

National Day of Prayer Coordinators'

School Prayer Event Guide

**A Public, Private and Christian School Resource Manual
How To Successfully Hold National Day of Prayer Events In Your Community's Schools!**



**A Project Begun May 2, 2002, at the 51st Annual National Day of Prayer
Marking the 40th Year of the Removal of Prayer from America's Schools**

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School Prayer Guide
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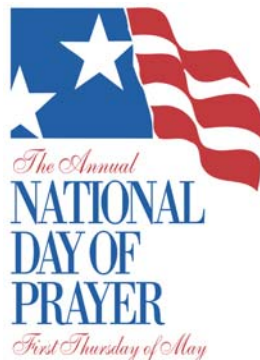
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Foreword: Prayer and Dedication

We thank You, Heavenly Father, for Your gift of prayer – a gift that can change our schools, our nation, and our world. With this National Day of Prayer School Prayer Guide, we humbly ask you to help us reclaim our schools in order that present and future generations of young Americans may come to know You.

Please bless your faithful Prayer Intercessors and Event Coordinators who obediently seek Your wisdom and direction as they organize prayer events in their local schools. We ask also that you would guide and protect our nation’s leaders and military servicemen, our schools and students, media executives, business entrepreneurs, churches, ministries, and families. May we once again be “one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”



In Jesus’ glorious name we pray,

Amen.



Photo courtesy of Rhonda Wilburn

Dedication

This School Prayer Guide is dedicated to all the children who, in the fall of 1962, returned to their classrooms and were told that there would no longer be a time of prayer before classes began in order to allow more time in the day for school activities.

I was one of those children, and I am honored to be blessed by God to author this Prayer Guide to give children another chance to know Jesus loves them.

With His Blessings,
Susan Turner

Section One

Historical Narrative

It has been more than 40 years since the United States Supreme Court ruled on June 25, 1962, that prayer in our nation's schools was unconstitutional, effectively removing prayer from America's public schools. Since then, our nation has experienced a diminished reverence for the Almighty, as well as an erosion in many areas of American life. Not only are we seeing a decline in our schools' environment and academics, but student performance and conduct has also taken a turn for the worse. Meanwhile, the disintegration of family life is giving rise to societal crises such as teenage pregnancy and violent crime.

The number "40" shows up frequently in Scripture to demonstrate that something important is happening. For instance, the Israelites wandered in the desert 40 years until they were ready to enter the Promised Land. Likewise, our nation's public schools have wandered in a "desert wasteland" for the past 40 years. We believe, however, that they are now ready, with God's help, to enter into a "Promised Land" accessible to them through prayer.

This guide has been prepared specifically to help National Day of Prayer Coordinators throughout America hold prayer events in their community's schools. This effort began with a single event at a Colorado public elementary school in 2002, and has since grown into a national movement that is helping return prayer to America's schools.

Throughout this guide, you will find suggestions for holding prayer events at your local public, private or charter school.



Section Two

Yes! You Can Hold a National Day of Prayer School Event!

The phrase "separation of Church and State" does not appear anywhere in the Constitution of the United States of America. Our Founding Fathers designed our republic in such a way to ensure that a government-sponsored religion would not be imposed upon the people. However, they did not intend to isolate our governing authorities from God.

The basis for the public's misconception and ongoing debate in this regard is found in Amendment I of the Constitution, which reads:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an **establishment** of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances [emphasis mine].*

Because of the misuse of what is referred to as the "Establishment Clause" in the First Amendment, Americans have been led to believe that school prayer of any kind is unconstitutional. To the contrary, school administration, staff, teachers, and students are permitted, as private citizens, to conduct and attend National Day of Prayer events at our nation's public, private and Christian schools before or after school hours.

Currently, school prayer events are to be student-led and student-initiated. One way of adhering to this model is to organize a Bible Club or Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter at your school. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) estimates that there are over 8,000 FCA "Huddles" – or chapters – that meet at

secondary schools across the nation, and the American Center for Law and Justice reports that Bible Clubs are presently meeting in 15,000 U.S. schools. (An article related to the launch of a Bible Club, originally printed in *Teachers in Focus* magazine, follows at the end of this section.)

Private and Christian schools may have policies allowing students to pray during specifically designated times, such as the lunch hour. They also may permit information regarding a prayer event to be distributed by students to fellow students. It all depends upon the school and its district policies. Don't become discouraged if certain district guidelines hinder your first attempts to conduct a prayer event at your school. Such regulations can be modified by attending school board meetings and through lobbying your district's board members and administration. Even in cases where these kinds of efforts do not succeed, flyers can be circulated outside of school in order to raise awareness of the upcoming event. In addition, the establishment of a Bible Club or FCA chapter can open doors for publicizing and coordinating your prayer gathering.



Who Me? Start a Bible Club?

By Suzanne Grissom

I'll never forget my first semester teaching at Granada Hills High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. The beginning of school found me out in the bungalows with students who had been through six teachers in six weeks and were proud of it. Sometimes I felt like I was fighting for my very existence. It didn't help matters that my classroom was on the very edge of campus, almost in a different time zone. The long walk between my class and the teachers' cafeteria only reinforced the feeling that I was a missionary in a hostile land.

