

COMMUNITIES RESOURCES

How to start an SCM community

SCM communities come in all different shapes and sizes. There are university societies, and those based in chaplaincies or churches. There are also informal communities of students that get together occasionally, as well as online communities such as the SCM WhatsApp chat. There is no set structure that needs to be followed; it's about what works best for the community.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

If you want to set up a new SCM community, it's best to do it with others. We know from meeting students that there is often interest in inclusive Christian community. There may be other interested students at your church, the Chaplaincy, on your course, or in your accommodation. Reaching out to Inclusive churches and Chaplains in your area could be a great help in spreading the word and finding other interested people to connect with. Hopefully a few of these interested people will be willing to take on leadership roles. This will help with the regular running of the community and ensure you don't get burnt out trying to do it all yourself. If you're struggling to find others willing to help you run the community, there might be a Chaplain or Church leader who could help.

LOCATION

Once you've got a bit of interest, you need to decide where you're going to meet. Does the Chaplaincy have a space? Is there a uni building you could use? Could you meet in a local church? There are many good options, and it's about what works best for you and the students that will join. Once you know where you can meet, you can think about what time you meet. This is something you can be flexible with, and you can experiment with different days/times and see how it goes.

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PROGRAMME

Now you can start thinking about what your sessions will look like. Will it be more discussion based, or more reflective with time for liturgy and songs? Some combination of the two? If discussion, what topics will you talk about? We have lots of resources that you might find helpful, but what you folks explore together is up to you! You could take it in turns to lead sessions and Bible studies, and the Chaplaincy and local churches may have a wealth of good speakers. If it's more prayerful, who will lead it? Is there an existing liturgy or structure you could use?

You don't need to plan a whole term immediately (though feel free to go for it!), but having about a month of sessions planned with times, dates, and locations would really help people join at the start.

STUDENTS' UNION?

This is also a good time to think about whether you want to affiliate with the student's union. This process will be different at each SU, so contact yours to find out how it works. We encourage communities to consider SU affiliation where possible and appropriate. There can be some challenges, from whether you have enough members to affiliate, to whether it works if you have members from multiple universities. SU affiliation is likely to have benefits, such as money to run the society, use of SU buildings, and places at uni freshers fairs- great for advertising yourself to prospective members. Whatever you decide to do, we're always happy to work with you.

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AFFILIATE WITH SCM

An affiliation we always recommend, is SCM affiliation! At SCM we do not have any forms to complete for you to affiliate, and there definitely isn't an interview process! We are always happy to work with people around our shared values of progressive, student-led faith in action. If you're keen to build inclusive, affirming Christian community for students where everyone is welcomed and celebrated for who they are, we're in. If you're interested, get in touch with the staff team. We will answer any questions you have and help talk through the support we offer, and then that's it- you're an affiliated SCM Community. Welcome! We hope you'll love it here.

SPREADING THE WORD

Now you're up and running, it's time to start building your community. This is where it can be helpful to have SU affiliation so that you can easily have a presence at Freshers Fairs. There are also other ways you can help attract new members. Instagram is a particularly good way to spread the word, and SCM can help by sharing and promoting your page. Why not set up a WhatsApp community? There is also a directory on the SCM website that we can promote you on, and your Chaplaincy and local churches can help too.