

The MOET logo is positioned in the top left corner, featuring the word "MOET" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is contained within a white, trapezoidal shape that is tilted slightly to the right. The background of the entire page is a red-tinted photograph of a social gathering, possibly a bar or club, with string lights and a crowd of people.

MOET

The
**Mission
Week
Planning
Guide**

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Introduction

How to use this guide

You're thinking about organising a mission week – great! The gospel is treasure that we can't keep to ourselves, and mission weeks are a great way of sharing that treasure widely. Over the past few years, hundreds of university mission weeks have taken place across Europe, reaching tens of thousands of students with the good news of Jesus. Many of these have been pioneered in contexts that have never before attempted one. This guide is written to help you be part of that exciting movement, and to help you make the most of the exciting opportunity.

Let me explain what lies ahead:

Part one will help you think about what a mission week is, and the reasons for doing one. This is especially helpful if you have never attempted a mission week before, but still worth refreshing yourself with, even if your local group has done many. 'Just because we always have' is not a good reason to do something, so it's good to remind yourself – why?!

Part two is eight principles that lie behind successful mission weeks. *Principles* and *practice* can often be confused – and other people's practice can be copied without thinking about why they did things that way. There's nothing wrong with learning from what other people have done, (in fact, there are lots of ideas to 'steal' and adapt), but you will need to consider why things were done that way, and also what will work best in your unique context. While practice may vary, depending on your particular country / city / university, principles transcend our cultural contexts and can be applied into every situation.

Part three is very practical, with a variety of 'How to...' guides for different aspects of a mission week. The advice here has been tried and tested hundreds of times.

It will be helpful for everyone on your mission week planning team to read parts one and two. The 'How to..' guides of part three are specifically designed for those who have responsibility for certain areas.

God bless you as you plan and prepare. There will be lots of hard work ahead, but it will be worth it! As one Christian leader put it – 'When we engage in mission we create ripples that go on for eternity'. Only in the future will the full impact of what you have done be revealed.

A note about terminology

Different countries have different language for describing a Christian student group and its associated roles. In this guide the following terminology will be used:-

CU – Christian Union – the regular ongoing group of Christian students in the university.

CU Leadership Team – the leaders who have the responsibility of the year-round organisation of the CU.

Weekly CU meeting – the regular meeting of Christian students – primarily for training, encouragement, prayer etc.

IFES – International Fellowship of Evangelical Students – the organisation that supports CUs across the world. (In each country the IFES movement is known by different names).

Mission week planning team – those who have the responsibility for planning the mission week.

CU Guest (CUG) - Person who comes to help the student group with the mission week.

CU Staff worker (CUSW) - Person employed by the local IFES movement to support the CU.

Hall of residence – student accommodation blocks / dormitories.



Part One

The What, Why and When of Mission Weeks

What is a university mission week?

A university mission week is the culmination of a CU's ongoing evangelistic effort; a focused and intensive period of public evangelism. During a mission week the gospel is proclaimed publically, persuasively and consecutively over several days. Those who show interest are linked up with appropriate people for follow-up, and given helpful resources.

The idea has spread widely in recent years. In 2006 less than five countries in Europe held a mission week, whereas, by 2016, nearly 200 missions had taken place across 36 different countries. The concept of a mission week is not, in itself, a biblical one, but public proclamation of the gospel is - mission weeks are just a good way of doing it! ... but...

Why organise a mission week?

Mission weeks are the culmination of year-round evangelism.

Evangelism is something we should be involved in every day – it's not just an activity we do - but more a way of life. As Christians we are all called to be a witness to Jesus, and we do that through how we live, and what we say. A mission week can provide a focus and a catalyst for the ongoing year-round witness of the CU.

In one university, I had spoken at several events throughout the year, culminating in their Spring mission week. One student had come to every event, invited by her Christian friend. After asking many questions through the year, it was at the mission week that she finally trusted Christ.

Mission weeks build momentum

In almost every mission week I have spoken at, the numbers attending have grown significantly during that time. At first, even the Christians can feel cautious about the events but, as they grow in confidence in the events and speaker, they are more likely to invite friends. In fact, the best 'inviters' are often those who are not yet Christians themselves!

Our first event of the mission week in Kiev, Ukraine proved disappointing, with only a few students present, and one non-believing guest. However, by the end of the week, over one hundred people came - many of whom were guests. I recently heard that the mentioned-guest from the first day has since become a Christian too!

Mission weeks give people many opportunities to hear the gospel; they can speed up the process of people coming to the point of trusting Christ.

A recent survey showed that, on average, it takes over 40 significant engagements with the gospel (conversations, books, talks etc) for someone to come from no understanding of the gospel to faith in Christ. Such a statistic could cause you to have low expectations for change as you share the gospel, but it should actually make you think about how you can give people more engagements. If people need to hear the gospel several times to come to faith in Christ, then a mission week gives them lots of opportunities in just a few days. What may normally take months or years can happen in a week!

I met Rob after the first lunch-time talk of the mission week. He had lots of objections and questions which we discussed at length. He came back to each lunch and evening event for the rest of the week. On the penultimate day, after the talk, I asked him what his questions were, and he said that he didn't have any left! I suggested he could have 24 hours to think of a good reason why he shouldn't become a Christian. He came back the next night, and admitted that he couldn't think of any...and so he did decide to make a commitment to trust Christ! A week later he shared his testimony in front of 150 people in the student group!

Mission weeks have a big impact in the university

It is hard to miss a whole week of events in a university, especially when the CU advertises them each day.

While taking a break in a coffee shop during one mission week I was eavesdropping on a conversation on an adjacent table. None of the students were part of the CU, or knew anyone in it, but their whole conversation was about the mission week! They commented on the publicity, and the people who had invited them to the events. After discussing the intriguing titles of the different talks, they decided together which ones they would attend!

Mission weeks build and display gospel unity

One of the characteristics of a mission week is that it draws Christians from different backgrounds together, around the gospel. Denominational differences become less of an issue when all are involved in sharing the gospel together. Jesus said that our unity is one of the best apologetics for the gospel (John 17:20-21).

Students commonly ask 'Why are Christians and churches so divided?' I love being asked this question while on a university mission week, because I simply point out that the Christians in the CU all come from different churches, but are working together in joyful unity. A 'picture can be worth a thousand words', and interdenominational mission weeks are a great picture of the unity of the gospel!

Mission weeks develop and train Christians

Jesus trained his disciples, first by taking them with him on mission, and then, sending them out on mission. It was 'on the job training'! On mission weeks you will learn to rely upon God in prayer, and also how to articulate the gospel and answer people's questions. If you waited until you felt ready, then you would never begin. Instead, jump in at the deep end, and start to learn to swim!



'I have learnt so much during this week. To be honest, before the week started I was rather embarrassed about the gospel, and didn't expect much to happen. However, as I have heard the gospel explained and defended, I know that it is true, and stands up to people's questions. I now know that it changes lives because I have seen it happen to my friend, this week!'

- Joe, member of the local CU

Missions draw in new Christians to join the group

A great outcome of a mission week is that you will find Christian students who may join the CU as a result. By doing evangelism in a public manner, you show the purpose of your group, and make it an attractive and exciting thing to be a part of.

One university held a mission week for their first week of term. They organised lots of events and had a large tent in the centre of the university. As well as reaching many students, they also found that the CU itself grew – from 20 at the start of the week to over 70 by the end!

When should you run a mission week?

Consider:

Do you have time to prepare?

It takes time to plan, and build expectations among the Christian students, so you need time to lead up to it. (Even if you decide to run a mission week for the first week of the academic year as people arrive, all the planning needs to be completed before the end of the previous academic year – planning will not happen over the summer holidays!).

Do you have time to follow people up?

The mission week is not the end – seekers will need to be followed-up, and new believers disciplined. Therefore, you don't want the mission to happen just before a major holiday.

Are there other diary events on that week?

Exams or reading weeks will significantly reduce the number of people willing or able to come to events. Look at the year's schedule and talk to students in different departments.

Are the speaker(s) and team available?

You may need some flexibility to secure the speaker you desire, as they will also have other commitments in their diary. Consider a selection of possible dates that could work, and see if the speaker is available. Similarly, if you are inviting a team of CU Guests to come and help, you need to consider when they are able to come.

The weather

This should not be a deal-breaker for planning a mission, and other factors should come first! However, if it is possible, a mission week while the weather is likely to be warmer can be easier – especially when talking to people on the streets!



How long should a mission 'week' be?

A mission week needs to be long enough to build momentum and generate interest, without being so long as to completely exhaust the team organising it! From experience, we have found that three to five days in length is optimum. If you are a CU attempting a mission for the first time, three or four days might be a manageable start. Generally, five days (Monday – Friday) seems to work well.

Frequently-raised objections

As you think about running a mission week, you or the members of your CU may think of a number of objections:-

We're too small in number to run a mission week.

Mission weeks have been successfully organised and led by as few as two Christian students. Remember that the mission teams in the book of Acts were similarly small - and they turned the world upside down! In fact, running a mission week when you are small in number is an especially good idea, as you can invite a team of CU Guests to come and help, so that you don't have to struggle on your own. (See page 29 for advice about recruiting a team).

We don't have enough money to hold a mission week.

Not all good things are expensive and not all expensive things are good! Mission weeks don't have to cost a lot to be effective. What is more, you will probably find that, with a clear vision and good communication, you can raise far more money than you might expect. (See page 32 for advice on fund-raising).

We do mission all year round, so we don't need to do a mission week.

A CU exists to be a missional community. Mission weeks don't exist to replace ongoing evangelism, but to be a point of culmination for it. Far from hindering ongoing evangelism, a good mission week will be a great catalyst for more of it.

We find it better to run one-off events, rather than a mission week.

One-off events are good, but they cannot build the momentum, or have the same impact as a series of events. It is particularly effective when the individual events through the year culminate in a mission week.

We find that it is better to do personal and small-group evangelism than public evangelism.

The book of Acts shows that the early church evangelised in all three ways - personally, in small groups and publicly. Experience around the world has shown that, for a CU to really have an impact, we need to do all three!

We tried it before, and it didn't work.

There can be lots of reasons why things don't work, and it's easy to get discouraged. It may not be that the whole concept was wrong, but some particular aspects needed to be adapted for your local context. Sometimes it can be a seemingly small detail that makes all the difference.

Remember that you can never judge the full impact of a mission - only eternity will reveal the full effect! Ultimately, proclaim the gospel, not just because it works, but because it is biblical; be bold, and persevere!

One CU almost cancelled their mission week, as they felt that the previous year's had been ineffective. After meeting with their speaker they were encouraged to try again, and made some changes to what they had done before. The mission week ended up being the most fruitful they had ever seen!

We are not able to hold public events in the university, so we can't do a mission week.

In many contexts across Europe it is not possible to book university rooms for events. With fears of religious extremism this may become more widespread. However, in many of these places, mission weeks are still possible, by using cafes, hotels, churches and other venues in close proximity. Even in places where university rooms are widely available, lecture rooms are not always the most ideal venue for an event. (See page 34 for advice on how to find good venues and page 21-22 for the example of what happened in Serbia).

People aren't interested in coming to hear talks.

You'll be surprised! Of course, some people may not be, but that doesn't mean everyone isn't interested - this is why we advertise widely, so that we find those who might be interested! Wording a talk-title in a provocative or intriguing way can engage people who wouldn't normally be interested in a Christian event. The biggest challenge is getting people to come to the first one; from there, they can be surprised by what they hear, and may want to come back for more.

We prefer to help Christians grow than to do evangelism.

CUs were initially set up to do evangelism - it is in their DNA. Local churches can help Christians grow, but it's through the CU that they can most effectively reach out to the university students. (What is more, one of the best ways to help Christians grow is to get them out of their comfort zone and sharing their faith!).

Our group does not seem keen to run a mission week.

As leaders of the CU, your job is to lead! That involves getting people to do things that they may not currently want to do. You won't always get everyone 'on board' but you can get a core group excited, and others will then catch on. Most of all, you can lead by example. Just as with a fire - if the centre of it is hot - the rest will catch fire eventually!



Part Two

8 Principles for Effective Mission Weeks

When observing mission weeks in other settings with a view to holding your own, there are two mistakes you can be tempted to make. The first is to just (unthinkingly) copy all the ideas; what works in one university or country may not be so effective in another. The second mistake might be to reject every piece of advice just because your context is different!

A better approach is to discover the principles that lie behind good practice and then translate them into your situation. What follows are eight principles that all effective mission weeks will incorporate.

1. Prayer

I find there is a direct correlation between the effectiveness of a mission week and the prayerfulness of the mission team! At one mission, recently, I found the vast majority of the 150 CU members turned up early each morning to pray. I knew from the outset it was going to be a fruitful week, just as it turned out to be.

Why should you pray?

The Bible tells us to pray for mission.

We are encouraged to pray for open doors of opportunity to share the gospel and that we may have open mouths to clearly explain it (Col 4:2-4).

Prayer shows us who we are depending on.

In prayer we remind ourselves that without God we can do nothing. (John 15:5). We are just cheap jars of clay but we have treasure within. (2 Cor 4:7). God is able to do above and beyond what we ask or imagine. (Eph 3:20). In prayer you say to God, 'I can't! but YOU can!'

God answers prayer!

It shouldn't surprise you to find that the God who commands us to pray also delights in hearing and answering our prayers. Paul thanked the Corinthian Christians for helping him by their prayers (2 Corinthians 1:11) and you too will find that God helps you as you pray.

God can make us the answers to our own prayers!

It is nonsensical to pray regularly for your friends to discover Christ, and then fail to invite them to the mission week events! In prayer we refocus our own priorities and are reminded that we have a responsibility to act. Prayer is not asking God to do what we are unwilling to do, but often it is about him making us willing to be a part of what he wants to do. In Acts 4:28 the believers prayed for boldness to witness for Christ in the face of opposition, and just two verses later we read that they went out and spoke with boldness!

Here are some tips for effective prayer for mission week:

Pray specifically – it is hard to know when a general prayer like 'God bless our mission week' has been answered. However, if you pray and then invite a friend to an event you will know when it has been answered, by their response. Prayer can be discouraging because you are not specific in what you ask for. It is a good idea to make a 'Five-a-day' bookmark. You can encourage each Christian student to write the names of five friends for who they are going to commit to regularly pray, before the mission week, and get them to keep it in their Bible.

Pray regularly – start praying for the mission week from the moment you launch it, and keep going, right up to, and beyond, the week itself.

Pray corporately – it's great to meet together to pray, so, as well as praying in your weekly meetings, it's great to start each day of mission week with prayer all together (see page 59). Other ideas include organising a week of 24/7 prayer *before* (not during, or you will be too tired) the mission, or a day of prayer and fasting.

Pray continually – don't just limit prayer to set times. Get into the habit of turning to God in prayer spontaneously, as you face challenges, or find opportunities. Silent 'arrow prayers', even in the middle of talks or conversations, are great ways to rely upon God.

