

churches building bridges vision and Jesus to inspire together local schools

equip

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your adventure begins

*Building Bridges between
churches and schools...*

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WHY CONNECT

Therefore GO and make disciples of all nations... (Matthew 28:19a)
The key word here is the word 'GO'. The funny thing is that when we talk about the great commission to 'go' and make disciples, we so often think about a missionary going overseas, when actually the word 'go' might mean 500 metres down the road to our local school.

Our churches were once the hubs and centres of our communities and now that role is taken by the school. These schools shape and influence the lives of young people and it's therefore essential that Christians are a part of that shaping. The people in our schools need to see Christianity lived out, not just spoken about; it's about real people walking around being the hands and feet of Jesus.

The potential is there to partner with the school and others to support children and young people in our communities and this booklet explores potential ways that churches can 'build bridges' with local schools. Some of these are obviously already being done. What this booklet does is help churches and individuals reflect on what they are already doing, so that they/we might make the most of the opportunities to build effective relationships within the community, especially with schools.

Many churches on their own and in groups have supported their local schools for years. This has been a natural expression of a desire to make a difference in the world putting Biblical principles into action.

WITH SCHOOLS?

Today there are new opportunities to build partnership between churches and schools and the challenge is for churches to make the most of them. Schools are very different places from what they were, even ten years ago. The church can justifiably to some extent, be proud of what it has done in the past. But maybe God is calling us to do something different or do it in a different way.

We hope these few suggestions not only promote thought in your church, but also motivation to make Christ known. That they also become practical ideas to help us not just talk about it, but be **IN** on it.

*"I keep my bearings in Christ – but I entered their world and tried to experience (understand) things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God saved life. I did this for the message. I didn't just want to talk about it. I wanted to be **in** on it"*
(1 Corinthians 9:22-23 – The Message)

A number of the following practical ideas have been adapted from the Scripture Union Publication: **Generation to Generation** – *Building bridges between churches and schools*. Compiled by Sue Radford, Jill Rowe and Jenny Baker. First published by Scripture Union (England and Wales) 1999

TIPS ON HOW TO APPROACH SCHOOLS EFFECTIVELY...

1. PRAY

We are on a spiritual task and prayer for ourselves and for the people in the school community is a vital part of our work in schools.

2. BE RELATIONAL

Let's help the young people learn about our faith through everyday relationship as they meet Jesus in us. Let's give young people the opportunity to see how followers of Jesus love, follow and serve him. Let's help them experience his love, forgiveness and patience through us.

3. THINK STRATEGICALLY

- Before we start, think about the community and its needs. (Know who else is there already and the history of what has taken place.
- Decide what you want to achieve.
- Evaluate your resources (people, materials, funding, space, weaknesses, strengths).

4. CHOOSE CAREFULLY

- Be aware of how each activity or programme contributes differently to your strategy and choose the best ideas.
- Evaluate your progress and change what you are doing when your ideas have reached their "use by date".

5. BE APPROPRIATE

Make sure your activities reflect a genuine understanding of the children, their concerns, their relationships, their previous experiences of God, their emotional well-being, their learning styles and developmental stages. And respect the educational context of the school and speak and act appropriately. Have fun too. so often the teaching of faith is taught in the same way we teach any other skill - in an "old school" style.

30 PRACTICAL IDEAS

This is a set of example ideas - checkout the groups pages for support in making them happen!

1. Support a school committee

Get involved in the school board. The school board is a very important place to influence the direction of a school. Christians with specialized expertise could be very helpful to the School Board be it in business, finance or in practical hands on areas – builders, plumbers etc.

2. Support a school camp

Offer to be parent help, run activities, cook, nurse etc. A camp is a great opportunity for teachers to be seen as ‘normal’ instead of the upfront boss. It’s also a wonderful opportunity for adults from your church to mix with both children, parents and teachers. Also why not volunteer for other school outings. Attending school outings and events is a great way to get to know the children and other parents. The teachers will appreciate it, and it’s a good way to build a relationship with the school.

3. Start an after school club for the school

This maybe just for an hour to have fun, games and a bit of afternoon tea for pupils as they finish school. You’ll need both male & female leadership. It’s a great way to assist the school plus be a ‘service’ to the parents. Contact Scripture Union for training and ideas on how this might work in your area.

TO THINK ABOUT...

4. Be a mentor

It takes just a wise head, someone prepared to listen, happy to meet with a pupil who wants and probably needs to talk to someone who is able to either answer their questions or point them in the right direction. Recall that James says “if anyone lacks wisdom, ask and it will be given.” There’s no need to be particularly clever, it’s more about relationships. There are a lot of children in our communities who need extra support because of family issues or learning problems and our churches are full for people who can walk alongside and support them..

