Explain that no mention of religion (i.e. God, Jesus, the Bible, etc.) will be mentioned in the course of the assembly.
- Candidly explain the evangelistic purpose of the evening youth event.
- Talk about the possibility of the evening youth event being held on school property.

**Share how the assembly is funded**

- Private donors in the local business and church community will help assist the school. Ask the school to help financially. They may have money allotted specifically for the purpose of assemblies. **DON'T JEOPARDIZE THE ASSEMBLY.** Share with them that you want to help and will raise the funds from the community to cover the costs.

### **Discuss length of the assembly presentation.**

- The assembly presentation is normally 35-45 minutes long.

### **Share desire to help support the school and assist the principal and staff to achieve their goals for the students.**

School assemblies allow for a great way to team-up with your school to help address issues that the school is dealing with.

Emphasize issues (drug and alcohol abuse, suicide awareness, self-esteem, etc.) and the positive impact the assembly will bring when approaching the administration.

## **Contracts**

Remember the old saying, "A paper trail is a safe trail". This saying definitely applies to you as you work with the schools. If you are looking to have any funding come from the school then contracts should be used. A sample contract is enclosed in this guide to show you what a sample contract looks like and how to complete one. Contracts are available for you to use and are included in this packet. Contracts are key because it will confirm the dates and times and the grades in which will be spoken to, but, the contract also will lock in the agreed upon price for the assemblies.

School administrations are use to using contracts and it gives them added security as well as an added reminder to all that has been agreed upon.

## **Planning Time line (What to do following your initial steps)**

*\*This is not intended to be a rigid, stuck to time line but a guide so you are not overwhelmed with details!*

### **4-6 Months in Advance**

**Prayer:** Make the evening youth event and school assemblies a matter of prayer in every participating church and organization involved in this outreach.

**Coordinating Team:** Develop and release Coordinating Team Members to various duties to make the event a success.

**Sponsors:** Designated Coordinating Team Members should meet with local business leaders to discuss sponsoring a school assembly "to offer positive alternatives and to strengthen the moral fiber" of young people. Don't overlook this source.

**Confirmation:** Confirm the location of the evening youth event and pay deposits to hold this location. Try to find a location that is either a school or a community facility that is neutral to the youth of your community. Make sure all confirmation is done in writing.

**Equipment:** Make arrangements for transportation, lights, and sound equipment you will need for the school assembly and evening youth event and pay deposits. Get receipts and confirmations in writing. Ask the assembly speaker if any additional equipment will be needed.

**Personnel:** Contact and confirm with every person who will be involved during the assembly and evening youth event. This is best done with a personal contact followed by a letter detailing their specific involvement and the updated information on any current developments.

**Tickets:** Make sure the speaker's airline tickets have been purchased.

## 2 Months in Advance

**Coordinating Team Meetings:** Make sure that everything is on track concerning the finances and planning of the assembly and evening youth event. Confirm the following:

- Location of evening youth event
- Fund raising
- Publicity (finalize poster, ticket design and info and take to printer)
- Schedule of events
- School assembly and evening youth event schedules, including confirmation of every aspect of those events.

**Altar Workers:** Organize and set up altar workers and follow-up for those who will make a decision for Christ at the evening rally. Ask each church to have a selected number of workers on hand. Do a quick information meeting before youth event to show them the decision card and materials you are using. Order any materials you will need now.

**Attraction:** Discuss drawing young people's interest to make this assembly and evening youth event a success at their school. Be creative!

**Optional Idea:** Pre-assembly rally. Have all the youth groups sponsoring the event gather for a meeting to pump up interest in the school assemblies and evening youth event. A key to a successful evening youth event will be students bringing students.

**Prayer:** If possible, organize community prayer times where several churches come together and pray for the success of the assembly and evening youth event.

**Accommodations:** Finalize ALL accommodations-hotel, travel, etc.

## 1 Month in Advance

**Publicity:** Begin publicity campaign.

**Training:** Begin altar worker and follow-up training. Make sure that there are enough workers and that all materials that will be needed are available. Purchase all follow-up materials.

**Reminders:** Send letters to everybody involved and reconfirm all of the reservations that have been made up to this point. Also good to contact those who have expressed an interest, but have not been actively involved. Get them tickets and posters, etc.

## 2 Weeks in Advance

**Budget:** Make sure the total event budget has been raised and that there are no unforeseen expenses that have not been accounted for.

**Event Schedule:** Send a copy of the schedule to everybody involved in the school assemblies and evening youth event, highlighting items of special interest to them.

**Coordinator's Update:** Send a copy of your coordinator's update to all the key churches and groups involved They will want to know the time to attend the assemblies, as well as how support is coming.

**Principal:** Contact the principal and reconfirm the final details. Also, ask if the speaker can announce the evening youth event at the end of the assembly. Sometimes the assembly will go so well the principal will change his/her mind and allow you to announce the evening youth event. Respectfully accept whatever their response may be.

## The Day of the Event

**Prayer:** Schedule a Morning Prayer time with everybody involved before anything happens. Also, use this time to encourage those who may be a bit nervous. If the speaker is at the meeting and wants to share a brief word to those who have put the day together, that is great.