Pray expectantly – don't just thank God for what he has done but also for what he *will* do! You can be expectant that as you share the gospel, relying on God through prayer, and in the power of his Holy Spirit that he will be at work! We never know who will respond to the gospel, but we can be confident that the gospel does work, and some will respond.

Pray thankfully – make sure you stop to say thank you, as well as to say please! You could keep a prayer journal through the year, where you write down the specific prayers and the date you first prayed them. In a second column, write down the answers to those prayers and the date when they came. One CU tried this, and at the end of the year they read through the book all together – by the last page, most were crying tears of gratitude for what God had done.



2. Planning

Great mission weeks don't happen by accident – they take effort and lot of hard work to organise. While mission events can very exciting, planning meetings may not always seem so – especially when the mission week seems a long way off, and you have a lot of other work to do. However, the hours of work will be worth it when the mission week finally arrives.

Here are some top tips on planning:

Appoint a team – you can't do it on your own and you need to share the load. (See page 24 for a list of the responsibilities you will need to have covered). God gives each of his children gifts, (1 Cor 12, 14; Eph 4) and, by working together, we are more creative and effective. Start early – it takes longer than you think to plan a mission week, so don't leave it 'til the last minute. Appoint your team as early as possible to save problems later on. Booking a speaker is one of the first and most important things you will need to do. Good speakers can get booked up more than a year in advance. (See page 27 for advice on booking speakers).

Work backwards – most of the things that you need to do will rely on other things having been done first. You can't give out leaflets until you've printed them, you can't print them before you design them and you can't design them before you plan what you are actually doing! (See page 76-83 for a suggested planning schedule).

Keep to your schedule – mission week planning can feel stressful, with the continual feeling that there must be something you should be doing. Keeping to your schedule can take away the stress because you can see what needs to be done, when.

Set the vision before the budget – it is a mistake to begin by thinking about how much money you already have, and planning from there. Don't limit your vision by the size of your current funding, but pray for (and raise) the funding to match the vision.

Pray together – start and end your planning meetings with prayer, and when difficulties arise, (as they will!) turn your frustrations into prayer and not despair!

'We had never done a mission week before, and weren't sure where to start. However, we found the guide so helpful. We read through it together as a planning team and implemented the ideas. Not only did this make a daunting job seem manageable, but it meant that the mission week was far better than we had hoped.'

– Student in Cluj, Romania, after their first mission week.

3. Preparation

If you have been on the planning team for a mission week then you will have spent a lot of time thinking about it. This doesn't necessarily mean that all the other Christian students have! You need to work out how to mobilise all the Christian students to get involved. There's no point having a great mission week planned, if the CU members are not equipped and excited to make the most of the opportunity.

As you prepare your CU for the mission week, remember that the gospel is the best motivation and guilt is a *bad* motivation. You have treasure! Desire to share it! Get people involved, but because they *want* to be involved, not just because they feel they have to be. So, think how you can be positive. Guilt may prod people to do something, but they won't do it well, and they won't stick at it for very long.

Remember that the gospel is...

...True! – The gospel stands up to public scrutiny. You can equip people with the skills they need to answer people's objections, so that they can see them, not as obstacles, but, as opportunities to share Jesus.

...Wonderful! – The gospel is good news, but many assume that it is the opposite. Learn how to connect the gospel to what people care about, and show that it really is good news for them and for the world.

...Powerful! – The gospel changes lives. You can remind each other of this, and retelling stories of how the gospel has changed the lives of individual students can give you confidence that it can happen during the mission week.

The CU in Leuven, Belgium was planning to hold their first mission week in recent years. They spent the year working hard to mobilise and enthuse their CU. All of the leadership team was leading by example, and their enthusiasm spilled over to the rest. Despite having had no previous experience of missions, they held one of the best I have seen. There is no substitute for prayerful enthusiasm and expectancy!



4. Publicity

The most effective way to get people to come to events is through Christians inviting their friends. Not only are they fairly likely to accept, but they have also seen the gospel lived out by their friend. This is why it is important for the Christians in your CU to be investing in these relationships, and for them to be praying for their friends regularly. Encourage them to live alongside and socialise with their non-believing friends.

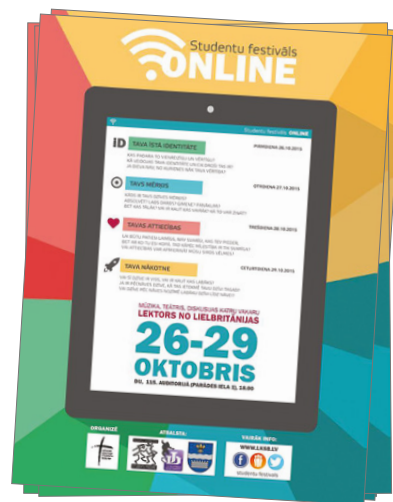
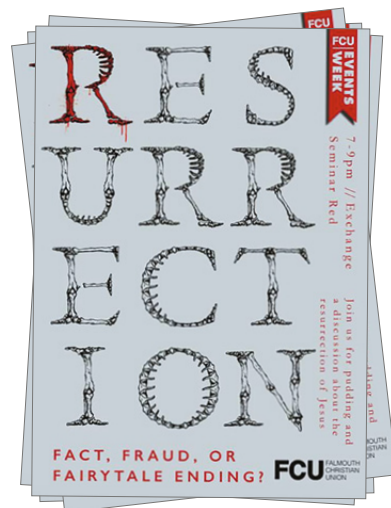
However, while the friendship route is normally the most fruitful in terms of getting people to come to events, it would be a mistake to only invite your friends.

How many Christian students are in your CU, and how many non-Christian friends do you think they each have? Multiply these together and this is the number of people that you can reach by inviting only your friends. It might seem like a lot, until you consider how many students are at your university. Even the biggest, most outgoing CUs in Europe will probably not reach more than 5% of the university through friendships alone. How do we reach the other 95% who don't have a natural friendship with a Christian?

This is where *publicity* comes in to play.

There is no one form of publicity that is guaranteed to attract everyone. In fact, normally, it is the cumulative effect of a number of different forms of advertising that will catch people's attention, and finally cause them to come. Imagine you were not part of your CU. It would probably take more than a poster to get you to an event. You would need to hear about it several times, and in different ways before you might consider going.

- ▶ Publicity must have an **identifiable branding**. Your branding will unite the different forms of advertising, and get people's attention.



- ▶ Publicity must be **attractive to your target audience**. Try to keep the people you'll be inviting in mind when you design your publicity. If you weren't a Christian, would these flyers make you want to attend? If this were a 'church-goers-only' event, Christian imagery might be appealing – but it's worth thinking how non-Christian students might respond to a picture of a cross or a Bible verse. The cross, for example, is a powerful image for us, but could reinforce some unhelpful stereotypes in the eyes of our friends – does it seem outdated and irrelevant?
- ▶ Publicity needs to be **well-worded**. Remember, not everyone who will be impacted by your mission will have decided they need to investigate Jesus' claims - some will simply be 'spiritually searching' or looking for meaning in their life. Try to create publicity that will draw in a broad group of people – how can it be open and wide-reaching while remaining clear? Perhaps using open language – such as inviting people to explore 'life and the Christian faith' rather than simply 'Jesus' – can intrigue and reach a wider demographic. Try to avoid using Christian jargon too! Be strategic in your wording. What are some of the misconceptions or preconceptions that might stop someone coming to your mission week, and how can your publicity challenge that? Maybe some students think that Christians are simply boring – why not use humour or creativity to challenge this? Perhaps others expect Christians to be impersonal and uncaring – why not use your publicity to communicate that you want to be open, personal, warm, and inviting? Some might simply expect a lecture – could you use publicity to indicate that questions and conversation will be an important part of the mission? Don't just share information – be creative, and make people want to come to your events!
- ▶ Publicity must **present clear information** – people need to quickly know the 'what, when and where' of the event. Make sure the talk title is prominent – the talk will be the central part of the event and you don't want to get people coming under false pretences.
- ▶ Publicity must **build** – there needs to be an increasing amount of publicity as you get close to the mission week. Produce a schedule, and decide when each form of advertising should be introduced.
- ▶ Publicity must be **well checked** before you publish it! Wrong information or a corrected flyer looks unprofessional. I was once at a very quiet 'text a toastie' event, where no one sent any messages. Only at the end of the evening did anyone realise that this was because the number on the flyers was wrong!
- ▶ Publicity must be in **plentiful supply** – don't run out of flyers 10 minutes before the talk - at the very point when people are most likely to come! So make sure you have more than enough. Better to have too much publicity than too little.

- ▶ Publicity needs to be produced **on time**. It's a disaster if you don't obtain the flyers in time for the event in question, or your hoodies arrive on the final day – but it has often happened! Aim to have everything ready a couple of weeks early, as you will want to start inviting people *before* the week begins.
- ▶ Publicity must be **creative** – what can you do to surprise people and get their attention? (See page 47 for ideas of different forms of publicity).
- ▶ Publicity must be **accompanied with a smile!** Students are used to seeing advertising, and receiving flyers. You can stand out from the crowd by your warm, friendly enthusiasm with which you advertise the events.
- ▶ Publicity must **get people thinking**. Many people have such negative perceptions of Christianity that simply receiving a flyer is not enough to get them to come. You'll need to intrigue people in a way in which they can share their views, but also glimpse something different about you. First-contact evangelism can engage with those who might never otherwise consider coming to hear a talk and certain well-run pre-mission events can provoke interest in people to come back to hear more. (See page 52 for different forms of first-contact evangelism, and page 58 for ideas of one-off events to publicise the mission).

A CU in Poland only had a few members but wanted to invite many people to an event. Three of them dressed up as death, an angel and the devil. Taking it in turns they knocked on the doors of the halls of residence. Firstly death appeared – giving people a shock, and then running on. A few moments later the angel would appear at the same door. Enquiring as to whether death had just been that way they assured the student that death need not be feared because Jesus had the answer! With that, the angel gave the student a flyer for the event and then they ran off. Finally, after some more minutes, the devil knocked on the same door. He asked if an angel had just invited them to a Christian event. When the student said that this was indeed the case, the devil responded by exclaiming, 'Whatever you do – don't go!' and with that, the devil ran off. Of course, the best thing to do with students is to tell them NOT to do something. (The event was packed!).



5. Proclamation

At the heart of the mission week people will get to hear and respond to the gospel. This is what all the prayer, planning, preparation and publicity are building towards. A good mission event will be...



...convenient

Getting the right time and venue is critical to people attending your events. You need to find out when people are free, and where they are most likely to be or get to. If the events are over a meal time, then you'll need to provide food. (See page 60 for ideas for lunch time events, page 63 for evening events and page 34 for a guide to finding the best venues).

...engaging

The theme of the week and titles of the talks need to engage people and intrigue them to want to find out more. Take time to find out what the biggest questions are, or what the most popular existential desires might be, in your context. As you plan the titles for the week, come up with a series that will both interest the average student on campus, and also provide a good opportunity for the speaker to articulate the heart of the gospel. (See page 37 for advice on selecting a theme, and page 39 for choosing mission titles).

...consecutive

A strong reason for holding a week of events is that people can come to more than one talk. Though some may only come to a single event, your aim is for people to want to come back for more. To help this to happen it is important to keep continuity with the venue, time and format of the events. If you change locations, or alter the format significantly from day to day, then experience shows that invited people are far less likely to come back.

...attractive

The environment to which people come will directly affect how well they listen to the talk. Effort needs to be taken to create a warm and relaxed atmosphere – especially for evening events. Depending on what your venue is like, this may take more or less work to achieve! A warm and attractive environment encourages people not only to come and to listen, but also to stay after the talks, and discuss what they have heard. These post-talk discussions are normally most significant and valuable.

...welcoming

Imagine you are a guest coming to an event for the first time. How would you feel? What would you need? Make sure that you have people pointing the way to the venue, welcoming people at the door and others to engage in conversations around the tables. People are more likely to converse after a talk if they have got to know someone before it starts. Good food and well-known secular music in the background will also help people relax.

...creative

We live in a visual culture where people have short attention spans. So you need to think how to communicate effectively. Good preaching can be *supplemented* (but not *supplanted*) by appropriate film clips, vox-pops, music, drama sketches, testimonies or poetry reading. Not only does this help hold attention, but it can also communicate the gospel in different and sometimes provocative ways. You'll need to discuss ideas with your speaker and make themes flow well together.

...responsive

It is great to give people opportunities to ask questions at the end of each talk. This not only shows that the gospel is public truth, and that you are confident it stands up to scrutiny, but it also bridges the gap between the talk and the conversations that (hopefully) will follow. Handled well, the 'Q&A' can be one of the most exciting parts of the event. (See page 69 for advice on taking questions after a talk).

6. Partnerships

Do get more people involved than just the CU. While many people could not be involved on a weekly basis, (especially those who are not local) they may be able to be involved by joining your mission week.

Potential partnerships:

- ▶ Local churches – as a CU you are the missional arm of the local churches in the university. A mission week gives you opportunities to get the rest of the church involved.
- ▶ Home churches – don't just think of churches in your university city – what about those in your home town? (If this is different).
- ▶ Graduates – they may have an interest in the university and your CU.
- ▶ Other societies on campus – they could help with aspects such as music, and it can be a great way to get people to attend the events.
- ▶ Other Christian groups on campus – it may be possible to work together with them and get them involved.
- ▶ CUs in other cities – if you are small in number, then supporting mission weeks in each other's cities can really help.
- ▶ Other IFES movements – we are part of an international family, and mission weeks provide great opportunities to build partnerships with other movements.

Ways that people can get involved in partnering with the mission week:

- ▶ Praying – wouldn't it be great to have hundreds of people praying specifically for the mission week each day?! (See page 31 for tips on raising prayer support).
- ▶ Giving money – you can raise far more than you might imagine when you spread the net. (See page 32 for tips on raising financial support).
- ▶ Providing practical help – not everyone can give money, but they might be able to help by preparing food for events, designing or printing leaflets, giving equipment for and / or controlling the sound and lighting, helping with the decoration of the venues, and so on.
- ▶ Helping with music and drama and testimony.
- ▶ Join the team for the week as CU Guests. It's great to have a team of people who have committed to helping for the week. Not only do they have no lectures to go to; they can model good personal evangelism, and encourage the more timid members of the CU. (See page 29 for advice on recruiting and forming a team).



7. Persistence – Follow-Up

People can repent and believe in a moment, but there is often a process of discovery that leads up to that point, and a lifetime of discipleship that follows it. Mission weeks do not finish with the final talk. In many ways, the real work is only just beginning. We need to consider people on both sides of that divide.

In Acts 17 we have the record of Paul preaching in the city of Athens, after which there were three types of responders:

- ▶ Sceptics - who mocked the idea of the resurrection (v32)
- ▶ Seekers - who wanted to find out more... (v32)
- ▶ New believers - who had responded to what they had heard. (v34)

You can expect that at the end of your mission week there will be people who fit into each of these groups. What will you do to help them?

