

Compel Night

(bring a friend night)

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. Luke 14:23

What

This is a special night designed to 1, increase your groups visibility (and brand visibility), 2, mobilize students and leaders to bring a friend to church, 3, rally the support of the entire youth group for prayer, planning and implementing a special night, 4 potentially double the size of your regular youth group attendance, and 5, to see those who don't know Christ receive a firsthand presentation of the gospel.

There will be lots of preparation before the initial 6 week campaign ending with the special night itself. There will also be work after the event in both clean up, discipleship, follow up and continuing the mission. First we will look at the preliminaries.

⚡ Get permission Since you will have lots of VERY unsaved students, you will have to sell this concept to your senior pastor and board. Some things you will have to consider are: security, the appropriate room, the band or special music, food (serving, getting it, getting it paid for, clean up, and quantities), promotion and other things that you don't want to sneak up on you. Benjamin Franklin said an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. You will have drink spills, pizza in the pew racks and other problems associated with a "free buffet". Also think ahead about parking, effects on the nursery and possible problems do to vandalism (graffiti, theft, etc). This is your responsibility but you have leaders and students that will bear the burden too. You must remember that there will be people attending your event that have NEVER been to church before. It is always better to get the permission, blessing and assistance ahead of time. This will bring about a team effort from the entire church, not just the youth staff.

⚡ Bookings You will want to bring in special music. Sometimes a youth group will have members of a band or know someone in a band themselves. The band doesn't necessarily have to be a "Christian" band, but be sure to get the lyrics and songs from them ahead of time, especially if they are not predominantly Christian. Remember to keep them on a tight schedule. They work for you and you say when, what and how they do their thing. Don't let them run the show. Remember this event is for the lost. Do not have a worship band singing church songs. This will bore the majority of unsaved students present, thus the term special music. You want something out of the ordinary. In soul winning you

must start where the unsaved are and get them to where you want them to be. Worship would be appropriate during the altar time or “bringing in the net”. You should keep the band to intro music (playing while the crowd arrives) and one or two songs max. Don’t do more than two or you will have a club atmosphere and people will come and go as they please. This is still church. If you have more than one band, use them at different times. You may even consider a cutting edge Christian band. Who says DC Talk won’t play your youth group until you get a letter from them yourself.

You will also want to book a special speaker. This doesn’t mean that you won’t have a part of the service, you will MC. Just bring in an evangelistic speaker that has experience with speaking to “unsaved” crowds. A bad speaker can lose the entire event for you. Watch out for: someone that doesn’t relate, someone who rambles, someone too “churchy”, or someone long winded. The entire message should be no longer than 15 minutes. After that they will tune out and you will have a huge crowd control problem on your hands.

⚡ Finances The more you get you church and community behind this, the better. The church can take an offering to assist, the pastor and board can free up some extra money from the general budget, local business can give a charitable donation. You may even get them to buy advertising on your special program of events that night. They may even want to donate items for the give aways. Regular “outreach” offerings need to be taken during the youth service too. “You have not because you ask not.”

You will need funds to pay your speaker and musicians an honorarium. Don’t be stingy, winning the lost always takes sacrifices. A great event is worth the cost. You will also need to cover the expenses of the guests (food, transportation, hotel, etc.). If you have never entertained guests of this nature before, get help. Ask them directly or get advice from your senior pastor.

Free pizza draws unsaved students more than any other one single thing. So don’t run out. Make sure you have enough food and drinks for everyone including musicians, speakers, security, and your youth group. You can get families to donate a pizza (just work out the price for one and make it a gimmick). You can also work a deal with the pizza place and have them lower the price due to volume and/or advertising possibilities. Who says you can’t give a coupon for the local pizza place out in the program that night?

⚡ People You will need lots of people, adults and students. Here are some things to consider: security, sound technicians, video cameramen, people to run concessions, set up, tear down, clean up, altar workers, game helpers, prayer warriors, ushers, and so on. Depending on how intense and huge you make this special event, decides what particulars you will need.

⚡ Miscellaneous costs: security, hospitality room, advertising, printing, props, special decorations, special event T-shirt's, give aways, follow up packets, mailings, janitorial, and maybe even budget some nice follow up packets with cookies or an after event "appreciation party" for your hardworking staff.

⚡ The room. You will need to get a room that will be able to hold at least twice the number of regular attendees. You will also need to consider seating, visitors/information table, a place for concessions, ample trash cans and rooms for hospitality and private counseling. Keep in mind the lines that will form for those wanting food IMMEDIATELY following the event will coincide with people giving their lives to Christ. You will want to have those two areas away from each other. Also set your room up for the best security precautions. You will also need to get a room that can handle all of your media requests. You will want to use as much video, music and high energy activities that you can. Make sure your sound system and sound technician can handle your needs. If you have concerns ask the band or consult a professional sound technician.

