



[www.YouthMinistryToolbox.com](http://www.YouthMinistryToolbox.com)

## STEP 1 PRAY

Please Don't Skip This Step!

Before we can move onto step 2 in the process of following up and closing the back door of your ministry, stop what ever you are doing and take a moment to think of one student that you have not seen in a while. Once you have that student in your mind ask God:

1. To speak to that student's heart right know.
2. To protect that student from what they are doing and whom they are around.
3. To use other Christians to encourage them, speak truth into their life and to love them.
4. To speak to their family members ask God to bless them and that they would see that God is the giver of all Good things.

Before we move onto the next steps of following up with students and before you leave the office, take out a post card and write that student a note like this:

[students name]

Just wanted to let you know that I'm praying for you this week.

I pray that everything is going well for you. If you need anything please call me! [XXX] XXX-XXX

After you have written the post card pick up the phone and call that student and tell them that you have missed them and invite them back to your service.

Blessings,  
Jamie and Buck

## STEP 2 COLLECT THE RIGHT DATA

In order to follow up on students we need to know exactly who are those students. When I was young in the ministry I had a form for students to fill out that had questions on it that I was never had time to read, yet alone use. Not too mention that it took forever for students to fill out at our sign in table.

So I have revised our information card over time to reflect what we have learned. This might not be the right way to do it but this is the most effective way we have found. Note: Before we talk about student data we have found that the friendlier the sign in table you have the more students you will have take the time to sign in. Please, for the sake of your ministry find the friendliest volunteers to staff your sign in table or booth. Example: A table with a tablecloth on it NOT a plastic one. Remember this is one of the first impressions you will make on students. Hang a sign on the table, above the table or if you have the resources print a nice graphic banner that might say Welcome to the "name of your program" or student sign in. Add a bowl of candy to the table or give out something as they sign in. Remember place this by the door of your room or in the room by the front door.

Data: What do you need to collect from every one of your student's and first time guests? You need to decide what is most important to you and your ministry. The following is what we have found to be the best for our database program and us. First, ask them to print!

\*Student Name (first and last)

\*Student Address (city, state and zip)

\*Home number and/or student's cell number and cell provider

\*Student email address

\*Grade level in school

\*Birthday

\*School they attend

\*Name of friend that invited them to the event

\*Parents Name, email and phone #

### STEP 3

So, you have the thought about the right environment for your sign in table. You have collected the right data. Now the question is, what do you do with that data? We have found that the first step in follow up is making a connection with the students within the first 48 hours.

You need to think through and find the best way for you and your ministry to make the initial contact with the 1st time guest. You need to think about what works best for your community and your budget. Some of the ideas that we have work through will not work for you because of the community you serve. The students that you are reaching might be different than the student I'm reaching. You could be in a small town community or an urban community. It is important for you and your team to think through this step in your follow up.

Some of the best practices that we have learned to WOW our 1st time guests. I want them to think that I care about them beyond our service. So here are the best practices that we have learned. Your 1st contact needs to be within the first 48 hours of your service. Here are ideas for this:

1. Phone Call: Phone call from you, a student or a volunteer but you need to make sure that this happens. You can evaluate the productivity of this because it is easy to measure.
2. Email: Email from you telling your 1st time guest that it was great to see them there. (This is something that I did try but my students currently do not check their email. Students check their facebook before they check their email.)
3. Facebook: If you can get students to give you their facebook address then you can add them to your friend request and shoot them a comment.
4. TXT Message: This is a great way for you to send them a 1st contact as soon as your service is over. I actually have a volunteer input the 1st guest data into a TXT messaging service. So that I can send them a text message the next day. I also send them a text message 2 hours before my service. ([eztexting.com](http://eztexting.com))
5. Personal Visit: If the community where you serve is not opposed to personal visits then go ahead. This is a great way for you to meet the students and parents.

Please remember that you will need to find out what works for you and your student community. Again, we have found that the best way for us to send a TXT message and a facebook request. I have volunteers that handle all this for me. So please entrust some faithful volunteers to help make this follow up happen.