Sceptics – at very least you will want to challenge them to read an account of Jesus' life for themselves. You may also be able to recommend a book on a particular issue that is a stumbling block for them. They may be unlikely to come to a follow-up course, but, if they have developed a friendship with a Christian during the week, then they may be willing to meet up to continue the discussion, or to do a Bible study.

Seekers – they are intrigued, but not convinced, and you will need to help that interest grow. They need to be able to look further at the claims of Jesus, and have opportunities to continue to ask questions. A course and/or a one-to-one Bible study is going to be essential in helping them towards faith. Reading a gospel (if they haven't already) and helpful appropriate books will also be of benefit.

New believers – just like new born babies, they will need help to grow. They need to get into studying the Bible, to learn to pray, and to meet regularly with other believers in a good local church.



8. Perseverance

No mission week is perfect – there will always be areas that you can improve! By having regular mission weeks – potentially every year – you can learn from your experiences.

So, when the mission week ends, take time to debrief. Don't do it on the final day (you'll all be too tired to think straight!) but, after you have had a rest, it is good to critique the week. What went well? Would you do it again? What wasn't so good? What needs to be changed / adapted? How could you further develop and grow things in the future? Remember – if things didn't work - it may not be that the whole idea was wrong – often it can be just a small thing that can make a difference.

Take heart, though! – God doesn't wait for us to get everything right before he will work. In his grace and mercy he delights to use us in our weakness, and even in our failings. So, if you don't get everything right, don't despair! Conversely, if you do see much fruit, don't get complacent – there will still be ways to improve next time.

The Christian students in Albania decided to implement ideas that they had learnt from seeing mission weeks in the UK. Their first attempt was not so successful and few students came. However, instead of giving up, they decided to rethink how they could implement the principles that they had learnt, in their own context. Using sports events, doing practical work around the university, and inviting qualified lecturers to give guest lectures in their own fields of expertise, they generated interest and gained the favour of the university authorities. This meant that they were given the use of university buildings and many more people came.

'Serbia is a post communist country with a strong orthodox identity and evangelicals are seen as a sect, foreign spies and traitors. Because of the communist history there is still a policy at University that no religious activities are allowed, and, because of the strong influence of the Orthodox Church, the only religious activities that are actually allowed are activities by the Orthodox Church. So evangelicals are not allowed to meet at Uni, to have rooms, or to do any other activities. Because of this, when some people first learnt of the concept of mission weeks they immediately said it wouldn't work. However, I felt that we had to try.

We decided to overcome our venue problem and have evangelism in cafes. Serbia is a coffee-drinking culture. Cafes are everywhere and Serbs love to hang out in cafes. We use cafes to do business, celebrate events, go on dates etc. However, the first cafe that we tried was a church cafe. Soon we realized that this is not a good idea since people would not come to such a place and that we need a more "neutral" place.

This is where our journey for a good cafe started. It lasted for 4 years and we tried about 10 different cafes. Some rejected us immediately, some were friendly but the location was bad, some had friendly managers but unfriendly staff and some were too small! We were even recommended by one manager to try a cafe that we later found out was the first gay bar in Serbia! In one particular situation the cafe staff started purposely creating noisy distractions because they didn't like what they were hearing, even though the cafe was packed with students! After trying various different venues that were not so good we were praying that God would open a door to a new and better cafe.

A few days later I was passing by a very popular café in the centre of the campus. However, I discovered that though it was in the university it was privately owned and so I decided to go inside and talk to the manager. The manager was a very relaxed guy, in fact he seemed too relaxed! I explained to him what we wanted - that we are an evangelical Christian organization and that we needed a place for evening events. The whole time while we were talking I expected that he would reject me yet when I finished he said that he is ok with it! I was surprised and asked if he was sure, explaining again that we were evangelicals, that we would talk about Jesus, and that we don't have money for rent just for drinks? He said that he completely understood this and he still agreed. So there it was - a cafe with a perfect location, in the Uni, but not part of Uni, popular so that every student knew it, and we could have a publicity stand in front of it during the day to advertise the events! It is amazing how God answered our prayers, and gave us the best possible place. What I learned from this experience is that when you do missions you can't quit! Often things will go bad and wrong, but you shouldn't quit!

- Marko, Serbia



Part Three

The 'How to...' Guides

How to form a mission week planning team

If you are a large CU it can be good to include people who are not already in a leadership role, so that you can share out responsibilities. In a smaller CU it may be the current leaders, or even the whole CU, who become the planning team.

When considering who should be on the planning team, you want to look for people who are:

- ▶ committed to Jesus and following him.
- ▶ willing to work with others
- ▶ humble
- ▶ well-organised
- ▶ committed to their own non-believing friends; they lead by example



...you don't necessarily want the best evangelists – evangelists may get frustrated by sitting in meetings! Below are areas of responsibility which need to be covered, showing:

Job Description (*Tasks involved*) and **Person Specification** (*Ideal gifting required*)

Finance

Working out a budget; keeping track of receipts; paying bills; presenting the financial need to the CU, local churches etc.

Someone with ability in accounting; organised, diligent and faith-filled.

Prayer

Writing prayer letters/emails to CU members, churches and supporters; helping to organise mission-focused prayer meetings; producing other resources that will encourage prayer for the mission and its follow-up (bookmarks, posters, etc).

They will need to be passionate about prayer; motivational; creative; good communicator.

Publicity

Coordinating the overall publicity strategy for the mission (including clear deadlines!); working with others to produce posters, flyers, hoodies, etc; presenting draft ideas to the rest of the mission planning team for comments; getting teams together to distribute publicity.

It would be great to have someone who is creative for this role. Good at keeping to deadlines.

Follow-up

Planning a follow-up strategy; encouraging follow-up discussion-group leaders to attend a training session; emphasising personal follow-up of friends and contacts; producing and keeping track of response cards; organising the availability of suitable materials (e.g. books, CDs, Bibles) for those who want to find out more, or who make a profession of faith for the first time.

This is a key role, and it is important for this person to be both diligent in details, but also, good with people, as they will need to organise as well as be making contact with people they haven't met.

Events

Organising the practical details of events; liaison with those involved in running events; booking rooms; liaising with speakers, musicians, drama group etc; coordinating lighting, sound, recording, seating etc.

You may want to have different team-members for lunch time, international and evening events if you plan more than one event per day. These people need to be well-organised and able to delegate tasks to others.

CU Guest Coordinator

Contacting the CU Guests ahead of the mission; sending out information packs; organising their time-table; sorting out where they will stay and where they will eat; being the contact point for them during the week.

This team-member needs to be good at communication and organisation. It helps if they are well-connected within the CU, as they will be organising hosts for the CUGs.

Administration

Keeping notes of what the planning team discusses; noting down points for discussion and action.

Administrator with good attention to detail and taking actions.

Team Leader

Enabling the group to function effectively; encouraging participation from all members; helping people to prepare before meetings by informing them of subjects for discussion; making sure time is used effectively and decisions are made early on; keeping an overview of what is going on!

This person should also be the main link between the mission-speaker and the group, ensuring good communication between the two.

Note that in smaller CUs you may need to double up some of these roles if you don't have enough people for one role each! ...though... in bigger CUs you may want to add more roles, e.g. Internationals rep, Small-group rep, and it may also be good for the planning team members to build their own small teams to work on their area of responsibility. A small team working on publicity or events will increase involvement in the mission week and share the workload.

If possible, try to include people from across the years in your mission planning team. Look out for those who have a little bit more experience in evangelism. If there are former CU leaders still around, ask them! The main CU leadership team should be involved in making decisions, and, if possible, CU members should be consulted for suggestions.

How to find and book a speaker

There are advantages in getting the same person to speak at as many events as possible during your mission week. Where there are multiple events you may consider getting two speakers (one for lunch times and one for evenings):

- ▶ This builds momentum. If people enjoy hearing the speaker they are more likely to come back, and bring friends.
- ▶ The speaker, around all week, can meet up with interested individuals outside of the main events.



It can also be good to get the speaker to come to speak before the mission week. Could they join you for your weekend away and/or a Christmas event? It's important that the whole CU get to know and trust them.

As you decide who you will ask to speak, remember that having someone who is well-known in Christian circles is of no particular advantage for friends outside these circles! Think about speakers you may have heard who give evangelistic talks, and not just talks aimed at Christians. Think:

- ▶ Are they committed to Biblical truth?
- ▶ Are they able to present the gospel clearly and persuasively to those who are not Christians?
- ▶ Are they able to fit in well in your university context?
- ▶ Are they able and willing to answer questions after their talks?
- ▶ Are they willing to be with you for the whole week? (It's not as effective when the speaker just comes in for one event or only arrives for his talk; it's much better if they can be part of the team and get involved in prayer and planning).
- ▶ Are they someone with whom you can develop a good relationship and work well with?

You may also want to ask the advice of your CU Staff Worker, as well as asking other CUs for suggestions of speakers they have particularly appreciated.

Lost in translation?

If you are just starting mission weeks in your country, then it may not yet be possible to find someone suitable from your own country, or who can speak your language. It is possible to have talks simultaneously translated, but you will need a) a good translator, and b) a speaker who is willing to work in such a way. If the majority of students understand English it could be possible to have an English speaker with translation headsets available. This may also appeal to international students.

Once the speaker is booked:

- ▶ Meet with the speaker, as a team, as soon as possible (or have a video call with the team) and work with them through the year, keeping them informed and being willing to take their advice. They may have done many missions before, and have lots of experience and suggestions.
- ▶ Communicate well – especially a) the theme of the week and b) the titles of the talks.
- ▶ Consider where a speaker will stay during the mission. He or she will need a room to themselves, for preparation time and adequate rest. Consider booking them into a local guest house, or arrange for them to stay with a local minister or hospitable Christian family.



How to find and use CU Guests

What is their purpose?

- ▶ to do evangelism alongside CU members.
- ▶ to encourage CU members who may feel timid.

What do they do?

- ▶ If possible, it is best for them to stay with CU members. This gives them opportunities to build relationships with friends and neighbours.
- ▶ If the university is split into colleges, or the CU into small groups, it is good if they are assigned to the same one for the week.
- ▶ They can help more timid members of the CU get started in first-contact evangelism, such as using questionnaires.
- ▶ They are on hand to help with practical duties during the day.
- ▶ They can initiate conversations with those who come to the events.
- ▶ They can join CU members and their friends for meals, where they can share their testimony / give a short talk / answer questions and be a catalyst for conversation.

Where to find them?

- ▶ People who work with your IFES movement – staff and apprentices
- ▶ Students from other CUs
- ▶ Staff and students from other IFES movements
- ▶ Local church student workers / apprentices
- ▶ Graduates
- ▶ Students training for Christian ministry
- ▶ Your speaker may also have contacts, and wish to bring team-members with them.

Look for those who are particularly gifted in evangelism – they will encourage the CU by their example.

It is helpful to have a mixture of local and non – local CU Guests.

Local CUGs:

- ▶ Accessible and available.
- ▶ You can build relationships with them.
- ▶ Develops links between local churches and CU.
- ▶ May already know some of the students in the CU.
- ▶ May know the situation and geography of your campus, so they can get involved quickly.
- ▶ Can be available to help with follow-up.
- ▶ **BUT...** they MUST be able to fully free up their week, and not just try to fit the mission week around their usual activities.

Non-local CUGs

- ▶ Bring experiences of what they've been involved in before.
- ▶ Encourage the CU (CUGs demonstrate that people are willing to come from other cities or even countries to come and help)
- ▶ Can learn from you, and take what they learn to use in planning mission weeks back home.
- ▶ Some students prefer to talk to someone from outside that they are unlikely to ever meet again.
- ▶ However... they come from a different situation, (obviously) and won't know your situation or team very well.

Decide approximately how many CU Guests you would like. Experience shows 10-20 guests can work well, unless your group is very large, (200+) in which case you may want more.

Invite them early – they will need to make plans to come, and take time off. Explain the vision, share the plan for the week and outline what you would like them to do. It will need to feel worthwhile. If you are expecting them to cover their own travel expenses then make sure that this is clear, but let them know that accommodation and food will be provided.

Explain to the CU the purpose of the CU Guests, and get students to commit to hosting them, or inviting them for a meal with their friends.

Looking after your speakers and CUGs

Your speakers and CU Guests are giving up their time to be with you. It's important that you don't take them for granted during the week.

If possible, arrange for the speakers and CU Guests to arrive the day before the mission week starts. Arrange for the speaker to meet with the planning team, and for the CU Guests to meet with the small group they'll be working with (if appropriate). This is a good time for people to get to know each other, and a good opportunity to go over the plan for the week, and pray together. If it is a Sunday, you could eat and attend church together in the evening, so that the CU Guest can get to know a few people. If this is impossible, arrange a gathering for some time on the Monday.

Make an information pack for your speakers and CUGs, including:

- ▶ a map of campus.
- ▶ some ideas for what they can do in their free time (e.g. sports centres and places to visit in your town).
- ▶ useful phone numbers of people in the CU.
- ▶ a diary showing them what they will be doing through the week, including who they will be having meals with.
- ▶ some chocolate! – let them know that they are loved!

It will also be really helpful if you can give them a brief tour of campus, showing them venues of mission events, good coffee shops, internet access-points and so on. At the end of the week it is a kind gesture to give the CU Guests a gift and a card to thank them for their help.

How to mobilise wider prayer support

Consider sending out a regular prayer letter or email to those who are willing to support the CU in prayer. This should include local churches, home churches, CU graduates, parents or friends of CU members and others.

- ▶ **Be clear and specific.** Many prayer letters are boring and vague! A good prayer letter will be clear, and have specific issues and people to pray for.
- ▶ **Respect confidentiality.** It may be better not to mention individual students unless you change their names.
- ▶ **Be reflective.** Include answers to prayer for things that were included in previous prayer letters, and include reflections on what the current situation is and how things are going so far.

It is important to involve the local churches in your city. They should be especially interested in what is happening and want to be involved.

- ▶ If your CU has a local advisory group, then its members can help inform the churches of what's going on.
- ▶ Prepare in good time a brief vision statement and explanation of the mission week, with clear prayer requests. Put them on a card.
- ▶ Write letters in advance to local church leaders, informing them of your desire to receive their help and to inform their church.
- ▶ Where CU members have good local church links, contact the leaders through these personal contacts.
- ▶ Be clear about what you are asking for e.g. 'We'd like a few minutes in one of your Sunday services to share about our upcoming mission week, and hand out some prayer information.'
- ▶ If the church is willing, then present the vision in pairs.