Then one morning I heard an announcement over the P.A. system: "Bible Club meeting today at lunch in Mrs. Hutton's room, B-12."

Wow! If I bolt the minute the bell rings, I bet I could make it!

I did, and what I found was like an oasis in the desert – about a dozen students, sitting with Bibles open, talking about the meaning of Scripture. And teacher, Chris Hutton, sitting peacefully, listening and eating her lunch at the back of the classroom.

Over the course of the year, that group of students became an encouragement and a challenge to me. More importantly, though, the group was a lifeline for many of those students. In the chaotic world of high school, that Bible Club was an affirming and secure place to be.

Do the Christian students in your school have a refuge like that? If not, maybe the Lord is calling you to help create one. Here's how.

Learn the Law

If you want to help start a Bible Club, the first thing you should do is familiarize yourself with the Equal Access Act of 1984, which governs the establishment and conduct of student religious groups on public secondary-

school campuses.

The Equal Access Act, which was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1990, requires public secondary schools to let student religious groups meet on the same basis as other non-curricular student groups. In other words, if your school allows any kind of non-curricular club to meet on its campus (e.g., chess club, scuba club, service club), then it must allow religious clubs to meet as well.

However, student religious groups must also meet the following conditions:

1. The religious group meetings must be voluntary and student-initiated.

2. There can be no sponsorship of the meeting by the school or its agents or employees (the court defined "sponsorship" as "the act of promoting, leading or participating in a meeting"—this does not include simply

attending the meeting for "custodial purposes").

3. Employees or agents of the school should be present at religious meetings only in a non-participatory capacity.

4. The meeting must not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school.

5. Non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control or regularly attend activities of student groups.¹

Essentially, the school and its employees are forbidden "to influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity."²

"If a teacher calls me and wants to start a [Christian] club on campus, I tell them that they should informally ask students to start the club," said Kim Colby, special counsel at the Center for Law and Religious Freedom. "Teachers shouldn't initiate the club ... the law doesn't protect them. The students need to go through the process of starting the club. The teacher should only be



there as a nonparticipating advisor, to provide discipline and keep students safe.”

Network, Network, Network

Okay, the club must be student-initiated. But how can a teacher connect with interested Christian students? According to Doug Clark, director of field ministries for the National Network of Youth Ministries and national promotion coordinator for “See You at the Pole,” relationships are the key. This includes not only relationships with students, but with teachers, churches and parents, as well.

Teachers: The best place to start networking is at your school, with other teachers. Some of your teachers may already know students who would be interested in starting a Bible Club. If not, Clark said, you can “form a prayer group with other teachers and pray for students to step out.”

Churches and Parents: If students from your school attend your church, ask your youth pastor if there are any kids who might be interested in starting a Christian Club. Better yet, see if you and your youth pastor can arrange a meeting with the kids’ parents. At the meeting, you can explain what Christian Clubs are all about and see if parents are interested in having their children lead or participate in such a group.

If no students from your school attend your church, try to connect with youth leaders at other churches. Or enlist some of your Christian colleagues to canvass parents and leaders at their own churches.

Students: Of course, don’t overlook relationships with your own students. Perhaps the best way to develop contacts with Christian students is to be up front about your own faith. Rather than hiding it under a bushel, let people know that you’re a Christian. Icebreakers can help you do this in a non-threatening manner. For example, when we did introductions at the beginning of each term, I asked students to share their four loves. Mine, I’d say, are Jesus, my husband, horses and Hemingway. That’s all it took to draw a response from the Christian students.



State Your Case

Once students have expressed interest and you have committed to sponsor the club, it’s time to go to the administration. The students may wish to do this themselves, or they may ask you to go on their behalf.

If students ask you to approach the administration on their behalf, be sure to do the following:

- **Remember that the law is on your side.** If your school allows even a single non-curricular club on campus, then the school must allow religious groups to meet, as well.
- **Watch your attitude.** Although the law is on your side, don’t use it as a bludgeon to beat

your principal (or anyone else) into submission. Rather, use your knowledge of the Equal Access Act to reassure your principal that religious clubs are indeed legal, and that you will be careful to stay within the law.

It was that attitude that helped win the day when Granada Hills High School teacher Chris Hutton assisted students in forming the Christian Awareness Club. The Supreme Court had just ruled that the Equal Access Act was constitutional. Equipped with this knowledge, Hutton approached her principal.

“Once I started using the terminology of the Act,” Hutton said, “the principal knew I knew what I was talking about. I made a commitment to her to sponsor the club in the right way.”

• **Stand pat.** Occasionally administrators try to put special conditions on student religious groups. For example, when I supervised a group a few years ago, the students invited a local pastor to speak about abortion from a Christian perspective. After we filled out the paperwork, however, we were told that we’d have to present “both sides” of the issue.

At first, I thought it was a good idea. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that we were being held to a different standard than the other groups. So I confronted the assistant principal and told her that the group would gladly present both sides if other groups did the same. I wanted the homosexual group to feature

those who'd gone straight, and the drug- and alcohol-abuse group to feature people who enjoyed their lifestyle. Faced with this obvious discrepancy, the assistant principal withdrew the requirement.

Once you've gotten permission for students to start a religious club, you need a game plan. How will the Bible Club be run? How will you advertise it? When will you meet?

