



LOCAL CHURCH ACF SPONSORSHIP GUIDE

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE

Thank you for being willing to sponsor an ACF chapter. As the relationship grows between these students and your congregation, “sponsorship” will take on new dimensions and I’m excited to see what that will look like.

The ACF chapter is already engaged in activities such as Bible study, supper, and campus outreach. Your church family has a wonderful opportunity to come alongside the students and journey with them. As you begin this relationship, I’d like to provide a succinct guide.

1. Relationship Building
2. Spiritual Nurture
3. Campus Outreach Support
4. “Storage” & Distribution of Funds
5. Student Involvement in local church

1. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

As part of this journey, getting to know the students beyond names and faces is a seemingly basic and yet crucial enterprise. Make it part of your church culture to never let anyone go unnoticed. This will ensure that the students experience the joy of what it’s like to be known. And remember that food is ministry. Feed them. Pray for and with them. Invite them to your home, take them out for a mid-week meal. Break bread together. Even spaghetti goes a long way when it’s in community. Some will continue to attend your church only because they believe you love them, not because they love church.

2. SPIRITUAL NURTURE

This item is only listed second because relationship building is all too quickly forgotten. In reality, spiritual nurture and relationship building should go hand in hand. When the members of your church (whether during divine service, vespers, or Taco Bell) point students to Jesus in a very clear, biblical way, the students will more readily move from attendees to participants. Know that for many of these students, spiritual nurture will most effectively come in the form of one-on-one discipleship—you’ll see that more clearly as you build personal relationships with them.

3. CAMPUS OUTREACH SUPPORT

As part of the activity on their campus, the ACF students engage in outreach of various kinds. They need your support and your attendance to these events is very meaningful. Allow them to brainstorm the activity. Provide healthy questioning and facilitate idea development but leave the reins in their hands as much as possible so that they continue to see this area of

ministry as something they are capable of doing (with God’s strength, of course). After all, ACF is defined as a ministry by and for students. This is often an area where your church can easily contribute resources such as copies of Steps to Christ to share or a house in which to bake the cookies students will hand out during exam week

4. “STORAGE” & DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

There are already funds for the ACF chapter from the ACF-GCC department. I’ll send these funds to your church and ask that your treasurer reimburse the students for their expenditures upon collection of original receipts (for accounting purposes). The chapter will decide how these particular funds are used. They must fall in line with the activities outlined in this linked document.

5. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL CHURCH

Based on students’ skills/gifts/talents and as relationships have been developed, I encourage the local church to invite the students’ participation in the weekly happenings of the church. It’s helpful if your board/nominating committee can agree to allow students to participate without holding membership and that the church leadership also provide appropriate mentorship.

A WORD OF CAUTION

A helpful reminder is to consider this a reciprocal relationship: students benefit from having a church family which often becomes a home away from home, and the church is injected with new life and energy from student participation. Churches need to be careful of expecting too much from students and the tendency to grab on to them as the new lifeblood of the church. This can suffocate students and scare them away. The goal is mutual spiritual and relationship enrichment.

One way to help with the connection between ACF chapter and your church may be to have a church board appointed ACF Liaison to serve as a representative or advocate on the board. This person would also coordinate or manage mentorship for the ACF students, along with other support needs

Don Keele Jr., ACF & Young Adult Director
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