



## Youthworkers Support Network

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Dear fellow Youth Minister\*,

★ **Do you know** that our Greater Houston Area has 62 school districts, with 1,593 public schools? The TEA reported 1,298,576 students for the 2022-23 school year (as of 03/27/23).

***What if every school had a group of students praying for their school?***

★ **Do you know** the annual **See You at the Pole** student-led prayer-event is on 09/27/23?

### Why is SYATP important?

- It helps connect the body of Christ on the school campus.
- It helps unify prayer for the school campus.
- It helps develop student leaders.

### Why is SYATP training important for your students?

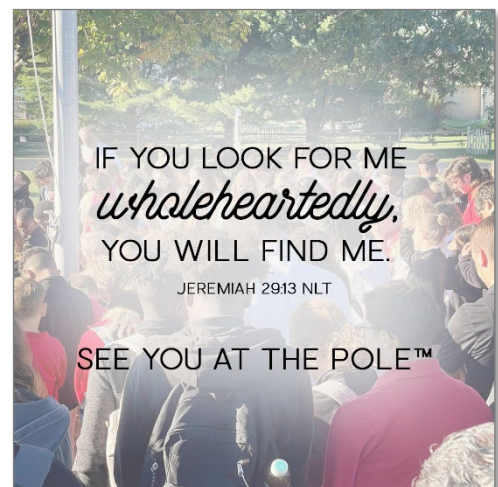
- It gives the students direction, encouragement and support.
- It helps them **work with** other Christian students at their school who may not attend their church.
- It allows students to use their gifts, to lead and promote prayer for their school.

Your role may be to help organize the training, or to help support it, or maybe just to encourage other youth leaders in your church, to be sure the training is offered for your students, in your community.

I hope the information in the following pages is helpful to you. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any help. And please let us know about your training event! There may be other folks in your area, that would be willing to help you!

Your fellow "youth-minister"

*\*We define a "youth minister" as anyone serving youth, with a desire to help lead them closer to God, by trusting and following Jesus Christ. "Youth ministers" include student leaders, volunteers, paid church staff, parachurch youth workers (like Cru, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Young Life, Youth For Christ, etc.), teachers, family members, and other adults who are concerned about our young people.*



# Training Suggestions

Go to [www.syatp.com](http://www.syatp.com) for more planning ideas, resources, videos, and materials.

These are some suggestions, based on our experience in the Greater Houston Area. Of course, please adapt our ideas to your situation and your best timetable.

**Step #1 Identify** the schools where most of your students attend. Ideally, this would be one or more high schools in the same community or school district, and the other schools that feed into them. The training works best when it is focused on specific schools.

**Step #2 Months before your training, partner with at least two other churches** in your community, who will work together to sponsor the training. One church can be the “Host” for the event; another church can provide the up-front leadership for the training, and another can provide the snacks or worship team. Of course, more churches can partner to reach more schools, but be sure the training is a partnership of multiple churches near the schools, so it doesn’t appear to be an outreach of just one church ... which can easily look like competition.

★ *If you plan your training before you recruit your partners, they will be less likely to participate. Everybody likes to have a voice in the process, rather than just showing up for “your” event.*

**Step #3 Plan** the training event for a time that is convenient for most students to attend. **Timing this training is important!** Students forget quickly, so they need our loving reminders. Training is best done two weeks, or 10 days before the SYATP Wednesday.

**Step #4: Set up:**

- If the schools are known, have tables set up for each school, clearly marked for later use.
- Have a youth leader assigned to each school’s table.
- Have snacks or refreshments available.
- Be sure the sound, video and worship teams are ready.
- When the students arrive, have them sit together in the main area, not at their tables.