5. Help on a road patrol or ‘walking bus’

This is big chance to serve in an area that doesn’t take too much energy or expertise, it’s just watching pupils, making sure that they cross the road safely. you can also support your school by running a walking bus for the school. It’s also a wonderful opportunity to become a friend to your community.

6. Help raise funds for the school

Fund raise for school camps or other needs the school has. Young people washing cars, sausage sizzle, make toys & grow plants for a garage sale –all ages can be involved older folk and all. What a great way to assist the school and pupils with a great cause. Having helped maybe you could visit the camp or activity while they’re there as well. There is most likely a number of other areas where funds are needed, a great chance for a church to be and to do!

7. Offer your church buildings for school activities

You may have a large hall or perhaps you would be happy using your church for outside occasions like - assemblies, end of year concerts, homework clubs, whatever. The school would think highly of you for doing such a thing particularly if you do it for free.

8. Get involved in Working Bees

Schools always struggle to make ends meet and any practical help they can get would be great. Christians need to be actively involved in their school, contributing where ever they can. A working bee is a great place to mix with other parents, teacher etc. Faith in action – it's called!

9. Provide Morning tea

Provide morning tea for staff on a special day, i.e. teacher only days, maybe at Christmas time. What a wonderful way to serve the school staff who are hard working and under pressure. They serve our kids – why not show appreciation and love in a practical way. Let the school know that you're praying for the staff, students and parents.

10. Support Christian students in schools

This is a great opportunity to be involved in the school environment and to build relationships with your local school. Many schools have a Christian group that meets at lunchtime or after school. Becoming a volunteer or leader for such a group is a great way to support the Christian students in schools and help them in living their faith out everyday. If there isn't a Christian group already running in your local school why not start one. If you would like more information about resources or about how to start a group please contact schoolsministry@scriptureunion.org.nz

11. Be a sports Coach

If you have people in your church who are skilled in areas of physical activities and would love to see kids getting good constructive exercise and game skills here's a chance – take it, pick up the ball and run with it!

13. Be involved in the 40 hour famine

World Vision hold the 40hour famine each year and are always looking for volunteers to head it up. Its fun for those involve plus a wonderful way to help students and maybe their parents to enlarge their world view and to grow personally in caring for others. www.worldvision.org

14. English as a second language

Adults from your church could run English as a second language classes for the school or support students in their lessons.

15. Promote operation Christmas box

Here's a relatively new idea that is growing fast through NZ churches. Families are given a box to fill with Christmas goodies to be sent to needy places through out the world, at Christmas of course. A church could approach their school and suggest that classes take a number of boxes to fill and be part of a caring Christian community project. www.samaritampurse.org.nz

16. Help out the school production

Teachers already have huge work loads, so practical help with extra activities like the school production is invaluable. You may have people who have skills to share (music, drama, art and design) or have resources (lighting and sound systems) the school could use. Maybe even offer your church hall for rehearsal space.

17. Get involved in National Teachers Day

This day is usually held in October both internationally as well as here in NZ. It's a chance to honour our teachers who are very important people in our communities. John Sculley said; *"we expect teachers to handle teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, and the failings of the family. Then we expect them to educate our children"*. We expect so much from them so here's one day a year when we can acknowledge them and pray for them.

www.ei-ie.org/worldteachersday2009/

18. Celebrate "Children's Day"

Get involved with the school in a practical way. Children's Day is usually the first Sunday in March. The initial idea for Children's Day came from a suggestion by the first Children's Commissioner, Ian Hassall, in 1991. **Vision:** To see children celebrated, nurtured and treasured by all. Children's Day has five important messages: -Giving time -Praise and encouragement -Listening and talking - Love and affection -New experiences.

www.childrensdays.org.nz

19. Christians in Education (CIE)

Christians in Education is an Scripture Union Initiative that endeavor's to bring Christian staff working in education together from time to time to encourage, stimulate and share ideas together. For information email: info.auckland@scriptureunion.org.nz

20. School holiday programme

Create a holiday programme for the school and local community: maybe some of your churches youth who are on holiday from school, along with adult supervision could run a holiday 'outreach' programme in the local school.

21. Start a Breakfast Club

Start a breakfast club which can be held at a church or school but run by the church at a small covering cost. A number of children may come from homes where parents don't provide breakfast for them for a variety of reasons. With hard times this could be even more the case. A group in the church could see this as a ministry for them, an outreach for the church and a great help for the school. Consultation with the school to ascertain if the need was there would be essential.

22. Support a local schools worker

Schools workers such as chaplains, Scripture Union staff workers and local youth pastors have great oppourtunties to be involved in their local schools. But they need support! Chaplains are able to forge relationships with the young people, and often deal with pressured situations. A Scripture Union schools worker spends much of their time bridging the gap between churches and schools, by assisting local churches to be a Christian presence in their schools. Choose a schools worker to support in your local school.