According to the Equal Access Act, that's for students to decide. If it is going to be their club, they have to make the decisions. Your job is not to lead the club, but to make sure that meetings are orderly and do not disturb classes or other groups.

However, if the students are having trouble coming up with a format for their club, it is perfectly acceptable to educate them about the choices they have. For example, meetings could include guest speakers, prayer sessions, Bible studies, discussions of current events and even formal curricula.

Remember also to let students take the lead on promoting their group. The Equal Access Act requires that religious groups have the same access to school media as nonreligious groups. But, students must do the promoting themselves. Remember all aspects of the "religious group" must be student-initiated and student-led. Promoting your club or activity is no different.

Remember the Big Picture

It wasn't long before the group I assisted began changing lives. A speaker on "Sex, Love and Choices" prompted 46 percent of our previously sexually active students to pledge abstinence. And at the height of the club there were well over 100 students attending – which forced us to move our meeting to the auditorium.

But, as you work with students to start their Bible Club, do not judge success by how many people attend. Three students who serve the Lord and their campus with gladness may do more to win souls than an army of 100.

Just keep praying that the Lord will guide and direct the students as they seek to do His will. Remember, our God is faithful. And He will always prevail.

Notes:

¹ *The Equal Access Act and the Public Schools: Questions and Answers*. Center for Law and Religious Freedom, p.1. Full text available at www.clsnet.com/eaabro.html.

² *Id.*, p.2.

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Overview of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes

History of Fellowship of Christian Athletes

The idea for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes was conceived in 1947 by founder Don McLanen when he was a student at what is now Oklahoma State University. Later, as a college coach, he envisioned athletes and coaches presenting Christ throughout the nation. McLanen's vision was brought to fruition in November 1954 when FCA was officially established.

Today, FCA is touching millions of lives. In fact, in the United States alone there are estimated to be more than 8,000 "Huddles," i.e., FCA groups that meet at schools, youth clubs and churches. Through this influential and widespread ministry that has become the largest Christian sports outreach in America, FCA is equipping coaches and athletes at every level to serve as Jesus Christ's ambassadors on the playing fields and in their local communities. As a result, countless people are being introduced to the hope and truth of the Gospel.

Purpose of Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)

FCA's Campus Ministries are designed to impact schools through programs such as Huddles, team Bible studies, Chapel Programs, Team FCA memberships, the *One Way 2 Play* substance abuse prevention program, and various special events. Ultimately, all of these efforts are designed to help believers grow in their relationship with Christ and lead others to a saving knowledge of Him.

FCA's vision, mission and values are summarized on the organization's Web site (www.fca.org) as follows:

- **The FCA Vision:** To see the world impacted for Jesus Christ through the influence of athletes and coaches.
- **The FCA Mission:** To present to athletes and coaches and all whom they influence the challenge and adventure of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, serving Him in their relationships and in the fellowship of the church.
- **The FCA Values:** Our relationships will demonstrate steadfast commitment to Jesus Christ and His Word through Integrity, Serving, Teamwork and Excellence.

Integrity - We will demonstrate Christ-like wholeness, privately and publicly.

Serving - We will model Jesus' example of serving.

Teamwork - We will express our unity in Christ in all our relationships.

Excellence - We will honor and glorify God in all we do.

How to Start a Fellowship of Christian Athletes "Huddle" at Your School

There are two proven ways to successfully sponsor National Day of Prayer events at your school. One way, described above in Suzanne Grissom's article, is to start a Bible Club. The other way is to form a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Huddle.

Whichever approach you choose, it's important to bear in mind that our present laws require your school's administration to treat your group as they do any other student organization. You are to have the options of meeting on campus, distributing your organization's literature (including prayer event flyers), and recruiting new members.

With that in mind, FCA's Web site provides the following suggestions for initiating a Huddle within your own school

(<https://teamnet.fca.org/certifications.nsf/HowDoIGetStarted?OpenPage>).

1. Pray. Ask the Lord to prepare your FCA start-up.
2. Contact your FCA Staff. They will give you a better understanding of FCA's purpose, philosophy and programs. To find information on your local FCA office call toll free (800) 289-0909, or visit the [Find Local Staff](#) web site.
3. Seek the Administration's blessing. FCA should be student-initiated and student-led. Students should meet with school administrators to obtain approval, and provide them with information regarding the FCA ministry.

