

BACK TO SCHOOL PLAYBOOK



ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
YOUTH MINISTRIES

“School and relationships are the grounds on which every student processes their faith. The strategic and intentional youth pastor will harness this reality for maximum Gospel-impact.”

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Welcome!

I am excited about the Back-to-School Playbook from Assemblies of God Youth Ministries! School and relationships are the grounds on which every student processes their faith. The strategic and intentional youth pastor will harness this reality for maximum Gospel-impact. This is true no matter what kind of school a student attends—public or private school, online school, homeschool, or dual-enrollment in college. As youth pastors and leaders, we must disciple our students to live out their faith at school and through their friendships.

Scripture makes our duty as youth pastors and leaders clear; our responsibility is to equip the students in our church to do God's work (Ephesians 4:11-12). God's work is to bring all of humanity back to Himself through Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). This is the Gospel! So our work as youth pastors and leaders is to disciple our students to share the Gospel with their school and their friends—to be Christ's ambassadors.

The Back-to-School Playbook is designed to help you achieve this discipleship goal. If you follow this playbook, it will be the greatest youth ministry growth strategy you'll ever experience. You will be empowered to have a mission-driven youth ministry. Your students will become Campus Missionaries and start Youth Alive Movements in their schools and communities. Your youth ministry will never be the same!

We are praying for you!



Lee Rogers
National Student Evangelism Director
Assemblies of God Youth Ministries



AG YOUTH

Back-to-School Playbook

Created by Matt & Lizz Clark

INTRODUCTION

A new school year is an opportunity for students to reset, refocus, and recommit to reaching their friends for Jesus. This playbook is designed to help you incorporate a mission-driven approach into your yearly youth ministry calendar through Youth Alive. Youth Alive exists to empower your students to share Jesus on their school campus, in their neighborhoods, and with their friends. You can disciple your students in God's mission and set them up for success by empowering them through challenges and messages designed to inspire and equip them to share the Gospel. This playbook should be used **every** back-to-school season to create a Gospel-sharing culture in your youth ministry. In the appendix you will find a multi-year set of resources to help you diversify your preaching, teaching, and discipleship from year-to-year.

SUMMER

Preparing Students for a Gospel-sharing School Year

Matthew 9:37-38 – “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Throughout your summer activities (camps, missions trips, etc.), intentionally look for those who have encountered God and may be stirred to make an impact on their campus in the upcoming year. Sometimes the Holy Spirit can move in a way that stirs a passion in students' hearts for their generation. This is not about finding perfect students—it's about identifying those through whom God wants to work. Challenging them to share the Gospel at school and beyond is the best way to foster that passion, and Youth Alive gives them a practical way to share Jesus. It's a time to pray, plan, and prepare for what God will do on their campuses in the upcoming school year.

Youth Alive Action for the summer:

- > Keep a detailed track of students who encounter God over the summer months.
- > Begin to personally challenge students to share the Gospel with their friends and to consider starting a Youth Alive Movement at their school.
- > Encourage students to pray for the upcoming year and what God might have them do.
- > Begin sharing stories of students who have made a difference in their schools during the last school year to create excitement.
- > Solidify your back-to-school youth ministry calendar for maximum missional impact. Be sure to include a back-to-school sermon series that challenges students to share their faith, any Youth Alive one-day events happening in your area, See You at the Pole, and other components that will challenge your students to share the Gospel.

LATE SUMMER

Equipping Students to share the Gospel

2 Timothy 1:7 – “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline.”

Use the last month of summer to train students to share the Gospel. This will help them get a personal connection to talking about faith with the world around them, and it will be important as the school year begins. The goal is to help them develop personal skill and ability in sharing their faith so they are ready to make an impact when the school year begins.

