

How to publicise your group

Student groups have the eternal problem of recruiting new members. Whether you're an existing group whose members have graduated or a new group just starting out, letting people know that you exist and what you're about is crucial. It will take a bit of work and a lot of enthusiasm, but there's no reason your group can't take off! Remember, SCM staff will also be happy to help you out with flyers, posters, visits and more.

Spread the Word Term card

Consult your copy of 'How to start and run an SCM group' for more tips on setting up your group and planning events. When you've done this it's a great idea to produce a term card or list of upcoming events. This will give people an overview of what's on and when, but also an impression of what the group is about. Think about how people are going to be able to find your term card – put it on notice boards, on your facebook group or website and on any flyers you distribute. Keep it updated and make sure you include info about venues for events, start times and contact details if people want to get in touch and find out more.

Flyers

You can order as many flyers as you like from the SCM office. They are post-card sized with a graphic on one side and a blank space on the back for you to print onto or fix labels to. It's also a good idea to produce some of your own. What's great about SCM is that every group has its own flavour, try to write a quick blurb about who you are (or aspire to be) as a group. Flyers should give some info about your group, when and where you meet and how people can get in touch.

Posters

Make sure you're visible around campus by putting up posters. Design your own or use the national SCM ones with a sticker saying when and where you'll be meeting. Also include a website or facebook link if possible.

Use the net

We are the social-networking generation so make sure you're online in some way. A facebook group is an easy and effective way to start – remember to ask friends to invite their friends. You may also want to think about setting up your own website, which will take a bit more effort – but is easier than you think. Some SCM groups already have great websites, why not talk to one of their members to find out more? Or contact the SCM office if you're not sure where to start. Most importantly, whatever you do, keep it up to date.

Word of mouth


Don't neglect this good old fashioned promotion tool! Tell your friends, or anyone you think might be interested about the new group. Inviting people may seem obvious but you'd be surprised what a difference it makes!

Freshers' Fair is fundamental!

Getting a stall at your freshers' fair is often key to promoting your group. Find out how you go about this by getting in touch with the officers in your students' union and they'll point you in the right direction.



This How to guide was written by Aileen Few when she was SCM's Resource Worker 2009-2010. She works as a chaplaincy assistant in Manchester.



Once you have a stall make sure that you have a clear sign to say who you are and stand in front of it actively offering flyers, sweets etc and engaging people. If your stall isn't eye-catching and you sit quietly behind it you may get lost in the bustle of freshers' fair.

Think about...

Where the students are

Every campus is different. If yours is compact then publicising might be easier, you'll know the key places for poster and flyering. If you have a sprawling city campus then think carefully about where to put up posters. Remember halls of residence too, and local churches.

Being enthusiastic

Freshers' week can be tiring and by 3.30 the banging music that the freshers' fair organised may be doing your head in, but if you can keep smiling you're a lot more likely to attract people to your group.

Getting support

If there are only a couple of you doing all the work then consider asking your friends for some help, even if it's just taking a poster to their halls or doing an hour on the stall. Your university chaplains may also be happy to lend a hand. And of course SCM staff can come and visit, though freshers' week is a busy time, so book them early!

Using the 'C' word

To some, making it clear you're a Christian group may seem obvious, but sometimes we are so aware of people's preconceptions of 'Christianity' that we shy away from using the word altogether. Actually, many students are looking for inclusive Christian groups to join and many more are curious. One group found that simply standing at the freshers' fair and saying 'Student Christian Movement?' to passers-by got more sign ups than trying to talk around the issue. Also, international students may not recognise you as a Christian group if it's implicit rather than explicit.

Remember, if people are really that put off by Christianity they probably won't join any way! Also remember that few people know what 'SCM' stands for, so use the group's full name when putting up signs etc.

Free food!

Quite simply, it works every time, so make sure you have food at your first event at least and make sure people know about it!

Having fun

Fellowship is a massive part of building Christian community. When putting together your term card remember to include social activities. Also, have fun while you're publicising your group: remember it's good news that you're sharing!

