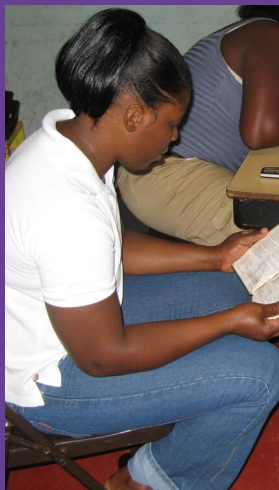


About 50% of young people now go to university, and many of them will move away from their family and home church. It is a time of huge upheaval and churches in towns and cities with a student population can offer support and friendship when it is most needed.

Some of the ideas in this leaflet are specifically about supporting Christian students, but others are ways in which you might consider supporting any young people who are studying in your community.



27 Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9HH
www.freechurches.org.uk

HOME FROM HOME

SUPPORTING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN YOUR CHURCH



Here are a few ideas to get you started:

An initial welcome...

- Greet and Eat:
At the beginning of the academic year, offer an open invitation to students to gather for a meal (pizza, a buffet, fish and chips, or coffee and cake) at your church. This can be advertised on your church notice board, on social media outlets, and possibly through the university chaplaincy. New students have the opportunity to meet those who are in their second or third year, and other church members and leaders can offer hospitality and friendship in a relaxed setting.
- Freshers' Service:
Hold a welcome service at the beginning of the academic year, with refreshments and time for chatting afterwards. Offer new students an attractive welcome pack with contact details of church leaders, and information about church activities in which students might have an interest.



Building relationships ...

- Adopt a student:
Pair up volunteers from the congregation (usually a family, couple or two friends, rather than one person on their own) with a student. They get to know the student by keeping in touch, sharing meals and helping them to feel part of the church community. There might be an agreement that they meet once a month, so that the contact does not drift. The adopters commit to praying for their adopted student.
- Arrange social events that integrate different groups in the congregation with students, for example, Xbox sessions, games of football, barbecues, bake-offs, and specifically invite the students to join in.
- Provide mentors for students who would like more support, either generally or specifically in relation to their faith.
- Start a student group. Get them to set the agenda, but support it by providing accommodation, refreshments, input from church leaders, and other appropriate help.
- Integrate students into small groups - Bible study or home groups, and encourage them to take a turn in leading.
- Invitations for meals, coffee etc. go a long way to make students (and others) feel welcome.
- Involve students in church services, worship groups, drama groups. This gives them a chance to be seen as people who contribute to the life of the church.