Youth Alive Action for late summer:

- > Get *Alive in 5* booklets from www.myhealthychurch.com, or through a Youth Alive Missionary or Coordinator.
- > Teach students how to share the Gospel using *Alive in 5*.
- > Schedule an *Alive in 5* training with your Youth Alive Missionary or Coordinator, or your your DYD.
- > Challenge students to start a Youth Alive Movement at their school this year—a Youth Alive Club, Prayer Movement, or a Huddle. Download materials to begin training students for this at www.youthalive.com, or contact your Youth Alive Missionary or DYD to schedule a training.
- > Create a support system (group chats, online devotionals with each other, or accountability partners) to keep students encouraged.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEASON

1 – Igniting a Passion for Evangelism

Romans 1:16 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

As you prepare your students to head back to school, intentionally gear your services to create a passion for reaching the world around them. A new school year can be a great reset to enter in with a new passion for reaching friends, starting a Youth Alive Movement, or organizing outreaches. This is a pivotal time as students prepare to go back into their mission field—their school. It’s the perfect time to ignite a fresh passion for sharing the Gospel, equip students with practical tools, and set the tone for a spiritually impactful school year.

Youth Alive Action for this season:

- > Preach/teach about the importance of sharing the Gospel. We recommend a 4–6 week sermon and small group series that begins around the time school begins and concludes with the week of See You at the Pole. Use this series to challenge and develop students to be Campus Missionaries—students who share Jesus. You can write your own series, or use one of the great message series available through Youth Alive:
- > *God So Loved...* (download at www.youthalive.com)
- > *I Dare You* (download at www.youthalive.com)
- > *Alive in 5* (download at www.youthalive.com)

- > Spend time in service praying specifically for local schools in your community.
- > Have a back-to-school event focused on students inviting friends and have a clear communication of the gospel.
- > As you move through the message series, challenge students to become Campus Missionaries. A Campus Missionary is a student who commits to share Jesus. Have a Campus Missionary commissioning—commission students to enter their schools as Campus Missionaries.
- > Challenge students to start a prayer list of friends they want to share the Gospel with—a “5 Friend Focus.” Download and print 5 Friend Focus cards from www.youthalive.com or have students create a prayer list by making a note on their phone.
- > Help students who want to start a Youth Alive Movement (a Youth Alive club, prayer movement, or huddle) by meeting with them regularly to help them plan, prepare, and launch. Use the Youth Alive Movements guides downloadable from www.youthalive.com to help you.

2 - Make Prayer a Priority

Philippians 4:6 - “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.”

The back-to-school season is the perfect time to emphasize the power of prayer in students’ lives. As they navigate the challenges of a new school year, encourage them to deepen their personal and public prayer habits. Teaching students to pray for their friends, school, and community will empower them to look at things differently and expand their faith for God to move. Encourage students each week to prepare their hearts for See You at the Pole. If there isn’t a SYATP already planned, work with students in your local schools to organize one!

Youth Alive Action for the month:

- > Be sure to emphasize the importance and power of prayer as you move through your sermon series. Invite students to the altar each week to pray for their friends and their school
- > Help students plan for See You at the Pole. Consider holding a rally for your youth group on the Sunday night before SYATP, or join with the local youth network (if one exists) to hold a rally.
- > Show your support by bringing donuts/coffee etc. to local See You At The Pole groups

MID-FALL

Mission Minded Outreach

Matthew 20:26-28 - “ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

This is a great time to organize outreaches in your community and in your schools. These can be designed to meet practical needs while at the same time help your students share the Gospel. These outreaches could be something as small as collecting a specific item for an organization, or as large as an entire community event. The best outreach is the one that fills a need in your specific area. If your students have gotten a Youth Alive Movement started (Youth Alive Club, Prayer Movement, or Huddle), consider empowering those Movements to do the outreach in school. Don’t be afraid to get creative and think outside of the box to see what God is asking your students to do. The goal this month is to get students

thinking outwardly about how God can use them to serve those around them.

Youth Alive Action for the month:

- > Emphasize the importance of outreach in a single sermon or month-long sermon series.
- > Use the Outreach Coaching Guide, Outreach Ideas, and Outreach Planning Board from the Youth Alive Movements documents to help you (download at www.youthalive.com)
- > Work with your Youth Alive Movements (clubs, prayer movements, huddles) to plan an outreach on their campus based on needs they see around their school.
- > Advertise your outreach and encourage students to get involved with the planning/preparation.
- > Give an opportunity for students to share their passion and vision for the planned outreaches in a small segment of the service. Designed to inspire other students to get involved.

