



high school lunchtime ministry

the MINISTRY PAPERS

missed opportunities...

Kevin is the leader of a high school lunchtime group. He has just finished leading the group for the year and is really happy with how it went. He had over forty students coming, they always had a great time and were always keen to invite their friends. It had been a great year but Kevin did have a troubling thought in the back of his mind. He really wished they had opened up the Bible and talked about **Jesus**...

10 years later at the high school reunion...

Kevin has often prayed for the guys and girls who had attended his lunchtime group. Now was his chance to see how they were going. When Kevin got to the reunion he noticed everyone had gained a few kilos. But even sadder than that, all of them had forgotten about Jesus (although it's hard to forget the gospel if you've never really heard it). As soon as they had left school they had quickly worked out that parties, drugs, alcohol and sex are heaps more fun than playing games. There was no foundation for them to hold onto when temptation came their way.

Kevin went home from the reunion a sad man. All the time he had put into preparing games had counted for nothing. As he reflected on his ministry he really wished that he had told the students the life saving message of the gospel even if some of them had stopped coming. He realised too late that it would have been better to save some rather than none at all...

LEADERS:...before taking someone through this paper, review the two key introductory MINISTRY PAPERS: 'the ministry training church' and 'meeting one to one'.

Connect. Grow. Serve. After **connecting** to God through trusting in Christ, a vital way we can **grow** is through a growth group and a vital way we can **serve** is through a ministry team.

This MINISTRY PAPER is designed to help your high school ministry leader introduce you to what it means to serve as part of our **high school ministry** team.



*Ephesians 4 is a great starting point for all our ministry teams... read **Ephesians 4:1-16***

1. Who are we ultimately ministering *for*? Explain.

2. What do we learn here about those we minister *with*?

3. What do we learn here about those we minister *to*?

4. We must 'speak the truth in love'. What is this? Why is it crucial?



5. *What personal challenges are you aware of in terms of playing your part in this ministry team?*

6. *What role will being actively involved in a growth group play in enabling you to carry out this ministry well?*

flexible & fixed

Many of our ministry teams are focused on a particular age group or demographic, e.g. kids club, youth group, university ministry. That makes sense because each of these groups has its own particular needs. Each group has its own special challenges and opportunities. However, it's sometimes easy to recognise only what's **unique** about each group. It's easy to forget what **all people**, whatever age or stage, have in common. This section of the paper helps us think through what's **flexible** and what's **fixed** in our ministry to young people...



read **1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

1. What is *flexible* in Paul's approach to ministry?

2. What is *fixed* in Paul's approach to ministry?



3. Referring to the 'profile of a high-schooler' opposite, in what ways will ministry to these children need to be flexible?

4. In all of this, what needs to stay fixed in our ministry to these young people?



challenges and opportunities

Have another look at the 'profile of a high-schooler'. Think through the particular challenges and opportunities of this ministry...

what are some of the challenges?	what are some ideas for facing these?
what are some of the opportunities?	what are some ideas for making the most of these?

profile of a high-schooler

change

high-schoolers are going through many changes that affect their attitude, mood and self confidence from day to day, and over periods of time.

influence

for the first time in their lives teenagers are now more influenced by their peers than their parents.

the school environment

school is like the animal kingdom. It is survival of the fittest. High school is probably one of the hardest places to live out the Christian faith. However it's also a place where young people can be very receptive to the gospel.

fun

students usually have about six class periods a day. At lunch they don't want to go to another class, they want to talk and have fun.

sex, drugs and alcohol

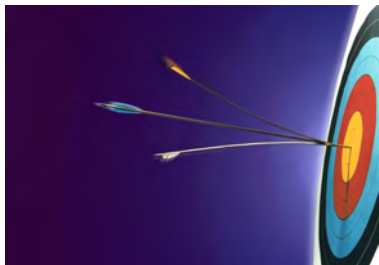
high-schoolers will inevitably be exposed to sex, drugs and alcohol. It all looks really exciting and most of the time their friends are all getting into it. Talk about these issues in the group regularly.

high school certificate

the final years of school can be pretty stressful for a lot of students. They often feel pressured by teachers and their parents (Christian parents can be big offenders).

who am I?

high-schoolers are trying very hard to figure out who they are. They're very conscious of their looks, intellectual capacity and sporting ability and wonder if any or all of these things determine their identity. We need to tell them that God loves them heaps just as they are and that through Jesus they can be children of God.



staying on target

Hopefully the previous page generated lots of discussion about gospel ministry to high-schoolers. On the *'flexible'* aspects of this ministry, there are certainly many **good** approaches possible. But it's when we come back to the all-important *'fixed'* aspect—the gospel of Christ—that we can get clearer about the **best** approach. We need to remember our key goals in seeing every person grow to maturity in Christ. We also need to keep thinking through the steps or pathway people travel toward maturity. In short, we need to stay on target with what the ministry is there for...

keeping it real...

Let's be honest high school ministry is really tough. It is both physically and emotionally draining and people who don't do it, quite frankly have no idea. There will be some weeks when you walk away feeling broken and empty. But there will be other weeks when you walk away on top of the world because a student has really understood what you were talking about and really got into it.

We have a remarkable opportunity in Australia to go into the schools. A big part of making the most of this opportunity will be prayer.

Pray Regularly that God will be working in the hearts and minds of the students in your group.

Another massive part of your ministry will be presenting the gospel clearly and effectively. Don't be discouraged when you only have 5 students coming to study God's word. But keep presenting the gospel. Sometimes you might get up to 16 students and other times no one will turn up. But keep presenting the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. It is better to save a few than none at all...

tips for the study...