**Finances:** Have a bit of extra cash available just in case something happens and a small unexpected item needs to be purchased.

## 1 Day Following the Event

**Follow-Up:** Get rolling on the follow-up that has been set up. This is a CRUCIAL time.

**Returns:** Return all rented items to the proper place.

**Thank the Principal:** Contact the principal and thank him for allowing the assembly to be part of the school calendar. This is also a good time to get their initial reaction to the assembly, which will help make future plans in working with that school.

**Thank You Notes:** Send thank you notes to EVERYBODY involved in the assembly and evening youth event. Also, include a brief update on the success of the entire event.

## 1 Week Following the Event

**Follow-Up:** Make sure follow-up is on track and students are being contacted, contact those who seem to be slipping between the cracks.

**Contact/Evaluate:** Contact all churches, pastors, and youth workers involved. Ask their reactions to the assembly and the evening youth event. This will help you make better and more effective plans for the future. Ask them to write a brief analysis of what they liked and how then entire event could be improved.

**Coordinator's Report:** Make a final coordinator's report, including the financial statement, with ending balance, attendance figures, salvation and rededication responses from the evening youth event. Send a copy to all churches involved with the outreach, as well as to Christian organizations and business people who contributed.

**As you can see, preparing of this event is not easy. But remember, your labor will not go unrewarded. You get what you put into it!**

# THE EVENING YOUTH EVENT

There are many needs to consider for an evening youth event to be successful. Here are several items to consider.

## Location.

- Have sufficient capacity for turnout. What is "sufficient"? That will be determined on the promotion, area schedule conflicts, support from youth groups/churches, and overall involvement and excitement from you and others.
- A location to consider is in the local high school or community center. If this is worked through an officially recognized club, like a bible club, there is often no or limited charge for the school facilities. A non-threatening environment can attract many youth and adults who would otherwise not come.
- Make sure there is an adequate space available to follow-up where sound is not an issue and is close to main event room for those making decisions for Christ.
- Make sure you have made arrangements to get into the facility as early as possible to set-up.

**Promote, promote, promote!** Getting the word out builds toward success.

**Keep the event schedule simple and short.** Remember people did not come for a lot of announcements. Your audience is there to hear your speaker. Give the event to the speaker as soon as possible.

**Try to have a local business(s) donate pizza and soda.** This all adds into your promotion of what will be at the youth event and may encourage more teenagers to attend with free pizza and soda. Many pizza chains will donate or offer special prices for large group events.

**Consider your sound needs.** Your speaker will not be successful if they cannot be heard and understood.

**Consider adding volunteer security at your event.** Often times you can have a off-duty police officers or adult volunteers who will patrol the building and surrounding parking lot to ensure safety for your guests.

**Make sure your event room is at a comfortable temperature.**

**Especially if you are anticipating a large crowd, have a doctor available.** Plan for the unexpected. By having a doctor available will allow you to help some one in case of a medical emergency.

## PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

The evening youth event must be treated as a separate event for the purpose of promotion. The school assemblies are a school event and should not be advertised as a part of the evening youth event. This will help avoid giving the school assemblies a religious overtone. All possible avenues should be explored in promoting the evening youth event. The following is a suggested list of some advertisement sources with time guidelines for promotions.

**School Newspaper:** Effective and low cost. Due to school printing times, place ad early. (1 month early)

**Local Newspapers:** May do feature article, talk to editor and use the speaker's press release for your information. (1 month before); place an ad (3 weeks before)

**Church Bulletins:** Mention evening rally in the bulletin and church announcements (3 weeks before)

**Posters:** Use a sharp design that will catch attention and place in public areas where young people hang out, and community bulletin boards (2-3 weeks before). Include:

1. Photo of speaker
2. Day/date
3. Time
4. Location
5. Sponsorship

**Cards/Tickets:** Give to youth to pass out to friends; distribute to area businesses -place a stack by the check-out cash register (2-3 weeks before) [A sample card format is in this packet.]

**Television:** Inform them of what is going on and ask for possible public service feature or community interest interview (2-3 weeks before)

**Radio:** Advertise with commercial spots to air starting four days before event. Use public services announcements.(3 weeks before).

**Co-Sponsors:** You could possibly ask newspapers, television station or radio stations to be a co-sponsor for the event in exchange for free advertising.

**Appear on talk shows:** On radio or television to explain the purpose for this event.

**Connect with other Outreach Ministries:** Such as Youth For Christ, Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Local Christian radio stations, Christian B, Businessmen's Clubs, Ministerial Alliances, Women's Aglow, etc.

## Motivating Youth to Bring their Friends

It's important to give young people ownership of the youth event and motivate them to bring their friends. Encourage sponsoring groups to implement their own plan to adapt the following plan to their own situation.

About 5-6 weeks before the youth event challenge young people to develop a salvation "top ten" list. Pass out promotional cards or tickets for the youth event and on the back of the card have students list ten unsaved friends. Encourage the young people to pray for those on their list and look for opportunities to invite them to the youth event. The assembly will usually generate excitement and create an opportunity to invite friends. Each student should be ready to provide transportation to the event if needed. The church may want to help with buses and vans.