LATE FALL

Keeping Youth Alive Movements on Track

1 Thessalonians 5:11 - “So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.”

By November, students may start feeling the mid-year slump and the momentum of their Youth Alive Movement (club, prayer movement, or huddle) may start slowing down. This is a great time to check back in with your Youth Alive clubs and Campus Missionaries to make sure they are on track and have everything they need. This would be a good month to encourage students to continue inviting new students to their Youth Alive Movement. Use November to reignite passion, troubleshoot challenges, and redirect focus if necessary.

Youth Alive Action for the month:

- > Check in with your Youth Alive Movements and Campus Missionaries and ask questions like:
- > “What’s been going well with your Youth Alive Movement?”
- > “What challenges are you facing or can see developing?”
- > “How can I resource and better support you?”
- > “How should I be praying for you as a Campus Missionary?”

THE HOLIDAYS

Christmas Outreach, Reflection and Planning

John 16:33 - “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

December is a great time for Youth Alive Movements to do outreaches that are centered on the Christmas holiday. It’s a natural time to talk about Jesus. Help the Youth Alive Movements plan and do an outreach (perhaps an after-school

Christmas party) where they share the meaning of Christmas and present the Gospel.

As the month moves toward the Christmas break, pause, reflect, and plan for the new year. Encourage students to evaluate how their Youth Alive Movement has been going over the past few months. Have them write down things that are going well, things that need changed, and ideas they have for the future. This will help them enter a new semester with renewed vision and clear direction.

Youth Alive Action for the month:

- > Help the Youth Alive Movements (clubs, prayer movements, and huddles) plan a Christmas outreach for their schools in early December. Use the Outreach Coaching Guide, Outreach Ideas, and Outreach Planning Board from the Youth Alive Movements documents to help you (download at www.youthalive.com)
- > Later, as the Christmas break approaches, prepare a space for your students to reflect on the past few months. You can ask guiding questions like:
 - > “Have we been consistently growing and reaching new students for Jesus?”
 - > “Are students in our school actively participating in Youth Alive Movement activities, prayer, and outreach?”
 - > “Have we been effective in inviting students who do not know Jesus and sharing the Gospel with them?”
 - > “Are we praying regularly for our campus, church, and community?”

NEW YEAR

Reigniting the Mission

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – “Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”

As the new year begins and the countdown to the school year ending starts, now is a good time to re-engage with students who may have lost their mission and purpose during the year. The school year is halfway over, and some students may need a fresh start to pray and seek God to be reminded of what He’s calling them to do. This would be a great month to choose a specific prayer focus for the new year and encourage students to get involved in any way that they can.

Youth Alive Action for the month:

- > Use one of your youth services to preach on God’s mission and re-emphasize the importance of sharing the Gospel at school and with friends.
- > Review the *Alive in 5* so that students have a fresh reminder of an easy and effective way to share the Gospel.
- > With just 5 full months left in the school year, challenge students to create or re-evaluate their 5 Friend Focus prayer list. Challenge them to have a personal conversation and share the Gospel with one of the friends on the list each month for the rest of the school year.
- > Focus fasting and prayer towards campuses, friends and opportunities to share the gospel.
- > Find ways to incorporate these prayer points not just for your youth group, but also for your entire church family.

FEBRUARY

Involving Students in Service

1 Timothy 4:12 - “Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.”

Incorporating students who have been sharing the Gospel at school or leading a Youth Alive Movement into one of your services can be a great way to promote what God is doing while giving them an opportunity to expand on the gifts that God has given them. You can involve students in your service by giving them time to share a testimony, preach a 5-minute message, lead worship, or give announcements and updates. Find a spot that fits the student and work with them ahead of time to make sure they are prepared and equipped before the service. February is also a great month for Youth Alive Movements to do outreaches at school. Keep the Movements on track by helping students plan an outreach (hint: February is a great month for Youth Alive Movements to do outreaches that talk about love—God’s love).

