

influencers

turning your school
upside down from
the inside out

Chris Evans and Matt Summerfield

A handbook for Urban Saints





URBAN SAINTS

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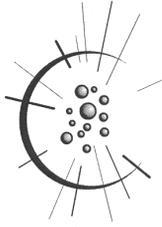
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Background

Chris Evans is Co-ordinator of the St Albans and Harpenden Christian Education Project (STEP). STEP is a collaborative local church initiative designed to see Christianity relevantly and positively represented in secondary schools. Its activities break down the spiritual/secular divide and model and encourage a relevant and active Christianity which is as much needed in the classroom and the corridor, as in the church. STEP seeks to present this Christianity to all pupils, challenging them to live life the way the creator intended.

For more information go to www.stepschoolswork.org.uk

Matt Summerfield is Executive Director of Urban Saints. Since 1906 Urban Saints (formerly known as Crusaders) has been reaching out to children and young people with the good news of Jesus Christ. It is passionate about working with children and young people who have no church connection, helping them realise their full God-given potential as they journey from childhood to adulthood. Young people connect with the movement in a variety of ways, including weekly youth groups, special events, holidays, community projects and training programmes. These activities are led by thousands of volunteers who are comprehensively trained and supported in order to help them work effectively and achieve the highest possible standards of youth work practice. While much of Urban Saints' work is in the UK and Ireland, increasingly it is helping indigenous churches within countries in the developing world to set up and run outreach work among unchurched children and young people.

For more specific information go to www.urbansaints.org

Introduction

Congratulations! You are taking your next step in a journey that draws you closer to finding out who you are and what you are living for. This book will help you to be better prepared to be a Christian in your community. By your community we mean the places where you hang out, especially your school or college. This book will prepare you for the challenges ahead of you in this life. As you read this book take your time and enjoy both learning and doing.

Throughout history God has always moved through influencers. Influencers are people who bring radical change from within. They're in the world but not of this world. They're people of God's kingdom bringing His good news to everyone. The Bible is full of influencers who changed history. Daniel and Esther were young and exciting people. But what makes them different – what makes them such an exciting part of God's story – is that they were willing to be used. In today's world God is looking for influencers – young people who are willing to be used by God in the places they find themselves. Are you willing to follow in Daniel and Esther's footsteps and believe that you were 'born for such a time as this'?

Influencers is designed to be both fun and challenging. We hope this book will not only make you a better witness but it will encourage and challenge some of your views. Exploring the ideas in this book will prepare you to be God's influencer in your community. This book doesn't have all the answers and may even leave you with new questions. Don't be scared of the questions. Embrace them and chew them over. We are convinced that questions are good; questions suggest that God is bigger than our understanding. Questions help us maintain a sense of perspective and wonder. Treasure the questions!

As you read this book you will realise that there are several things you need to do to complete each chapter. Each chapter

is divided into sections. Each section includes tasks you need to perform, things you need to think about and lots of stuff to chat about with a mentor. 'What's a mentor?' you may ask. In order to get the most of *Influencers* you need to have someone older than you in your church who can help you as you work through this resource. We've included some information on selecting a mentor in the next section. We were never supposed to be influencers by ourselves, so make sure you get someone to walk with you on your faith journey.

Remember, being an influencer isn't about passing or failing. It is about growing and influencing. Give everything a go!

We hope you enjoy this opportunity!

Chris Evans and Matt Summerfield

Session 1

Catch the Vision

Session aim:

The aim of this session is to help you see the need for God to be at work in your community, through you. God has a vision that every generation will know Him, experiencing His very best life both now and for all eternity. He has called you to get involved in seeing that vision become a reality.

Get motivated!

Have you ever imagined what would happen if Jesus walked the corridors of your school or college today? If the Holy Spirit moved through the vents? If God was respected as the one and only King of the playground?

Well, Jesus might not be physically walking the corridors of your school or college today, but guess what? *You're* there! And He wants to walk the corridors through you, impacting the lives of everyone you meet. Not only that, but you have the Holy Spirit in you and if God is King of your life then there's fantastic news . . .

Be honest! How does it feel to think that God wants to use you to make a difference in your community?





. . . God's kingdom can be built in your community through God at work in you!

It's highly likely that you have mixed feelings about this challenge. Perhaps you're feeling excited about the idea that the creator of the universe wants to work through you, or maybe you're feeling quite scared, wondering what people will think.

For this reason, it's so important that we first catch God's perspective on the need, understanding His vision for the world and His clear call for us to get involved.

If only we could get God's perspective on our situation. Imagine Jesus walking to school or college, turning the corner and seeing the playground full of young people. What would He say?

○ _____

Read Matthew 9:36–38 and sum up what you think Jesus was feeling when He looked at the people as they walked by.

○ _____

○ _____

The image of sheep and shepherds is probably an alien one to us. Imagine Jesus using a more relevant phrase today, e.g. a class without a teacher, an army without a general, or a team without a captain. The point was that the people were lost – they weren't experiencing *real life*. Deep down all people are wondering about their purpose and value, and they will only find the answer to these questions when they come to know their creator personally.

In what ways do you see your friends struggling with life today? Where do they need hope and real life?

○ _____

○ _____

The apostle John was one of Jesus' closest disciples. He spent nearly three years watching what Jesus did. In John's latter years he wrote one of the Gospels and three letters.

Have a look at the following passages and see if you can summarise the key message that John is trying to communicate about the mission and vision of Jesus: John 3:36, John 5:24, John 6:47, John 10:10 and 1 John 5:11-12.

○ _____

○ _____

God has a vision that '... each generation can set its hope anew on God, remembering his glorious miracles and obeying his commands' (Psalm 78:7).

It might be difficult to imagine your non-Christian friends deciding to set their hope on God, in awe of His love and power and obediently following Him. But that really is God's passion and He wants to make that vision a reality through you. Think about it! God wants to involve you in His master plan to see every generation come to know His best life, both now and for all eternity.





If you're still not sure then read these last words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8, which He spoke to His disciples before returning to heaven.

Matthew 28:18-20 tells us:

1. Jesus has all authority over and (verse 18)
2. He commands us to go and (verse 19)
3. We must teach people to God (verse 20)
4. Jesus promises to be with us (verse 20)

Acts 1:8 tells us:

1. Jesus has given us His
2. We will become His

So with all this in mind, why not start by thinking about the ways Jesus might want you to get involved in meeting the needs of people in your community? How could you start to be a witness in your community among your friends, teachers, etc.?

Get active!

Through the coming sessions we'll be looking at how you can become the most effective influencer for God. It may all seem a bit scary at the moment, but be assured that God is with you and will help you every step of the way.

As we come to a close in this session, why not take a moment and answer the questions below?

What have you learned about the needs of people who don't know God?

○ _____

What have you learned about God's vision for every generation?

○ _____

What have you learned about who God has called to see the vision become a reality?

○ _____

How are you feeling right now about that challenge?

○ _____

Take some time to pray honestly before God, asking Him to help you to start to make a difference in your community and see the dream of God realised.

Note: this kind of Christianity comes with a warning. Make sure that your activities respect not only the school, but the individuals involved. Posters telling people they are going to hell can seriously ruin the Christian's voice in school. Run your ideas past your mentor before doing them.

To finish, turn to 'Your Key Learning Points' and write down a few sentences to summarise the key things that you have learned from this session.

