

A guidebook to support those starting or running a Christian Union in their Secondary School

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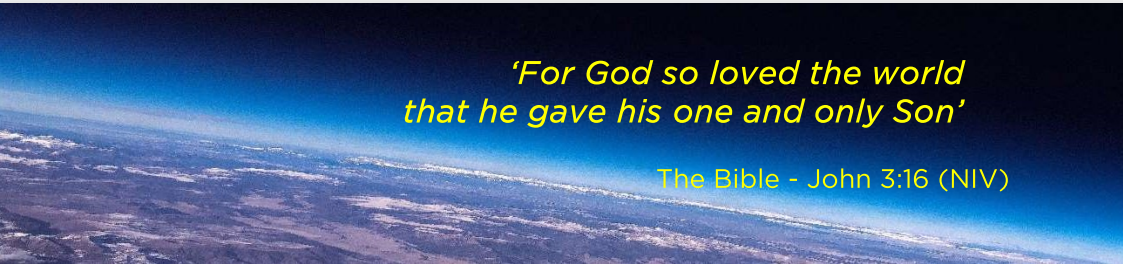
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Preface

This is a simple guidebook for you on how to establish, build and lead a Christian Union (CU). It has some information to help you focus the CU and to help it to become beneficial and effective to those who attend, and to the school community.

Each chapter has some questions to help you, and the members of the CU, to reflect upon where it is now and make positive changes for the future. There is also an 'action' at the end to give you a challenge to do something, should you choose to accept it!

Being part of a CU in school can be an exciting, ground-breaking and amazing time. You have the ability to be an amazing blessing to the school, staff and your peers, to demonstrate the Gospel and the love of Jesus. There may be people who may never know the Good News about Jesus - you could change that!



*'For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only Son'*

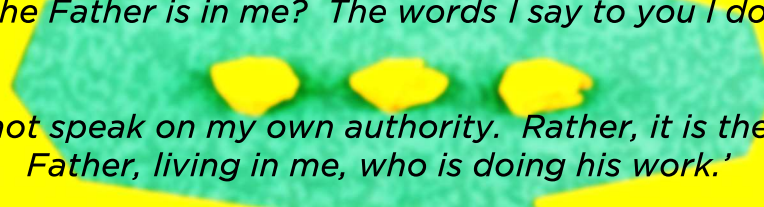
The Bible - John 3:16 (NIV)

May God richly bless you as you seek to follow His call for your school.

God Bless

The Wycombe Youth for Christ Team

Chapter 1: Introduction



*'Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that
the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do*

*not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the
Father, living in me, who is doing his work.'*

The Bible - John 14:10 (NIV)

What is a Christian Union?

A school CU is, at its foundation, a group of young people meeting together in their school to explore, discuss and meet with Jesus. How this is expressed will be different to each school and CU, because it naturally displays the culture, personalities and experiences of those who attend.

However, a CU should have Jesus at the centre. This may seem self-explanatory, but for any Christian group it can be easy to let the focus slip from Jesus unintentionally. CU's can easily become mere social gatherings, safe places to 'hide', or become an insular clique that is closed to others.

What is the aim?

The main aim of a CU should not be about 'becoming big', running great meetings or events, or even that people hear the Gospel; although these things are good. The aim of a CU should be knowing Jesus.

Look at the lives of Daniel and his friends (found in The Bible in the book of Daniel!). They are probably the first Christian Union - or Jewish Union at that point! These four men, were taken as slaves to live in Babylon. They continued to be true and faithful to God, praying, encouraging each other and using every

opportunity to see God glorified. As you read through the book, you see how as God moved through them; the atmosphere, culture and the way people thought, all started to change. Even two of the Babylonian kings, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, ended up glorifying God themselves because of the lives, prayers and actions of Daniel and his friends.

Lives are changed, through the prayers and actions of Christians.

'... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.'

The Bible - 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)

What should a CU look like?

There is no right answer to this. Every CU looks different; reflecting the people and personalities who attend, the school they are in, the area in which the school is and what God is doing in the lives of the Christian young people.

Some CU's are filled with just a few Christians, others are run by adults (Chaplains, Youth Leaders or Wycombe Youth For Christ), others are run by the students. Some CU's focus on outreach, others on service, prayer, or supporting Christians. What is important is that there is opportunity to know of Jesus. If Jesus is at the centre, it will allow Him to shape the CU and enable it to be the best and most effective it can be.

Reflection

- Is Jesus the foundation and centre of the CU? How is this seen?
- What are the issues, circumstances and cultures in your school that affect what the CU looks like?
- What could your school look like if God changed the atmosphere and the culture of the school?

Action

Pray over the coming days for Jesus to give you a passion for Him and to put on your heart His love for your school and CU.



Chapter 2: Vision



'If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; but when they attend to what He reveals, they are most blessed.'

The Bible
Proverbs 29:18
(The Message)

Why is it that some CU's appear only to be surviving and yet others are thriving and making a difference in their school?

Vision is part of the answer to the question. Vision is precious to God.

Proverbs 29:18 helps us to realise that our vision comes from God, not from our own thoughts or ideas. Vision is seeing what God is saying and doing, and then joining Him in it.

Setting Vision

First and foremost, pray. If vision comes from God and is about joining Him, pray and ask Him what His vision is for your school and CU. Do this alongside the leadership and other members of the CU.

Secondly, confirm the vision. What is it that God has said to you? What passion has He put on your heart for your school and CU? It may be helpful to write this down in one or two sentences, so you are clear.

Thirdly, communicate the vision to everyone within the CU. When someone really grasps the vision and owns it, then they have the passion and motivation to work at seeing it happen.

Finally, *'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens ...'* (Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV). Ensure the CU is listening to God and His call, and if and when He directs, follow Him and if necessary look to review and change the CU's vision according to what He is saying.