Having thought this all out, now we move into the event itself. This is not a one time, one night event. It starts six weeks out and ends when you assimilate the unsaved student completely into your group. A common misconception is that this is a one night thing. This is wrong. If you look at it like this, don't do the event, it will be damaging at best and a spectacle causing irrevocable damage to the kingdom of God at worst.

Week 6

Start promoting the event. We'll assume you have already gotten permission, enlisted the help and burden sharing of your staff booked the musicians and speaker, enlisted lots of volunteer help and taken care of the miscellaneous things that need to be done ahead of time. Promotion for this event is two fold. In addition, it needs to be different than your usual ways of promotion.

Start announcing from the pulpit.

- * Talk about it to everyone you know inside and outside of church.
- * Make sure you have lots of things planned besides a band. Free food, inflatable games (especially from www.inflataparty.com), give away items, etc.
- * Put up special flyers. Have them professionally printed and make them bigger than 8 ½ X 11. Put picture of the band and speaker but remember the really emphasize the thing that will increase attendance the most - FREE PIZZA! A good flyer has all the right ingredients: who, what, when, where, why, how, and price. Be sure and include am or pm on the flyer and specific directions, not only to the church, but once on the church grounds, where they need to go.
- * Give your students a chance to buy in on this event. Don't just let them think they will be able to come and be entertained. You will need their involvement. At least they will bring a

friend or two at best they can pray, bring friends and help with the event itself (set up, clean up, etc).

- * Start a special prayer emphasis.
- * Put a special add in the church bulletin.
- * PRAYER NEEDS FOR THIS WEEK - for everyone to catch the vision.

Week 5

- * Continue the above.
- * Show special videos of the musicians and/or speaker during announcement time.
- * Let all the students know what the event is for and why. Do this through your youth news paper and special announcements. You may want to start walking them through the event. For instance, "In five weeks we are having a special night that will enable you to bring an unsaved friend to church. This will be a night geared toward the unsaved and will be like no other event we have ever had. We all need to be in prayer for this event daily. We will have flyers for you to help us promote this as well as special tickets you can give to invite your friends."
- * Take a special youth offering designated especially for the compel night. Emphasize that winning the lost, does incur a cost. Share the budget with them and let them prayerfully respond.
- * PRAYER NEEDS FOR THIS WEEK - finances.

Week 4

- * Continue the above.
- * Have cards ready on every chair before service. These cards will have blanks for unsaved friends names. Each student will fill in the first name of their unsaved friend(s). Don't use last names, because someone may see their name on the big list and be offended. Ask students to prayerfully consider who they will put on the list. Collect the cards and compile a big list for next week.
- * PRAYER NEEDS FOR THIS WEEK - God's will in leading us to invite the right people and that God would draw people to the event.

Week 3

- * Continue the above.
- * Have the big list ready. The big list is all the names of all the unsaved friends. This will be about three to four times the size of your regular group. Put them on a piece of butcher paper and display it at an appropriate time (a dry erase board will do nicely too). Have your special announcement regarding compel night and then reveal the list with all the names on it. This will create stir, because there really are a lot of unsaved people your students come into contact with. Close this time out with special prayer for them by name (you don't have to read them all). This is a graphic illustration of not only how many unsaved friends your collective group has, but gives them insight that the compel night coming will be huge in attendance.
- * Begin preaching special messages regarding the lost and our part in the great commission.

- * PRAYER NEEDS FOR THIS WEEK - Boldness for us in inviting the right people and making sure they attend.

Week 2

- * Continue the above.
- * Purchase and distribute bracelets for each student to wear. This bracelet serves two purposes, 1 to remind students to pray for this event each time they look at or notice the bracelet (a simple prayer like "Father, let compel night be a success" will do), 2 for unsaved students to ask, "hey, what's the bracelet for?" and the students to have an opportunity to invite someone to compel night.
- * PRAYER NEEDS FOR THIS WEEK - Father, let compel night be a success.

Week 1

- * Continue the above
- * A prayer and fasting chain. Have cards previously printed up for each meal leading up to compel night. One weeks worth of meals is 21 cards. Put the date and meal on each card. For instance Tuesday, September 7, lunch. Students will take the card and fast and pray during the appropriate meal. If you have more than 21 dedicated students that want cards, just double the amount and have two students fasting each meal. This way, you as a youth group will fast for a week leading up to the event.
- * Pass out tickets. The tickets should have all the information the posters do. Have them professionally printed and make them look sharp! If you hand out sloppy and poor tickets, they will not draw a crowd. This is the second impression of compel night the unsaved will receive (the first is the person handing it to them). This tells them about your group. Sorry tickets, sorry church, sorry youth group and they will consider the entire event a waist of time. Have at least enough tickets for each person to take five.
- * Rock the bells. In addition to the bracelet prayer, every time a bell is heard (signaling class changed, bells on store doors, telephones, pagers, etc) the simple compel prayer is offered up. This will increase prayer coverage and student anticipation.
- * PRAYER NEEDS FOR THIS WEEK - everything, cover it all.

