

Here are **5 outreach-focused team-based ministry strategies** that you can use to engage in intentional personal witness to Christ to your teammates:

Missional Prayer: The most basic thing (but definitely not the least important thing!) that you can do in witness to your teammates is to pray for them—and to especially pray regarding their spiritual condition. The Bible tells us that the Evil One (Satan) has blinded the minds and hardened the hearts of unbelievers so that they cannot see or desire God. Jesus tells us that the only way for our teammates to know Him is if God enables them to do so. Therefore, we must ask God to draw our teammates to Himself. “Get your feet wet” in witness to your teammates by beginning to pray for God’s work in their lives. Pray, too, that God will give you a greater passion to see your teammates turn to Him—and a greater boldness to engage in intentional personal witness to them.

2 PLUS (2+): This is a witness strategy that all student athletes who desire to be involved in intentional personal witness to their teammates can engage in. It works like this: Choose two (or more) teammates who are “not-yet” or “not-now” followers of Jesus, who you will commit 1) to pray for daily, 2) to spend time with regularly (to grow your relationship with them and hopefully to grow in greater understanding of where they are at spiritually) and 3) to look for and take opportunities to witness to these teammates through both words and actions. For support and accountability, it’s good to find someone (e.g. another Christian teammate) who will do this together with you.

Spiritual Conversations: If the above two things are happening—you can trust that God will be opening doors to having healthy and regular spiritual conversations with at least some of your teammates. You can help in getting to this place with them through sharing your own spiritual journey story, and by initiating conversations through making simple, non-threatening requests like “I’d love to hear about your spiritual journey...” or through asking questions like “Did you grow up going to church?” The goal here is not to give them a lot of “content”, but rather, for you to learn more about them, build trust with them, and grow curiosity within them for wanting to learn more. A great place to be “in the water” of witness to your teammates is that of them knowing that you’re a follower of Jesus (and them being ok with that) and you having healthy and regular spiritual conversations with at least a few of them.

GIG: This is a great witness strategy for student athletes who are already engaged in intentional personal witness to their teammates and have begun to have regular spiritual conversations with a few of them. If your witness grows to this place, this is a great opportunity to invite these teammates (but not necessarily the entire team) into a Bible study which will allow them to have a more structured (and hopefully safe and helpful) opportunity to ask questions, learn what the Bible says about who Jesus is and what He’s done, etc. This kind of small investigative Bible study is called a GIG (Group Investigating God). GIGs may evolve into Team Outreach Bible Studies (TOBS) if those involved feel that other teammates could benefit from being involved in the Bible study as well, and are open to inviting them into it. But even if it doesn’t, it is an intentional and effective witness strategy that gives some student athletes the opportunity to be more effective in their witness and desire to reach more teammates. Try it. It works!

TOBS: Some student athletes will have both the desire and opportunity to be engaged in witness to their entire team. In these situations, employing the witness strategy of a Team Outreach Bible Study (TOBS) may be the most effective way of reaching the most teammates. This strategy should not be employed by you in place of intentional personal witness, but rather, it should help to give you and other Christian teammates more opportunities to engage in witness to your teammates. In fact, it is our desire to see all TOBS leaders influencing and leading other Christians on their team into greater witness (utilizing all of the witness strategies above, including TOBS) and working with them toward reaching “every teammate”.

For more information or resources for engaging your team/teammates in witness to Christ, contact: Denny Brogan, Athletes IV Associate National Director at denny.brogan@intervarsity.org