Implementing Vision

Many people have vision, but a strategic plan of action puts vision into practice. CU Leaders should reflect upon the CU's focus and effectiveness. If not, the tendency can be to drift, or become strong in one area, whilst others are neglected. If there is no plan, the weeks will fly by and before you know it the CU may be very different to what you (or God) wanted it to be, or thought it was.

One of the best strategies for putting vision into action, is to include the whole CU, and delegate. Some CU's will struggle due to their size, but for all CU's it is important that the vision does not rest on one person's shoulders. Sharing roles and responsibilities, gives a sense of ownership and creates a stronger more committed team and CU. It enables the CU to do more, pray more and have more impact. It also means that there is less risk of any one person 'burning out' and offers the best opportunity for others to take the lead in future years.

For example, have someone take responsibility for organising prayer; someone else, communication with Churches; someone else, organising events.

Vision will drive the CU. If it loses its drive, go to God in prayer and ask for His refilling and re-envisioning. Keep the fire burning and do not lose sight of the vision God gave.

Reviewing

Be an honest CU; each term ask three simple questions:

- Do the activities connect with the CU's vision?
- What activities have gone well?
- What activities do we need to improve or change?

Talk regularly together as CU Leaders and members. People see different things; others may have seen or noticed things that you have missed, so a range of feedback is helpful to solving any problems.

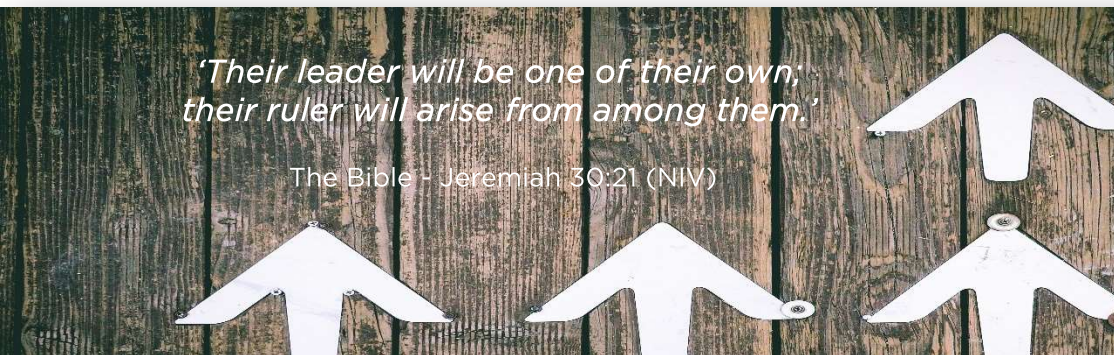
Reflection

- What is God saying about and doing in your school? Keep praying, until God shows you!
- Do all the members of the CU know and understand the vision of the CU?
- Do all the members of the CU feel a part of, and connected to the group?

Action

- Write down, in no more than two sentences, the vision of the CU.
- Write down a list of all the activities that the CU does and see which ones fit with its vision.
- Make a list of all the roles and responsibilities in the CU and see if they can be delegated to different members.

Chapter 3: Leadership



Start with knowing how the CU will be led. Will there be one main CU Leader, or a Leadership Team? Both can work, but will require different strategies.

Single Leadership

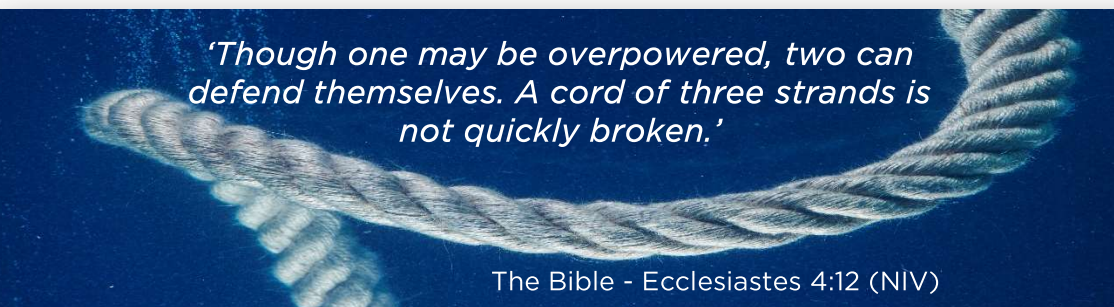
Sometimes having one leader is necessary because of circumstances. However, the CU is never the leader's club or pet-project. If you are the only leader or the main person leading the CU, then remember to lead and not dictate! Don't become bossy and overbearing! Make sure you focus early on who leads when you aren't present, and looking ahead for when you eventually leave school as the CU.

Find ways to involve others, as this will help with the CU's future. Organise guest speakers, so that there is variety in style, and look to pray together as a CU as often as you can.

Team Leadership

If there is a Leadership Team it is important to work together! Meet regularly, either in school or outside of school to pray, discuss each week and keep clear goals and communicate effectively. Everyone should have a responsibility, and again, talk together about how things are moving forward regularly.

Help and encourage one another at all times, especially when someone is struggling.



Think about the dynamics of those in the Leadership Team. Consider students in Years 10 and 12; they can run the CU when others are away on study leave and during the Summer Term. This can be crucial experience, and a fantastic way of developing leaders for the future.

Leadership Transition

The difference between one amazing year of CU life, and long-term breakthrough and impact, is leadership transition. Prepare well for those who will lead after the existing team have left.

God has the habit of starting young! The Bible is full of young, passionate leaders whose hearts were full, but they had little experience. Look for future leaders in Years 7 and 8, and involve them in the meetings and discussions as they are often bursting with enthusiasm and vision. Start leaders young; let them see you succeed and fail, and let them succeed and fail themselves.


A few tips

- **Diversity**
Look to gather people from different churches. Nothing makes for a clique more than a Leadership Team all from

the same church! Try and have leaders that may be different to you so that you have a variety of ideas and skills.