Other ideas for mobilising wider prayer support might include ... getting CU members to take prayer letters back to their churches during the holidays ... organising a prayer time when people sign up to pray for a particular block of time for the mission ... encouraging people in the CU to get a postcard of the university and to write to a Christian friend with prayer requests for mission ... sending someone to other nearby CUs to tell them what is happening and get them to pray ... sending prayer points to IFES movements that your group or country partners with... ..and you may be able to think of other ideas!

How to budget and raise funding

These are the things you can expect to spend money on:

- ▶ **Literature:** books and booklets, including those in foreign languages for international students. You may want to give these away free of charge, or subsidise them, so they are all sold at a set cost. (Save money by buying these at reduced cost from www.tenofthose.com)
- ▶ **Speakers' expenses:** some speakers just charge travelling expenses, others will have a set fee structure. If somebody is employed by an organisation or a church, it may be appropriate to make a donation to that church/organisation for the person's time. If the speaker is dependent on gifts for his/her living, you will have to consider not just the days they were actually with you, but also time spent in preparation, in travel and in time off afterwards. It's also customary to give speakers and CU Guests a token of appreciation.
- ▶ **Publicity:** Flyers, posters, banners etc.

- ▶ **Room booking:** Some places charge for booking certain rooms and facilities. Equipment hire: It may be necessary to hire staging or a sound system or lighting.
- ▶ **Food:** Prepare this yourself, or get local Christians to provide it, to reduce costs. In some venues you will have to pay for in-house catering, which will cost more (but may be worth it, to secure the suitable venue).
- ▶ **Other events:** musicians have a variable scale of charges (bands are often quite expensive, so do consider the value of such an event for gospel opportunities, against its cost).
- ▶ **Administrative costs:** including telephone, photocopying, envelopes and stamps.

We often feel awkward about asking for money, but reading 2 Corinthians 8-9 shows how Paul let people know about financial needs because he was convinced that there was no better way for Christians to invest money than putting it towards the cause of the gospel. So if you have a real financial need, then you shouldn't feel embarrassed about making that fact known.

The main source of income for a CU mission (and the first to be tapped) should be CU members themselves.

- ▶ Even though money is tight, encouraging students to give sacrificially is very important.
- ▶ People could give a small amount towards the mission each week, or maybe decide not to buy something they had been saving for. Be creative in where you might see students raising their contributions. Gimmicks are probably best avoided: it's better to present the opportunity to give sacrificially and honour the gospel. If the need is explained well, and people are prayerfully challenged (not guilt-tripped) they will give generously.

Other sources of income:

- ▶ Local churches may be able to contribute, either financially, or in other ways (e.g. catering, accommodation). Approach churches early so you can discuss your plans properly with them. Remember that local churches only have money because their members give sacrificially – you will find it difficult to approach churches with integrity if the CU itself is not giving.
- ▶ Home churches. Consider giving each CU member a letter to take to their home church in the last CU meeting before Christmas (if you are having a Spring mission week), and encourage CU members to chat to their church leaders about the mission week and helping to finance it. Make sure the letter also offers the opportunity to support the mission in prayer.

- ▶ Churches have budgets, so may feel limited in what they can give. Individuals within the church may be able to be more generous. If you are able to run a presentation at a church you may also find that individuals would like to give.
- ▶ Graduates. If your CU is in touch with graduates, talk to them about contributing financially.

When communicating your financial needs it is important to be clear:

- ▶ Lay out the vision of the mission week and what you are planning to do.
- ▶ Show the total budget for the week, and a breakdown of the various costs.
- ▶ Show how much the CU have already given (and other amounts already received), and how much is still outstanding.

Keeping things organised:

- ▶ You may need to open a special mission week bank account. This will help you see exactly how much you have raised, and how much you are spending! If this isn't practical, at least make sure all contributions for the mission week are accounted for separately in the CU accounts.
- ▶ All requests for money and payment of bills need to be channeled through the same person. This person should keep a careful record of all money received (with pay-in slips) and all money spent (with receipts).
- ▶ Keep names and addresses so that you can send thank you letters and let people know how the mission went.
- ▶ Accounts should be available for viewing by CU members or university authorities.

How to find the best venues

It is critical you find a suitable venue for the events. Like speakers, good venues can also get booked up early, so don't leave this too late!

Consider:

- ▶ Accessibility – is it near where people will naturally be at that time of day or in a place they would know well? The harder a venue is to find, the less likely people are to come.

- ▶ Availability – can you get it for the whole week? Moving venues midweek may lose people, or stop your momentum.
- ▶ Flexibility – can you lay it out in an attractive manner? – sitting round tables is more sociable than in rows, and more conducive to conversations afterwards.
- ▶ Exclusivity – if you are using public venues (eg. a café or restaurant) make sure that the owners know that there will be a talk, and that you will have exclusive use of the room. It may seem like a good opportunity if you have other people in the room, but they may not appreciate the unexpected talk, and if they themselves keep chatting, you will have a lot of distractions!

Different events may need different venues:

- ▶ Lunch time events need to be very close to where people have lectures, as they will be coming in their break. A room in the centre of campus, and easily accessible is best. If it is not possible to meet on campus, consider booking a venue very close – a hotel / restaurant / pub?
- ▶ Evening events need to feel more relaxed. People don't often want to go back to university and sit in a cold lecture room when they have had to do so all day! Lower level lighting, tables and a stage set-up will be helpful.
- ▶ International events – if you are holding a meal for international students before the main evening event, then it would be essential for it to be close to the evening event venue, so that people can easily walk between.



A good way to find venues is simply to walk around your university / town at different times of day, and see where people are, and what rooms are available.

Booking venues:

- ▶ Be clear at the time of booking what you are asking for, and get confirmation in writing. If necessary, pay a deposit to secure the booking.
- ▶ You may get a more favorable response from bars and cafes if you get to know the owners

and build trust. Why not regularly visit some suitable venues and get chatting to those who work there. Try to meet the owners.

- ▶ Be willing to pay. Sometimes it is the only way to get the right venue. If it makes the difference whether people come to the events or not, then it is worth it. Sometimes, instead of paying for a venue, you can secure one by agreeing to buy a certain number of drinks or meals.

If you are still struggling to find somewhere:

- ▶ Don't give up! It's common that finding the right venue can be a battle.
- ▶ Pray – God can intervene! (See the example from Serbia on page 21-21)
- ▶ Remember that you can transform an otherwise un-attractive space with good lighting, décor, chairs and tables etc.
- ▶ While a church building is not the ideal venue as people may be less inclined to come, they can be used... you may be able to transform a room to make it feel very welcoming.
- ▶ Consider erecting your own venue! Where no other suitable venue is available, hiring a marquee can be a good solution. This will add logistical challenges, as you will need to provide 24-hour security, and if it isn't summer, you will also need to ensure that there is adequate heating... so it should not be undertaken lightly. However, a huge tent appearing on or near the university will certainly generate a good amount of publicity!

Montenegro has the lowest percentage of evangelical Christians anywhere in Europe. Due to their size and the Orthodox identity of the majority of the population, it can be hard to get permission to hold events anywhere. However, because there was a team from England coming to help and the speaker was a published author, the university English department were willing to allow the student group to both have a stall on campus and to use the biggest lecture room for the talks. Around 100 people came each day (almost as many as there are known evangelical believers in the whole country!)

In one European country it is technically illegal to use anything other than a registered church building to hold Christian events. However, the organisers approached the Christian owner of a local donut café and asked for permission. He said 'I can't give you official approval but if you turn up and someone starts giving a talk then I won't stop you!' Each lunch time around 40 people turned up to hear the talk!

How to pick a mission theme

'**Mission week**' may be a very good 'in-house' description of what is being planned, but it is a very unhelpful way of communicating it to the rest of the university! To the average unbeliever, 'mission' is a negative concept, and it is certainly not a politically correct one!

'**Events week**' does not have the same negative connotations, but suffers from sounding rather dull. It's an accurate description, but it is hardly going to get anyone excited about the impending activities.

It is important, therefore, to pick an attractive and engaging theme for the week, by which it can be known. Not only will this theme be prominent in all the advertising, but it can be consistently used whenever the week is referred to. It is helpful, even within the CU, to use the theme rather than the term 'mission week', as this reinforces the theme and increases the chances that CU members will use it in conversation. Selecting the theme for the week is one of the biggest decisions you will make. You need to liaise with your speaker about this – both you and they need to feel comfortable with it before you move forward.

What you do want in a theme:

- ▶ The theme should give an idea of what the whole week is about. In this sense, it is more than just a title – it is a description of the purpose of the week.
- ▶ The theme should be something that can be reflected in, and included in, the individual titles of the events; this shows how they link together as part of the whole week.
- ▶ It should be easy to explain the theme to anyone when inviting them to the mission. E.g. 'Hi! We have got a week of events called 'Think again!' where we are asking people to think again about some of the biggest questions about life and God.'
- ▶ It could be helpful to connect in with your university's motto. One university had the slogan "We are fearless together," so the week was called "Fearless?" and had some of the talks start with the values being promoted by the university, and then show how those values point to God.



What you don't want in a theme:

- ▶ Something that is ambiguous or confusing. If it takes major explanation as to why you picked it, then it is too complicated! It should be obvious as to why the week has the theme that it does.
- ▶ Something that is too specific on one topic and doesn't allow for a breadth of talk titles.

Good examples

'Jesus for Sceptics' - Appeals to those who are sceptics, describes the purpose of the week well and can be used for many different talk titles. E.g. *Sceptical about a God of love – why does he allow suffering?; Sceptical about the resurrection – could it be possible?*

'What Kind of God?' - An intriguing question that lies at the heart of many of the objections that people have. E.g. *What kind of God doesn't stop the suffering?; What kind of God sends sincere people to hell?*

'Convinced?' - Each is a simple bold question. Great for advertising and publicity. The word can easily be used in many different talk titles. E.g. *Convinced that Christianity is arrogant – how can there be only one way to God?*

'Think again!' - A bold statement that describes the purpose of the week. The concept can be used throughout the different talks. E.g. *Think again about faith – is it just a psychological crutch?; Think again about suffering - does it disprove God?*

'Uncover' - If you are giving away 'Uncover' gospels during the week, the simple title can be used in each talk title. E.g. *Uncover hope – is there life after life?; Uncover my identity – what am I worth?*

'Story' - Not everyone is a sceptic nor has questions, but everyone has their own story. This mission title encouraged people to think about their own story, and each event included stories of people's encounters – both from the gospel accounts and from the present day.

Bad examples

'Cross Examined' - The 'play on words' is not immediately obvious to most people. Neither is it a very accurate description of the week – the talks will be doing more than just examining the cross!

'Making your Mark' - It took the CU leadership several minutes to try to explain what was meant by this title. How was a member of the public going to understand it on their own? (The subtle link to Mark's gospel was lost on everyone!)

'Identity' - Too focused on one particular topic – it allows for two good talks ('Our identity' and 'Jesus' identity'), but it is almost impossible to deliver a whole week of talks connected to the this theme.

'Jesus Awareness Week' - Could it be that this sounds a little bit dull? – Would it motivate many people to come?

This is *your* mission week, and you know your students best. However, you will find that the week will be enhanced in many ways if you select your chosen theme according to the helpful advice above. It has been tried and tested!

How to choose talk titles**It's important!**

- ▶ While some may come primarily for the food, or because of an ongoing friendship, many others will come on the strength of the talk title. It needs to grab people!
- ▶ You want people to come expecting a talk, ready to listen and interact with what is said.
- ▶ It looks much better having an attractive and engaging title than simply saying 'with a short talk' - this begs the question 'a talk about what?' and sounds like a warning rather than an invitation!
- ▶ It is vital that you keep good communication with your speaker in this process. You need to be content with the titles because you have to invite your friends, but the speaker also needs to be happy with them, as they have to deliver the talks! They may also have ideas that they would like to feed in to the discussion, and they may have particular expertise to add.

How to decide which topics to cover

We shouldn't assume that we already know what people's biggest questions and issues are – these can be far-ranging, depending on the individual university setting.

Felt needs vs Real needs? Some question whether it is right to start with what people want to hear. Isn't it better to start with what they need to hear? However, there is a theological as well as practical reason why we do this.

If we believe God is the ground of all truth, then the ultimate answer to any sincere question – if we think prayerfully and creatively enough – is going to be something about who God is and what he has done. We are confident starting with people's actual questions, not just because that's what they want to hear about, but because who God is, as the ground of all truth (the Logos), justifies us.

A great way to help you decide is to conduct a survey of the students. You could ask people 'What is your main objection to the Christian faith?' or 'If you could ask God one question, what would it be?'

Get every member of the student group to do this with at least 5 friends. This is a brilliant way of getting them to talk to their friends – but it is easy to do – the students don't have to give the answers to the questions – instead they can invite their friends to hear the answers when the mission week takes place!

You could also go out into the university and do this as a form of 'first-contact evangelism'. The more people you ask, the more representative the results will be.

Get people to fill in their response with a thick marker pen on a preprinted A5 sheet of paper – these can then be collated and displayed during the week itself, as an attractive and intriguing display.

It may be possible to write an article for the student newspaper, where you publish the results of the survey, and tell people that you are going to tackle the questions during the mission week. This gives you free advertising, and will prompt curiosity.

'We went out and asked 500 students - "If you could ask God one question, what would it be?" Many students were happy to answer and we even asked the President of the country! When people responded we then asked why they would ask that particular question and we then explained that we were going to answer the five most popular questions in a few weeks' time and look what the Bible had to say about them. This modelled grace to the students because we did not speak at them, but first listened well to them and then in a talk showed we were prepared to interact with their concerns.' - Geoff, Malta



Which events are best for covering the different titles?

- ▶ It works well to cover objections to Christianity at the lunchtime events, (e.g. Why would God allow suffering? Can we trust the Bible?). People are often coming to the event in between other lectures, so the talk needs to be short and snappy, with time for questions at the end.
- ▶ Tackling common existential desires works well for the evening events (e.g. Identity, Success, Freedom, Hope etc). The evenings are more relaxed and people have more time - they are not distracted by what they have to do next. It is, therefore, a better time to connect with issues of the heart. Alternatively, you can go for a series of talks which much more specifically focuses on the person of Jesus (see examples over) but with personal application and challenge. The format of the evening events also allows of the use of drama, music and testimony.
- ▶ If you are *only* doing evening events, then you may want a combination of both the intellectual objections and existential desires through the week (starting with the former and moving on to the latter).
- ▶ Some talks deal with the intellectual objections (science, evidence for God, the Bible etc) and others with moral objections (suffering, intolerance, hell etc). It is considering the moral objections that often most naturally takes you to Jesus and the heart of the gospel. For this reason, it is often better to start with the intellectual objections, and then move to the moral objections. You want to build up to the talks that most naturally allow you to present Jesus and challenge people to respond.
- ▶ Similarly it is good to think about progression with the evening titles. The cross and resurrection of Jesus are at the heart of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) so while these are mentioned throughout the week it is good to make specific time to focus on them at the end of the week. You will find that for the final two evenings it is good to pick titles that allow you to focus on the cross and the resurrection. For a talk on the cross you could use topics like Forgiveness / A Fresh Start / Guilt / Shame / Failure. For a talk on the resurrection you could use topics like Hope / The Future / Life and Death. The added advantage of finishing the week by looking at the resurrection is that this combines both the truth and the goodness of the gospel in the same talk. It is also something that you can advertise throughout the week in response to people's questions - it ultimately all comes back to the resurrection of Jesus – it is the reason for our hope (1 Peter 3:15, 1:3)!

