

Invitations into Community

Communal Evangelism Toolkit



COMMUNAL EVANGELISM | INVITATIONS INTO COMMUNITY

Remember and share in pairs

Think of your first few InterVarsity events. Who invited you? Why did you go?

Each of us received an invitation into this community, whether it was through an event, a flier, or an email. Someone reached out to you and invited you to belong. Now we have the chance to be those hospitable people to new and returning students. Let's grow in our intentionality and hospitality and embody God's heart of welcome to others by making invitations as a community.

What do invitations do?

1. Create a culture of belonging.
2. Connect us to newcomers.
3. Communicate to people that we are a community who values and sees them.
4. Help us take risks and see God move.

What are components of a hospitable invitation?

1. **Relational**: establishes connection and builds rapport. Relationship matters more than exact words.
2. **Genuine**: shows genuine desire for the person to come.
3. **Specific and clear**: includes where/when and relevant information about the event. Avoids bait and switch.
4. **Communal**: offers to go with the person and/or gives information about who else is going. Helps the person connect to the community.

Write your own invitation

Reflect on your own story and answer these questions:

1. What is InterVarsity? What felt need does your InterVarsity chapter meet on your campus and how does InterVarsity meet that need?
2. How have you personally been impacted by the InterVarsity event to which you are inviting them?
3. Why do you want others to check it out?

Now try it out!

In pairs, practice making invitations to each other by sharing a snippet of your story and why you want them to come. Don't worry about saying the right words; focus on connecting with the person and being yourself. Just don't forget to make an invitation!

WHEN TO INVITE

Now that we have practiced making invitations, let's discuss when to invite. What are opportune and natural times to make invitations? How does the community play a part? A rule of thumb: *Always be looking for opportunities to invite and remind people about upcoming events!*

Some good times to invite are:

When we see them on campus:

- At the table
- At an event
- After running into them
- If they ask, "What is InterVarsity?"

Right before events/hangouts:

- Send a text or email
- Message or tag people on social media
- Visit people in their dorm

Right after an announcement:

- Ask the person or the group you are with: What did you think of that? Want to go together?

Make invitations with announcements

You can use communal events to make 2-part invitations:

1. Start by giving announcements to the entire community.
2. Then chapter members can make personal invitations after the event is over.

Your announcements can be direct and informational, so that personal invitations can focus on being relational. This way, everyone hears the information about the event AND receives a personal invitation to come!

Announcement

Includes: Vision, Testimony, Logistics, Can be more direct and explicit

Example: College is a great time to freely explore who we are and what matters to us, but it can be daunting to engage issues of faith. We want to create safe places where anyone can read the Bible and try-on faith in practical ways, while growing in community and having a fun time. [Insert story] These small groups will meet at DAY/TIME and are led by ____ (SG Leaders stand up). We want everyone to consider going to the first small group. Sign up so we can get a headcount for food!

Personal Invitation

Includes: Relational invitation to individual or group, Offer to go together or connect to the right people

Example: Hey, did you hear the announcement about small groups? What did you think of that? (have conversation) I think you would really enjoy it because... (give a reason). If you're not sure, why don't you check out the first one with me and see if you like it? Come meet _____. S/he is going too. Do you think you want to come?

WHEN SOMEONE SAYS NO

It can be disappointing when people say no to our invitations. Let's remember that invitations are opportunities to connect and communicate that we care even to people who will eventually say no. Invitations are a chance to have a conversation and learn more about people's desires and interests. Even if you suspect that the answer is "no", still make the invitation and let them say "no".

When someone says no: Respect their decision. Thank them for considering and communicate that you still care about them. Their "no" need not jeopardize your relationship. Try to learn their reasons for declining and consider other ways to connect them to you and the community. Sometimes people say "no" because they genuinely cannot make it. Sometimes people say "no" and then later they say "yes". Sometimes people say "no" but they become good friends anyway. Don't let a "no" keep you from loving and building relationships with people. We cannot always tell how God is working in someone's life, but we can be faithful to invite them and love them regardless.

Next Steps

Communal: As a community, make sure every person on your contact list has someone assigned to invite them to the next event this week. Pray for your contact list and ask God for what you need to make invitations.

- If you have any announcements coming up, make a plan for how you will make invitations right after.

Individual: List the people you will invite and make a plan for how and when you will make invitations this week. Are there any informal events or hangouts you can invite them into? You can even text them right now!

SAMPLE INVITATIONS

NEW STUDENT OUTREACH/1ST LARGE GROUP INVITATION

Hey, it's been great to see you around AAIV. Weren't you at _____ last week? That was really fun! On Friday, AAIV is having our first large group/general meeting. This is one of my favorite events of the year because there is always good food, music, and people. In fact, when I was a freshman, I only went for the free food! But it changed my life, and I can't imagine college without my AAIV community or my faith. A bunch of us are meeting to walk over at (time/place). Wanna check it out with us?

GENERAL INVITATION

Hey, it's great to meet you. How do you like it here at (campus name)? AAIV is a great place to meet friends and explore faith. When I joined, I wasn't too sure about religion, but being in AAIV ended up being one of my favorite parts of freshmen year. I gained a community that inspires and encourages me, and I got to think about what matters to me. Whether you are a Christian or not sure about faith, you can have a place here. Plus we eat good food and have a good time. :) Would you like to check out (event name) on (day/time)?

SMALL GROUP INVITATION

I'm so glad that you have been getting to know folks. AAIV is not just here for orientation events, but we're hoping to be a group that is constantly inviting people to explore family and faith. I know that for me, I never really had many meaningful experiences with faith or church growing up. But AAIV gave me a chance to explore my questions for real and a family to do that with-- I would have gotten lost in the crowd without these brothers and sisters. I wanted to see if you'd want to come out to a family group where we're exploring the impact Jesus could have on who we are as students and Asian Americans. Danny and Chi (people the freshman knows) will be there also. What do you think?

GROUP INVESTIGATING GOD (GIG)/DISCIPLESHIP INVITATION

Hey, I'm so glad you have been checking out AAIV and getting more plugged in. We're starting a program called discipleship in a couple of weeks, and I wanted to see if you are interested. Discipleship is like a mentorship program where upperclassmen are paired with people to invest in them and talk about life, identity, and faith. Do you want to try it out with me?

CONFERENCE INVITATION

Hi, _____. How are you liking school so far? I hope you've gotten to know people in AAIV. Have you heard about fall retreat? I went last year, and I can't wait to go again. There was a speaker who inspired me through her story. I realized that God has a plan for my college years that is more than just my academic success. Being there with AAIV made it all the more meaningful - I didn't know people too well before the retreat, but afterwards I felt like they were family. I can't wait to go back this year - do you want to come too?