

# local groups: mission accomplished!

be bold, be faithful, be encouraged. **Emily Stainton & Sajan Khullar** gives tips for mission

## St George's, University of London

It's been exciting to be part of mission weeks at St George's, University of London – I have attended one and planned two. Each university varies (we're mainly healthcare sciences) and so mission weeks will look different. But what are the fundamentals to making events flourish? How can we get people engaged and involved? Here's what worked well for us at St George's.

### early, prayerful planning

God gives us this amazing privilege to do his work, and he has been so faithful to us. We started planning five months early so that we could be praying for guidance and provide the right speakers, topics, venues and finances. We struggled to find speakers, but during that waiting time we really had to trust that God would bring everything together. And he did – the final timetable was way better than we could have imagined.

### prayer meetings

We held prayer meetings daily at 08:00. It was an opportunity to give all our plans over into God's hands and rely on him. It was amazing to see our prayers answered throughout the week, and to praise him together. What a wonderful way to start each day!

### teamwork

We needed to get the whole CU behind our plans. When the CU understands the importance of mission and sharing the gospel at university, its members will be so much more willing to help practically and invite their friends. In the preceding weeks we had talks to encourage and equip our



members. Members are crucial for follow up to read the Bible with non-believers.

### publicity

We created a theme for the whole week ('Real Life?') and invited clinical speakers. This linked all our talks and events together. We advertised via Facebook events, posters and even a video to catch people's attention. A 'text-a-toastie' event the week before was

great to gain people's interest and spread the word. We also found that an official mission week launch at CU (complete with a countdown and party poppers!) really helped build excitement within the CU.

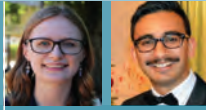
### know your uni and know your friends

We've had some trial and error over the years, but it's all helped us discover what works. We know that free food and daytime events on campus work best at St George's. It's so important to know your friends and the struggles that they have and the things that they ponder over – the gospel can speak directly into that. We've identified the idols and questions prevalent on our campus so that we can really target our talks.

### invite people to read the Bible

Following on from mission week, we want people to be reading God's word with a CU member, and we want them to come to know Jesus for themselves. We hold weekly follow-up sessions looking at Luke's gospel (Uncover Luke), and we're praying for everyone that comes along, that God may work in their hearts.

Don't forget to order your missions resource pack from the CMF Office in advance of the event. [students@cmf.org.uk](mailto:students@cmf.org.uk) ■



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## Keele

Starting university is daunting. Starting university as a Christian is a further challenge. Keele University is near the deprived city of Stoke-on-Trent in Staffordshire. It has a small medical school with a number of small societies such as our CMF group. We are not disheartened by our size; if anything, we are strengthened by it. Over 20 Christian medics at Keele are involved in CMF and we know each other well, like family.

We are blessed by the presence of Janet Lefroy, a local GP, who supports us in many ways. She recently hosted a 'freshers' pizza evening' and a Saline Solution course. These gatherings provide great fellowship and learning.

It's not easy when you start your clinical years. You're thrust upon a ward, you are told to get involved, and suddenly you find yourself desperate for a tutor to hold your hand as you approach your first patient to take a history. One morning when taking a history, a patient was talking about church and she asked about my faith and we talked about how valuable faith is. She asked for prayer, so I prayed on the ward for her.

Later a doctor who overheard this, revealed to me his Christian faith. We identified other Christian colleagues and discussed starting a prayer group at the hospital. I realised that although it can be hard to find out if colleagues are Christian, the best way is to talk about your faith, so allowing others to feel welcome to do so.

Soon, a meeting at the hospital chapel was organised – students, doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants, porters were praying and worshipping together. God provided when we were desperate for a Christian hospital group. Since then, the group has blossomed, providing a monthly time of fellowship with colleagues.

In senior clinical years, 100 students move to a lovely town called Shrewsbury near the Welsh



border – far from the buzz of university life. I shadowed a vascular surgeon during my first week there in Year four. On top of the worry of moving is the issue of finding a new church. I was recommended a church. To my surprise, the vascular surgeon I shadowed was there the first Sunday I went. I knew my prayers for a Shrewsbury CMF doctor had been answered. The CMF website's 'workplace links' is another place to find local CMF members to build your community.

Shrewsbury Christian medics shared dinner with the surgeon and other local Christian doctors. We have studied *The Human Journey*, which covers workplace-relevant topics often not covered in church.

I look back at the last few years at Keele and see that God has transformed us. We shouldn't wait to feel 'ready', nor hesitate because we feel uncomfortable. We need to be bold, pray and go forward. God provides the tools for the job along the way and does so according to his plan. ■