Examples of lunchtime topics

Good at the start of the week:

- ▶ Science/Rationality and God
- ▶ Evidence for God
- ▶ Reliability of the gospels
- ▶ Faith as a psychological crutch
- ▶ Does the bible repress women? / Is the bible sexist? / Is God sexist?
- ▶ Aren't miracles impossible?

Good at the end of the week:

- ▶ Arrogance of Christianity / Only one way? / Are Christians hypocrites?
- ▶ Suffering and the problem of evil
- ▶ The question of hell

Examples of evening topics

Existential desires:

- ▶ Identity
- ▶ Success / Meaning / Purpose
- ▶ Freedom
- ▶ Life / Satisfaction
- ▶ Forgiveness
- ▶ Hope / Dreams

Clearly Jesus-focused:

- ▶ Who was Jesus?
- ▶ What does Jesus offer?
- ▶ Why is his death relevant to me?
- ▶ How is the resurrection possible?
- ▶ What does it mean to follow him?

The wording of the actual titles

- ▶ Questions work better than statements. Try to use open questions that get people to think. 'Why would a God of love send people to hell?' is intriguing and thought-provoking. 'Does God ruin my fun?' is not so good (everyone assumes 'yes', but presumes that we will say 'no'!)
- ▶ Phrase questions in a way that people would actually ask them. For instance, we find that 'How can you claim that there is only one way to God?' works better than 'Do all religions lead to God?'... For many people, the issue is less about other religions, and more about the perceived arrogance and intolerance of claiming that everyone else is wrong.
- ▶ Word the question in such a way that it implies it will be difficult for the Christian to answer. This is more provocative, but also stops guests feeling like things have been weighted in favour of the speaker/Christians.
- ▶ Make sure that it is clear what the talk is about. It may be necessary to use a sub-title if the main title is not clear enough. The title should not need explaining. While explanation is possible when inviting a friend, it is impossible when flyering on a busy street. Test how engaging your title is by imagining yourself shouting it out, in a busy student union venue – would it grab people's attention? Does it make them want to know the answer?
- ▶ It is good to link the titles together, so that it is obvious that they are part of a series. The easiest way to do this is to connect the titles to the theme of the week.

Examples of good titles

The examples below show how you can work common objections / existential desires into a series of talks that fit with a common theme. (You will notice that many of the same topics are covered in each series, but the question can be phrased to fit with the theme).

If the mission week only has evening events, use a combination of the lunchtime and evening titles.

The Search

Lunchtime titles for each day:

- ▶ In search of the historical Jesus – can we really know anything about him?
- ▶ In search of the God of the Old Testament – is he a moral monster?
- ▶ In search of tolerance – how can there be only one way to God?
- ▶ In search of answers – why would a God of love allow suffering?
- ▶ In search of justice – how could God send good people to hell?

Evening titles for each night:

- ▶ The search for real identity – who am I and what am I worth?
- ▶ The search for real love – where can it be found?
- ▶ The search for real forgiveness – can the past be wiped clean?
- ▶ The search for real hope – is there life after life?
- ▶ The search for real life – how can I live life to the full?

Jesus for Sceptics

Lunchtime titles:

- ▶ Sceptical about God – what's the evidence for his existence?
- ▶ Sceptical about the Bible – how can I trust it?
- ▶ Sceptical about religion – how can there be only one way to God?
- ▶ Sceptical about a God of love – why does he allow suffering?
- ▶ Sceptical about hell – how could God send people there?

Evening titles:

- ▶ Jesus for Sceptics - Who was he?
- ▶ Jesus for Sceptics - What does he offer?
- ▶ Jesus for Sceptics - How is his death relevant to me?
- ▶ Jesus for Sceptics - Isn't his resurrection impossible?
- ▶ Jesus for Sceptics - What would it mean to follow him?

Convinced?

Lunchtime titles

- ▶ Convinced faith is just a psychological crutch or a social construct?
- ▶ Convinced God should make himself clearer?
- ▶ Convinced Christianity is arrogant?
- ▶ Convinced suffering disproves God?
- ▶ Convinced hell is incompatible with a God of love?

Evening titles

- ▶ Convinced Jesus is boring?
- ▶ Convinced Jesus is just for religious types?
- ▶ Convinced Jesus was just a great teacher?
- ▶ Convinced Jesus' death is irrelevant?
- ▶ Convinced Jesus' resurrection is impossible?

**Story**

Lunchtimes

- ▶ An unreliable story – isn't the Bible just a book of myths?
- ▶ A repressive story: does God want to control me?
- ▶ A tragic story: Where is God when it hurts?
- ▶ An intolerant story: Isn't it dangerous to claim exclusive truth?
- ▶ A delusional story: how can anyone believe that Jesus rose from the dead?

Evenings (included an interview with a different person each night)

- ▶ The Student (A member of CU)
- ▶ The Major General (A high-ranking member of the army)
- ▶ The Terrorist (From the conflict in Northern Ireland)
- ▶ The Scientist (A professor from the university)
- ▶ The spiritual leader (A former leader of the Hindus worldwide)

What kind of God?

- ▶ Distant, disinterested and silent - What kind of God doesn't make himself clearer?
- ▶ Rape, child abuse and AIDS - What kind of God doesn't stop it?
- ▶ Crusades, inquisitions and car bombs - What kind of God allows violence in his name?
- ▶ Hypocritical, judgmental and divided - What kind of God lets the church represent him?
- ▶ Condemning, unjust and arbitrary - What kind of God sends sincere people to Hell?

Uncover

(An example of titles for a mission week which only had evening events, so we used a combination of the topics normally used at both the lunchtimes and in the evenings.)

- ▶ Uncover faith – is God just a psychological crutch?
- ▶ Uncover value – am I only matter and do I even matter?
- ▶ Uncover suffering – does it disprove God?
- ▶ Uncover forgiveness – how can a fresh start be possible?
- ▶ Uncover hope – is there life after life?

A note about new universities

Experience has shown that titles which work well at more traditional universities do not always have the same appeal in 'new universities' (those that specialise in more vocational courses rather than purely academic ones, previously called polytechnic colleges in UK). Often, here, a more creative approach is preferred.

Remember, good communication with your speaker at all times is essential.

Lunchtime events

Using personal testimony to answer apologetic issues can work well. This is reflective of how the popular media often discusses important issues by finding and interviewing real life examples of those for whom the issue is personal. Obviously, for this, you would need speakers whose life story relates to the topic in question.

For instance – someone converted from a different faith-background could talk about Jesus being the only way, someone who has experienced great suffering could speak about why God might allow it, or someone who is a scientist could speak about how it hasn't buried God.

Choose a good title, and then a strapline emphasising that it will be a personal story. One event with a soldier was given the title: 'Grenades and God: one soldier's story of why he's still trusting God in a world of violence and suffering.' It drew a good crowd. 'From mafia to Jesus – the search for true satisfaction' drew huge crowds to hear a former Bosnian mafia boss!

Another idea is to use famous people's names as a way in to a particular issue. 'What would Jesus say to...' has been a tried and tested talk series, or simply 'Jesus and...'. You then pick a celebrity who prompts you to tackle a certain subject. E.g. 'Jesus and Miley Cyrus – would he knock her off her wrecking ball?', or 'What would Jesus say to Wayne Rooney?'

It is important to pick the celebrity carefully, or else the talks can all become quite similar. Tackle different themes each day. A subtitle may also help:

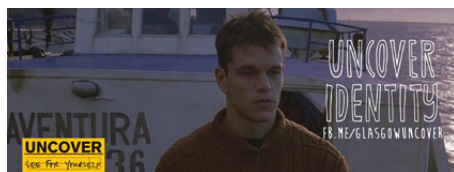
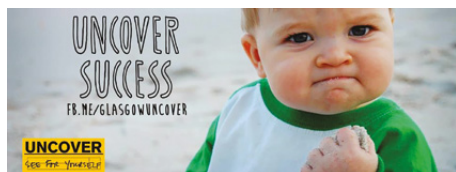
- ▶ Jesus and Damien Hirst: Laughing at life and death
- ▶ Jesus and Derren Brown: is God a trick of the mind?
- ▶ Jesus and Alan Sugar: Does money make the world go round?
- ▶ Jesus and Katy Perry – Is Christianity all about rules and legalism?

Evening events

One very creative idea for evening events is to use popular culture as a bridge to the gospel. A series of film-themed evenings drew a big crowd because it excited the CU members to bring their friends. Instead of showing the whole film (which makes it difficult to have a talk as well) the group did a survey to find the most popular films of the students. These were then used as the bases for the evening talks. The talk used clips from the film (but assumed that, because they were so popular, most people had seen the entire film). In addition – the food and decor fitted with the film each night. So for instance – for the 'Toy Story' evening the room was decorated like a children's birthday party and party food was served.

Examples:

- ▶ The Lion King: Fun, failure and a father's love
- ▶ Inception: Can we be rid of deep regret and remorse?
- ▶ Toy Story: You've got a friend in me?
- ▶ Shawshank Redemption: Hope for the hopeless



How to make an impact with publicity

You won't get everyone in your university to come to your mission week, but you can aim to make sure that everyone knows that it is happening. Combining different forms of advertising is the best way to make an impact. Here are some tried and tested ways of getting the message out:

Flyers

It is good to produce two types of flyers in advance:

- ▶ **Weekly flyer** – With information about all the events of the mission week. Good quality printing is best for these, as they are used both in the build up to, and during, the mission week. Include the titles of all the talks, times and venues. As well as handing them out, make sure they are on the chairs or tables at every event, so it is easy for people to find out about the other events.
- ▶ **Individual event flyers** – especially good for Lunch Bar events. They need to be bold, clear and present the key information succinctly – the title, time, venue and offer of a free lunch. Have separate flyers for lunch time events, as people need to get the information quickly. Produce lots of these – you don't want to run out of flyers five minutes before the event when that is the best time to get people to come! This shouldn't be too expensive – photocopied well onto white or coloured paper can look fine. Remember to design them so that they can be easily cut.

Posters

- ▶ Posters need to be clear and bold, so that they quickly communicate the essential information.
- ▶ Put posters up in busy areas, especially where people are likely to be waiting, such as bus stops.
- ▶ Check if you need permission from the university, and get it.
- ▶ Be ready each day to replace posters that get torn down or posted over.
- ▶ Consider a 'teaser campaign' where posters gradually show more information over the course of time before the mission week begins. One CU started by putting up posters with, simply, a question mark on them; the second batch had the phrase 'Why bother?' and the third, the full title of the talk 'Why bother with Jesus?'.

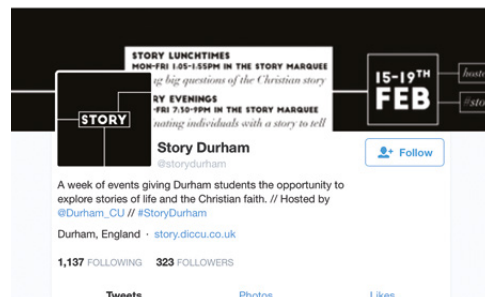
Websites

- ▶ Make sure your website is up to date, and that it is easy to get to the key information from the front page.
- ▶ You could set up a separate page with a catchy address. This can contain the main information, and, ideally, the option to download talks from earlier in the week.

Social media

- ▶ Set up an event page and invite people to it.
- ▶ Get everyone to change their profile picture to the mission week logo during the mission week. Alternatively, you could take photos of everyone in the CU holding the logo, and use these.
- ▶ Consider making a mission promo video that you can post on all your social media accounts. To see an excellent example go here... tinyurl.com/StoryDurham
- ▶ Post photos of the events during the week, and links to the talks, to build interest.
- ▶ Consider paying for official advertising – this can be targeted exclusively at students in your university, and normally you only pay for the number of times people click the link.
- ▶ Tag the university / student union / key individuals in your posts.
- ▶ Stress to the CU that an invitation on social media is not a personal invitation. The Internet is best used to reinforce and back up the personal invitations you have already given.

- ▶ Remember, social media's primary role is to develop awareness and intrigue about the mission, so that people come to your events to find out more. You don't need to do all your evangelism on Facebook – instead, use it as a springboard to invite people to your mission to hear the gospel.



'If you have a great gospel event and no one knows about it, then what is the point of all the planning and preparation? Facebook is not evil, we can use the force for good! We paid for adverts that would show up on the news feed of every student in the university. We had an interesting picture and an engaging question that hooked students clicking it, which then linked them to our events page. We reached many more students because of this advertising'. – Geoff, Malta

Hoodies / T-Shirts

- ▶ If the weather is likely to be cold, then hoodies or large T-shirts that can be worn over other clothing are best for identification. They can display the mission week logo and possibly event details.
- ▶ Bright colours will attract people's attention.
- ▶ You don't have to print a bible verse on the hoodie. Often a thought-provoking question is best for effect.



Chalking

- ▶ Chalk adverts for the events onto the pavement in the approach to the venue, and on pavements nearby.
- ▶ Include arrows pointing the way to the event.
- ▶ Use a chalk spray, making a template of the mission week logo.
- ▶ Check if you need permission to do this first, and obtain it.



Flash-mobbing

- ▶ A flash-mob is a large group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an unusual action for a brief time, then quickly disperse.
- ▶ You could use an action like this to promote your event, by wearing hoodies/t-shirts whilst performing, or by having non-participants hand out flyers after you have drawn a crowd.
- ▶ Examples of flash mobs: Pillow fight, spontaneous applause, blowing up and then letting go of/bursting balloons, massed singing, music, shouting out something random, dancing. (Avoid being irritating though)!
- ▶ See a good example of a flash mob at Bath University CU here... tinyurl.com/CUflashmob



Banners and sandwich boards

- ▶ Professionally-produced banners, pull up stands and sandwich boards can be expensive... but can make a big impact.
- ▶ If short on money, make your own! Sheffield University CU wrote the Lunch Bar title on a roll of wallpaper, and held it up outside the venue for 15 minutes before the talk started- it certainly got people's attention.

Stalls

- ▶ An attractive stall set up in the centre of campus, serving free hot drinks and biscuits / sweets.
- ▶ A big banner with the mission week logo would draw attention and communicate what it is about.
- ▶ Have plentiful supplies of flyers available to give out.
- ▶ If you can play music – either live or through loud speakers - this will really draw attention.
- ▶ A stall has the added benefit of being a focal point for CU members. From here you can often encourage them to get involved in questionnaires and flyering.