To keep the study fresh alternate the style of study each term. So in term 1 the group might study *Two Ways to Live*, Term 2 look at a series of tough questions, Term 3 study 1 Peter and Term 4 look at how the gospel interacts with some contemporary issues.

Students tend to like topical stuff more than studying a book of the Bible. The trick is to pick up on the major themes of the book and then students will dig it just as much as the topical stuff. A variety of question styles is also a winner - multiple choice, physical challenge and True/False are all fair game.

Any ministry should set clear goals so that everyone involved knows what they're aiming for. The goals below flesh out the idea that we are called to present Christ to everyone and present everyone mature in Christ.

1. establishing the core...

To start a high school ministry you need a core group of keen Christians. The core could be as small as one or as many committed followers as you have. The way to establish the core is get to members from your youth group (if you've got one) to get involved. If you don't know any Christian students at the school make an announcement at assembly and some students will turn up. Obviously to start a group in a school you will need to negotiate with the principal.

2. building up the core...

Once you've gathered a core group it's time to start building them up. The main part of your meeting together has to be studying God's word but remember they have already had at least 4 class periods and have got a couple to go. The study should therefore treat God's word seriously but should also be fun and interactive—both mentally and physically where possible.

A lot of the time the study will need to be "dual action". That is, it will need to build up Christians but also clearly explain the gospel to non-Christians. The way to do this is to keep the study focused on the gospel.

3. reaching out...

The best evangelism happens through relationships. Therefore it will be through the core members inviting their friends that the best outreach will occur. It might be helpful to have a couple of 'invite a friend' days each term with a tasty gospel presentation.

4. connecting to youth group...

Lunchtime groups are a great thing. But the lasting fruit will be seen when the members of the group start coming to youth group where they can be further encouraged and cared for. A lunchtime group can even be a great launching pad for a youth group if your church doesn't yet have one.



If you haven't got a lunchtime group established. What needs to be done to make it happen?

If you have got a lunch time group going. What can you do to make it more effective?

getting equipped

High-schoolers often have many questions about things like sex, science, God, suffering and other religions. The resources listed below will help you to be able to deal with the tough questions you will face in this ministry. But they are also helpful resources to give to the students to read for themselves. It would be a good idea to give everyone in the group a 'two ways to live' gospel outline. It would also be a good idea to get a few copies of 'a sneaking suspicion' and 'hanging in there' to loan/give to students who want to know more about Jesus.

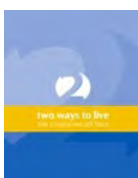


But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. **1 Peter 3:15a**



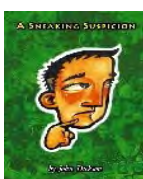
teaching & training resources

Many MINISTRY PAPERS are being developed to help in the area of equipping (e.g. personal evangelism, personal apologetics, youth group, etc). The resources below are also worth getting to know.



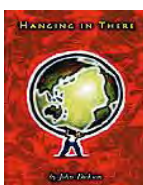
two ways to live (Matthias Media)

This is a well-known evangelistic tool. It clearly outlines the gospel in six easy points that teenagers can understand. This is a great resource to take students through. It helps them to clarify what they believe and it also helps them to be able to clearly explain the gospel to their friends.



a sneaking suspicion (Matthias Media)

This is an excellent introduction to Christianity for young people. John Dickson takes a look at things that matter to teenagers - things like life, death, relationships, sex, suffering, meaning and God - things that are important but which we don't often talk about in everyday conversation.



hanging in there (Matthias Media)

This is a great book for all young Christians. John Dickson writes in away that is very relational and tackles issues such as; God, you, the Bible, prayer, church, relationships, sex, feelings, doubts, love and, above all, 'hanging in there' as a Christian.

outside resources

special religious education (SRE)

The local high school in your area may have a full or part-time SRE teacher, funded by the local churches. It would be wise to liaise with such a person even before approaching the school about starting a lunchtime group. If the teacher has not yet taken this opportunity themselves, a partnership could be possible. But make sure that you're on the same page theologically and share the same goals for the group. Having a close connection with someone employed at the school could have significant benefits such as greater access to staff and students and to the schools resources as well.

inter school christian fellowship (ISCF)

ISCF is a part of scripture union. It may be helpful to register your group with scripture union. The main benefit of being associated with scripture union is that if you are about to start a group most schools know exactly what you're talking about when you mention ISCF. ISCF also has resources for lunchtime groups and provides your group with insurance cover. To register your group just go to the scripture union website and follow the links to ISCF.

child protection

safety first...

While the focus of this paper has understandably been on meeting the spiritual needs of the young people in our care, we must remember that we minister to the whole person and as such are concerned for their total wellbeing.

A significant part of this concern is ensuring that the Lunchtime Group environment is one of **uncompromised safety**. This is our "duty of care". Sadly this duty has not always been taken seriously in churches and some terrible stories of abuse have resulted.

Our Child Protection policy - "Breaking the Silence" - aims to protect both young people (first and foremost) and leaders from the terrible effects of abuse.

checklist

- do you know who to talk to at your church if you want to report an incident or ask a question about child protection?
- have you completed the Breaking the Silence training so that you are aware of your responsibilities for notification of abuse and the signs of abuse?
- do you have a copy of the Breaking the Silence brochures "Our Policy" and "Our Code of Conduct"?
- do you have a position description?
- have you filled out the working with children check?