- **Gifts & Skills**

The Leadership Team will be gifted in different ways; some may be gifted at preaching, advertising, communication, artistically creative or good behind the scenes. All are important and valuable.



'But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.'

The Bible - 1 Corinthians 12:24-26 (NIV)

- **Communication**

Do this regularly and often; with other CU Leaders, CU members, school staff and supporters.

- **Pray**

Pray together often, and pray for each other.

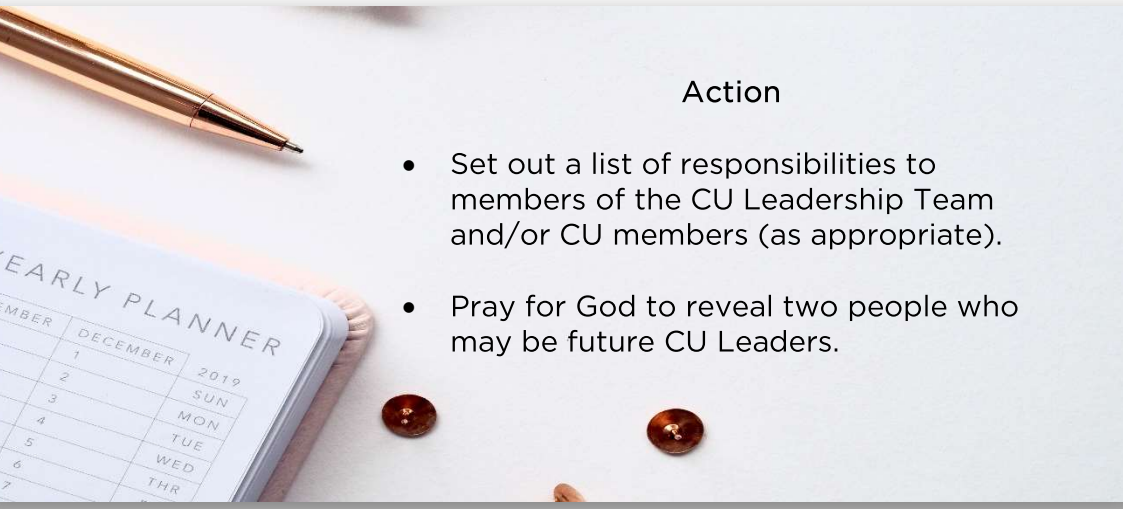
- **Share**

Being a CU Leader can be a stressful, lonely endeavour sometimes and you need others to share the burden with. This will be especially true if you are running the CU on your own. Be accountable, share ideas and concerns, and encourage one another.



Reflection


- What does the CU Leadership currently look like?
- Who are the people that could be part of a leadership team for the future?
- What skills and gifts does the CU have?



Action

- Set out a list of responsibilities to members of the CU Leadership Team and/or CU members (as appropriate).
- Pray for God to reveal two people who may be future CU Leaders.

Chapter 4: Prayer



*'The prayer of a righteous person
is powerful and effective.'*

The Bible - James 5:16 (NIV)

When looking at how to run a strong CU that makes an impact, there is no substitute for prayer. Prayer is the difference between having good ideas for God, and doing great things with God.

The major reason we see breakthrough, is down to prayer. Consistent, passionate prayer is the driving force behind change and seeing God at work.

Without prayer, you can market and run a big CU like a business, but it will not be a work of God. Leonard Ravenhill (a 20th Century Christian writer and revival preacher) used to say *'Prayer is the lever'*. Prayer opens up a channel through which God works.

Personal Prayer

Make prayer a priority that you do yourself, personally. Prayer should be a lifestyle, though it is one of those things that many struggle with; but something that, as we get into the habit of, becomes easier.

Prayer is an overflow of your personal passion; if you care deeply, you will pray; it will just ooze from you. You will find your mind moved often to the matters you are praying about and find yourself in regular, spontaneous communication with God over it. If you are struggling to pray, then explore these things with God; get your heart deepened in His presence and ask Him to

give you a deeper love for time with Him. Ravenhill's last interviewed words before he died in 1994 were *'There is no substitute for prayer'*.

Corporate Prayer

Having regular times of praying together as a CU is important. Some CU's will meet before school, others on a different lunchtime to the CU meeting, others after school. The CU has to find a rhythm and a method of prayer that works for it.

Having a prayer meeting is not the same as praying - we are all very good at getting distracted! One local CU had to come up with some boundaries to avoid the awkwardness and distraction. Firstly, it was prayer time, nothing else! On arrival, you drop your bag by the door and take a seat. Secondly, no silence; prayer would be non-stop and out loud for as long as possible. Silence was only if someone had something to share. Thirdly, Bibles would be made available for anyone who received a word or needed help to focus.

This worked for them and their prayer meetings were very loud, disciplined events. However, you must find what works for your CU and its members; not all prayer has to be loud or spoken! The times, places and way in which your CU prays will differ from other CU's.

The CU may want to consider creative ways of praying, for example, prayer boxes, keep prayer diaries, making a list on the board and then pray through it. Alternatively, create a list of 10 people to pray for every week. Consider forming prayer partners or triplets; one CU ran its own prayer text network, where they texted each other to pray every day. Some CU's pray for God's vision for the school each summer before the school year even starts.

Just remember, there is no right or wrong way in how the CU prays, but focus on Jesus and His heart for your school.

CU Leadership Prayer

Praying as leaders outside of school and meeting as CU leaders in town to pray together, even if only once a month or each half term, is another useful way of praying. When there is a lot of prayer going on, you can be far more mindful of God during the school day. You are likely to be more in tune with His will and His plans. You will have more confidence in your endeavours and a keener eye for opportunities. You will find more opportunities come your way too. When there is a foundation of prayer for everything you are doing as the CU, you feel carried on God's wings; even during challenges, you will be aware that God is on your side!