Announcements in lectures

- ▶ Encourage CU members at the start of the week to announce the events in their lectures.
- ▶ It is especially good to do this in the mornings before a Lunch Bar.
- ▶ It takes a bit of courage to stand up in front of your course mates, but it can be effective, and you will often be surprised who comes as a result.
- ▶ Do ask the permission of the lecturer at the start, and have some flyers on hand by the door at the end. I find there is often surprise at who comes along as a result.

The Student Union / University

Can you get them to advertise your events? They might run an article in the student paper, run a piece on the student radio, advertise the events on their website, or display the events on the TV screens around the university.

How to engage people through first-contact evangelism

Questionnaires:

- ▶ Choose a busy part of campus or a canteen if possible, and approach people with a questionnaire. If people are not in a hurry or cold/wet, they are more likely to stop.
- ▶ The aim is not simply to collect information, but to engage with people and eventually invite them to the mission events and perhaps give them a gospel.
- ▶ It can be helpful for credibility to arrange to use the results in some way, such as reporting in the student newspaper.
- ▶ Train the CU members in using the questionnaire and how they can use it as a springboard for conversation.
- ▶ Questionnaires work well used during the mornings.



Questionnaires can seem like hard work, but don't lose heart. A fresher from a non-Christian family was asked to take part in responding to a questionnaire. He was quite shy, and would not have naturally sought out the CU. The questionnaire and the conversation that followed intrigued him enough to come along to some of the events the CU were hosting. As a result, he trusted Christ, and, after graduating, became a staff member of that particular IFES movement!

Text a toastie / cookie / donut / pancake etc.

- ▶ Flyers are handed out across the university or outside a hall of residence as people come home.
- ▶ Students are invited to text a question about God, the bible or Christianity and declare what type of toastie/cookie etc. they would like during a designated time.
- ▶ The goodies are then delivered by a couple of members of the CU, along with the answer to the question, a gospel and an invitation to the mission week events.

- ▶ Often conversations begin, and CU members are invited inside to talk more.
- ▶ Works well just before the mission week begins.

Cumbria CU ran a 'Text a Toastie' event. One text came through from Newcastle (over 100 miles away!) from a girl who had heard about the event from a friend at the uni. The CU managed to contact a local Christian who actually delivered the toastie and the answer (much to the student's amazement!). This resulted in them meeting up regularly to study the bible. At Sheffield CU one student came to faith on the first night of the mission week after talking for most of the night with the person who delivered their toastie!

Toastie / Waffle and Question

- ▶ In a busy part of campus you could set up a production line of toastie / waffle makers.
- ▶ Passing students are invited to order a toastie / waffle with a choice of fillings / toppings.
- ▶ While it is being cooked they get to ask any question they like about Christianity.

Question board

- ▶ Situate your board in a busy place in or near the university.
- ▶ In the centre of the board write the question of the day.
- ▶ Link the question to the lunch time talk.
- ▶ Make it an open question so that people can write responses on post-it notes and stick them on. E.g. 'Why is there so much suffering in the world?'
- ▶ Alternatively, have different options, and get people to tick to indicate their response e.g. 'What happens when you die?' (Nothing / Heaven for everyone / Heaven or hell / Reincarnation / Something else)
- ▶ Be proactive and go to people and encourage them to come and take part.
- ▶ Use it to open up conversations by following up their response with a question, such as 'What makes you think that way?' or 'How did you come to that conclusion?'
- ▶ Hand out flyers to everyone who responds.

How to prepare your group for mission week

There's one single thing that will get people on board for a mission week, and a single notice in a weekly meeting will rarely mobilise anyone. Ultimately there's no substitute for enthusiasm about Jesus and prayerful expectancy for him to work.

The gospel is the biggest motivation.

Paul said it was the *love of Christ* that compelled him (2 Corinthians 5:14). As we consider the treasure that we have in Christ, we should naturally want to share it, but if we don't think the gospel is good news, then we won't! There's no substitute for regularly reminding each other of the gospel through good Bible teaching and then responding through joyful prayer and worship.

Encourage people to be engaged with university life and develop friendships with those who don't know Jesus.

Mission weeks are rarely effective if your group members are not fully involved in the university – it is great if they are also members of other societies and sports clubs, as well as being part of the Christian one. Encourage Christians to do what they love, and to take Jesus with them. People will be far more likely to come to events if they have a genuine friendship before the mission week starts, so make sure you encourage this throughout the year.

Introduce the mission week well.

If you haven't done a mission week before, then most of the Christians in your group won't have any idea what one is! Even if you have done, none of the first year students (who might make up half of your group!) will know what to expect. It's important to clearly and enthusiastically explain the idea well ahead of time, so that they know what is going to happen and can look forward to it.

This initial launch needs to be more than a simple notice. One good idea is to produce a short video that will introduce the concept. It's good to have a plan for the mission week that you can give out to people, so they know what will be likely to happen.

Keep talking about the mission week.

You need to keep it high on the agenda by talking about it each time you meet as a group. However, to stop this becoming repetitious, think about different aspects of the mission week that you want to focus on, so you aren't always saying the same thing.

Notices should explain to people the 'why', as well as the 'what'.

Don't just tell people what is going to happen, but explain why – provide some Biblical motivation for what you are doing - it gives much more weight and makes it an opportunity for teaching.

Tell stories from other mission weeks.

If people have never been involved before, they may doubt that it could ever work. Sharing stories from other similar universities can inspire people to believe that it could be possible in their context too.

Send people to observe other mission weeks.

With so many missions happening across Europe, it is often possible to send some key members of your group to join a good mission elsewhere. These students can then become champions of the idea – enthusing others with stories of what they have seen.

Share testimonies.

A great way to remind people that the gospel is powerful is to share stories of how it has worked. If you have group members who have started out as Christians during their time as students, then get them to share their testimony – they are living examples of the power of the gospel. You can also get Christians to share stories of how they have been sharing their faith. Their bold example will inspire others to do the same, and give them ideas about how it might be done.

Make use of a weekend away.

Some groups go away for a weekend of teaching and fellowship each year. Why not maximise this time together by having teaching on evangelism and getting your mission speaker to come and share? (See page 27 for more ideas).



Train people in core evangelism skills.

You want every member of your group to be able to share their story, to start a conversation about faith, to answer some basic objections and to articulate the central core of the gospel. Use your regular meetings or your weekend away; making evangelism training an optional extra is rarely effective - the people that would most benefit from it rarely attend, because they think evangelism is not for them.



Hold a Christmas event.

In some countries it is still a cultural experience to go to Christmas carol services – so why not organise your own, and invite the whole university? (Or, if carol services are not popular, then make it a Christmas party or meal). If your mission week is going to be after Christmas, then invite your mission speaker to come and give a talk, so that Christians can grow in confidence in the speaker, and their friends can get to know them, and are more likely to come back for a talk during the mission week.

Lead by example.

The speed of the leader is the speed of the team - so don't expect other Christians to do what you are not willing to do. Just because you are planning the mission week doesn't mean you can't get involved in inviting your friends too.

Have a big launch event.

In the last couple of weeks before the mission starts you want to ramp up the excitement with a big 'mission week launch event' for the Christian students. (See page 57 for ideas).

Sign people up to get involved.

A good way of ensuring commitment is to get Christians signing up and pledging help. There will be lots of responsibilities that will need to be filled (people to host, cook food, serve food, hand out flyers, etc).

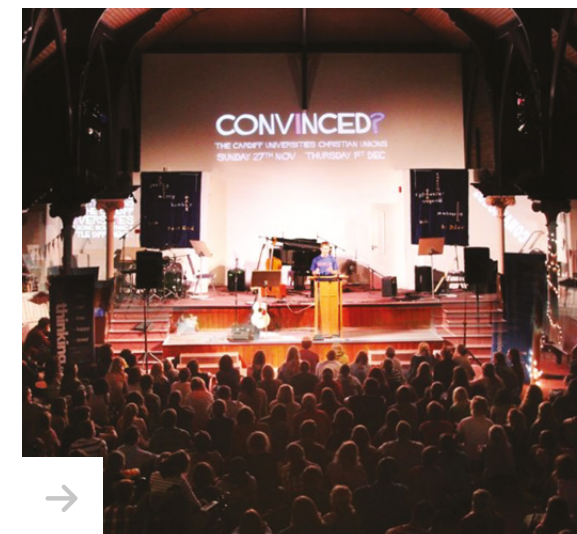
Encourage people to free up their diary for the week.

Encourage the group to get ahead on work so that they can devote as much time as possible to the mission week, and won't be able to make excuses for not getting involved. It's great for them to come to every event, even if they don't have friends coming, as there will be other people to talk to, and they will also learn themselves.

How to run a mission week launch event for the CU

Although you will have been talking about the mission week for several months you will want to increase the excitement as the week itself draws closer.

- ▶ Ideally this event should be about two weeks before the mission week.
- ▶ If possible, use the venue that you will use for the mission week, and set it out as you will during the week.
- ▶ You could have produced a mission week promo video that you will 'premier' on the evening, and then use online to advertise the mission week to the university.
- ▶ Plan your praise and worship as mission-focused.
- ▶ If possible, get the speaker to give a motivational talk, or get them to send a short motivational video that you can play.
- ▶ Have time for people to pray – maybe have different areas around the room so people can move round and pray for different aspects of the mission week.
- ▶ Include some key training e.g. 'How to do flyering well' or 'How to do a questionnaire'.
- ▶ Give out mission week hoodies / T-shirts.
- ▶ Give out flyers so people can start to invite friends.
- ▶ Give out posters so people can display them.
- ▶ Have a photo booth for taking profile photos for promotional use during the mission week.
- ▶ Get people to sign up to be involved in different ways during the week.



How to make use of one-off events

A great way to get students to your mission week talks is to hold a big pre-mission week event. Examples:

- ▶ A debate between a Christian and an atheist. Involve the local atheist society (they will advertise it too) and get someone from the university to moderate it.
- ▶ A lecture or talk with a well-known speaker. If the speaker is of academic credibility then the university may be willing to sponsor and advertise it.
- ▶ A pub quiz, with a short talk in the interval.
- ▶ An 'open mic' night, with a variety of performers, including some Christians who can advertise the upcoming mission week.

'At our first ever mission week we had John Lennox speak at the Faculty of Arts on 'Has Science Buried God?' Some 650 students came to the lecture and another 150 had to be turned back as they couldn't fit in the room. John dealt brilliantly with the topic so that many people left hungry to hear more about the core teachings of Christianity. This served as a perfect kick-off for the following week of talks by Michael Green who expanded on the bible accounts introducing the person of Jesus. Hundreds came to these including one individual who later gave her life to Jesus, settled in Church and was involved in the preparation of the mission week this year.'

– Tom, Czech Republic

'This year we started our mission week with a talk from the famous motivational speaker Nick Vujicic. It was largest student meeting in history of Novi Sad University if you don't count student anti-government protests in 90s! There were 3500 students at the event and we handed flyers for the mission week to everyone after Nick's speech! The group is also very active in anti human trafficking work and we have organised several big conferences on the subject. This gives us the opportunity to share with people why we think that humans have value and to show practical love for society. This also raises positive awareness of the group which makes people more likely to come to the mission weeks.'

– Marko, Serbia



How to organise mission prayer meetings

It is good to have a time each day when everyone can unite together to pray for the mission. For this reason many CUs will run their prayer meeting before lectures start at 8am (or thereabouts). It means an early start, but it's only usually for one week and often the attendance is better than if you hold it later in the daytime.

- ▶ It's important to meet at a location that everyone can easily get to. This may not be possible in some places where the university is spread out, so you could have several prayer meetings at different locations around the city – maybe one each in the different halls of residence.
- ▶ Offering breakfast can be a great incentive to students to get out of bed (if prayer itself is not enough!).
- ▶ Do make sure that encouragements and answers to prayer from the whole CU are shared. If some CU members are having a tough time, they can still be encouraged by the work of the gospel elsewhere.
- ▶ Prayer meetings are for praying, so make sure that prayer time is not squeezed out. However you might also like to include: some informal evangelism training from the speaker or CUSW; time to share names of people who have come along; a song to start or finish (but keep it short!).
- ▶ Make sure that your prayer meeting is well led. Start at the advertised time even if there are still people arriving. Make sure that you finish in time for people to get to lectures.



How to run a Lunch Bar

The idea is simple: a speaker tackles a common objection to Christianity. Students are invited to a free lunch and, after a 15-20 minute talk; the speaker takes questions from the floor for about 20 minutes. Everything happens during the lunch break and people can stay to talk if they are free.

The advantage of a Lunch Bar is that you often get people to come who wouldn't yet be willing to make the effort to come to an evening event. If you advertise it well, you can get a high proportion of people to come who have no previous contact with the CU / Christians.

The three key aspects are venue, flyering and food. The difference between the success or failure of a Lunch Bar is attention to detail. The following details represent years of Lunch Bar experience. Every detail is important. If you work to the detail, the Lunch Bar will certainly be more effective, and more students will hear the gospel.

Venue

- ▶ The most important thing is that you find a convenient venue. Can students get there from lectures in less than 10 minutes? The venue must also be easy to find, and preferably close to busy thoroughfares. (See page 34 on finding venues).
- ▶ It's generally better to have a slightly smaller room which is full, than a large room that feels empty. It's not rare for a well-organised Lunch Bar to attract 100+ people. If you have not done it before, perhaps start by preparing for 40-60 people, and build up.
- ▶ Make sure that people can get food and sit down as quickly as possible – if big crowds are expected, have multiple serving points, and people helping to serve.
- ▶ Arrange the room so that, if possible, people arriving late / leaving early aren't walking past the speaker.
- ▶ Have some music playing as people arrive. It helps 'break the ice' and encourages people to chat.
- ▶ Make sure you have enough feedback forms, pens, flyers (showing the whole week's events), and gospels for everyone – place them out on the chairs or tables.
- ▶ Have a bookstall which is easily accessible and visible to people. If space is tight then you could replace food on the table with books during the talk.

Food

Offering food is not simply a way of getting people to come. On a practical level - if people are giving up their lunch break to come, then they need to eat! On a theological level - by inviting people to enjoy good food, free of charge, we embody the gospel! Therefore, food should be of good quality, and plentiful. Providing the bare minimum contradicts the gospel we are wanting to share. Provide plentiful good food, and people will want to come back.

- ▶ Ideally you will be able to provide food yourselves, but due to regulations in the venue, you may have to pay for professional catering, and will need to budget accordingly.
- ▶ Try to keep the food simple. People need to be able to walk up, grab food and take a seat quickly. If they find they have to make their own sandwich it will create a 'bottle-neck'! They will either walk away, or will still be getting lunch when the talk should be keeping their attention.
- ▶ Why not consider offering something sweet as people leave? A big pile of doughnuts at the door, possibly?