Youth Alive Action for the month:

- > Get students involved in your service preparation to give them an opportunity to not just share but also to have an input on what happens that night.
- > Find a place for students that might not want to be on stage: preservice set up, sound and media, or social media.
- > On these nights, encourage anyone not already involved in a campus club to get involved.
- > Work with your Youth Alive Movements (clubs, prayer movements, huddles) to plan an outreach to share God’s love and present to Gospel at their school. Use the Outreach Coaching Guide, Outreach Ideas, and Outreach Planning Board from the Youth Alive Movements documents to help you (download at www.youthalive.com)
- > Invite your lead pastor to a youth service to show your students they are supported by more leaders than just you.

SPRING

1 – Prepare Youth Alive Movements for transition

2 Timothy 2:2 - “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”

Encourage students who are Seniors and leading Youth Alive Movements (clubs, prayer movements, huddles) to begin identifying new leaders for the Movement for the next year. Help them plan, communicate and prepare for the transition that will happen as the year comes to an end. This will give them time to walk through the transition and set the club up for success in the coming year.

Youth Alive Action:

- > Identify students in your youth group who have been attending a Youth Alive Movement or could take over an already established one.
- > Organize a “Training Day” for your senior students to mentor and encourage the younger ones to show them it isn’t about what you do, but who you invest in

2 – Make the most of every opportunity

Galatians 6:10 – “Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.”

As the school year is moving towards summer, give a final push during the Spring to finish strong and to close the door on any Gospel conversations they’ve been having with friends. Remind students that next year their classes, classmates, and schedules will be changing. This means that they will only have the connections and opportunities they have right now for a few more weeks. Helping students understand the importance of using the opportunities that God gives us will encourage them to take advantage of the time they have left in the year.

Youth Alive Action:

- > Focus on the importance of timing and using the opportunities God has given us.
- > Have students write down the name of one person they’ve had an opportunity to witness to but haven’t yet. Encourage them to pray for that student every day for the rest of the school year and to act when the Holy Spirit opens a door to share.
- > Encourage students not to give up or grow weary but to finish the year strong.

3 – Spring Outreaches through Youth Alive Movements

Proverbs 16:3 – “Commit your actions to the LORD, and your plans will succeed.”

Spring is a great time for Youth Alive Movements to plan their last outreaches of the school year. Easter is a great time for to have some kind of Easter themed outreach at school. As Spring sports start up, Youth Alive Movements can serve the different teams through outreaches. As the end of the school year approaches, a Youth Alive Movement could hold an end-of-school bash for their school and give one final push for the Gospel. Additionally, as you prepare your youth ministry for summer activities (camps, etc.), you can equip your Campus Missionaries to invite their friends to come to camp or a summer missions trip.

Youth Alive Action:

- > Help the Youth Alive Movements (clubs, prayer movements, or huddles) think through one or two outreaches they can do at school in the months of March, April or May.
- > Some great themes or focus points for outreaches at school in the spring are: Easter, Spring sports, or end of the school year celebrations. Through conversation with Youth Alive Movement leaders, help them process the best opportunities to share the Gospel through these concepts or to come up with their own.
- > Use the Outreach Coaching Guide, Outreach Ideas, and Outreach Planning Board from the Youth Alive Movements documents to help you (download at www.youthalive.com)
- > Put some information sheets, flyers, or other advertising materials in your students hands to help them invite friends from school to join in on youth camp or summer missions trip opportunities.
- > Consider creating and providing camp/activities scholarship for the friends your Campus Missionaries are inviting to camp to make it easier for them to attend.

END-OF-SCHOOL YEAR

Celebrate!

The ending of the school year is the time to look back and to celebrate what God did throughout the past year. Share stories, celebrate Youth Alive Movements, and cast vision for the next year. Students have worked hard, invited friends, organized outreaches, shared the Gospel, and impacted their schools. Encourage your students to stay engaged throughout the summer with classmates from school and their Youth Alive Movements; there is no reason the Gospel-sharing momentum should stop just because school is out for the summer!