CU Networking & Prayer

Praying and meeting with other CU's can also serve as an encouragement. It adds to your accountability and reminds you that you are not doing this alone. Other school CU's are not rivals, they are brothers and sisters and you are all working for the same goal. Meeting together can sharpen resolve, and allows you to encourage one another to keep going and can give the refreshing spark that is sometimes needed.

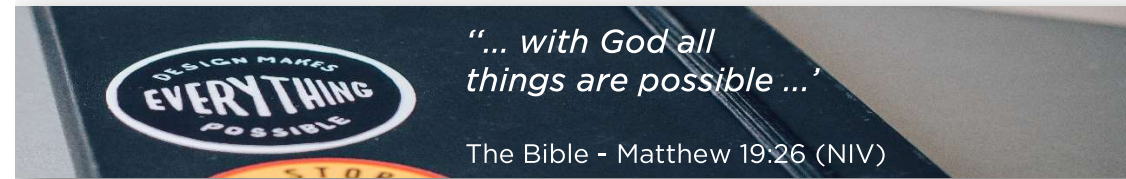
Revival Prayer

James Fraser lived his whole missionary life with the Lisu mountain tribe of South West China this way; David Brainerd laid the foundation of Native American Indian revival with his intercessory prayer and Leonard Ravenhill spoke of this as the only means of prayerful living. Each of those men were alone in an unreached area among a people who knew nothing of Jesus, yet over the years of deep and desperate prayer they saw huge change.

Just imagine how this could impact you and the CU.

Don't forget ...

- Pray Big

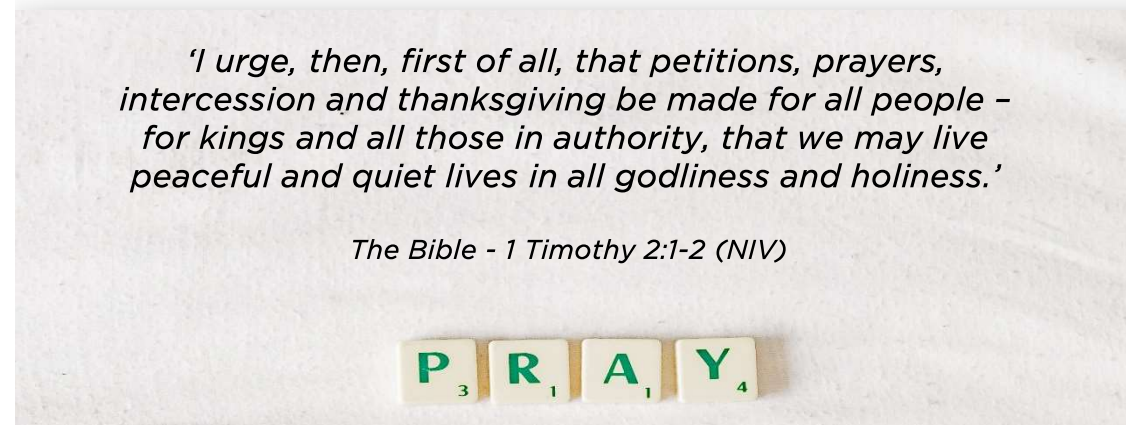


- Pray Small

Don't forget to pray for the small things too; God is concerned about the little things, especially when we pray for each other.



- Pray for your School



- **Pray Together**

When things happen, the Christian response is to pray; the CU response should be the same. Do not be afraid of bringing the CU together to pray when it is needed.

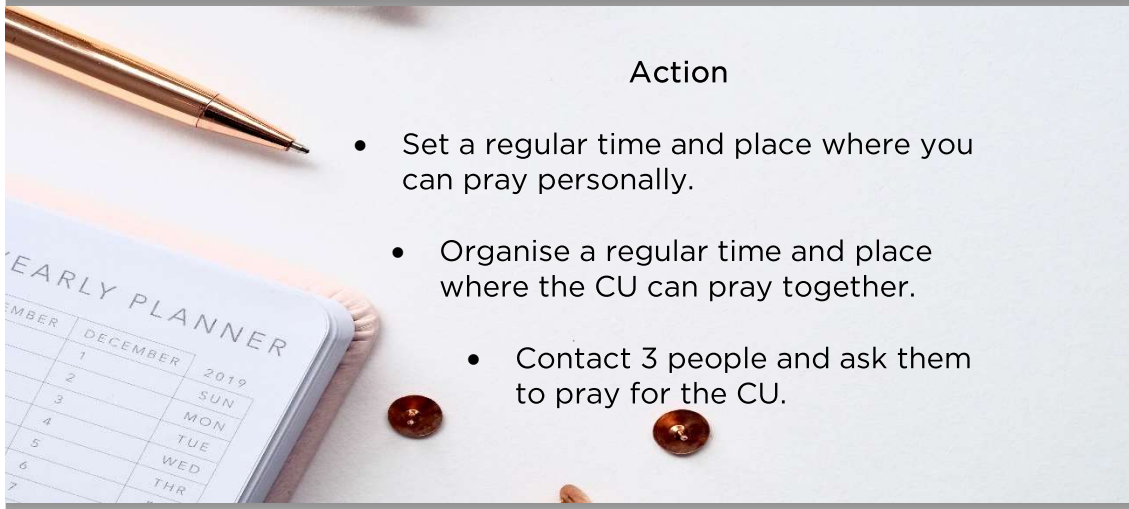
- **Prayer Support**

Get others to pray too. Ask Youth Leaders, Churches and Wycombe Youth For Christ to pray for the CU, and keep them informed of prayer points. Get as much prayer as possible; the more information you share with others, the more they can, and will pray.