Timing

- ▶ Try to start 10 minutes after the end of the previous lecture, and finish, at the latest, 10 minutes before the start of the next.
- ▶ Consider running the Lunch Bar twice if there is not a set lunch hour; this way more people will be able to come. You can either repeat the same talk twice, or cover more topics.

Flyering

People are most likely to come to lunch events just from receiving flyers. Enthusiastic flyering can make the difference between an empty or full venue.

- ▶ The best time to give out flyers is in the 15 minutes before the event begins. CUs often make the mistake of flyering in the early morning and then stopping, but this is rarely effective.
- ▶ Take out as many enthusiastic people as possible, with hundreds of flyers and blitz the campus. Those flyering need to stop people, make eye contact and invite them along, stressing the talk is going to be interesting, the food is going to be great and the start is going



to be soon! Students are used to getting flyers thrust in their faces, but by being engaging, friendly and actually telling people what you are inviting them to - you will stand out.

- ▶ The majority of people who receive a flyer probably won't come, and many may seem disinterested. Don't lose heart, though, because some will come! You may only get a 1% success rate, but, if you hand out enough flyers, then this can translate to a large crowd.
- ▶ Most people are cautious about attending an event unless they feel that it is big and popular. No one wants to be the only person at an event. You can create a buzz around campus, with relatively few people, by being strategic. Everyone walking to or near the venue needs to get a flyer. Then have a chain of people with posters / signs pointing the way from the main thoroughfare to the venue, with at least one person at each entrance, doorway or stairwell.

Speaker

- ▶ Brief the speaker. Make it clear that the talk is supposed to be a gateway to the gospel, as well as an answer to the question.
- ▶ Give the speaker an idea of the kind of audience they will have. Do students on your campus respond better to Shakespeare or Spielberg? Tchaikovsky or Taylor Swift?

Stewarding

Give a friendly welcome on the door and direct people to the food. Encourage them to fill the seats from the front. (Latecomers won't want to walk past everyone once the talk has started). Add that the talk will be starting shortly. If people are welcomed well, and told about the talk, they are less likely to simply grab the food and run!

Hosting

- ▶ It can be helpful to have the same host each day so they can grow in confidence and build a rapport with the speaker and audience. They need to be friendly and confident.
- ▶ The host needs to arrive early to go through the plan with the speaker and ensure that everything is prepared, equipment checked and timing sorted.
- ▶ Start on time – if necessary, encourage people to their seats by giving a one-minute warning. Time is often short and you don't want to run out of time for the Q&A.
- ▶ The person hosting the meeting needs to be confident and friendly, but succinct. Welcome everybody, explain what's going to happen and then introduce the speaker.

- ▶ After the talk, take questions from the audience (see page 69). Make sure the Lunch Bar ends within the advertised time, even if the questions are coming thick and fast. People can stay and ask questions afterwards if they want to. In any case, if a Lunch Bar ends on a high, people may well want to come back to others...
- ▶ If the speaker has not already done so, explain the feedback forms, ensuring that people fill them out, and point out the box at the door where people can deposit them.
- ▶ Encourage people to keep investigating by announcing the next lunch bar and the bookstall. Make an extra big plug for the evening event (people will take more encouragement to come in the evening).

How to run an Evening Event

A mission week is ideally the culmination of a CU's year-round evangelistic efforts. The events that you organise want to give central place to the proclamation of the gospel, so you need to think clearly about what type of event will best serve this purpose.

It is good to avoid events that would make it difficult to give time and attention to the talk. Quiz nights, open mic nights, film showings etc. can all be good events, but are best to do *before* the mission week, as the nature of the event would make a talk of more than 5 or 10 minutes feel unnatural. People may often be coming for the event, and not for the talk, and so be less receptive or willing to engage.

However, this does not mean your events have to be dull. It is quite possible to run events that faithfully and clearly communicate the gospel, while also being creative and enjoyable. There are certain key elements to consider:

Venue

- ▶ Consider that students may be coming from where they live, rather than from lectures. Find a venue that will be accessible and easy to find.
- ▶ Create a relaxed atmosphere. This can be achieved by the way you set up the venue. Sitting around tables works better than rows. However, this takes up more space, so you will need a big enough room. If you are struggling for space, you could compromise, by having tables nearer the front, and rows at the back. This creates the same feel, but fits more people in. Like a coffee shop, you may also want to have a mixture of tables and comfortable couches. Place these nearer the front, to encourage people to fill up the room from the front first.

- ▶ Make sure that people can see the action! Placing chairs round just three sides of a table and positioning the tables end on to the stage ensures that no one has their back to the speaker during the talk (or gets a stiff neck!).
- ▶ Lighting is a quick and relatively cheap way to make a big difference to the feel of a room. If you can't dim the lights of the venue, consider bringing your own lights. However, make sure that it is not so dark that people cannot read gospels or feedback forms. With low light in the venue it is important that the speaker can be seen, so ensure adequate lighting of the stage area.
- ▶ You will probably want to make sure that you have the ability to project onto a screen, and a PA system, both for the speaker, and also for any video clips that are used. Make sure you check this beforehand, that it will be reliable!
- ▶ On each table there need to be enough feedback forms, gospels and pens for each person.
- ▶ Set up a bookstall in a position which is easily accessible.

Music

To create a café 'feel' it really helps to have music playing from the moment people arrive, and again after the talk. This will help people relax as they arrive, but also encourage people to stay afterwards.

- ▶ Aim for secular music. Christian music will be unknown to most guests, and may make them feel they are coming into an alien environment.
- ▶ While it is possible to just use pre-recorded music, it is attractive to play live music if you can.
- ▶ It is important people are able to chat (especially after the talk), so music should be of the sort that doesn't require the audience to sit in silence! Keep the volume at a level where people can still chat without having to shout at each other! It's good for the musicians to have been informed of this, so they have the right expectations. It is not a concert, and they are not intended as the centre of attention.



Food

Few students fail to be attracted by food. Yet, as with Lunch Bars, food is not just a way to encourage people to come. In the Bible, one of the recurring images of the Kingdom of God is a feast. In holding events around food, we ensure the medium and the message go together. There are different levels of catering that you could go for:

- ▶ Hot drinks and cookies – but make sure that the quality is good. No instant coffee please!
- ▶ Coffee and cake / desserts – can be very popular (especially if they are home made!).
- ▶ A full meal – could be a sit-down three-course event, with the talk interspersed between the courses... or something more easy to serve informally, like a hog roast?



Remember:

- ▶ Check with the venue about any possible restrictions / regulations. Preparing food yourselves is the cheapest option (and sometimes the nicest) but you may have to pay for professional catering, or only buy and distribute packaged food from a shop.
- ▶ Be aware how long it will take to serve everyone. Make sure the food does not delay the start of the talk.
- ▶ Having more food / drink available at the end of the talk encourages people to stay, and for conversations to continue. Consider having people waiting on the tables, offering food and drink, so that people don't have to move.

Stewarding

Stewards should welcome people at the door and encourage people to fill up the room from the front. If people arrive on their own, they can be introduced to others that they can sit with.

Explain the format of the evening – when and where to get food etc.

Stewards can also encourage CU members and CU Guests to join tables and start conversations with those who come. (CU Guests won't necessarily know who is already part of the CU, so it can be helpful for them to be directed).

Hosts

It can be appealing to have a male and female host. They need to be confident and friendly and interact well with each other.

Consider having the same pair each night as they will grow in confidence, and build their rapport with each other, the audience and the speaker.

It is good to allow about half an hour, after the advertised start time, for people to arrive, get food and enjoy conversations while the music is playing. It is then time for the hosts to introduce proceedings more formally.

The welcome needs to explain something about the CU, the purpose of the week and what will happen for the rest of the evening. A short interview with the speaker can be helpful at this point, with both some serious, as well as more light-hearted questions. Recap each day, for those coming for the first time, but also ask new questions for the benefit of those who have come back a subsequent time.

At the end of the talk and questions, encourage people to stay to chat further. Advertise the events due to happen the following day. If the speaker has not already done so, explain the feedback forms and ask people to fill them in.

The Talk

Unlike at lunch time, an evening event has less time restrictions and you can afford to think about including various other items around or within the talk. This not only helps hold attention but also communicates the gospel through a different medium. It is important that you discuss with your speaker these ideas. They must fit with the direction of the talk and the speaker may have their own suggestions and ideas too.

Vox-pops

- ▶ It can be helpful to start with a vox-pop that introduces the theme of the evening and shows what people think about it. It shows that you are listening, and is also a good form of first-contact evangelism.
- ▶ A short video clip of students being asked questions in relation to the topic of the evening. e.g. Hope
- ▶ 2 or 3 questions. eg. What do you think happens when you die? On what do you base your thinking? What do you think of the claim that Jesus rose from the dead?

- ▶ Ask students around the university – preferably on the day - so you can invite them to the event.
- ▶ Edit the video down to make it no more than 3-4 minutes long.
- ▶ A more simple way would be to get them to write responses on a small white board, and pose for photos that are edited into a compilation.

Testimonies

Testimonies that tie in with the theme of the talk make the gospel tangible in people's minds, as they see the difference it can make. Testimonies can be a short 2-3 minute interview with a student inserted into the talk at an appropriate moment.

You could have a more extended interview with someone who has a particularly interesting / relevant story, and conduct this before the talk. This may also be included in your advertising. E.g. A well known academic, or a former terrorist, or someone who has experienced bereavement.

Music

Some Christian musicians write music to be evangelistic (as opposed to Christian 'worship' music). This can raise questions in people's minds, as well as drive home certain points. One or two carefully selected pieces can be very effective.

Drama

It is possible to do drama 'in house', even if you don't have drama students, and for it NOT to be embarrassing. Drama can be used at the start of a talk to raise a question in a thoughtful or humorous way, or to drive home a key point later on.

Ensure that drama is well rehearsed, and the speaker has seen it rehearsed, before the talk.

People in the drama can use their acting as a further reason to invite friends.

The drama needs to be ready to begin when introduced. You don't want long pauses while you set up the stage.

For ideas see moetonline.org/categories/drama

Other ideas

Be creative as you think of other things you can include. An appropriately themed piece of poetry or spoken word? A relevant film clip?



How to run an International Supper Event

Don't forget the needs of international students during a mission week. They make up a significant percentage of most universities' students, often coming from countries with little or no gospel witness.

Many larger CUs run a separate internationals' track with a meal provided, just before the main Evening Events. Students are able to come straight from lectures, and then potentially stay on afterwards, for the Evening Event. You could get a separate speaker to do a short talk each night, on the same theme as the main Evening Event.

Venue

- ▶ Make sure it is close enough to the main evening event for people to walk there easily.
- ▶ Why not make the atmosphere international, eg. display lots of different flags?

Timing

- ▶ You need to have time to eat, hear the talk, and have some discussion. Finish in time for people to head towards the main evening event, but not so early that people have too long to wait!

Speaker

- ▶ They should have some experience of speaking to internationals, and be able to speak slowly and clearly without using jargon or complex phrasing.
- ▶ Use the opportunity to address specifically some of the preconceptions, objections and questions that an international student might have, E.g. 'Is Christianity just a western religion?', 'Honour and shame', etc.

Food

- ▶ You could ask local Christians or churches to partner with you and provide the meal each night.
- ▶ Make sure that it is internationals-friendly – not too much potato, avoid certain meats (e.g. avoid pork, as you welcome the attendance of guests from other faith backgrounds) and offer a vegetarian option.
- ▶ You could offer a different international cuisine each night?

Publicity

- ▶ Advertise it through the regular meetings for international students.
- ▶ Have separate flyers produced with the key information on.
- ▶ Target advertising to internationals' halls of residence and places where internationals often congregate.

How to run the Q&A

It is good to finish events with a time of questions and answers. This has several purposes:

- ▶ It bridges the sometimes awkward gap between the talk ending and conversations beginning, by showing that it is ok to ask questions, or to disagree.
- ▶ It shows that the gospel is public truth, and we are not afraid to defend it as such.
- ▶ It engages people with the questions they have.
- ▶ It trains Christians in how to answer questions.

Taking Questions

There are several ways that people could ask questions. Let people know at the start that there will be time for questions, so they can think of them during the talk. Options:

- ▶ Text – advertise the number throughout the talk (a good way to do this is in the corner of each PowerPoint slide).
- ▶ Paper and pen (collect them in).
- ▶ Hands up from the floor.

A combination of the different ways can be helpful. Some people will prefer the anonymity of not having to speak out loud. Allowing people to verbally ask questions from the floor works well with the dynamic of a Lunch Bar, but is not always so helpful in an evening event.

Asking and Answering Questions

- ▶ It is good to have someone collating the questions that come via text or paper. They need to group similar questions together, edit out questions that are completely off topic and phrase a good question for the end.
- ▶ It is good for the host to read out the questions to the speaker.
- ▶ If you are taking questions from the floor, then alternate this with the other questions. This stops one person from dominating the time, and also helpfully keeps you moving around different parts of the topic, rather than getting stuck on one particular line of questioning.
- ▶ If possible, finish with a question that gives the speaker an opportunity to get back to the centre of the topic, and to the heart of the gospel.
- ▶ Finish on time – better to leave people wanting more than having people lose interest. Encourage people to continue to ask and discuss round the tables.

How to organise effective follow-up

Lots of Christians simply collapse into a small heap at the end of a mission week, and emerge from their rooms only to catch up on work, but the fact is that many people who become Christians do not do so during actual mission weeks, but in the weeks and months afterwards. To miss the opportunity for follow-up is to miss the majority of the harvest. It's important that seekers are given plenty of opportunities to go on asking questions, reading the bible and engaging with the message for themselves. They won't be impressed if, as soon as the mission finishes, the Christians seem to stop taking any interest in them. New Christians will also need careful nurturing, to help them start out with Christ. Follow-up is key.

Prepare your CU

If the CU think that follow-up is the job of one person, or something that someone else will do, then it will be ineffective. Just like the mission week, the follow-up needs to be owned by the whole CU.

For this reason the whole CU need to know not only what is available for people, but be trained to make the most of these opportunities. They need to know what they should do when their friends actually come to an event, and express interest of any kind.

There are plenty of opportunities to maintain momentum after your mission:

A course for seekers

These are absolutely crucial to get right – but, unfortunately, something that CUs often get wrong. Here are some tips to make them work:

- ▶ Find leaders early on and ask your Staff Worker to give them some training. You can get experienced local Christians to help lead this.
- ▶ The same principles about mission week venues apply to follow-up. People are much more likely to come to a well-known café than to a stranger's house. Similarly, food can make the evening attractive, and be a good way to build relationships at the start.
- ▶ People don't normally come unless they are brought. Encourage CU members with friends who have shown interest in the gospel, to bring them along to the group.
- ▶ Follow-up needs to be pitched at those who want to find out more – there are a number of courses that have been designed specifically for this. Talk to your Staff Worker about what you might use. It is helpful if the CU members are familiar with the course and have the confidence to make the most of it.
- ▶ Advertise the course at every mission week event, not just at the end. It is helpful to have attractive flyers on the tables.

