

Start or revitalize a ministry in your church

QUICK START GUIDE



PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRIES



Quick Start Guide for Public High School Ministries

Available from:
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Why?

The Facts

70% of Adventist high school students attend public schools and we need to reach them! We have invested in the lives of many of these students in our Adventist elementary schools, Adventurers, Pathfinders, camp, and other ministries. Then, all too often, we merely look the other way and lose those investments when these same students choose to attend public high schools instead of academies. But the fact is that for most of the 70% academy is not a realistic option because these students either don't live near one or can't afford to attend.

The Gospel Commission

Adventist children are not born “saved.” We must personally and individually lead them to Jesus. We do this by developing relationships: first, with Jesus, and then also with the children. We cannot lead kids to Jesus without knowing Him ourselves. And if we distance ourselves as they head off to public high school we are giving up before they have made their full commitment to Christ. Evangelism must begin at home, in our own churches, with our own children who need our spiritual care and nurture until they reach adulthood.

We must intentionally take the step of meeting students in the middle of their world, helping them learn how to live their faith where they need it most—on campus. As they learn to live their faith at school they become natural evangelists, modeling their faith for other students and sharing it through word and deed as well. Public high school ministry takes place in one of the richest evangelistic fields. The harvest is ready and the students are waiting, but the laborers are few.

How?

Make Your Commitment

Every church family should intentionally choose to adopt at least one public high school in their area. Choose your level of commitment and pray for God's guidance as you proceed.

Level 1: Prayer Warriors

Choose a public high school to pray for. Put this school on all your prayer lists and pray for the students, teachers, peace, for Christian students to live their faith, and for a Christian club to develop if there isn't already one in place. Pray for every high school student in your church by name every day. Pray that Jesus will open doors and give you opportunities to reach these kids and their friends.

If you want to put some of your prayers into action you can even go to the high school you've adopted around the holidays and ask if you can contribute Thanksgiving or Christmas baskets for families in need. Many schools have programs in place and would welcome donations and volunteers.



Level 2: Building Relationships with Students

- Start by learning their names. Every Sabbath as you see them pass by say hello and ask them about their week. As you learn their names, use them when you address the students and try to remember what they tell you so you can follow up the next week and see how things are going. Showing you care makes a huge difference in the life of a teen.
- Bring some food and drinks to youth Sabbath School. Nothing wins the heart of a teen like food! This is just one more way to show you care.
- Invite the youth to participate in the church service by helping with the Scripture reading, prayer, offering call, or children's story. Help them identify and use their talents for God. Ask them to serve as junior deacons or deaconesses. This is a great way to show that you value and trust them. But remember not to push too hard. Instead, look for ways to provide mentorship and help them to be successful in all they do!

LIVING IT HIGH SCHOOL OUTREACH WEBSITE

Visit <http://livingiths.org> to find resources to help start your public high school ministry. This site features videos, Bible studies, information on helping at-risk teens, and much more.

Level 3: Visiting Students at School

For pastors and youth leaders high school student visitation is far more effective at school than it is at home. School is where they spend most of their waking hours and often face their biggest challenges and need to know how to live their faith.

Simply ask a student you know if you can stop by their school at lunchtime and bring a pizza or two to eat with them and their friends. I've never known a teen to pass up free pizza—especially if they can bring a friend. Ask the student's parents to call their school the day before and let them know you'll be stopping by. You will also need to stop by the school office and ask what all is involved with meeting a student on campus before you schedule your visit. They will also require you to sign in when you visit. If you aren't quite ready to go on-campus, offer to meet them at the front office and take them out to their favorite fast food restaurant for lunch.

While you're eating with them, ask the student(s) what it's like to attend a public school and if they would like to share any prayer requests. Ask them if it's a challenge to live their faith at school and ask why. Ask them if any of their friends are not yet Christians. As your relationships with the teens grow, also be sure to nurture their relationships with Jesus by sharing something you've learned recently in your devotional life that they may find helpful. Being personal and real is critically important and really quite simple—sharing straight from your heart is best.

You can visit students at school anywhere from once per week to once per semester—whatever it takes to stay in touch and show you care. Being a spiritual mentor to a public high school student and his or her friends can win many souls for the Kingdom and is a priceless gift that will pay dividends for eternity. And if natural evangelism can become a way of life for



students while in high school, it will also prepare them to live their faith in the professional world once they become adults. This should be a top priority for every youth group, church, conference, and union.

70% of Adventist teenagers attend public high schools. We need to reach them!