Reflection

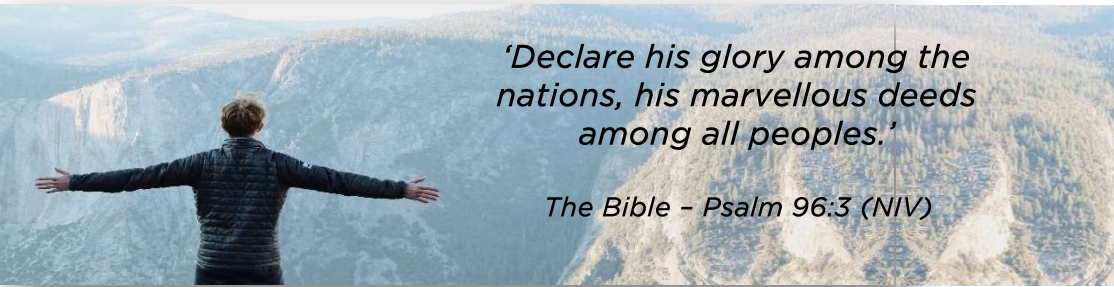
- How are you doing in prayer, both as a CU and personally?
- Where have you seen God answer prayers?
- What areas of the school and school life need the most prayer?
- What time is best for the CU to pray together as a CU or leadership team?
- Who else might pray for you and the CU?



Action

- Set a regular time and place where you can pray personally.
- Organise a regular time and place where the CU can pray together.
- Contact 3 people and ask them to pray for the CU.

Chapter 5: The Gospel



A CU is a great place to demonstrate and share the Gospel – the love of God. It is about taking the CU ‘out’, rather than staying ‘in’, as a group of Christians in a room every week.

The Centrality of the Gospel

The Gospel is central to Christianity, and needs to be central in the life of the CU and sharing of God’s love must be an important part.

How to share the Gospel

We often think that sharing the Gospel is all about talking ... but this is not the case. In the Bible, Jesus didn’t spend his whole life talking – his actions spoke volumes to many; and ultimately His willingness to sacrifice His life was the greatest demonstration of love (and the message of the Gospel) of all.

If we consider learning styles, in its simplest way there are three – visual learners, auditory learners and kinaesthetic learning. In other words people learn in three ways – by seeing, by hearing and by doing. Statistics show that the best and most effective learning comes when all three ways are used.

How could, and does this impact on your thinking about sharing the Gospel?

- Sharing by seeing

What could you do visually to share about God’s love?

This could come in many forms, and used in many different contexts. You could consider posters on a notice board, or use videos for assemblies or CU sessions.

However, one of the most effective ways of being visual with the Gospel, is through actions. What are the actions of the CU showing to those within the school? This can include the actions of individual CU members – just in how they act and behave towards staff, friends and peers. It may be through acts of service that the CU has a whole may decide that they want to organise. More on these in chapter 7 and 8.

- Sharing by hearing

You could consider having discussions and talks on issues affecting Christians and Christianity in your school, or on topics that are current and relevant to life today.

Here are some examples of topics:

- What is truth?
- Does God exist?
- Who is Jesus?
- Is the Bible (or Christianity) relevant today?
- How can Jesus help my anxiety?
- What would Jesus say about YOLO?

All of these subjects have different approaches and different starting points, but they all give opportunity to share about how Jesus may speak into situations.

You could include testimonies; don’t be afraid because your story is a gift. Moses had a stutter and Jeremiah was

young; God calls the ordinary to do the extraordinary with Him. It's amazing how, when God gives you something to say, a boldness and authority come with it. And even if it doesn't go as you'd like, keep going.

- **Sharing by doing**

You may want to consider how you enable people to get involved. It's a great way to enable people to encounter the Gospel.

From experience, what enables others to feel they belong to a group is to be needed and to have a role. For those that are introverts, this is really important. Having a role and responsibility gives them continued reason to be involved and enables them to develop friendships more easily, than just expecting them to start a conversation.

Finally, learn

Encourage CU members in their knowledge of their faith. People can be apprehensive about talking to others about God, because they are unsure how to answer questions. Encourage people to read books, listen to podcasts and hear how other people answer questions, to give them confidence that they too can give an answer well.



be  kind

'Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ...'

The Bible - 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV)



Reflection

- If a visitor came to the CU, what would they learn about Jesus?
- How does the CU share the Gospel?
- What different ways could the Gospel message be shared in the CU?
- What books, podcasts, media etc. have you found useful?



Action

- Review the last CU talk and/or discussion; how was the Gospel shared?
- Consider what would the CU do differently next time?
- Share some of the books and podcasts that you have found useful.

Chapter 6: Mission & Events

*'Go into all the world and
preach the gospel to all
creation.'*

The Bible - Mark 16:15 (NIV)



Mission is a great opportunity to share and demonstrate the Gospel, and obvious times are Christmas and Easter. Look for opportunities to do a mission or event. It takes effort, prayer, vision and creativity, but it is a great way of being a blessing to the school, staff and students by sharing God's love and the Gospel.

- What could the CU do next term?
- What could the CU do that is creative and engaging?

Do not just simply do an event, but thinking strategically. Challenge the CU to connect with every Year Group; consider the different focus' the events could take; for example, serving, creative activities, guest speakers, music bands.

One CU's attendance was low. Then after a whirlwind of activity in prayer and mission, the CU grew. A combination of factors contributed to this staggering growth; prayer, regular mission events and sharing the Gospel.

Speak to other CU's about what they have done; ask churches and Wycombe Youth For Christ how they could help. You do not have to do it alone. It does not have to be big. Just make the event an opportunity to be a blessing, and to demonstrate and share the love of God.

Reflection

- What types of events has the CU led?
- What events are in the school calendar? Could any of these be used as an opportunity for the CU?
- Are there any Year Groups that are not currently attending the CU?

Action

- As a CU, set a plan for running one mission next term ... be creative!



Chapter 7: Acts of Service

'... the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve ...'



The Bible - Matthew 20:28 (NIV)

Some CU's have a strong gifting and heart to serve and do acts of kindness in their schools. This can completely change how a CU is seen in the school. Serving the school is a wonderful ministry and one that should be considered as part the CU.