#### STEP 4 2ND FOLLOW UP CONTACT.

Now that you know how important the initial contact is for your 1st time guest it is time to move onto the 2nd follow up contact. Your 2nd follow up contact needs to take place in the next 96 hours, 4 days, after your guest's first time visit to your service.

We used to print out a letter from a fancy software program. But that feels so impersonal and reminds me of a bill collector. Sure the info that I was sending out looked great and had great info. But the students were not reading the letters. I had to answer some questions about my 2nd follow up contact.

1. What will make students want to read my letter?
2. What was going to set my letter apart from all the other junk that they receive?
3. What was going to WOW that student and get them to tell a friend about my letter?

I do not have a lot of money for a fancy letterhead but I do want to surprise that student when they open my 2nd contact. So the best practice that we have learned is to send a hand written card to that guest. Yes you heard me right a hand written card not a post card but a card. Send a simple card that you can create using word or publisher with your logo on the front and blank on the inside.

We put a simple message in the card with a "WOW factor in the card

Inside of card:

Hey [name of that student]

It was great to have you at our service last the past Wednesday. I hope you found the service to be relevant and meaningful to your life. We have included a \$5 starbucks gift for you to enjoy. So have a break on us. Hope to see you next week!

Blessings,  
Your name

You need to make sure that the person speaking the night the guest came signs his or her name to it. Now you can do this or you can have team of student or volunteers handle this for you.

It is not enough to send them a hand written card. They might read it and then forget about it. But because we have added a WOW factor we know that they will read and not forget about it. What we have found out is that they will actually tell their friend that invited them about the letter. Our job is to make a connection that will last so you need to think through what will make that connection to your students. The community I serve favors hanging out at Starbucks all the time so why not get them something they already have a connection with.

If you do not have a Starbucks in your community then you need to find out what will WOW your 1st time guest. Some examples might be McDonalds Bucks, Blockbuster cards, a coupon for a free soda and candy when they come back to your service. Please give this some thought. Remember, this is what will help those students make a connection to your ministry.

You might be thinking we do not have that kind of money to spend on 1st time guest. What we have done is every week we take up an offering in our program and our students know that the money is going to Missions, and for follow up. They know if they bring a friend that their friend will hear the GOSPEL message and have a chance to respond to it and that their friend will be receiving a Starbucks card in the mail. I have students come up to me weekly and ask me to make sure that their friends will receive a card in the mail. It has been something that they can use as a hook to their friends to come back.

Blessings,  
Jamie and Buck

## STEP 5. A ONE-MONTH FOLLOW-UP CONTACT.

What have we learned so far?

Step 1. Pray! (it is a must for follow-up)

Step 2. Collect the right student data from guest.

Step 3. Make first contact with guest within 36 hours.

3. What was going to WOW that student and get them to tell a friend about my letter?

Step 4. Make second contact with guest with a handwritten card and include a "WOW" element.

Step 5. A one-month follow-up contact.

Approximately one month following a student's first visit to the student ministry, we send a letter from the student pastor indicating that it has been a month since the first visit. In the letter we thank and encourage the student. We also include information about the next big event that we are doing.

### FIRST TIME ONE-MONTH FOLLOW-UP LETTER

September 17

Hi [add first name here],

Thank you for visiting [insert your service name] for the first time last month – in August. We want to express our appreciation to you for taking the time to check us out!

We hope that you have found [insert your service name] to be a welcoming, relevant, and fun place to get plugged in and meet other people. We also hope you have found [insert your service name] be a place where you can encounter God and have a meaningful worship experience. We are a student ministry where you can be yourself with other people like you.

To celebrate your one month anniversary @ (insert your service name), we wanted to do something special for you to show our appreciation. Enclosed is a \$5 Blockbuster Gift Card. I hope you enjoy it!

There are a lot of cool things going on right now at (insert your service name). In just a few weeks we will be kicking off The Frat and Become. Frat and Become are our small groups of 8-12 people who meet together weekly to grow, build new relationships, and have fun. We hope you are able to get connected. You can sign up for the groups on Wednesday or by visiting our web site @ [www.yourstudentministry.com](http://www.yourstudentministry.com).

