

INVITING WELL

Learning to Make Winsome Invitations

Invitations are critical in campus ministry. They're key junctures where people decide whether to take a step deeper—by attending an outreach event, going to a Bible study, or choosing to follow Jesus—or stick to the status quo. We need to do all we can to make our invitations winsome and compelling, to cast our vision well and engage others.

Ineffective Invitations

- Awkward
- Using insider jokes or lingo
- Unclear Ask

Example:

I'm starting a Bible study next week because I want to help students seek the Lord. We want to create a safe place for Christians to gather amidst the hostile secular university. We want a place for mature Christians to grow, not just baby Christians. We need a diet of meat, not milk (1 Cor 3:2).

Winsome Invitations

- Personal
- Relevant
- Clear Ask (Always comes last)

Example: My time in college was a great opportunity to explore who I was and what I believed. I think students are open to exploring questions of faith, but the word "faith" can feel vague or strange. We're creating a safe place for anyone to explore faith in practical ways. Jesus has some great ideas for helping us grow and be transformed. Would you or anyone you know be interested in coming out next Tuesday night to look at Jesus' teachings and try putting some of them into practice?

3 Key Qualities of Inviting Well

Personal. The person's first sentences in the winsome invitation example establish some context for the invitation and give a glimpse into his or her past. To make this truly effective, it's best to spend a few minutes, at the very least, getting to know the other person and building some rapport before you launch into an invitation.

Relevant. Compared to the ineffective example, notice there's no insider lingo in the winsome invitation. It clearly connects with the other person's background as a student and gives him or her a reason to take this invitation seriously.

Clear Ask. Having given more of a context, the last sentence is a clear invitation. It offers a specific opportunity for the other person to get more involved. A clear invitation can look different in different contexts. Some personalities and cultures would benefit from a more indirect ask, but you can still communicate your intentions clearly.

Your Turn: Drafting Your Invitations

STEP 1: The Ask - Identify the next time you'll likely need to make an invitation. What specifically are you asking for?

STEP 2: Personal Connection - Brainstorm connections that make your invitation personal. If you don't have a direct connection or testimony, find something related.

STEP 3: Relevance - Think about what makes this invitation relevant and valuable to the invitee.

STEP 4: Putting It Together - Organize each part and practice to make sure your invitation flows.

Be Prepared for Different Responses. Not everyone will respond with a yes, and that's okay! Preparing yourself for the different kinds of answers you might receive can help you stay composed in the moment.

Coaches Corner

Here are some coaching activities you can try with your group:

- Give them sample invitations and ask them to identify what qualities are missing.
- Practice writing invitations together: identify a context for your next invitation and then make it personal and relevant with a clear ask.
- Role-play making invitations in pairs and debrief the experience. What if the person they're inviting is combative?
- Offer two types of coaching: Bright Spot Coaching, which focuses on the strongest part of the invitation and makes it shine even brighter, and Gap Coaching, which focuses on areas for improvement.
- Lead a Discipleship Cycle where they hear the word, respond actively, and debrief and interpret around making invitations.

Remind them that you're doing this to help you all accomplish the end goal of seeing more people following Jesus.

Learn More

Related Playbook Courses:

- [Sharing the Gospel](#)
- [Knowing Where Someone is Spiritually](#)
- [Following Up](#)

Related Resources:

- *True Story* by James Choung
- *Beyond Awkward* by Beau Crosetto
- *I Once was Lost* by Don Everts and Doug Schaupp

Visit the Ministry Playbook to learn more about leading, planting, and building Kingdom movements on college campuses: <https://www.theministryplaybook.com/>