4. Certify your campus. Use the Online Certification tool on FCA's web site www.fca.org/certify.
5. Complete the Ministry Leader Application. This can be obtained through your local FCA staff, or it can be completed online: www.fca.org/mla.
6. Identify Student Leaders/Huddle Coaches. Identify the students who are most likely to be leaders in your FCA, and ask Christian adults to be Huddle Coaches. (It is ideal if the adults are coaches at your school.)
7. Surround yourself with volunteers. Adult Ministries are designed to support the FCA. These adults can meet together, raise funds and assist in activities.
8. Determine the impact. There are many ways you can impact your campus. Decide if you want to start a Huddle, lead a team Bible study or develop a team chaplain program.
9. Hold a Leadership meeting. Have a meeting with the Leadership Team and your FCA staff to learn about the great resources in the Campus Ministry Kit. Discuss meeting schedule, FCA-provided materials, and the impact that FCA will have on your campus.
10. Complete Basic Training. In your Campus Ministry Kit you will find our Huddle Playbook. In the Playbook are five leadership training sessions called: Basic Training. Take time to complete these lessons with your leadership team.
11. Build a Plan. In the Basic Training lessons you will learn how to utilize FCA's resources to do ministry on your campus. Use the Planning Sheets found in the Resource section of the Huddle Playbook to build two months worth of ministry plans. Then regularly meet with your leadership team to put the plan in motion and to continue the planning process.
12. Evaluate. FCA has provided a great tool to help you lead the best campus ministry possible. The Huddle Scouting Report will help you evaluate all the important areas of your ministry. It is found in the Huddle Playbook, on the Huddle eEquipment CD and on the web in our Huddle eEquipment.
13. Ongoing Leadership Training. All great teams have that extra advantage – The X Factor. FCA's ongoing training for our leaders is that extra advantage. Leadership teams should meet regularly to pray, plan their campus ministry and further develop their leadership abilities by working through all 15 of our X Factor lessons found on the Huddle eEquipment CD.



Fellowship of Christian Athletes
8701 Leeds Road
Kansas City, MO 64129
1-800-289-0909
www.fca.org
 E-mail: fca@fca.org

Section Three

School Event Informational Contacts

Should you have specific questions regarding your school event, including inquiries related to legal matters, you may find the following organizations helpful.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ)

P.O.Box 90555

Washington, D.C. 20090-0555

(757) 226-2489

www.aclj.org (For specific information about school prayer, enter "National Day of Prayer" in the Web site's search field.)

Founded in 1990, the American Center for Law and Justice is the nation's preeminent public interest law firm and educational organization dedicated to defending and advancing religious liberty, the sanctity of human life and the two-parent, marriage-bound family. Issues highlighted on the ACLJ Web site include education, Equal Access (i.e., Bible Clubs), freedom of speech, matters of church and state, prayer, and student rights.

Alliance Defense Fund (ADF)

15100 North 90th Street

Scottsdale, AZ 85260

(800) TELL-ADF (835-5233)

www.alliancedefensefund.org

For legal questions, call ADF and ask to speak with someone in the Legal Intake department.

The Alliance Defense Fund champions the right of Americans to engage in public expressions of faith. Through strategy, training, funding, and litigation, the ADF staff focuses on issues such as religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, and the preservation of traditional family values.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) National Headquarters

8701 Leeds Road

Kansas City, MO 64129

(800) 289-0909

www.fca.org

E-mail: fca@fca.org

(See Section Two for a description of FCA's work.)

Liberty Counsel

P.O. Box 540774
Orlando, FL 32854
(800) 671-1776

www.lc.org

E-mail: Liberty@LC.org

Established in 1989, the Liberty Counsel is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing religious freedom, the sanctity of human life and the traditional family through litigation, educational resources and policy reform efforts. The Liberty Counsel offers informational materials pertaining to students' and teachers' rights on public school campuses. Of particular interest is a handbook titled Faith & Freedom, a comprehensive guide to defending religious rights.

WallBuilders Press and Ministry

P.O. Box 397
Aledo, TX 76008
(817) 441-6044

www.wallbuilders.com

This ministry offers a wealth of electronic and print items geared toward perpetuating our nation's religious heritage. WallBuilders Founder David Barton has served as a speaker at many NDP events and has authored a book related to school prayer, A Constitutional Amendment Protecting School Prayer and Other Religious Speech, which can be purchased at WallBuilders' Web site.

In addition to the above organizations, the NDP Task Force has staff members who are available to field inquiries related to school prayer. Contact information for NDP National Area Leaders (NAL's) or State Coordinators is also available through the NDP Task Force office at the following address:

NDP Task Force

P.O. Box 15616
Colorado Springs, CO 80935-5616
(719) 531-3379

www.nationaldayofprayer.org

National Day of Prayer product information and ordering

Various products related to school prayer events can be obtained through NDP Task Force headquarters. Credit card orders can be placed online or through the NDP Order Line (1-800-444-8828). For mail orders with a credit card, check or money order, write to National Day of Prayer Task Force, P.O. Box 15440, Colorado Springs, CO 80935-5440. You may also fax your order to (719) 531-4520.

Christian and Private School Resources

Event Examples and Ideas:

Neighborhood Alliance Pre-School

Longwood, Florida

Summary: *To observe the National Day of Prayer, this school coordinated a "Pre-NDP Teacher's Breakfast" and organized prayer-related classroom activities for its students. As a church-sponsored school, this week-long celebration was announced from the pulpit during the Sunday service prior to the event.*

Program Details

A continental breakfast and NDP presentation for teachers, held on the Tuesday before the National Day of Prayer, followed by a time of supplication for our nation in the school's assembly hall

NDP decorations with a patriotic theme, such as balloons, small American flags, tablecloths, and posters hung throughout the school and church

Classroom activities, including prayer and discussion about the National Day of Prayer, held on the first Thursday in May

Prayer for the nation and its leaders during Children's Chapel

Materials Used

- *National Day of Prayer Placemats*
Pre-school and elementary students love to color these and write their prayers on them. They are invited to take them home as a reminder to continue praying for our country.
- *Suggested Prayer Topics*
School administration, staff, students, and the students' families received a printed list of rec-

ommended subjects for prayer through classroom distribution and at strategically placed areas, such as carpool locations, the school's entrance and the teachers' lounge.