In the meantime, please let us know if there is any way that we can be praying for you or if there is anything that we can do for you. Also, if you have any questions about (insert your service name) or how you can get plugged in, feel free to let us know.

Have a great week, and we look forward to seeing you again soon @ (insert your service name)! God bless...

Add your closing,

Jamie and Buck  
(insert your service name)  
[www.yourstudentministry.com](http://www.yourstudentministry.com)

Blessings,  
Jamie and Buck

## Step #6: From Second Time Guest to Regular Attender

The second goal in closing the back door is moving students from being a second time guest to becoming a regular attender. If you do a good job creating a positive first impression and worship experience, and you are intentional and thorough with your follow-up processes, you have a better chance at seeing first time guests become second time guests at your youth ministry service.

While this is a big step, the next step is even more difficult. How do you encourage a second time guest to attend your student ministry on a regular basis?

When a student returns to our service for the second time, we focus on two areas as being important to encouraging that student to become a regular attender.

### A. Before Service: Sign In Table

Before the service starts we have every kid sign in at your sign in table. This way you can keep a record of who is coming back to your service.

### B. During Service: Connection Card

A second time guest has the option of filling out a Connection Card during our service to collect the information of Second time guests. On the card we collect contact info, prayer requests, and any spiritual "next steps" (steps of growth) that an individual feels he/she needs to take in response to the service that night. These next steps are options that students can choose that engage a person more deeply into our student ministry.

We use a Connection Card to collect the information from our students. It is a simple card that is easy to fill out. On the card we collect contact info, prayer requests, and any spiritual "next steps" (steps of growth) that an individual feels he/she needs to take in response to the service that day.

The student pastor announces that first time guests may drop a completed Connection Card in the Offering Buckets.

In order to make the Connection Card more effective for collecting the contact information of first time guests, we ask that everyone (including regular attenders and members) fill out Connection Cards as well. Everyone places a completed Connection Card into the Offering Buckets as the student ushers pass them at the end of the service.

We have included a copy of our connection card with this email.

### C. Post-Weekend: Follow-up

As with our first time guests, immediate follow-up with second time guests is vitally important. Again, we focus on 36 and 96 hour follow-up.

#### 1. 36 Hour Response via email

We believe in following-up with second time guests with a personal contact within 36 hours. We do this with text messaging or myspace.

#### 2. 96 Hour Response via mail

We believe in following up with second time guests with a second personal contact within 96 hours. We do this with a typed letter from the student pastor. Included in the letter is a \$5 Starbucks Gift Card or one free Blockbuster movie rental as a way of thanking and encouraging the second time guest. By this time, a second time guest begins to see that your student ministry is friendly, generous, and cares about them

#### 3. One month follow up

Don't forget, the second time guests will receive the one month follow up on the one month anniversary of their first visit to the church.

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## STEP 7 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

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Before we can move onto step 2 in the process of following up and closing the back door of your ministry, stop what ever you are doing and take a moment to think of one student that you have not seen in a while. Once you have that student in your mind ask God :

1. To speak to that student's heart right now.
2. To protect that student from what they are doing and whom they are around.
3. To use other Christians to encourage them, speak truth into their life and to love them.
4. To speak to their family members ask God to bless them and that they would see that God is the giver of all Good things.

Before we move onto the next steps of following up with students and before you leave the office, take out a post card and write that student a note like this:

[students name]

Just wanted to let you know that I'm praying for you this week.

I pray that everything is going well for you. If you need anything please call me! (XXX) XXX-XXX

After you have written the post card pick up the phone and call that student and tell them that you have missed them and invite them back to your service.

## STEP 2 COLLECT THE RIGHT DATA

In order to follow up on students we need to know exactly who are those students. When I was young in the ministry I had a form for students to fill out that had questions on it that I was never had time to read, yet alone use. Not too mention that it took forever for students to fill out at our sign in table.

So I have revised our information card over time to reflect what we have learned. This might not be the right way to do it but this is the most effective way we have found. Note: Before we talk about student data we have found that the friendlier the sign in table you have the more students you will have take the time to sign in. Please, for the sake of your ministry find

the friendliest volunteers to staff your sign in table or booth. Example: A table with a tablecloth on it NOT a plastic one. Remember this is one of the first impressions you will make on students. Hang a sign on the table, above the table or if you have the resources print a nice graphic banner that might say Welcome to the "name of your program" or student sign in. Add a bowl of candy to the table or give out something as they sign in. Remember place this by the door of your room or in the room by the front door.