## FOLLOW-UP

**Plan Your Follow-Up:** No matter how effective the speaker is or how well organized the event, long-lasting results will not be seen without adequate follow-up. Effective follow-up comes from good planning and organization, not good intentions. The following tips will help guide you to make follow-up more effective.

**Altar Workers:** Should be secured from all churches that are involved in the youth event.

**Altar Worker Meeting:** At a brief meeting before the youth event altar workers should then be informed of all the procedures and have opportunity to become acquainted with the decision cards and follow-up materials.

**Follow-Up Materials:** Purchase at least one month before the event. A great resource that combines a decision card and provides a great initial discipleship material in one product is entitled, "Guess What Happened To Me?" This inexpensive product is the first of an eight part discipleship series aimed for students. This product may be ordered by contacting our Youth Alive Office: 1-800-315-4723. Items to have on hand are:

- Pencils and Decision cards.
- Basic discipleship material to start the new.
- Christian in the right direction.
- Bibles for those who do not have one.

**Follow-Up Area:** Often the front part of the stage area will not be conducive to follow-up. When scheduling your evening event location, consider the availability and access to another room relatively close to the youth event location. If the follow-up area is too far away, fear of the unknown might make some people turn back.

**Decision Cards:** Altar workers should complete the decision card for each student who makes a decision for Christ

- Assurance of Christ in their life if sincere in their decision
- Pray every day
- Read the Bible every day (start with the Gospel of John)
- Attend a Bible-believing church regularly
- Tell a friend about his/her new life in Christ

## 1 to 2 Days After Event

**Pass Out Decision Cards:** All youth leaders from participating churches come together to pass out decision cards for follow-up.

- If the student indicated a home church, cards go to that church for follow-up.
- If no home church was marked, cards go to the church of the friend who invited the student to attend.
- If neither of the above were marked, sort by location of the nearest church.

**Letter:** The youth pastor or youth leader should send a letter of invitation to each person in their pack of follow-up cards, listing activities and meeting times. Inform the youth of the date and time of any Bible clubs that meet at his/her school.

**Youth Invitation:** Within 48 hours each student should receive a phone call from a young person who attends the assigned follow-up church, inviting him/her to come to the youth service and any Bible club that meets at their school.

## 5 to 7 Days After Event

**Phone Call:** Within five days the student should receive a phone call from a youth worker/pastor or counselor with the assigned follow-up church, checking on how everything is going and letting them know they are appreciated.

**Visit:** Within one week of the event, the student should receive a personal visit from a young person and youth worker from the assigned follow-up church.

## 3 to 4 Weeks After Event

**Letter from Speaker:** If possible, an encouraging letter from the youth event speaker should be sent reminding the young person of the importance of their commitment. This letter may be written before the rally and kept on file until it is time to send it.

# HOSTING A SUCCESSFUL YOUTH ALIVE ASSEMBLY

1. **Timing is everything.**

Determine how much presentation time the speaker requires. Build in additional times for students to get seated, the introduction, conclusion and any unforeseen interruptions. If possible, silence the bells and announcements during the program.

2. **An auditorium is the best place to hold an assembly.**

A gymnasium will work if the technical aspects are appropriate, and only if the audience is seated on one side facing the speaker. If there are more students than will fit on one side of the bleachers, the remaining students should be seated in chairs or on the floor.

3. **Keep the stage clear.**

The stage area should allow plenty of room for freedom of movement. Most speakers prefer a lapel microphone. If a hand-held mic is substituted, place the microphone on a stand and provide a long enough cord for the speaker to walk the full width of the venue. The audience should be as close to the stage as possible, with no empty seats between the speaker and the last row of students.

4. **A good speaker cannot overcome bad sound.**

If your school does not have a quality sound system (quality microphone, amplifier and speakers) buy, rent or borrow-just make sure the speaker has the main tool they need to perform successfully. The quickest way to sabotage an assembly is to overlook the need for excellent sound.

5. **The presenter must be seen, not just heard.**

Make certain that the speaker is fully illuminated so the audience can see animated facial expressions and gestures. Some gyms offer sufficient light, but auditoriums will always require full stage lighting.

6. **Ambiance sets the tone and the mood for the assembly.**

Attention spans will easily evaporate in a hot, stuffy gym. Every effort must be made to keep the room at a comfortable temperature, adjusted to the size of the crowd. If possible, play upbeat music through the sound system as the students enter and leave.

7. **To every great assembly, there is a sense of order.**

When students are permitted to sit anywhere they choose, troublemakers will tend to cluster and create "pockets of disturbance." Teachers should sit with their students. Avoid the presentation where teachers stand together along the walls, in lieu of taking part.

8. **The introduction is a critical part of the performance.**

The introduction should begin after the audience is seated and the room is quiet. Most speakers will provide their own introduction and prefer that it be read by someone with a loud, clear voice.

9. **Remember ... Assemblies are for the students!**

If there will be adult visitors attending the presentation be sure to seat them in the rear of the auditorium. This event is designed to motivate and encourage students. Therefore, students should have the best seats in the house!