- *NDP Posters*

Posters were placed within the school to draw attention to their availability.

- *NDP Bookmarks*

These were tied onto NDP balloons for the children to take home at the end of the school day. They were also made available to the school's administrators, staff members and any others interested in commemorating the National Day of Prayer.

- *NDP Thank-You Gifts*

NDP magnets and pins were presented to administrators, staff members and the school's pastor as an expression of appreciation for helping to host the event.



Orangewood Christian School

Pre-school - 12th Grade
Maitland, Florida

Summary: *This school encompasses three different campuses serving pre-school, elementary, and junior and senior high students.*

Another church-sponsored school, its NDP activities were announced during the church service the Sunday prior to the National Day of Prayer. In addition, a suggested list of prayer topics was inserted into the Sunday bulletins.

Program Details

- Three volunteers, stationed in each elementary classroom, praying with the students
- An opportunity for elementary students to color

pictures on NDP placemats depicting what the National Day of Prayer meant to them

- Discussions about NDP during Social Studies classes
- Chapel services for elementary, middle school and high school students in observance of NDP

Materials Used

- A large NDP banner, displayed on campus grounds to generate interest in NDP and prayer for our nation among the staff, students and parents
- Uncle Sam posters with the heading “I Want You to Pray” displayed in classrooms



St. Peter’s Episcopal Pre-School and Kindergarten

Lake Mary, Florida

Summary: *Yet another church-sponsored school, the senior pastor announced both the church’s and school’s NDP activities from the pulpit the Sunday prior to the event. The church and school cooperated in promoting their observance through various communication channels. The church, for instance, utilized NDP program covers that included announcements about the school’s planned activities that week.*

Program Details

- A National Day of Prayer chapel service hosted by the school in the church sanctuary
- Various classroom activities
- Prayers provided by each child that were shared during the chapel program

Materials Used

- NDP Balloons
These were handed out for each child to take home.

- NDP Bookmarks
As an additional token of the National Day of Prayer, bookmarks were tied to the children’s balloons.

- NDP Placemats
Placemats were colored in the classroom for students to take home as another keepsake reminder to pray for our nation.

- NDP Posters
Posters were displayed to draw attention to the school’s NDP observance.

For ideas related to NDP events held at colleges and universities, contact Pastor Rick Barton, an FCA sponsor, at the following address:

***Western State College of Colorado
Gunnison, Colorado
(970) 641-3583
E-mail: barton@gunnison.com***

Public and Charter School Resources

Event Examples and Ideas:

The Classical Academy Charter School

Kindergarten - 12th Grade
North, East and Central Campuses
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Summary: *The Classical Academy (TCA) is a public charter school comprised of three campuses: East Campus (Kindergarten through sixth grade), North Campus (Kindergarten through twelfth grade), and Central Campus (Kindergarten through fourth grade). In 2003, with only a week to plan a National Day of Prayer event, the school opted to provide their staff and interested families with prayer guides and bookmarks. Posters announced that these were available upon request at all campuses.*

The following year, TCA's North and East campuses held campus-wide events. Each campus produced its own unique printed program, which included a list of all TCA administrators, staff members and teachers by name along with an encouragement to pray for those individuals. Because TCA is a public school, prayer events took place before school hours began and were attended by the entire school.

Program Details

- Administrative, staff and family involvement at both campuses
- Times of prayer both before and after school



Materials Used

- *NDP Posters and Balloons*
These items were delivered to school offices the day before the National Day of Prayer to draw attention to the observance.
- *NDP Bookmarks and Other Printed Materials*

Woodmen-Roberts Elementary School

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Summary: *Woodmen-Roberts Elementary School may be one of only a few public schools in the nation that held an organized prayer and worship time in observance of the 2002 National Day of Prayer. Principal Tim Rawley viewed this prayer event as a character-building opportunity for the students. This school continues to hold an annual NDP event.*

Program Details

- A half-hour service at the flagpole allowing participants a time of prayer and praise, followed by light refreshments in the cafeteria
- Prayers for Colorado Springs, the state of Colorado, and the nation as a whole, presented by school staff and teachers
- Prayer for specific federal, state, county and local officials, along with the school district's administrators, staff members, teachers, and students
- "America the Beautiful" performed by students who had competed for the honor .

Woodmen-Roberts Elementary School Cont'd

- NDP balloons released at the conclusion of the program to symbolize the event participants' prayers lifting to Heaven.
- A National Day of Prayer information table

Materials Used

- *NDP Program Covers*
Program covers obtained from the NDP Task Force were created with details and information specific to the school's event.
- *NDP Event Stickers and "I Prayed" Stickers*
These stickers were distributed to attendees as they arrived at the event and made available at the information table.
- *NDP Church Program Covers*
These programs, personalized with event information and labels, were included with church bulletins as a way of informing church and community members of the school's prayer event. (These resources are especially helpful when there might be a restriction placed on publicity on school grounds.) After using an event bulletin, the Woodmen-Roberts Elementary School saw attendance at its event triple.