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- \*Student Name (first and last)
- \*Student Address (city, state and zip)
- \*Home number and/or student's cell number
- \*Student email address
- \*Grade level in school
- \*Birthday
- \*School they attend
- \*Name of friend that invited them to the event
- \*My Space address

### **STEP 3 THE FIRST 48 HOURS**

So, you have the thought about the right environment for your sign in table. You have collected the right data. Now the question is, what do you do with that data? We have found that the first step in follow up is making a connection with the students within the first 48 hours.

You need to think through and find the best way for you and your ministry to make the initial contact with the 1st time guest. You need to think about what works best for your community and your budget. Some of the ideas that we have work through will not work for you because of the community you serve. The students that you are reaching might be different than the student I'm reaching. You could be in a small town community or an urban community. It is important for you and your team to think through this step in your follow up.

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1. Phone Call: Phone call from you, a student or a volunteer but you need to make sure that this happens. You can evaluate the productivity of this because it is easy to measure.

2. Email: Email from you telling your 1st time guest that it was great to see them there. (This is something that I did try but my current do not check their email. Students check their myspace or facebook before they check their email.)

3. Myspace: If you can get students to give you their myspace address then you can add them to your friend request and shoot them a comment.

4. TXT Message: This is a great way for you to send them a 1st contact as soon as your service is over. I actually have a volunteer input the 1st guest data into a TXT messaging service. So that I can send them a text message the next day. I also send them a text message 2 hours before my service. [eztexting.com]

5. Personal Visit: If the community you serve is not opposed to personal visits then go ahead. This is a great way for you to meet the students and parents.

Please remember that you will need to find out what works for you and your student community. Again, we have found that the best way for us to send a TXT message and a myspace request. I have volunteers that handle all this for me. So please entrust some faithful volunteers to help make this follow up happen.

#### **STEP 4 2ND FOLLOW UP CONTACT.**

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1. What will make students want to read my letter?

2. What was going to set my letter apart from all the other junk that they receive? (As I am typing this out I am reminded of a conversation I had with a parent. She told me that her son received a girls gone wild DVD in the mail. I'm thinking if I send a letter to her son he might open it but he will remember the DVD he received in the mail. Which one do you think he would tell his friends about? I began to realize what I was competing against in the area of students' attention.)

3. What was going to WOW that student and get them to tell a friend about my letter?

I do not have a lot of money for a fancy letter head but I do want to surprise that student when they open my 2nd contact. So the best practice that we have learned is to send a hand written card to that guest. Yes you heard me right a hand written card not a post card but a card. Send a simple card that you can create using word or publisher with your logo on the front and blank on the inside.

We put a simple message in the card with a "WOW factor in the card

Inside of card:

Hey (name of that student)

It was great to have you at our service last the past Wednesday. I hope you found the service to be relevant and meaningful to your life. We have included a \$5 starbucks gift for you to enjoy. So have a break on us. Hope to see you next week!

Blessings,

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### FIRST TIME ONE-MONTH FOLLOW-UP LETTER

September 17

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In the meantime, please let us know if there is any way that we can be praying for you or if there is anything that we can do for you. Also, if you have any questions about [insert your service name] or how you can get plugged in, feel free to let us know.

Have a great week, and we look forward to seeing you again soon @ [insert your service name]! God bless...

Add your closing,

Jamie and Buck  
[insert your service name]  
[www.yourstudentministry.com](http://www.yourstudentministry.com)

## **STEP 6 FROM SECOND TIME GUEST TO REGULAR ATTENDER**

The second goal in closing the back door is moving students from being a second time guest to becoming a regular attender. If you do a good job creating a positive first impression and worship experience, and you are intentional and thorough with your follow-up processes, you have a better chance at seeing first time guests become second time guests at your youth ministry service.

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We have included a copy of our connection card with this email.

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Blessings.  
Jamie and Buck