

Freshers events on a budget

for Small CUs and Others

from UCCF UK

I know, I know, it is only May, and Freshers Week seems a mere speck in the distance, but now is really the best time to be planning for that speck! The following is just to get you thinking through some ideas as to what YOUR CU can do . . .

Aims - why bother?

- To help all those new students who are Christians to find the CU and get stuck in.
- To impact the college: the first weeks of a new term are when students are most likely to think about what they believe.

Pre-event checklist - things to do now

- Check with the college authorities: - When do the new students start? - What are they planning for the newcomers? - What can the CU do or not do?
- Brainstorm, Plan and Delegate with the CU - it may be a good idea to get some of the leavers to help you.
- Get as much backing as you can from UCCF, local churches, chaplains, lecturers etc.
- Make sure as much as possible is set up before the end of term: day, time place, intro leaflet to the CU, posters, vision statement, plans for term and the correct contact name sent to UCCF.
- Check you have all your resources. Will you need any cash?
- Pray, and get everyone else to.

Brainstorm

Here are some workable suggestions from previous years:

- Welcome stall or table
- Flyers in college or SU welcome pack
- Welcome buffet lunch or coffee bar
- Concert or Band
- Student survival guide with local info and advert. for CU
- Posters
- CU meeting . . .

But we bet you can think of something extra special to do.

Don't forget

Don't forget those two reasons for doing something:

- to help the Christians find you
- to challenge the rest to think.

The event

DO all your preparation before-hand – then on the day you can spend time with those who come. If you run round like a headless chicken you won't have a clue who came by.

Running a stall or welcome table

Try to have some of the following on your table and don't forget to smile!:

- CU information: where, when, what time; term planner; vision statement.
- Leaflets and info on the gospel.
- Local guides to places/events including good churches in the area.
- Freebies – small gifts e.g. lollipops, sweets, balloons – see what you can scrounge...
- Notebook to collect names/email address/phone number and if they already know their free lunchtimes.

Follow up - what do you do next?

Keep in contact with the people you meet. Don't just let them slip away, and don't show your frustration if they don't seem as keen the next time. Find out how they are really doing – don't just show interest in whether they are coming to CU – remember how you felt in your first few weeks.

Organising welcome meetings

TYPE 1 : Your main freshers event, a buffet or coffee lunch. Make sure you have an official time of welcome as well as informal chat. Some speakers are very good at 10 minute slots of low-key gospel presentation - book one, or if you can do it yourself, go for it. Drama also works well.

TYPE 2 : A meal out with those you have met during the week at a local venue or someone's house. This will give you time to explain what CU is all about and the things you hope to do.

TYPE 3 : A first CU meeting. Make people feel at ease and then do something worthwhile and interesting. People are unlikely to come again if you are disorganised or spend all your time catching up with last year's members. On the other hand, if you have a really tough discussion, people may feel too intimidated to come again. It's all about getting the balance right. Try "What really impresses me about Jesus is...". Share the results, then look at the end of the crucifixion story in Luke 23: 44-49. Think about what impressed this hardened Roman Soldier.

TYPE 4 : Just Looking. There may be first years interested in finding out more about Christianity. Why not set up a group for them? There are ready-made courses on the market and UCCF have one aimed at students, so email or ring the office for a copy. If you need help with this, we will do our best to find you someone.

DON'T FORGET: think big, be organised, plan ahead, pray and leave the results to God.