The event

Set up time and demands depend upon how elaborate you get with your speaker, musicians, decorations and sound system. The more intricate, the more time needed - duh. The following call sheet will be done without times listed (you will want to include times on yours) and in chronological order.

- * Room set up. This includes chairs, stage, sound system, multi-media and concession tables. Also be sure to include follow up packets, service programs (AKA church bulletins) in handy places. Be sure to comply with fire and safety standards. It is great to let things spill over into outside especially if you have sports games, inflatable games (www.inflataparty.com) and other things, especially in warm weather.
- * Sound check. This should be done WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT. At least two hours ahead of time should be ample. This way if you need to get additional supplies you can.

Be sure and include a run through on your media elements. If you are using drama, let them practice on stage and using the necessary microphones.

* Security check. They should be on the premises at least an hour before the event, because you will have people show up early. Have a security chief in charge of the security team and let him act out on your previously planned security measures. Some things to be aware of: illegal parking, graffiti, people in undesignated areas (since the unsaved don't know the unwritten code of church buildings and where to and not to go, you should probably assume the worst), smoking, gang activity, problems around the nursery and people that come to the event but don't make it into the building at the right time.

Now we come to the actual event schedule. The service must be short and fast paced. Any grace given to the unorganized youth pastor will not be afforded by a house full of rowdy unsaved people. A rule of thumb: one, maybe two songs in a row, message kept to 15 minutes, make and keep the energy high (think pep rally), at the end of service you will want to keep the focus on what is happening spiritually but at the same time professionally serve the promised food and drinks. The entire service should be between an hour and an hour and fifteen minutes. Assuming your event starts at 7pm, the following is a rough outline of an event.

- 5:30 Meeting with leaders and staff. A short prayer, review expectations, get last minute help, raise the expectation level.
- 6:00 Have outside elements up and running: BBQ, sports games, inflatable games, etc.
- 6:30 Doors open up. Keeping them outside builds anticipation and lets you put the final touches on your decor etc.
- 6:45 Band begins to play. This is not so much a concert as it is background music. You may also show some videos while the band plays.
- 7:00 Wild video (sport video, count down, or other fun and high energy video will work)
- 7:02 Give aways. Be prompt, enthusiastic and fun! Start on time. Give away good items (a leather football, computer game or jersey works much better than CD's of Christian artists you donate because you don't like them or youth group T-shirts). If you aren't high energy, find someone who is. Have either the band or other wild music playing in the background. A live camera filming the action and showing it live on the video screens makes this part of the service really incredible.
- 7:10 MC introduces the night, briefly explains who you are, what you are doing and why. Also encourage everyone to fill out the raffle ticket on their chair (AKA visitor's card).
- 7:12 Drama
- 7:17 Video. You can use a bit more thought provoking one.
- 7:20 Have a student share their story (AKA testimony)
- 7:24 Special music
- 7:30 Last call for raffle. Announcements. Invite them back next week.
- 7:33 Games and crowd breakers. Have some good ones planned in advance. Band can play during this time.
- 7:40 Raffle winners.
- 7:45 Special music. This is a good time to transition from rowdy to a place where the speaker can take it.
- 7:50 Introduction of the speaker by the MC
- 7:51 Special speaker.
- 8:05 Draw in the net
- 8:10 Pizza for all. The band can pick up the tone from the altar time and bring up the tempo a bit. This is the perfect time for your regular students to mingle and invite others back for the next week.

- 8:30 Clean up

* Notice that offering and worship are omitted. Keep it that way.

The day after.

Each visitor gets a letter from the youth pastor. Be sure and make it personal. Sign your name (photo copied names = not important. You may also want to hand write a personal P.S. (i.e. hope to see you again next week). If you have too many letters, get your staff to help you write them.

Each commitment card gets a follow up packet in addition to the visitor letter.

Within a week, each person needs to receive a phone call from a youth group member. A SHORT personal and non threatening visit may also be appropriate.

The week after.

You have just completed a season of evangelism. Although evangelism is still important a new focus of your youth group should be discipleship. Your messages should explain the basic tenants of Christianity. A good review session is good for even the "best" Christians. Service should still be exciting. You should take an opportunity to explain everything you do (i.e. this is why we sing together as a group, this is why we give our money to God, this is why we bow our heads and close our eyes when we pray, etc.)

A good illustrated sermon would be a great follow up. It's a great thing to invite the unsaved to while you already have their attention. It's also a good follow up to a compel night. It will be a lot of work to pull two huge things off back to back, but remember, it's only a season and not an every week occurrence.

The second week after.

Time for another letter and/or phone call. Just see what's going on with them and invite them back for another service. If you have a special activity scheduled off the church grounds and not necessarily religious in nature invite them that., It is necessary to keep in mind that the event doesn't end with the service, but continues for a couple of weeks after until the discipleship season is fully entered into.