- *NDP Balloons*
These were used to decorate the event, distribute to the children and release at the end of the program. (Prior to the event, students signed up to receive an NDP balloon.)
- *National Day of Prayer Literature*
Displayed at the information table were NDP bookmarks, bulletin inserts, current NDP leaflets, copies of NDP's newsletter, and additional event programs.

Columbine High School

Littleton, Colorado

Summary: *On April 20, 1999, a tragic shooting at Columbine High School took the lives of several students and one teacher. Despite the horror of the incident and the ensuing trauma and heartache experienced by the entire Columbine community, God has continued to work mightily in the lives of many people connected with Columbine High School. In fact, not only was an FCA Huddle recently established at Columbine, but the school's Bible Club held its first annual National Day of Prayer event in 2003, which was attended by more than 100 students, faculty, family members, and friends. Clement Park – the site where the names of the Columbine victims were first read – also served as the site for the school's first NDP observance, led by members of the Bible Club's worship team. During their prayer service, participants praised the Lord for all of the healing that had taken place in their school throughout the preceding four years.*

Program Details: In order to keep media attention to a minimum, the Bible Club members who initiated an NDP event elected to keep their assembly private. They were able to raise awareness, however, throughout the school and among Columbine residents by distributing flyers at a nearby business and among their friends, loved ones and fellow students. They also placed NDP posters within the school and announced the event on the school's public address system and at their weekly meetings. In addition, they contacted many local church youth groups, inviting them to participate in prayer for Columbine High School, the city of Littleton, the state of Colorado, and our nation as a whole.

Materials Used:

- *NDP balloons, bookmarks and program covers*
- *Lists of suggested emphases for prayer*
- *NDP "P.R.A.Y." bracelets featuring Columbine's school colors*

Section Four

National Day of Prayer School Event Checklist

Preliminary Event

It's best to begin planning your school's prayer event approximately four to five months in advance. Below are suggestions for preparations that should be completed within this timeframe.

- **Pray for God's leading for your NDP observance.**
- **Seek interested individuals who may help develop a steering committee to coordinate your event.** These individuals can be school administrators, staff members, teachers, parents, students, community members, or even local pastors.
- **In cooperation with your steering committee, determine the prayer event's**

- ◇ **Location** – Consider holding your event at your school, an adjoining park, or another nearby facility.

- ◇ **Time** – Generally, it's best to schedule your gathering before or after school. The lunch hour is also a possibility, depending upon the school's policies.

- ◇ **Program Type** – Options include a prayer walk, teachers' prayer breakfast, intercession accompanied by praise and worship, or a simple time of corporate prayer.

- ◇ **Program Format** – Ask yourself how you want the program to be conducted and on whose behalf you'd like to offer prayer.

- ◇ **Prayer Categories** – Topics could include federal, state, county, and local officials; local school districts and their staff; our nation's judicial system; military person-

nel; police and fire departments; local media representatives; business executives throughout the community; church leaders, and families in your area. Remember to lift in prayer your school's staff, as well as the students and their families. Whenever possible, mention individuals by name.

- ◇ **Refreshments** – In most cases, light refreshments such as a continental breakfast are sufficient.

- ◇ **Materials:**

- **Publicity posters**

- **Programs** highlighting your event format and prayer categories

- **Balloons with accompanying bookmarks** and other NDP keepsakes for participants to take home

- **NDP banner** to display at the entrance of your event location or as the backdrop for your assembly. (Most

sign companies are able to make these.) If you have several different prayer gatherings throughout the day, simply move the banner from site to site.

- **Event stickers** featuring the phrase "I Prayed" or the current NDP theme can be distributed to attendees to wear if they choose.

- **NDP brochures, newsletters, and program inserts** can be made available at the event.

- ◇ **School Contact Person** – This can be any staff member at the school who can be present at the event and provide needed support beforehand with details such as set-up, the sound system, etc.



Arrange to meet with this person at your event site in order to discuss any relevant logistics in advance.

- ◇ **Music/Entertainment** – This aspect of your program can be led by members of the school, community, or a local church. It will depend largely on your school’s policies and on the availability of performing groups in your area. Remember to obtain equipment such as sound systems, podiums and microphones ahead of time. Keep in mind, as well, that the NDP Task Force offers event videos and DVDs to supplement your program.
- ◇ **Prayer Intercessors** – Invite staff members or students to serve in this role, and suggest various topics each individual can emphasize during his or her prayer. Mention these intercessors by name and title in your printed program, also referring to the focus of their prayer. Three to five minutes of prayer for each of your categories is usually adequate.

Your NDP school event should not cost more than \$150.00, although that sum may vary depending on the entertainment, materials and refreshments you choose to incorporate into your event. The NDP Task Force now offers event packages, which are described at www.nationaldayofprayer.org

Event Preparation

The following planning should take place three to four months in advance of your gathering.

- **Determine possible communication vehicles**



that can be used to promote your school’s prayer event.

- **Media (print and electronic)** – Develop or obtain a list that includes media contact information pertinent to promotional efforts related to your event. Stay apprised of copy deadlines for broadcast spots or print advertisements, bearing in mind that some deadlines may fall one to three months before your event. Update your media list each year.