Level 4: Starting an Off-Campus Ministry

Once you have developed relationships with the youth in your church and taken the step of visiting them at school, they will know how much you care and be much more receptive to attending other ministry events that you host. Here are a few ideas that have worked well for others:

- **A Bible application group** is similar to a Bible study group except there is always a focus on how the lessons from the Bible passage can have a lasting impact and change the way you and the students live. You can find complete Bible application guides for small groups available for free on the Living It website: <http://livingiths.org/resources/jesus-living-you>.

You can host these Bible application groups at church but the best place, by far, is in the home of a caring family. It's all part of the relationships you are nurturing with these students and it also fulfills the "make disciples" part of the great gospel commission. Welcome them into the middle of your life and show them how much you care.

- **Service projects** are a great way to give students an outlet for their faith. As students learn and grow spiritually they naturally want to reach out and help others. Service projects are an entry-level outreach that will help students work their way up to being comfortable with more gospel-oriented outreach and eventually sharing their faith with others. Some outreach projects that others have had success with include: volunteering with local city parks and recreation department to help clean up neighborhood parks, serving meals at a local homeless shelter, volunteering at a local after-school tutoring program for elementary or junior high students, helping with work projects at your home church, or any other community-based service project you can find.
- **Sidewalk ministry** is a great way to help students start bringing ministry events toward their school. In this outreach you don't have to get permission from the school because you aren't actually on-campus. Either before or after school (after is typically better) have your students on the sidewalks taking surveys, asking for prayer requests, or handing out tracts. Surveys can consist of questions about personal faith or beliefs, hobbies, social issues, or anything that interests teens. The goal is to get into conversations, show care and concern, and to offer something that may be of interest or helpful to other students.
- **See You at the Pole** is an event that schools across the country and around the world participate in. It simply consists of students meeting 30 minutes before school starts on the fourth Wednesday of September each year around the school's flagpole to pray for students, teachers, school, the government, and the nation as a whole. The event is student-led with adult support and can be attended by anyone who wishes to support the event since it is around the flagpole in front of campus rather than in the middle of campus.



- **Conference-sponsored events** are another great faith-building resource for your students. Check your local conference website for information about short-term mission trips, camp meetings, weekend spiritual retreats, day-long youth rallies, and other youth-friendly events. It is important to help your students meet other students with similar values and interests and to develop a community of believers amongst the youth in our churches.

Level 5: Starting an On-Campus Ministry

There are many ways to get on campus and start ministering to students in the middle of their world. Remember, the key is to establish relationships and work through them. If you are a little nervous about getting on campus check out the “Walk on Campus” video: <http://livingiths.org/resources/videos/walk-campus>. After watching the video consider these ideas to help you get started on campus.

- **Register as a volunteer** so you can help out in any capacity you can on campus. With budgets tight, many schools are looking for volunteers to work in a variety of roles, from assistant coaches for after-school sports to sponsors for a wide range of clubs. Stop by your local public high school or middle school and find out how you can get on campus and help. This is an especially good way to start if you don’t already know students on campus wanting to start a ministry. As you volunteer you may meet students with an interest.
- **Help out with an existing campus club.** Have the students you know find out if there is an existing Christian club on campus. If so, get registered as a volunteer and offer to help. You can start by bringing food or drinks to club meetings and offering other support as needed. Encourage the students you know to attend and help out as well. Help the students to be successful in all that they do and always be prepared to share a testimony should the need arise.
- **Start a new campus club.** Check out the complete step-by-step guide on starting and running an on-campus club found in *GO: A Guide to Campus-based Youth Ministry*. For more information about this book, visit <http://livingiths.org/resources/outreach-ideas/leader-student-outreach/starting-club>.

Here is the basic outline:

1. Find a faculty sponsor. Find someone you or the students know, or ask around for a Christian teacher who may be interested.
2. Get the paperwork needed to form an official campus club from the school secretary and file it in the office.
3. Find a meeting time and place. Lunch is often the best time and just ask around for a good place—typically in a classroom, school theater, lunch area, or foyer of the gym.
4. Get the word out. Give out with Living It wristbands and t-shirts! Make sure your meetings are announced in the school bulletin, have your student leaders make posters to display around campus (get them approved before posting), and make flyers to pass



out. Many schools have an event called “Club Rush” where each club puts up a table with promotional materials and recruits new members. And remember, free pizza once a month while you get established works wonders for a student’s memory as well!