23. Donate a library Book

Donate books to the school library. Any good quality children's books will be appreciated although your school may ahve a list of ones it wants. Make a colourful card on your computer. Glue it into the front of each book so that the children will know who gave it to them. This is a great option for members of your church who might no have the time of health to get involved at school but can give money.

24. Bible in Schools

This is when one or more volunteers go into a school and teach a class or large group. Some schools allow a 1/2 hour per week class to be taken by trained people. This is a great way to share the gospel with kids who might not hear it anywhere else. For more information please contact CEC at www.cec.org.nz

25. Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy is a wonderful opportunity to get alongside our youth. Chaplains offer pastoral care and support the whole school and community. For more information please contact CEC at www.cec.org.nz

26. Employ a schools worker

This is an opportunity to think community wide. As you can see from this booklet there are considerable opportunities for churches to get involved in schools. As a church consider employing a schools worker, include schools in your scope of ministry. There are many options of how you could go about this. Firstly, if you already employ a youth pastor, consider setting aside some of their working week to specifically work in schools. Secondly, in addition to a youth pastor you could employ someone whose sole focus is schools ministry. Thirdly, the church could employ a 24/7 youthworker to connect in with schools, responding to the needs of your local school. For more information about employing a 24/7 youthworker please check out www.24-7youthwork.org.nz

27. R.A.O.K

Link in with international random acts of kindness day (1 september) as a church and bless the school, students, teachers and staff with gifts, help and kind words.

28. Pray for a school cards



When you see the school road sign.....slow down.....seize the moment and pray.....

Pray for a school cards are designed to encourage people when they see the 'school zone' sign outside schools to seize the moment to pray for that school community. It's a simple action but one that can make such an amazing difference if we all did the same. Imagine every Christian praying everyday for the schools they drive or walk past? Schools shape lives and it's vital that Christians are connected in with and praying for those involved. Check out www.scriptureunion.org.nz/news.htm to purchase your set of pray for a school cards.

29. Coffee stand for the parents

Provide a coffee stand for the parents dropping kids off in the morning. Great chance to build relationships and start conversations with parents.

30. Yr Choice lessons

Get involved leading Yr choice lessons. Teaching about sex and relationship issues with young people and a great opportunity to teach kingdom values. Check out www.yrchoice.co.nz for how to get involved..

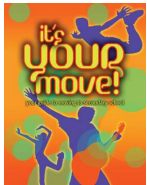
Please note: that the above ideas are just a few ways of how churches can build bridges with their local schools. We will be updating this booklet regularly, so if you have any ideas you would like to share with us please email us at: schoolsministry@scriptureunion.org.nz

SCRIPTURE UNION



Our SUPAKidz programme is made up of fun interactive clubs that teach primary age children about Jesus. The clubs which take place at lunchtime or after schools allow children who don't come from a Christian background to hear God's word, many for the first time. SUPAKidz is a values based programme and is a great way for churches to reach out to children in their community and to build relationships with local schools. We also run SUPAKidz camps each holidays around Auckland and in Southland. For more information about starting a SUPAKidz club in your local primary schools or SUPAKidz camps, please check out the website at:

www.supakidz.net.nz



It's Your Move is a 64-page, A5 book which gives tips and advice to Y8 students about to begin high school. Friendships are the most important issue with young people moving to high school – leaving friends, making new friends, being left out of friendship groups – they're all major concerns. It's your move is a survival guide to high school containing advice, stories from students and teachers and heaps of other info to help make the transition to high school a smoother one. It's Your Move gives churches the opportunity to offer practical support to their local intermediate schools by offering to buy the resource books for the schools. This leads to the building of relationships, credibility and trust which in turn can lead to further opportunities in the schools. Alongside of the books churches can be trained to work with their own high school aged students to run a one-hour session for the Year 8 students during the last few weeks of the school year. The programme works through issues raised in the book and allows face-to-face advice from students currently in high school. For more information about It's your Move contact:

schoolsministry@scriptureunion.org.nz

SCHOOL INITIATIVES



Pray Day is a day of prayer for schools. It started in Germany and now has spread throughout the UK and Europe. Scripture Union has launched the first Pray Day for Schools in the Southern Hemisphere - right here in New Zealand.

On the 7th August 2009 we encouraged everyone who is involved in schools around New Zealand to set aside time to pray. We acknowledge that lots of prayer for schools is already happening. This day was about celebrating this and taking a unified stand. It is also about letting others know what is going on around the country and that they are not alone in their prayers and passion for their local school.

