



FALL OUTREACH STRATEGY

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The first few weeks of the fall semester are the most important time for you to reach students. It's harvest time!

Do you remember your first weeks as a freshman in college? The friends and choices students make in the first weeks often impact the rest of their lives.

Our ministry believes that the first weeks of a student's college experience are the most crucial time to connect students to a church and relationship with Jesus.

Doing ministry at California State University (or Chico) the last few years we discovered that the average student is looking for two things when they walk on campus: friends and fun. Most students find "friends" in Chico's shallow party scene.

With this in mind we believe God wants our ministry to reach out to these students each fall. We don't see this as a nice ministry opportunity, but a life or death rescue mission.

Fall semester isn't time to find a balance in your schedule. Eternity is hanging in the balance.
Our bottom line... get as many interested contacts as possible.

It's all about the contacts! During our fall Outreach we search long and hard to find students who want to be involved in our ministry, we are looking for "persons of peace." (see Luke 10)

This fall we prayed that God would give us 1,000 interested contacts to invite to our ministry and a relationship with Jesus.

We ended up with 1,120 interested contacts. 100 of those would end up receiving Christ after we ministered to them.

One way to get contacts is to have an info table on campus. We printed an attractive banner, ordered flyers, and had a raffle for an iPad.

Anytime students walked by we asked them if they wanted to sign up for the raffle. When they came up to the table we explained our ministry and told them about the next fun event scheduled.

We told them, "If you're interested in more information check the box at the bottom." (We keep the raffle ticket minimal so they don't get overwhelmed. Just name, email, phone and the "I am interested" box to check.)



This is how we got most of our new contacts in the beginning. It is amazing how many testimonies start with, "then I came up to the Challenge table to sign up for a raffle and see what it was about..." We did this all day every day for the first two weeks asking nearly every student who walked by. Another tool is sending students out two by two all over campus doing "[30 Second Surveys](#)." With these two methods and about 10 volunteers we are able to get over 100 contacts a day. We do this all day every day during welcome week and the first two weeks of class. This is no time to pace yourself!

There are other great ways to get interested students, check out my chapter on fall outreach in my free e-book [*Tips for Starting A College Ministry*](#).

Once we have interested student contacts, we give each a call or text that same day inviting them to our next event.

We then add them all to a bulk text list and invite them to every event for the first 6 weeks or so. We use an app called "group text" that is worth checking out.

Once someone is added to a bulk list we periodically send them personal texts so they wouldn't feel like it is only bulk texts from us.

We add every new contact as a friend on Facebook and enter them into a Google Docs spreadsheet. We use this to keep track of who has followed up with who so that no students slip through the cracks. We then try and visit personally with each student and set up a gospel appointment.

If God has given us this student it is essential that we do our part to connect with them. We also add everyone to our Facebook group. Be careful to let people know you are adding them to the group, so it doesn't appear spammy. Personally, I think a Facebook group is more personal and effective than a Facebook page.

We make Facebook events for each of our ministry events and encourage our students to "like", comment, invite their friends, and "share" on their profile. We have also had some success in buying Facebook ads. We throw a ton of parties!

I know this doesn't sound very spiritual, but students are looking for fun ways to meet new people. If they don't find it from our group, they will find it somewhere else. So, we plan a fun event for almost every night of the first two weeks on campus.

Last fall we pulled off 13 outreach events in the first 15 days that students moved in. Fraternities and sororities have known the power of a "Rush Week" for years. Why not redeem this practice for the kingdom? We spend a lot of time preparing for the first month on campus.

We plan a mix of cheap-and-easy events as well as big events such as a free pizza bash or free BBQ on campus.



During the first two weeks new students are constantly looking for things to do and love to be invited to something. Many start to belong before they believe.

Socials don't need to be elaborate they just need to be fun ways for students to get to know each other. When we started our ministry we did simple events like sand volleyball by the dorms, walking to a frozen yogurt shop, bowling, game nights, ultimate Frisbee, and other free or cheap events.

It is essential that students hangout with each other in order to build an identity as a group. Currently we raise about \$5,000 for our fall outreach expenses to pull off all of our outreach strategies and fun events.

You may consider raising a little extra money to capitalize on this strategic time. Boldly share the gospel with as many students as possible.

During fall outreach we share the gospel with everyone we possibly can using what we call "gospel appointments."

Gospel appointments have been a game changing evangelistic tool for us. The college campus is a recruitment culture, so setting up a meeting to get to know someone and tell them about your group is natural and expected.

If you are not actively recruiting on campus the students will wonder if your group is even worth it. We personally follow up with everyone who responds.

This is a ton of work, but if God blesses your efforts and students receive Christ it is essential to consider how you will plug these students into discipleship relationships and small groups. Work hard!

Our staff works more than 70-80 hours a week the first four weeks on campus. If you think this is excessive ask any farmer about their work schedule during harvest time.

Eternal destinies are at stake and "The harvest is plentiful"(Matt 9:35-38).

My twin brother, David Worcester writes this encouraging us to work hard during "Harvest Time."
"Every year countless new students flood onto college campuses. Proverbs 10:5 says, "A wise youth harvests in the summer, but one who sleeps during the harvest is a disgrace." College ministry has very clear seasons; the beginning of each semester is harvest time. It's not time to work on your support raising. It's not time to catch up on your reading. Eternity is hanging in the balance. It's not time to find a balance in your schedule. There's a field of new students waiting to be harvested. Will you harvest them? Or will you sleep through it?"

Reflection Questions

Which of these fall outreach ideas will you put into practice?

Take some time with your team to strategically plan your own fall outreach. What are "faith goals" that you could make?