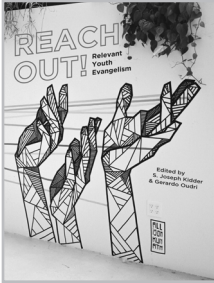
Conclusion

Thank you for reaching out to the public high school students in your community. If you provide the structure as outlined in this manual the students will provide the fire and excitement that brings your mission to life and makes it possible to be the highly effective hands and feet of Jesus on a high school campus!



Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource. For a complete list, visit AdventSource.org or call 402.486.8800.



Reach Out! Relevant Youth Evangelism

Edited by S. Joseph Kidder and Gerardo Oudri

This resource is designed to give local church leaders ideas on how they can engage youth in ministry to their peers. It includes a collection of papers on youth evangelism on campus, mobilizing youth for evangelism, and more.

Product #629780

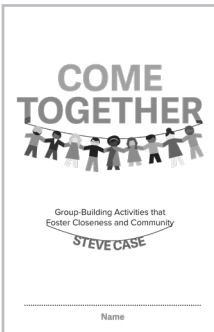


Let's Talk About Jesus

By Steve Case

Want some small group discussion starters? Use these prompts to get your group going. Each of the 52 Bible studies starts with an ice-breaker question that “levels the playing field” so everyone in your group has equal access to God and vice versa. Multiple-choice options will stretch you to think in new ways, sometimes bringing a smile to your face or a surprise to your mind and heart. Deeper questions conclude each study and move participants from talk into action.

Product #419274



Come Together

By Steve Case

Although each group is unique, you can count on some key principles and follow a basic flow to foster closeness and community in your group—whether that’s with 5 people, 50, or 500. Youth ministry veteran Steve Case has put together this “bag of tricks” which he collected over decades of experience. You may have seen, led, or possibly invented some of these activities, but now you have them arranged in a flow and with descriptions that will enable you to craft your own group-building experiences.

Product #629729



Public High School Ministry Coordinator

Introduction

Jesus gave us clear instruction as to the importance of our young people when He said, “And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me... Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:5, 10).

When His disciples would have sent the young people away, thinking that they were interrupting the important work of the Master, Christ said “Let them come... for such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14). Teenagers form a precious, most important part of God’s church. They are not only the “church of the future,” but also the church of the present.

Christ created the church to be a fellowship where people share in a common purpose and help one another grow in faith. The New Testament describes the church as “... his body, the fullness of him who filleth every thing in every way” (Eph. 1:22). God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing a saving relationship with Him and supportive community with one another.

God calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is “a kingdom of priests” (1 Peter 2:9). Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. Each Christian is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

As public high school ministry coordinator, you are a minister called by God to a particular and vital ministry within your congregation and in your community. God supplies each person in the church with the resources for ministry—scripture, spiritual power, God’s character, and spiritual gifts. He will supply your needs as you assume this important responsibility!

Duties of the Public High School Ministry Coordinator

The following duties are included in your responsibilities:

- **Joining the youth ministries committee.** You will want to meet with those who nurture youth in Sabbath School and any other youth ministries of the church, such as choir and summer camp. Together you can reduce overlap, look for gaps in programs, and coordinate efforts. Your leadership should encourage a cooperative spirit in which all of the leaders of the various programs work together.
- **Planning and ideas.** In consultation with individual leaders and in the meetings of the youth ministries committee, you have a wonderful opportunity to spark new ideas. It is your responsibility to work with the program leaders and to draw together an overall plan and budget for a comprehensive program of youth ministries for your church.
- **Program administration.** You will represent the interests of public high school ministries to the church board, the pastor, the church ministries council, the youth Sabbath School leader, leaders of youth groups, and church treasurer.



- **Building relationships with students.** Get to know the students at your church who currently attend public high schools. Ask if you can arrange to visit them at school and invite them to get involved with your ministry. Start a small group for students either on or off-campus. Look for activities and community events your group can join, along with community services projects you can do together. Coordinate attendance at conference-sponsored events.
- **Age level specialist.** Help families, church members, teachers and leaders understand how to organize activities for this specific age level. Conduct a needs assessment among the teens in the congregation and the community, and help the leaders of youth activities understand these needs. Look for ways to support church leaders while maintaining the enthusiasm of the youth involved in this ministry.

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Public High School Ministries

This Quick Start Guide for Public High School Ministries is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or an experienced volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series:

- Pathfinder Club Director
- Youth Ministries
- Public Campus Ministry

For a complete list of Quick Start Guide titles visit AdventSource.org



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