A course for new believers

Those who have become Christians during the mission will have different needs to those who are still thinking it through. A nurture course where they can go over the Christian basics will be essential.

It can be helpful to get some experienced local Christians to help lead this.

For simplicity and clear communication, you could run this alongside the seeker course, sharing the same venue and food but splitting up into different groups for the course.

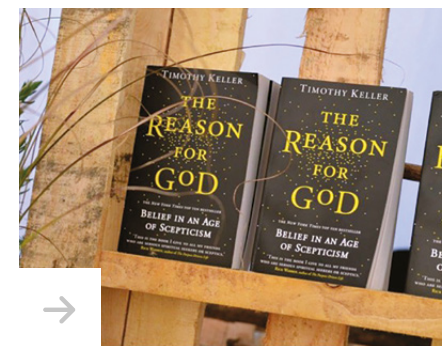
As well as these two main options for follow-up courses, there are other avenues that work well. These can be helpful, as not everyone will be able to make the central follow-up, or may not like the idea of coming to such a group.

Other avenues:

A bookstall

It is a really good idea to have a bookstall at all events. People who have been interested by what they hear can continue to investigate in their own time.

- ▶ A few well-selected titles are better than having too much choice. Books that tackle common objections in more detail as well as those that clearly explain the gospel. You could think of making sure you have something for different types of people who may be at the event – those from other faith backgrounds or societies.
- ▶ It is good to subsidise the books as this makes it more likely that people will take them; you may even want to make them free. You can simply specify that this is just for guests and that CU members can pay the cost price.
- ▶ After each talk you could advertise the bookstall and mention any specific title that would naturally follow on from the subject of the day.



Gospels

God speaks through his word and so we want to get people reading the gospel for themselves. Having a copy on each chair, or several on each table means that people can easily take them home. The speaker may also base his talk on one of the passages and so can get each person to open up the gospel during the talk.

Use 'Uncover' One-to-One

'Uncover' bible study guides are a brilliant resource that introduce people to Jesus through the pages of the gospels. Available in many different languages, they are easy for any member of the CU to use with those who show interest. You can provide training before the mission, so that every member of the CU is equipped and excited to use 'Uncover'.



Encourage people to start 'Uncover' as soon as possible. Why wait until the week after the mission, if you can do the first one straight after a lunch bar? If you begin during the week, there is more chance that it will naturally continue afterwards.

Church

If someone has become a Christian or shown good interest, ensure that they are invited to church by a CU member.

In your communication with local churches before the mission, encourage them to have special guest services the weekend after the mission, on the assumption there will be new people coming along. It's a great way to get them involved. But do make sure you ask them early enough – churches can plan their preaching schedule a long way in advance!

Don't forget to make some provision also for the holidays. If your friends do not know of an evangelical church near their home, then your CU Staff Worker may be able to help you to find one.

Making sure you don't miss people

At the end of the mission week, get each of the CU Guests to leave a list of all of the contacts their small group has made, and how far each has come in their understanding of the gospel. Get the CU Guests' perspective on the best way of continuing contact (e.g. books, meetings). Ensure that each person on the list is being followed-up – they won't necessarily have any Christian friends in the CU.

Some people will not ever have had any Christian friends before, so work hard to forge reliable personal links before the mission ends, to ensure adequate follow-up.

Genuine friendship is a key ingredient in leading our interested friends to a definite commitment to Christ. The mission may have formed a link with the CU, but this must now be strengthened by the more permanent one of personal friendship with a Christian.

Using Feedback Forms

One way to get details of those who are to be followed up is by having a simple response slip on every chair or table during the mission.

Here is an example:

FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for coming. We'd love to know what you thought of the event.

<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 150px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="margin: 0;">Comments</p> </div>	<div style="margin-bottom: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tell me more </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Count me in </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="margin: 0;">Name</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p style="margin: 0;">Number</p> </div>
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- ▶ At the end of every talk the speaker or host can encourage everyone present to fill out the form and, at least, leave comments. This makes those who are ticking one of the boxes feel less awkward. To help this happen, encourage CU members (before the mission week) to always fill out a feedback form, and explain why.
- ▶ Refer to it as a 'Feedback form' – people are used to giving feedback after events or talks.
- ▶ Explain that for those who want to find out more they can tick 'Tell Me More' and if there has been an opportunity to pray to trust Christ, and they have, then they are encouraged to tick 'Count Me In'.
- ▶ The form is deliberately simple in design to avoid confusion. It is designed to need explanation by the speaker or host at the appropriate point in the event. Avoid using more wording ... phrases like 'I have prayed to become a Christian' can be off-putting to a guest finding the card on their table as they arrive at an event.
- ▶ Encourage them to leave their name and contact details if they have ticked either box.

- ▶ Do NOT leave a space for email addresses. Mobile phone numbers are much better. Most emails sent out never get a reply, and phone calls have proved more effective.
- ▶ Make sure there are enough forms and pens for everyone.
- ▶ Make sure there is a clear box for people to leave the forms in, or, even better, go round and collect them straight away.

Contacting People

- ▶ Once you have collected the forms in, treat them like gold dust – each one represents an interested individual!
- ▶ The person organising the follow-up needs to collate the responses on a spreadsheet and record progress e.g. Date collected, who is contacting them, date contacted, response... etc.
- ▶ Time is of the essence, so try to contact anyone who has asked for follow-up within 24 hours. The longer you wait, the less likely people are to respond. Satan will want to snatch away the seed that has been sown before it can take root. We need to get there first!
- ▶ You will need a small team of people who are willing to make contact. One person will not have the time to properly follow-up each student. It is good practice to contact respondents of the same sex as yourself.
- ▶ You may want to text them first, to introduce yourself, and tell them that you will call.
- ▶ If you can't get through, don't just leave a message, try again at another time until you get in touch.
- ▶ As well as explaining the different courses, offer to meet up for a coffee and a chat. This is a great way to establish where they are at; to start to build a friendship. People are more likely to come to follow-up if you have got to know them first.
- ▶ If people have only left an email address, then send a personal note, as people don't often read group emails, especially from people they don't know.
- ▶ If, at first, you don't hear back, don't give up. Another way of contacting them might be to try to find someone in CU who knows them, or is on their course, who can get in touch and invite them.

Appendix

Mission Countdown Checklists

These Countdown Checklists will help you to start planning your mission week in plenty of time. Each item has a space for you to write the deadline for completing the task, and we've suggested the minimum number of weeks before the mission that should be. (These are a rough guide, but as a general rule it's better to do things sooner rather than later!). There's also a tick box so you can see what you've done, and what is still left to do.

First Things First

Mission begins: / /

This checklist concentrates on the big decisions that need to be made as you begin to plan your mission.

12-6 months before the mission... (i.e. as early as you can) Complete by:

- ▶ Book a main speaker or speakers. (/ /) 26 wks
- ▶ Arrange for your main speaker to speak at your carol service and weekend away (or another event before the mission week). (/ /) 26 wks

6 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Assign responsibilities for different elements of the mission: (/ /) 24 wks
(Make sure each one gets a copy of The Definitive Mission Planning Guide)

- Lunchbars
- Evening Events
- Internationals
- First Contact Evangelism
- Publicity
- Treasurer
- CU Guests
- Follow Up
- Prayer

- ▶ Begin to discuss an overall plan for the week, and (with your speaker) choose a theme and title for the mission. (/ /) 20 wks
- ▶ Decide on a budget for the mission, and make sure each member of the team is clear how much they have to spend. (/ /) 20 wks

5 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Decide how you will launch and communicate about the mission to the whole CU. (/ /) 16 wks
- ▶ Organise any training the CU might need (eg answering difficult questions, sharing testimonies etc). (/ /) 4 wks

Lunchbars

Mission begins: / /

This checklist will help you plan a series of lunchtime apologetic talks, often called 'lunchbars.'

6 months before the mission... (/ /) Complete by:

- ▶ Decide who will be responsible for lunchbars. (/ /) 21 wks
- ▶ Decide how many lunchbars you will have. (How many days? How many per day?) (/ /) 21 wks
- ▶ Book a central, easy-to-find venue. (/ /) 15 wks

5 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ CU ask their friends for their top 3 objections to Christianity (to help with choosing titles). (/ /) 16 wks

4 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Discuss and choose talk titles (with speaker). (/ /) 11 wks

3 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Plan food. Approach local churches if necessary. (/ /) 3 wks

2 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Design and print publicity (or coordinate with publicity team). (/ /) 2 wks

2 weeks before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Begin advertising Ongoing

1 week before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Check final arrangements. Next week!

Evening Events

Mission begins: / /

This checklist will help you plan a series of evening evangelistic events, which will probably be at the heart of your mission week.

6 months before the mission... (/ /)	Complete by: ✓
▶ Book a suitable venue.	(/ /) 15 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Decide how many evening events you will have.	(/ /) 21 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
4 months before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Discuss and choose talk titles (with speaker).	(/ /) 12 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
3 months before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Begin to plan running order for each evening	(/ /) 1 wk <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Organise music/entertainment for each evening.	(/ /) 3 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Organise food	(/ /) 1 wk <input type="checkbox"/>
2 months before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Design and print publicity (or coordinate with publicity team).	(/ /) 2 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Organise team to decorate evening venue.	(/ /) 1 wk <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Organise MCs.	(/ /) 2 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Organise set up/clear up teams.	(/ /) 1 wk <input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Begin advertising	Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/>
1 week before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Check final arrangements.	Next week! <input type="checkbox"/>

Internationals

Mission begins: / /

This checklist will help you plan a series of evangelistic events for international students.

6 months before the mission... (/ /)	Complete by: ✓
▶ Book a speaker for these events if you haven't already.	(/ /) 21 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Book a suitable venue.	(/ /) 15 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Talk to Friends International about your plans, and check what other international events are planned.	Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/>
4 months before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Work out how international students will travel to the main event.	(/ /) 11 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
3 months before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Discuss and choose talk titles (with speaker).	Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Begins to plan food for the evenings.	(/ /) 2 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
2 months before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Design and print publicity (or coordinate with publicity team).	(/ /) 2 wks <input type="checkbox"/>
1 month before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Plan food. Approach local churches if necessary.	(/ /) 1 wk <input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Begin advertising to international students.	Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/>
1 week before the mission... (/ /)	
▶ Check final arrangements.	Next week! <input type="checkbox"/>

Publicity

Mission begins: / /

Well-organised publicity is hugely important for a successful mission week - how will anyone come to events if they don't know what's happening? This checklist will help you keep on top of the publicity as in the run up to the mission week.

2 months before the mission... (i.e. as early as you can)	Complete by:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
▶ Collect details of each event:	(/ /) 7 wks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening Events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lunchbars		<input type="checkbox"/>
International Events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow Up		<input type="checkbox"/>
Others		<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Design and print posters.	(/ /) 2 wks	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Design and print a programme of all events.	(/ /) 2 wks	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Design and print daily flyers for each day.	(/ /) 1 wk	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks before the mission... (/ /)		
▶ Put up posters.	(/ /) 1 wk	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Distribute weekly programmes.	(/ /) 1 wk	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Organise flyering teams for mission week.	(/ /) 1 wk	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the mission...		
▶ Monitor stocks of flyers, printing more if necessary.		<input type="checkbox"/>

CU Guests

Mission begins: / /

CU Guests are non-students who join you to help with your mission week, and a good team of guests can make a huge difference to a mission week. This checklist will help you put a team of guests together for your mission.

6 months before the mission... (/ /)	Complete by:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
▶ Work out number of CU Guests required.	(/ /) 16 wks	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Begin to make a list of graduates, church workers, Relay workers who could be CU Guests.	(/ /) 16 wks	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 months before the mission... (/ /)		
▶ Invite CU Guests.	(/ /) 12 wks	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 months before the mission... (/ /)		
▶ Arrange accommodation for CU Guests.	(/ /) 2 wks	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ Keep CUGs informed about mission plans.	Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 month before the mission... (/ /)		
▶ Produce welcome packs including timetables and details of accommodation.	(/ /) 1 wk	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 week before the mission... (/ /)		
▶ Check final arrangements.	Next week!	<input type="checkbox"/>

Follow-Up

Mission begins: / /

Good follow up is crucial if a mission week is to have a lasting impact. This checklist will help you to plan your follow up, and to keep a focus on follow up throughout the planning and the mission itself.

6 months before the mission... (/ /)

Complete by: ✓

- ▶ Ensure follow up is kept central in mission planning and communication. Ongoing
- (/ /) 4 wks
- ▶ Plan and run one-to-one Bible study training for CU if required.

5 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Decide how you will follow up interested non-Christians. (/ /) 16 wks
- ▶ Decide how you will follow up new Christians. (/ /) 16 wks

4 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Set dates and times for follow up courses. (/ /) 12 wks
- ▶ Book a suitable venue. (/ /) 12 wks
- ▶ Arrange speakers if necessary. (/ /) 12 wks

3 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Get resources (DVDs, workbooks, Bibles etc) for courses. (/ /) 12 wks
- ▶ Recruit and train group leaders for follow up courses, if required. (/ /) 4 wks

1 month before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Design and print feedback forms for all events. (/ /) 1 wk

During the mission...

- ▶ Ensure feedback forms are distributed and collected at all events.

Prayer

Mission begins: / /

The best missions are usually the ones where lots of people are praying for the CU, and where the CU are committed to expressing their dependence on God by meeting together for prayer each day. This checklist will help you to get people praying.

6 months before the mission... (/ /)

Complete by: ✓

- ▶ Write a prayer letter outlining your plans for prayer supporters. (/ /) 22 wks
- ▶ Prepare Powerpoint presentation of prayer info for use in local and home churches. (/ /) 22 wks

5 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Send prayer letter to local and home churches. (/ /) 19 wks
- ▶ Arrange opportunities for members of committee/planning team to talk about the mission in local churches. (/ /) 8 wks
- ▶ Encourage CU members to talk about the mission in home churches. Ongoing

3 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Encourage CU members to be praying regularly for 5 friends. (/ /) 12 wks
- ▶ Book a suitable venue for morning prayer meetings during the mission. (/ /) 4 wks

2 months before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Recruit people to prepare and lead each prayer meeting. (/ /) 2 wks
- ▶ Decide if you will provide food at the prayer meetings, and organise who will bring it. (/ /) 1 wk

1 month before the mission... (/ /)

- ▶ Write and distribute another prayer letter to local churches. (/ /) 1 wk

After the mission...

- ▶ Write and send a follow up prayer letter to local and home churches.

Helpful websites

- ▶ moetonline.org - For more resources for mission planning and examples of mission talks
- ▶ feuerreports.eu - For the latest reports of mission weeks across Europe
- ▶ uccf.org.uk - For lots of resources for Christian Unions
- ▶ ifesworld.org - For information and resources about student evangelism from around the world



IFES 
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of Evangelical Students

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