



Helping Freshmen Survive

Orientation to college life from a Christian perspective.

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People who do them swear by them. Many point to a Survival Conference as the event that significantly increased their ministry. Survival is a pacesetter and exciting kick off for the entire school year. It's fun, high - energy, relational, and helpful to Freshmen.

Must have components of a Survival Conference include Family Groups which accelerate friendships and Survival Tip seminars that cover the practical how - to's of adjusting to college life. Bonus elements include pizza buffet, cool Survival t-shirt, team building games and music. A \$10 to \$15 charge can defray costs as well as tell Freshmen that it's worth a registration fee! Leave them wanting more and itching to come back to BSU.

Scheduling

The ideal time for a Survival Conference is before the first day of class in the Fall semester. Picking the right date and time is crucial. Check with the university schedule. When do residence halls open? When is the university's orientation happening? When are band camp, sorority rush, and other extracurricular events involving a large number of Freshmen? While no date and time will be 100% conflict free, there will most likely be a window of opportunity when lots of Freshmen are hoping for something to do. Much can happen in a six-hour block of time. A short, focused period of time allows for quality control. Freshmen respond to events that are well done and don't require a major time commitment on their part.

Three Sample Survival schedules follow:

Sample #1

- 10:00a.m Let's Mingle
10:20 Family Groups
 (Small groups that help you make friends fast!)
11:00 All-You-Can-Eat - Pizza Buffet
12:15 p.m BSU/Church Opportunities
12:35 Survival Tips (Pick 3)
 Getting Along With Your Roommate
 Academic Survival
 Spiritual Survival
 Making Friends That Last
 Dating: NLU Style
 Making the Transfer From Another College
 Financial Survival
1:35 Family Groups
2:00 Family Feud
 (Groovy games with other family groups)
2:45 Family Groups
3:15 Concert

Sample #2

- 3:15 p.m. Meet at the BSU Center on Campus
 (Getting Acquainted Mixers)
3:50 Family Groups
4:15 Let's Munch!
 (Pizza Buffet!)
5:30 Survival Tips
 (Choose 3 seminars to attend)
6:30 Family Groups
7:15 Family Feuds
 (Crazy games with other family groups)
8:00 Campus News
8:30 Family Groups
9:30 Concert

Sample #3

Friday

- 6:00 p.m. Welcome & introductions. Meet at the BSU Center. Get acquainted mixers & share groups.
- 7:00 Leave for supper at a local church
- 8:00 Spiritual Survival Session
- 9:00 Leave for desert at local church
- 10:00 Return to the BSU for the Social Survival Session
- 11:00 Dismiss

Saturday

- 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Option 1 - Hiking trip
- 4:00 - Option 2 - Volleyball, softball and swimming

Sunday

- 9:30 a.m. Leave for breakfast at a local church
- 11:00 Attend the worship service at a local church
- 12:00 noon Leave for lunch at a local church
- 1:15 Dismiss at the BSU
- 4:30 Leave for supper at a local church and attend the evening service
- 7:15 Leave for the BSU and the final session
- 9:00 Dismiss

Promoting

Start early. Get as many names, numbers, and addresses from as many incoming Freshmen possible.

- *Have a team of students in place to visit churches, collecting names of incoming Freshmen and saying a plug for BSU and Survival.
- *Gather information on Baptist preference students from the ad missions office.
- *Collect information from students during summer orientation session.
- *Put a Survival brochure in each student and parent packet at Orientation.

Create a plan, in which students currently involved in BSU write, e-mail and call the incoming Freshmen throughout the summer. Creatively, collect names. Promote Survival as the single most important event during their college career. It may very well be!!!

Implementing

Invite 8 to 15 of your sharpest female students and 8 to 15 of your sharpest male students to participate as Survival leaders, hosts and hostesses for this important event. The leaders should arrive two days prior to Survival for training and additional promotional activities. Pair your guys and gals together to serve as "Mom" and "Pop" for the day. They will lead the pre-written family group sessions.

Train your leaders to greet and encourage every Freshman at Survival, but especially to learn the names and needs of those in their specific Survival family group. Sit by them during the large group sessions. Introduce them to others. Be responsible for their "happy-level" during Survival.

The Family Group material should be written to take the group from light to serious, from "What was your high school's mascot?" in the first session to "When did God become more than a word to you?" in the last family group session. Survival Tip co-leaders should be enlisted in advance as well. They should have time to plan during the training period. Successful Survival Tip sessions can happen in 15 - 20 minutes. Let your leaders know that the point is not to give them an in depth seminar, but to give practical tips leaving a positive taste for BSU and Christ.

Use your time with the leaders for outreach and enlistment too. Send them where the Freshmen are. When Freshmen are moving into the dorms, have your Survival leaders there wearing their Survival t-shirts, helping unload cars, and recruiting for Survival. When Freshmen are at band camp, your Survival leaders should stop by band camp as well. Prearrange with the

university's band director a time for your leaders to provide snow cones for their break. Have Survival brochures available to recruit Freshmen. The opportunities for recruitment are endless. Mobilize your Survival leaders to be visible and helpful during these two days.

Finally, on the day of Survival, keep it moving. Stay very close to schedule. And have a great time!

Retaining

Follow up is important in retaining those Freshman attending Survival in the BSU. Follow up needs to begin the day of your Survival conference. Before your leaders leave, have them write a postcard to each Freshman in their Survival family group. The BSU Director collects and mails the postcards.

Each Freshman should receive a visit from their Survival leader within two weeks. Getting a Freshman involved in something big, like your weekly worship time or lunch program, and something small and personal, like a Freshman Family Group, usually means successful retention. Of course, this means on-going opportunities for evangelism and discipleship.

This is meant to be an overview of a program in which I strongly believe. Survival is the most successful and helpful tool I've found for entrance into a Freshman's life.

God, help us as we attempt to reach the entering class of 2004.

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