



## WHAT WORKS EVERYWHERE IN COLLEGE MINISTRY?

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I just got back from a mission trip to Germany to help a campus ministry called Connexion. They're doing a great job of reaching and discipling college students in a very hard to reach place. Some of the things we do translate to their context while other things don't. This inspired me to ask myself what ministry principles and practices work no matter what context you are in. I tapped into the Collegiate Collective family through Facebook and asked them to chime in. I got some legit answers. *That's the strength of the Facebook group, it's a great place to share ideas and get feedback on yours!*

Here was my question....

*"I hear a lot of people say 'In my context' that doesn't work or 'we are a commuter school' or whatever. I want to do an article about what works everywhere. What are the things that will work in evangelism and discipleship in East Asia or the Deep South, in Canada or Africa? What in your opinion are the things that transcend the 'that doesn't work in my context' line of reasoning?"*

After reviewing the answers, there are a few that rose to the top! Here you go:

### CREATE SPACE FOR CONNECTION WITH GOD AND OTHERS

I have to give credit to my friend Justin Woods for the phrase "creating space." He does a great job explaining it, "We (BCM staff) do not have the ability to actually make authentic community. It is the Holy Spirit that works in people's hearts to draw them towards others and towards worship. But we can create space and pray that God will use it to make relationships. Creating space may take on many forms: party at our house, BBQ on campus, a retreat, a spring break trip, etc. we will work very hard to create the best space but it is only God who can make the space valuable."

If you read your Bible, you will figure out that it's not really our job to change people's lives; that's God's job, but we have a significant role in helping set people up to encounter God through biblical community and the Word. The way you create this space will depend on your context.

All humans like food. Randy Jordan said, "This has worked in OK, CA, E. Asia and S.E. Asia: "If you feed them, they will come!" We see Jesus and the early church using food as a way to create space for connection, as well.

Fun events are another great way to get believers and non-believers in the same space. Martha Moore, the director of Connexion, teaches about "connecting the ponds." This means creating environments where



different people's relational circles can intersect. For example, if I am reaching out to a non-believing surfer named Joe and then I invite him to a fun event with Challenge, he could meet another guy named Chase who he might connect with, and Chase can introduce him to more people in Challenge. Events provide ways to keep new people connected to several others in your ministry, not just one person.

Creating space for connection allows believers and non-believers to "catch" the disease of discipleship. I learned from my time at the OU Baptist Collegiate Ministry that discipleship is more caught than taught. Over time, I have also seen that people will often belong to our group before they believe, and that when a non-believer sees the joy and transformation in the lives of believers up close it's often only a matter of time before God gets them too!

*How is your ministry "creating space" for non-believers and new people to rub shoulders with those farther along than them spiritually?*

## **PREACH THE GOSPEL CLEARLY AND REGULARLY**

It seems obvious; we need a clear strategy to share the gospel. My favorite way to do this is through "Gospel Appointments" because you can set up a time to meet personally with someone in any ministry context. Also, you can tailor your gospel presentation to the person's unique religious and cultural background.

Other ways to clearly and regularly share the gospel would be through scheduled initiative evangelism. Another way to prioritize sharing the gospel in your group is to be sure to share the gospel every week at your weekly gathering.

*Does your ministry have an intentional and relational strategy for sharing the gospel?*

## **DISCIPLE PEOPLE PERSONALLY**

Jesus told us plainly in the great commission to "make disciples." If we don't do this, we don't need to be in college ministry. This can look different depending on the context. Some groups will choose small groups of two or three. Some prefer one-on-one. Others do "huddles" which include more people. No matter what strategy you use the principles of passing your life in Christ onto another transfers. One thing we know is that disciples are not mass-produced.

Robert Coleman, in his classic book on how Jesus disciplined people *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, argues that methods and programs don't produce disciples; people make disciples. Neil Walker says, "You can impress people from a distance but you can only impact people from up close." There is no substitute for intentional time spent with the people you are investing in. No matter which campus you are on or how many people you have in your ministry, you can invest in the few faithful that God has given you.

*How do you prioritize personal discipleship in your ministry?*



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## **PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!**

Prayer works no matter what your context is. You can be in the middle of Saudi Arabia on a campus and you can walk around and pray, or you can pray at your computer right now. Prayer is our secret weapon. It transcends all barriers and breaks down walls that we can never break down. It's been said, "When we work we work; but when we pray God works." If we want our work in these other areas to be effective, we must establish them on prayer. Very few of us are where we want to be when it comes to prayer. I am challenged to make prayer a priority in my strategy from start to finish.

*What priority does prayer have in your life and ministry?*

*Which of these four cross cultural ministry practices do you want to focus on today?*