

local groups

what are they all about?

You may still be wondering what CMF is all about. Well, there are CMF student groups in more than 25 English, seven Irish, five Scottish and two Welsh medical schools, and a growing number of nurses groups.

Church? CU? CMF?

The CMF group is not a church, nor is it the same as a Christian Union (CU).

We think that it's vital that all Christian medical and nursing students are committed to their local church, and to their CUs. The aims and tasks of a CU are very similar to some of CMF's aims, and CMF groups can be seen as faculty sub-groups of a CU; part of the wider mission of a CU, praying for and reaching your friends with the gospel. As a student, CMF is complementary to church, not an alternative.

CMF is for life

Medicine and nursing are vocational; nearly all of us will go on to be doctors or nurses. And so CMF is not just a sub-group of CU, it is also a professional group. We want to integrate fully our faith with medicine, to be Christian doctors or nurses. Becoming Christian healthcare professionals is a career-long process and it's important to understand and practise our vocation in a Christian way from the very beginning.

So the CMF group exists as both a faculty sub-group of the CU, while you are at university, and as a professional group from the beginning of your career in medicine or nursing and beyond.

life-on-life

Real discipleship happens as we are involved in people's lives – 'life-on-life discipleship' if you like. It is key to involve local doctors and nurses. We encourage you to get to know them, invite yourselves to their homes, eat all their food and bleed them dry! Seriously.

Anyway, each group is different in the way they organise themselves, so here's a few examples of what groups get up to in a typical term:

BIRMINGHAM

- **Week 1:** Freshers' welcome curry – getting to know the new freshers
- **Week 3:** Junior doctors' evening – some F1s and F2s come back and have a Q&A on life as a junior doctor, how we can best prepare, any tips etc
- **Week 5:** Day away – go away for a Saturday, have a speaker for 2-3 talks, worship and prayer plus fun, games and food
- **Week 7:** 'Life Matters' – a one off event aimed at Christian students who are not medics, to think about a biblical approach to medical ethics and what it might mean for them as patients, friends, etc
- **Week 9:** Saturday breakfast – prayer

CAMBRIDGE

Weekly

- **Bible study:** applying God's Word to our lives
- **Prayer:** praying for CMF, our friends, the wider world etc
- **Sharing:** discuss challenges/encouragements we've faced as medical students and opening the Bible to see God's wisdom on such issues

- **Evangelism/discipleship:** The Human Journey course
- **Weekly prayer meetings** (Monday mornings 8-8.30am): Bible thought and prayer for the week ahead

Evangelistic events

'Talks @ One': a series of three evangelistic talks

- **Week 3:** God, pain and suffering
- **Week 4:** Where is God in natural disasters?
- **Week 5:** Mind, brain and the search for God

SOUTHAMPTON

Weekly

Prayer meetings, both at the hospital and on campus

Monthly

On the first Monday of the month a local consultant and his family welcome us into their home. They cook us a delicious meal and a guest speaker talks on a topics such as:

- The transgender agenda
- When doubts arise
- Sharing faith with patients and colleagues

Why it works?

First, CMF groups do not replace church or CU, they are entirely complementary. We think it's really important to stress this early on, so we keep our events well-spaced yet regular and always try and make them suitable to invite our non-Christian friends to.

Second, our local links with doctors and nurses have meant mentoring, support, and sometimes subsidies on our conference costs!

SHEFFIELD

Month 1

- **Prayer breakfast:** Praying for the academic year and freshers

Month 2

- **Freshers' welcome brunch**
- **Welcome back meal**
- **Weekly meetings start:** The Human Journey

Month 3

- **Evening meeting:** What is a person? – discussion group led by local doctor
- **Evening meeting:** When does life begin? Thinking biblically about contraception
- **Bonfire night:** Fireworks and bonfire at a doctor's house, people are encouraged to bring friends along

Month 4

- **Christmas events:** Meal at a doctor's house, sometimes joint with graduates CMF
- **Carol singing**

OXFORD MEDICS

Dinner discussions

Every other month at a local doctor's house. They provide a lovely home-cooked main and we all bring puddings and drinks to share. The discussion topics are inspired by the things the students want to discuss and include:

- Working abroad as a Christian medic/student
- Living with integrity in seasons of ambition
- The moral dilemma of IVF
- Assisted dying
- Hierarchy within healthcare

Other events

- **Brunches:** in intervening months, typically at a student's house.
- **Annual CMF carol service:** we organise this in association with the medical student society. We involve doctors, healthcare

workers and students in all the readings and prayers, and have a choir. It's a great event!

- **Thought for the week:** this has worked really well in keeping our Facebook community active. We ask a student to share a brief thought on the wall and it's sparked some really interesting conversations.

Both medical and nursing students are welcome to groups, however sometimes they will meet separately. This will either be for geographical reasons (and some schools are medical or nursing only) and sometimes to cover more specialised topics. Nursing-specific groups are growing by the day. Here's an example of a group that regularly meets specifically as student nurses and midwives.

OXFORD NURSES/MIDWIVES

The group meets every month at a local midwife's house. Local graduate midwives and nurses usually provide a lovely home-cooked main and students bring puddings to share. The discussion topics are inspired by the things the students want to discuss and have included:

- New technologies
- How to thrive in your faith as a Christian nurse or midwifery student
- Compassionate care Bible study
- Socials with sharing and prayer

In between monthly meetings, the group has arranged some socials such as a Sunday afternoon walk, as well as joining in regional CMF breakfasts and meetings. Plans have been made for a joint social with local CMF medical students. They also have initiated the 'Once' Encourager scheme (see below) so Encouragers also meet up with their student.

'Once' Encourager scheme

The 'Once' Encourager scheme is an initiative being introduced to CMF nursing groups. The Encourager is an older 'buddy' or 'mentor' in the same discipline as them (nursing or midwifery, but could equally be medicine) who commits to pray for them. Older students can be Encouragers of younger students as well as being Encouraged themselves, with a graduate being their own Encourager.

The following is the suggested minimum commitment requested of the Encourager, to allow for even busy graduates to get involved, lasting three terms:

- **ONCE a week:** pray specifically for the student you're encouraging
- **ONCE a month:** text, message or phone your student
- **ONCE a term:** meet in person to chat, encourage and pray

The need was felt by some (particularly younger) students to have someone they could phone or message when in need of support or prayer in between the monthly group evenings, who would understand the work situation they were in. By this scheme we are hoping to meet that need and for our students to know they are cared for and prayed for regularly. ■

We hope this has given you a feel of what can happen locally. To find out who your local student links are visit www.cmf.org.uk/students/cmf-local-contacts