This may simply be a matter of not meeting in your room one day, but taking on a litter pick - simple, yet effective. One CU volunteered to serve all the tea, coffee and refreshments at Open Evenings and Parents Evenings; another baked cakes for the staff room.

When the CU is a blessing to the school and all within, everything changes. The focus of any service, is the act of demonstrating Jesus' love to others. The side effect may be that people will value the CU and what it does.

Aside from the CU serving the school, enable the school to serve the world - promote and raise awareness of charities. Far too often, Christians are known not for what they stand for, but what they stand against. Some of the most wonderful things done by CU's, are the campaigning and raising money for charity and causes. There are so many amazing charities. If you have gone on an overseas mission with your church then share the story and raise money for the needs out there. In doing so the CU will shine a light on a needy situation and show itself in a light people may not have seen before.

Reflection

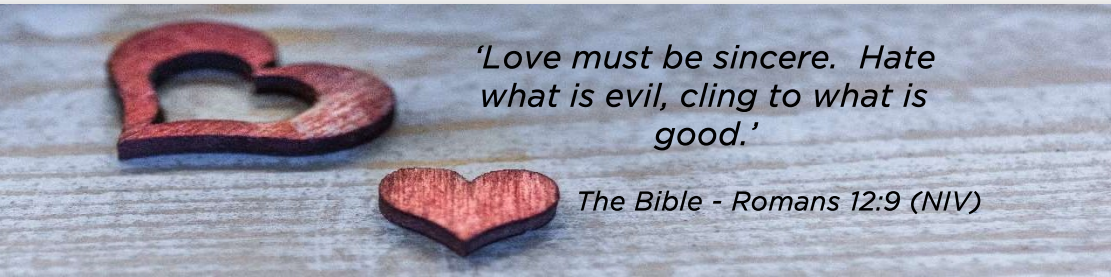
- What acts of service has the CU done in the school?
- What needs in the world could the CU promote and encourage the school to support?

Action

- Plan one act of service that the CU can do this term.



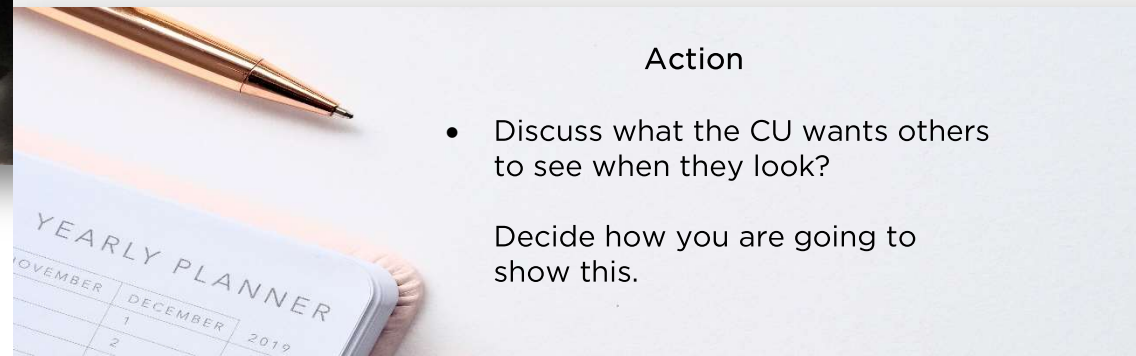
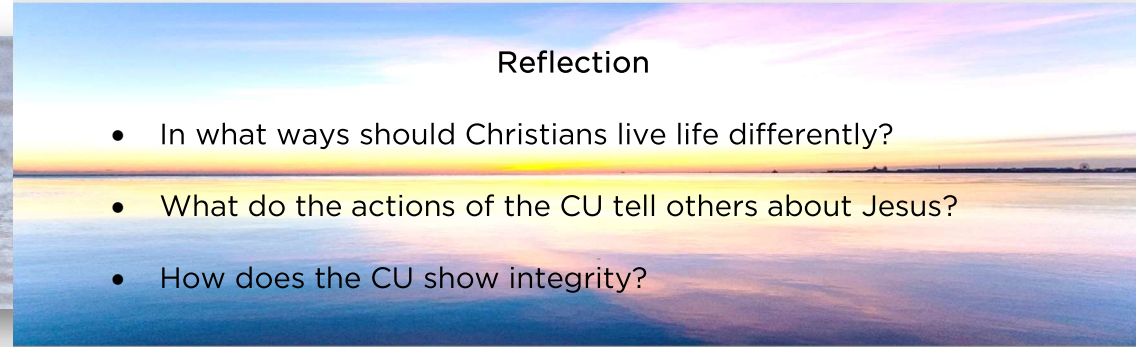
Chapter 8: Lifestyle



All Christians in the CU, especially the leaders, must try to make sure that their lifestyle matches up with the one Jesus describes. When you live a holy life, and walk the narrow path, people may sneer and give you grief, but your light will shine brightly for Jesus.

Staff may see this better than other students. Staff members know an honest student from one who lives a double life; they see it all the time. People need to know that when they become a Christian it means you are different. Jesus makes all the difference.

When we mess up and get things wrong, how we act afterwards can also be a witness to others. The Bible is littered with stories of men of God who faltered and stumbled. Do not be condemned if you slip as you walk the path; know that God is faithful to restore and heal.



Chapter 9: Year 7, Sixth Form and Staff

'... make disciples of all nations ...'

The Bible - Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

These three groups can be the hardest to reach and can often be forgotten or taken for granted. But they are instrumental to the development and future of the CU.

Regardless of how well the previous year of CU went, every new academic year brings the same challenge of reaching out to a new group of staff, Year 7's and Sixth Formers. Each group is a unique challenge of its own.

Year 7

As soon as Year 7's arrive in September, the CU can be praying for them and have a plan for reaching out, letting them know of the CU and how to get involved if they wish to. Make sure you do all you can to welcome them, make them feel at home, included and that their presence is valued. The CU could find a way to serve the school in supporting the Year 7's on their first day.