- **Develop press releases and Public Service Announcements (PSAs)** – These are helpful in getting the word out about your event. Remember to use the five “Ws” (who, what, when, where, and why) when describing your assembly, and be sure to provide contact information for anyone wanting additional specifics. Samples of both a press release and a PSA can be found at the end of this section.

- **In-school communication vehicles** – Depending on your school policies, you may be able to send flyers home with students or advertise your event through school newsletters, in-school telecasts or radio programs, or community billboards.

In all of this, it’s important to keep in mind that Bible Clubs or FCA chapters are to be treated as any other student club or organization. In other words, by law they must have the same access to on-campus communication mediums. If you meet with any resistance, however, consider making an appointment with your superintendent (or his or her representative) to ask that their policy be changed. In addition, remember that groups such as the American Center for Law and Justice, the Alliance Defense Fund and the Liberty Counsel stand ready to assist you with any conflicts in this regard. (Their organizations’ contact information is provided in Section Three of this document.)

- **Contact local churches** – Most churches are more than willing to mention your prayer event in their Sunday bulletin, make an announcement from the pulpit, hang a poster in

their youth area, or advertise your observance through signs placed on the church's grounds.

- **Determine the format and type of your program.** Choose a format that can be adapted every year with only minor changes. There are a number of desktop publishing software packages on the market that can aid you in designing your program copy to fit your program cover's size requirements. You can then print your programs on your home computer printer. If you need a large volume of programs, however, you may want to get price quotes from local print shops or even find out if there are any printing companies who would be willing to donate this service.

Program items should include

the current NDP theme and its accompanying Scripture verse
the time, date and location of your event
the order in which your program's components will occur
the name of your emcee and any other program participants
topics for prayer

- **Remember to make special arrangements if you are hosting a multi-campus school event.** For instance, if your hosting school has multiple campuses, but each campus houses the same grade levels, think about holding your event at the same time in the morning or afternoon. If each campus has different grade levels, however, you may prefer to schedule your events in a rotating sequence. In other words, the first campus could hold its gathering before school starts, while the second campus could allow its students to meet immediately after school. This type of arrangement would make it possible to accommodate anyone who wanted to attend.
- **Include in your program suggested subjects of prayer.** Below are listed areas the NDP Task Force encourages participants to remember during their times of intercession. Each of these covers a different segment of American society, and each one is influential in directing the course of our

nation.

- ◇ **Government**
- ◇ **Military**
- ◇ **Media**
- ◇ **Business**
- ◇ **Education**
- ◇ **Church**
- ◇ **Family**

Because you are hosting a school event, you will also want to remember individuals associated with your school, such as the faculty, staff, volunteers, and students.



- **Brainstorm any other components you'd like incorporated into your program.** A number of our Coordinators, for instance, include a tradition known as "Balloons Lifted High" at the close of their events. As attendees prepare to depart, everyone gathers to release NDP balloons in a meaningful symbol of the prayers that were just raised to the Almighty's throne. In addition, many assemblies conclude with a corporate rendition of "America the Beautiful." This can be sung with or without musical accompaniment. It's helpful to print the lyrics inside your program.

- **Select thank-you gifts for each program participant.** Don't forget to give thought to the administrative members who gave permission for you to hold your event. Gift possibilities that can be purchased through the NDP Task Force's Web site include pins, magnets, apparel, or other prayer-related memorabilia.
- **Recruit the involvement of individuals who will be willing to pray in the days prior to your event.** These intercessors will commit to ask God to be glorified through your gathering, in addition to seeking His wisdom for you and your fellow planners and His guidance and provision for any logistics associated with your event.

Last-Minute Preparations

During the final week leading up to your event, there will be a number of details you will need to confirm. Following are suggested items to review in the days

before your observance.

- **Get in touch with your contact person at the school.** Confirm that the sound system, podium, microphone, tables, and any other necessary equipment will be set up in time. If there are any fees associated with the use of these items, be sure to bring your payment to the event, if you have not taken care of that in advance.
- **Cue your music.** If you are using recorded music, ensure that you'll be able to begin your music easily at the appropriate portion of your program. If live musicians are participating, contact them to verify that they are still able to perform and remind them when you need them to arrive.

- **Make certain that your refreshments will be delivered or picked up on time.** If possible, have it delivered to your event location, and pay any remaining balance on the refreshments.



- **Find a time when you can decorate your event location.** Pack up any banners, posters, paper goods for refreshments, balloons, programs, and any other NDP materials you will be distributing.
- **Pick up any inflated balloons.** These should be ready the night before the event if your gathering will take place early in the day, or first thing in the morning if you will be gathering in the afternoon. Ask the store provid-

ing your balloons to inflate them in a way that will make them last as long as possible.

- **Group your programs in ten- to twenty-count batches.** This will allow you to keep an accurate count of your attendees. You will also want to make sure that each program contains any additional information you'd like included, such as bookmarks or prayer guides. Designate someone to hand out programs as people arrive.
- **Bring to your event any miscellaneous items you may need.** Scissors, tape and other adhesives, and a supply of extra pens and pencils will likely come in handy. Pack them prior to your event and keep them on hand throughout the day.

