



Resources for Church and
Campus Collegiate Ministries

COMEDY WITH A PURPOSE

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One of my favorite Disney movies is Mary Poppins. In that movie, one of my favorite scenes is when Mary Poppins and Bert the chimney sweep take the kids on a visit to Uncle Albert's house. Uncle Albert is an eccentric old man and a likable character. Uncle Albert loves one thing, he loves to laugh! Of course, in Mary Poppins' world when you break out in hysterical laughter it causes you to rise off the floor and float in the air. A perfect place for a nice cup of tea around a floating table. As a kid I remember thinking if I just laughed hard enough, I might fly off the floor hit the ceiling with my head too.

I have heard it said that laughter is the best medicine. A good laugh goes a long way in making us feel better when we are down. But laughter does not just make us feel good. Laughter has a way of opening us up to one another and connecting us to one another in ways other things cannot. A little bit of laughter in a group setting is also a great way to prepare the hearts of people to hear and respond to something deeper and more serious.

This resource is available to all collegiate ministries. Please use it for your ministry but not for commercial purposes. We ask that you retain the BCNet header.



When I arrived at Morehead State University BCM as Campus Minister in the winter of 2016, there was an outreach ministry happening called Tuesday Night Live. A spin off the wildly popular comedy series Saturday Night Live. The BCM version being completely clean comedy, with skits, videos, and a live band, all student produced and led. In the beginning I must admit I was a bit skeptical of TNL and what the point of it was. I grew up in a 90's youth group where interpretive movement performances were done on the regular. I think I even played Jesus in one of them. Nothing against those types of ministries, I just did not want BCM to feel like youth group 2.0. So, I began to ask questions and seek to learn the why behind TNL.

My predecessor, Gene Parr, served as campus minister at Morehead State University for nearly 35 years. He impacted countless lives of students in his tenor for Christ by discipling students well. This discipleship included empowering them to be who God made them to be and use their creativity for the sake of the gospel. Once empowered through gospel focused discipleship to use their creativity to reach their classmates with the gospel, Tuesday Night Live (Comedy with a Purpose) was born.

I have discovered that TNL is not just a comedy show to get laughs and make students feel good. TNL is comedy with a purpose. That purpose, to reach students on the college campus who would never come to a Bible study, church service, or prayer meeting; but they would come to a comedy show. Because everybody loves to laugh. That laughter that happens in the comedy show sets the stage for the most important part of TNL, and what gives TNL its purpose, the gospel being presented to students at the end. Rick Howerton, a colleague of mine at the Kentucky Baptist Convention and former campus minister, said "tears, laughter, and beauty open up the heart so that the gospel can be poured into it." I have found all these to be true, and in the case of TNL, laughter cuts through the divide and tears down some of the barriers non-Christian students have when it comes to hearing and believing the gospel.

WHY USE COMEDY TO REACH STUDENTS?

- Laughter is a unifying thing. It makes Christian and non-Christian students see they have something in common.
- Laughter eases fears and anxieties that non-Christian students have about attending a Christian organization's event.
- The live comedy show is a welcomed throwback novelty that students do not consume through a screen and they love it.
- The live comedy show attracts creative students to the ministry that love to write, act, produce, and create.
- The live comedy show allows the college ministry to engage with other student organizations on campus and get them involved in TNL. This builds significant bridges with these organizations that often lead to opportunities for gospel engagement.
- The comedy show sets up the gospel presentation at the end of the night and softens students' hearts to hear the message and respond.



- The comedy show is often the front door, or the beginning of the relationship, Christian student leaders have with their non-Christian friends that they invite to TNL.
- TNL is a blast for students and creates a lot of unity within the ministry. Having a ton of fun together helps students desire to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus together too.

HOW TO USE COMEDY TO REACH STUDENTS?

- Develop a team of maturing Christian students in the ministry who are creative and will thrive when given this type of ministry to serve in.
- Make sure the comedy remains clean and is quality. It is completely possible to do this. Set the boundaries for what is acceptable and gently rebuke when necessary.
- Remind TNL Team members of the "why" often. They need to remember that TNL is about more than just getting laughs and having a good time.
- Have a live band that is quality. We play popular, and clean, secular music to hype up the crowd throughout the show.
- Have a variety of speakers at the end of TNL who present the gospel clearly. These could be student leaders, local pastors or church leaders, alumni of the ministry, Christian faculty, or administration on campus.
- Have a variety of forms of sharing the gospel at TNL. Testimonies, Messages, Interviews, Videos, etc.
- Challenge student leaders to promote TNL virtually and physically on campus, invite their lost friends, and follow up well afterward.
- Have a good plan for follow up with students who respond. Have student leaders invite them for coffee to talk more about the show and the message.

Tuesday Night Live is not the only evangelism strategy we use here at Morehead State BCM, but it is one effective way we have found to do it for many years. For examples of TNL skits and videos you can check out our YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/c/MoreheadBCM/videos>