Sixth Form

The Sixth Form presents a huge challenge, as in most schools, students are free to leave at lunchtimes and are very independent. There must be a very good reason if the CU wants them to stay on site, rather than leave the premises and escape for a while! Finding creative ways to reach out to the Sixth Form, and also to invite them to CU is one of the biggest challenges. The task is to be creative and consider what will attract, and be important for them (i.e. special events, special guest speakers).

The biggest witness to the Sixth Form students will be the Christians themselves that are in the Sixth Form. Ask existing CU members who are in the Sixth Form to step out in faith and invite their friends!

Staff

It is unlikely that staff will come to the CU. Their lunchtimes are not free time and their hours are precious. The witness the CU gives them will be in the way its members live their lives and conduct themselves in the school, and through acts of service that you may organise.

Reflection

- Does the CU currently have any Year 7's or Sixth Formers attend?
- What activities or events has the CU run that has engaged Year 7's or Sixth Form?
- What activities or events do you feel will engage Year 7's or Sixth Form?

Action

- Organise and run an event that will engage either the Year 7's or the Sixth Form students this term.



Chapter 10: Church Support

*'Carry each other's burdens,
and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.'*

The Bible - Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

It is no good being a fisherman who catches fish, then leaves them on the shore in their net. We need to support new Christians and the CU needs the Church's support.

The CU needs to have a means of encouraging those who are Christians, and helping them connect to a church community, if they are not already part of one - so involve Youth Leaders and churches.

Youth Leaders

A Youth Leader visiting the CU is a great help, as they become a friendly, familiar face for people in the CU. This is a great bridge for Christians to help them connect with a church.

Youth Leaders can be such a great source of support, prayer and encouragement too. Speak to them often and include them in the CU's heart for the school. Get your church to pray for the CU and your school. Share with them what is going on and what events the CU is running. If you have Youth Services, consider sharing a few words about the CU.

Churches

A welcoming church environment is important. Find those who can invite and take them to their church; or find someone in your CU who lives locally and can take them to theirs. Try to avoid

situations where a young person is simply showing up at a church by themselves without knowing anyone.

In many cases, Sunday morning may not be possible, so invite people to a church's midweek Youth Group, social event, or church-run youth club.

Reflection

- Does the CU have any contact with local Youth Leaders and/or churches?
- What churches are represented by the members of the CU?

Action

- Collate information about local church Youth events and services, and have a flier available with this information at the next CU meeting.

Chapter 11: Advertising

*'And how can they believe
in the one of whom they
have not heard?'*

The Bible - Romans 10:14 (NIV)



No one can come to the CU if they do not know it exists, or if they cannot find you! Advertising typically comes in a variety of formats. No one method is especially more effective than the other, but all of them are part of enabling people to engage with the CU.

- **Personal Invitations**

There is nothing like a personal invitation. Talk with people and explain who the CU is and why it is there, in a warm and welcoming manner. Challenge the CU to pray for, and invite at least one person each week. Ask God to reveal who you should approach and pray for them each day. When the CU is a bit bigger, send out a few of the more confident people (in pairs) to invite others; or consider having one or two people stand at the door of the CU and inviting those who walk past.

- **Notice Board / Posters**

Many may walk past a notice boards without paying attention, so the posters need to be eye-catching. You could choose posters that are thought provoking, colourful or have a positive message. Update the notice boards often so they don't become stale. Try to get notice boards in different areas of the school, so that

every day most students would walk past at least one of the notice boards! Be strategic and deliberate.

- **Assemblies**

You could lead an assembly as a CU, or just put in a note with the Head of Year for them to advertise the CU. If the CU does a great assembly then chances are you will get to do more! Chose a variety of people to be involved, preferably from a range of Year Groups, who would be willing to be creative and take on an assembly.

- **Registers**

Look to get a notice in the registers; either promoting the CU or an upcoming event.

- **Electronic Adverts**

Some school have monitors in the Reception Area that give information and highlight clubs and events to visitors, staff and students. Consider asking if a CU advert can be included, as another way of raising the profile within the school.

- **Social Media**

This will need careful consideration, and you may want to seek advice from Wycombe Youth For Christ or a Youth Leader on how best to manage this appropriately and safely. However, a presence online can be used to keep CU members fully informed about days, times and events that are running.

- **Special Events and Missions**

The CU can be a hub of life and activity. Try to do something special regularly and promote it to the whole

school. When the CU is doing an event, make fliers and hand them out in break time. Remember, that there will be people that will not be interested, so do not be disheartened if you see the fliers on the floor or in a bin; at least everyone will see and know what is going on! Don't forget, you may need permission from the Head Teacher to run special events and hand out fliers, so make sure it is all well organised, warm and invitational.


Reflection

- What current advertising does the CU have?
- How could this be improved, so that the profile of the CU is increased?
- What events are planned that could be specifically advertised?

Action

- Decide on a new way of advertising and implement it.

Chapter 12: Practicalities



'But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.'

The Bible - 1 Corinthians 14:40 (NIV)

Break & Lunchtimes

Break and lunchtimes may be short, so attending a CU can be a challenge. It is always important to make good use of the time available.

In thinking about prayer times, typically, a break-time or before school is a great time to pray together. Find a good room to pray in and meet each day or as often as the CU can, to pray.

In considering CU meetings, find a day that is suitable; consider when the longest lunchtime may be (if they vary), or later in the week, so the CU can advertise on a Monday any events or meetings happening later in the week.

CU Meeting Frequency

Try to meet as often as you can; the more the CU meets, the more impact it will have, and the more life there will be.

There is so much going on at lunchtimes, that when you meet there will inevitably be people who would love to come, but can't due to other commitments. Meeting more than once does not mean that you have to run every day, never see your friends or become overloaded! Consider how the CU Leaders can share the responsibility across the team and throughout the CU members.