This a annual event, please checkout the prayday website to see how you can get involved and when the next prayday will be happening. www.prayday.net.nz



SURGE is a group for intermediate age students that meets on the school premises at a time appropriate to the school community, during lunchtime or after school. We aim to provide a warm friendly environment in which students can have fun and explore values from a Christian perspective. Attendance is voluntary and students need parental permission to come. The young peopeo will enjoy working together, exploring values, playing games, problem sloving, checking out the Bible and praying.



SPORTS!

SURGE sports is a weekly sports based Christian programme for intermediate age students. It is a programme where students can play games, develop new sports skills, and have fun exploring values from a Christian perspective. Attendance is voluntary and students need parental permission to come especially as this tends to work best in an afterschool situation. Students will be encouraged to discover more about themselves and increase their understanding of their personal identity as well as biblical values and relating to others around them.

OTHER SU INITIATIVES TO HELP...



WAY2GO! is a children's ministry conference run by Scripture Union in 3 venues across the country each year. It contains training for those working with children from pre schoolers through to intermediates. These conferences offer very high quality training for those working in a number of different situations including church groups, school lunchtime and after schools clubs, Bible in Schools lessons, holiday programmes and camps. Scripture Union also run smaller training days in smaller centres around the country called EXTEND.

For further information about both of these training days go to the Scripture Union website and click on WAY2GO or EXTEND links. Or contact hilary.hague@scriptureunion.org.nz



YOUTHSERVE is *urban mission in action* encouraging young people to not just serve and sacrifice, but also verbalise their faith in the process in some of our more needy communities. It's faith and deeds together....YOUTHSERVE is a week long programme 'working specifically with a church we based ourselves in' on an outreach week in its local community. We have developed it this way as it connects more into our mission of working 'with' the local church and it also has more likelihood of ongoing local mission for the church we have partnered with. It also gives YOUTHSERVE participants a fantastic opportunity to not only physically serve and do jobs for people, but also really learn what it means to verbalise and enter into conversations about faith. This is invaluable in our work with these students who in turn take the skills (combining faith and deeds) they learn at YOUTHSERVE into the everyday and the schools we work with them in.

For more info check out the Scripture Union website (www.youradventurebegins.com) and click on the YOUTHSERVE link

SCRIPTURE UNION CAMPS!

Scripture Union has been running camps across New Zealand for many years and runs over 50 camps a year. Our camps are a mix of outdoor adventure, amazing activities and life changing experiences and are a great opportunity within a temporary Christian community to build relationships and allow young people to make discoveries about themselves, their world and God. Maybe invite the young people you are working with in school along for a wonderful chance to build on the relationships being formed in the school

For more info check out sucamps@scriptureunion.org.nz

OTHER ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN SCHOOLS

- **YrChoice**

Previously called PSI (postponing sexual involvement)
Lessons with kingdom values, 10 areas mainly across the north island (not specifically Christian)

www.yrchoice.co.nz

- **Attitude**

Life skills / values based presentations
(Mainly Auckland and Christchurch but will travel to other areas)

www.attitude.org.nz

- **Scripture Union**

Schools group support, resources, training, camps, specialist programmes for schools, schools work advocacy (National)

www.scriptureunion.org.nz

- **Team Extreme**

Life skills presentations working with schools
(various parts of the country)

www.teamxtreme.org.nz

- **Young Life**

Serving the school, some connection with Christian groups and camps (East Auckland and Christchurch)

www.younglife.org

- **24/7 Youthwork**

Christian youthworkers serving the school
(Christchurch and National)

www.24-7youthwork.org.nz

- **World Vision**

Famine and lessons in schools
(National)

www.worldvision.org

- **Incedo**

Some schools work in a few areas
(National in a few areas)

www.incedo.org.nz

- **Zeal**

Connections into schools in West Auckland and interns involved in Wellington supporting Christian students

www.zeal.org.nz

- **Stay Real**

Working with at risk youth from schools

thestarlings@xtra.co.nz

crossroadsyouth@xtra.co.nz

- **CEC (Churches Education Commission)**

Bible in Schools, Chaplaincy
(National)

www.cec.org.nz

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS...

- **Churches**

There are many churches across the country that are already heavily involved in their local schools. Check them out and get more ideas.

- **Denominations**

A number of denominations are involved in education and have their own schools (e.g. Catholic schools, Anglican schools, Christian schools)

- **Local Networks**

There are a number of local networks in areas across the country involved in schools work. Including Taranaki, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland, find out if anything is active in your area.

- **Cultural Organisations**

There are a number of cultural focussed organisations with a Christian ethos you can get support from.

- **Schools Ministry Network**

SMN is a developing natural network for those involved in schools ministry across New Zealand. This currently involves CEC, Scripture Union, 24/7 Youthwork and younglife.



Scripture Union New Zealand 2009

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