- **Pray for the Lord's blessing on your observance.** Ask God to help your gathering proceed smoothly. Most importantly, pray that everyone in attendance will be positively impacted and that our nation will benefit from the intercession offered during your event.

Instructions for the day of your observance

- **Arrive early.** You should show up at least one hour before your event is scheduled to start. This will allow you to be present to oversee any last-minute set-up and decorations.
- **Make sure all set-up preparations are completed according to your prior specifications.** For instance, the podium, sound system and chairs for attendees should be ready.
- **Have any media equipment, such as music or video presentations, set up and ready to play.** Any live musicians participating

should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the event to set up for their own segment of the program. In addition, prepare to begin playing any background music approximately 10-15 minutes before people are scheduled to start arriving. Appropriate selections can be found on NDP music CDs.

- **Prepare the tables that will hold information and refreshments.** In addition to refreshments, make sure that decorations, paper goods, your balloon sign-up form, and your NDP informational items are displayed at these tables at least 30 minutes before the event begins.
- **Help your program participants find their places.** Have these individuals at their respective stations at least 10 minutes before your event begins.

During Your Prayer Event

As you proceed with the elements of your program that have been laid out in advance, there are several additional details you'll want to make sure to include.

- **Thank all those who assisted you.** Express appreciation to everyone who made your event possible. You may also present thank-you gifts at this time.
- **Offer refreshments and NDP information.** Invite everyone to stay for refreshments and to pick up NDP materials at your information

table. Balloon sign-up can also take place at this time. (Placing all leftover refreshments and materials in the teachers' lounge is a nice gesture.)

- **Play music with prayer-related themes.** Have approximately five or ten minutes of music play over the sound system as attendees exit for refreshments.

Event Follow-Up

Following are several things you should do within the month following your prayer observance.

- **Send thank-you notes to everyone who helped with your event.**
- **Schedule a follow-up meeting with your steering committee and any other advisors to evaluate the success of your prayer event.** Also discuss ways you might improve a future prayer observance at your school. Include a time of prayer during which you thank the Lord for guiding your event and ask for His blessing upon your next assembly.
- **Be available to help other schools plan their own event for next year.**

- **Fill out an NDP Event report online in the coordinator section of:**
www.nationaldayofprayer.org



Sample:
National Day of Prayer School Event News Release
(Prototype for Print Media)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Date)

Contact: **(Event Coordinator Name & Phone)**

(School Name) Observes National Day of Prayer

COLORADO SPRINGS – The (XXth) Annual National Day of Prayer, **(annual NDP theme)**, will be observed this Thursday, May **(date)**, from **(event time)** at **(event location and address)**. The public is welcome to attend and pray for our nation.

Prayer for America will be offered, emphasizing the following topics: government, military, media, business, education, church, and family. According to **(position and name)**, **“(quote from that person).”** This event is just one of many taking place today all over our country and overseas on our military bases. Gatherings planned for this Thursday include observances at the White House and the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, D.C. Events will vary in size ranging from school and church gatherings to prayer events at state capitols, around county courthouses and at local parks.

This year’s theme is **(NDP annual theme)**, inspired by Scripture found in **(Bible book, chapter and verse)**: **“(quote passage).”**

The National Day of Prayer is a vital part of our national heritage. Since the first call to prayer in 1775, when the Continental Congress asked the colonies to pray for wisdom in forming a nation, this corporate prayer has continued throughout American history. President Lincoln, for instance, proclaimed a day of “humiliation, fasting and prayer” in 1863, and a joint resolution by Congress in 1952, signed by President Truman, declared an annual National Day of Prayer. In 1988, that law was amended and signed by President Reagan, permanently establishing the National Day of Prayer as the first Thursday of every May. Each year our nation’s president, governors, mayors, and other elected officials sign proclamations encouraging all Americans to pray for their country on the National Day of Prayer.

For a full listing of all National Day of Prayer activities in our area, please contact your local church or visit the National Day of Prayer Task Force Web site at www.nationaldayofprayer.org. At this Web site, you can also find out how to contact your NDP State Coordinator for specifics about events.

For more information about this release or other school events, please contact **(insert local contact name and phone number)**.

Sample

National Day of Prayer School Event Public Service Announcement (PSA)

(Prototype for Broadcast Media)

**Please note that all copy is typed in capital letters and timed to fit within a 30-second spot.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Date)

(Contact Person and Phone Number)

Length: 30 seconds

(Event Location)

National Day of Prayer

COLORADO SPRINGS – THE (XXth) ANNUAL NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER WILL BE OBSERVED THIS THURSDAY, MAY (DATE) AT (TIME) AT (LOCATION). THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO COME AND PRAY FOR OUR NATION.

PRAYERS WILL EMPHASIZE TOPICS SUCH AS GOVERNMENT, MILITARY, MEDIA, BUSINESS, EDUCATION, CHURCH, AND FAMILY.

PLEASE CALL YOUR LOCAL CHURCH OR VISIT THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER WEB SITE AT WWW.NATIONALDAYOFPRAYER.ORG TO LOCATE OTHER EVENTS IN YOUR AREA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE (EVENT LOCATION), CONTACT (LOCAL COORDINATOR NAME AND PHONE NUMBER).