Location

Consider where the CU is, as there are some advantages to being by the playground, but mostly the noise is a big distraction! A quieter room can be more productive.

A centralised location and ground floor room means that, as people will walk by, there is a greater possibility some may just decide to come in.

It is important that the room is dependable, and unlikely to be booked for anything else, or that the CU is moved without notice. This way the CU is safe in the knowledge that week in, week out, it is yours and your advertising is correct!

Room

When the CU has considered where it wants to be, a room that holds 100, but only having 5 people come, might create a poor atmosphere. Consider starting with one room, with an eye on another location for the future; as planning for growth is important and a room that is full to overflowing will hinder growth, so some empty space is always necessary.

Environment

Consider the practical feel of the room. This is lunchtime and the CU should be a comfortable and relaxed place to be - try not to make it feel like a lesson! If possible, if the CU is in a classroom, consider rearranging the chairs and tables.

Atmosphere

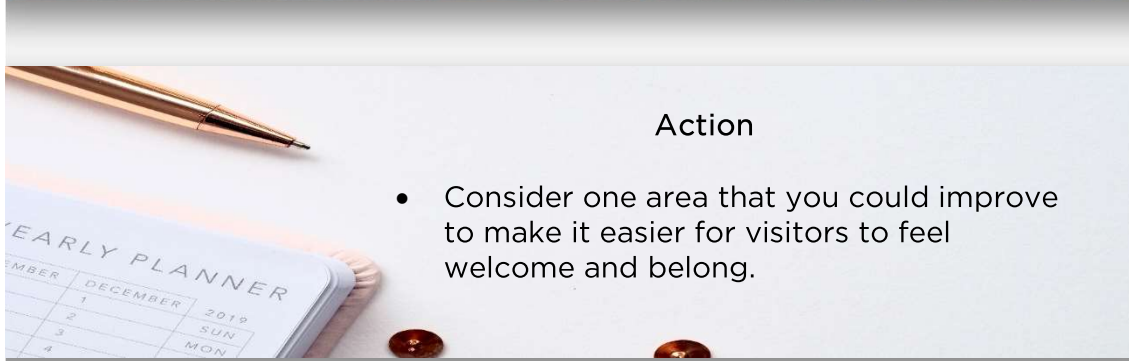
People want to feel like they belong. A visitor will need to know that they are welcome, and know what is happening and what they should be doing. Consider having a 'Welcome Team', one or two people who can welcome students at the door, meet and greet visitors and then spend some (or all) of the CU with them, introducing them to others so they do not feel left alone, isolated

or uncomfortable. Having a short time at the start with a game or activity, is a great way for visitors to join in easily without feeling awkward.



Reflection

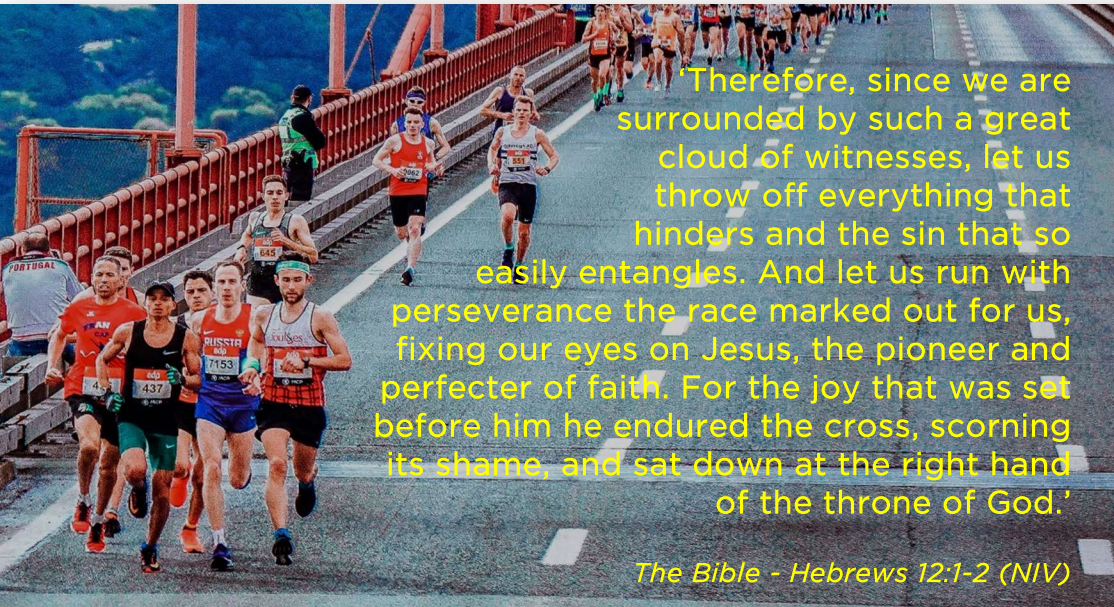
- What does the CU room feel like?
- Do visitors come along, and do they come back the next week? Why?
- Do the CU members act in a way that is welcoming to visitors?



Action

- Consider one area that you could improve to make it easier for visitors to feel welcome and belong.

Final Encouragement



Be encouraged that you are not alone in this venture.

Jesus goes with you. He is present in every conversation, discussion, talk, mission and act of service you do. Allow him to lead you and guide you in what you do as a CU. Work with integrity and when you get it wrong (as we all do), make it right with humbleness and humility, understanding that God's grace is sufficient.

There are many Christians in your town that are behind you, and willing to pray and support you. Keep them informed, so they can pray directly into what you are doing.

At Wycombe Youth For Christ, we are committed to supporting CU's in our local area. Please do not hesitate to contact us for advice, support, and prayer. We love to see young people, going for God, passionate to see lives changed.

May God bless you, your Christian Union and your school and may you see God move in power through all you do.

God Bless

The Wycombe Youth for Christ Team



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