Youth Alive Action for the month:

- > Celebrate all the God did in your Movements this past year by hosting a Celebration Night
- > Highlight specific testimonies to share with your church and on social media
- > Have your students write letters to the “next year’s version of themselves” encouraging them to continue with His mission and calling on their lives.
- > Encourage summer engagement like:
 - > Starting a summer Bible challenge or devotional plan with their friends
 - > A monthly prayer lunch with their friends
 - > Creating a summer impact challenge to set goals like: inviting a new friend to church, praying for 5 friends everyday and texting them that you are doing so, memorizing a verse of the Bible every week.

THE CAMPUS MISSIONARY

Multi-year mission-driven discipleship track

Use this track to bring a different emphasis to your Back-to-School Playbook each year. You can follow the sequence of years outlined below, or you can move the years around based on the needs and growth of your youth ministry.

Year 1 - The Message

Summary: This is the introductory way to inspire and train Campus Missionaries to share the message of the Gospel using *Alive in 5*. This is foundational, and we believe *Alive in 5* should be re-emphasized each year as the way to share the Gospel.

Resources to use:

- > • *Alive in 5* graphics, booklets, sermon & small group series, and other materials available at www.youthalive.com
- > • *FireBible Youth Alive Edition*. This also contains *Alive in 5*. Available to order from www.myhealthychurch.com
- > • Five Friend Focus, available at www.youthalive.com

Year 2 - The Methods

Summary: Challenge and train students to use different methods to share the Gospel at school and beyond. You can challenge students to try a different method each month of the school year, or to experiment with the methods until they discover the method that works best for them. Re-emphasize *Alive in 5* as part of the back-to-school push.

Resources to use:

- > • *The Campus Missionary Guidebook*. Available starting August 2025 at www.myhealthychurch.com
- > • *Alive in 5* graphics and booklets available from www.youthalive.com
- > • Five Friend Focus, available at www.youthalive.com

Year 3 - God So Loved...

Summary: This is a next-level approach to training and inspiring students to share the Gospel. *God so Loved...* will help students serve various people groups at school and beyond based on that groups needs, and to start conversations that will lead to Jesus.

Resources to use:

- > • *God so Loved...a student's guide to sharing Jesus at school*. Available at www.amazon.com, or order in bulk at www.initiateconversations.com.
- > • *God so Loved...* graphics and sermon and small group series available from www.youthalive.com

- > • *Alive in 5* graphics and booklets available from www.youthalive.com
- > • Five Friend Focus, available at www.youthalive.com

Year 4 – *I Dare You*

Summary: Another next-level approach to training and inspiring students to share the Gospel. *I Dare You* will help students challenge their friends through a series of dares that open the door to faith in God. This emphasis includes a sermon series to kick off the school year, then one additional sermon for each month until May.

Resources to use:

- > • *I Dare You...spread the Gospel one Challenge at a Time*. Available at www.myhealthychurch.com
- > • *I Dare You* graphics and sermon and small group series available from www.youthalive.com
- > • *Alive in 5* graphics and booklets available from www.youthalive.com
- > • Five Friend Focus, available at www.youthalive.com

Year 5 – Powerful Conversations

Summary: This is the most advanced to train and inspiring students to share the Gospel. *Initiate: Powerful Conversations that Lead to Jesus* will help students (and you) use everyday conversations to share the Gospel. They will be equipped to start a conversation with any student, listen to how the Holy Spirit is already working, and then point the conversation to God.

Resources to use:

- > • *Initiate: Powerful Conversations that Lead to Jesus*. Available at www.amazon.com, or order in bulk at www.initiateconversations.com
- > • *Initiate* graphics and sermon and small group series available from www.youthalive.com (starting in August 2025).
- > • *Alive in 5* graphics and booklets available from www.youthalive.com
- > • Five Friend Focus, available at www.youthalive.com

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