**Step #5: Training options:**

	Basic	Basic+	Deluxe	Deluxe+
Opening Prayer	•	•	•	•
Serve pizza, sandwiches, or ?				•
Introduce the youth pastors	•	•	•	•
Worship songs			•	•
Show SYATP video(s)	•	•	•	•
Break into school-groups	•	•	•	•
Have each group share their plan	•	•	•	•
Closing prayer	•	•	•	•
Cookies & Snacks		•	•	•
Estimated time	1:00	1:15	1:30	2:00

- **Opening prayer and welcome:** Options are important here. Sometimes it's a worship set, sometimes it's pizza or food, sometimes it's just an opening prayer or an introduction of the youth ministry people there. It's also a time-frame issue. The training video is less than 10 minutes, but the students' planning-time at their tables can take 30 to 45 minutes.
- **Introductions:** Be sure to recognize the other youth pastors and youth ministry workers – such as from Cru-High School, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Young Life, Youth For Christ, or other youth ministry professionals. This might be the only opportunity your students have to see another youth pastor! This also spotlights how the body of Christ is working together, to serve the youth in your community.
- **Show the video:** It takes less than 10 minutes, and it doesn't need much of an intro. There is a paper guide for notes and discussion, so it's nice if they have it before the video. Students may take notes on their phones, but the guide can be a helpful prompt and reminder to them on what to discuss, and what decisions need to be made.
- **Break the students into school groups:** Based on the size of your group, if at all possible put each school at their own table. If there are not enough students, then put the high schools together, the junior highs together, etc. Assess your numbers in each group, and assign youth leaders as needed.
- For a good size group, 6-10, one of the youth ministry leaders should serve as a resource person for the group, making helpful suggestions. 'Like, "It's unlikely that \_\_\_\_ (some popular worship group) will come and lead worship for your school's *See You at the Pole* event."
- For a larger school's group of 15+, the resource person can suggest that once a general plan is outlined, that they break into planning and promotion groups. Or, some other logical breakdown based on their chosen direction.
- The most difficult aspect of this, is for the youth leaders to serve as resources/consultants, and ***not*** providing direction. 'Just be present to encourage the students making their plan together.
- **Have each group share their plan:** It's helpful to have a student from each school share the plans that were made. It's interesting to hear the diversity in their plans and ideas.
- This also allows you to promote your students' work and advertise for them. Think about how many times you have asked them to tell their friends about your event. Now you can be a partner in your students' event!
- **Get a copy of each group's plan and starting time for their SYATP event:** Before each group leaves their table, be sure you get a copy of their plan. The starting time is very important for letting the parents and other students know when to be at the school for SYATP. It may be a good idea to have a small printer/copier available at the training.
- **Closing:** Sometimes, food is a good stopping point; sometimes it is a closing prayer. Try to leave time at the end for the students to keep talking and visiting. Often new friendships are being formed between Christian students who attend the same school, but who have not had the opportunity to work together, to represent Christ on their campus.



## Why I love **See You at the Pole**

**Dottie Hinesley** serves as the Schools-Network Coordinator, with the Youthworkers Support Network. While she is the nationally recognized “ESES Campus Strategist” for the Brazoria and Galveston county school districts, she enjoys encouraging SYATP efforts, everywhere. Dottie has been a youth ministry leader and networker since 1981.

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For more information and materials, go to: [www.syatp.com](http://www.syatp.com)

I love it, because **See You at the Pole** is a brilliant tool for communities and churches to support the Christian students, on their school campuses.

**It's simple:** In its most basic form, it is a group of students who meet at their school's flagpole to pray for their school and fellow students, on the fourth Wednesday in September. Easy, simple.

**It encourages teachers:** Depending on the school, the political climate and the district, I have known teachers to either join the students and pray with them, or to pray with other teachers. I have also known times when teachers were told that they could not come to their school's **See You at the Pole**, so they watched in groups or alone from windows. Those teachers have told me how encouraged they were to see their students boldly gathering to pray. I had a teacher tell me this with tears in her eyes, so I knew how meaningful this was to her. So, whether the teachers are allowed to be present or not, they are still encouraged by the faith and prayers of the students.

**It challenges students:** Students who come out to pray, are taking a stand on their campus for Christ. Sometimes, this is a milestone for a student. Sometimes, it can lead to opportunities to share their faith.

**Its training:** I love the **See You at the Pole** training. The SYATP staff produce a simple video to use to train students to plan and lead their school's event. I have watched students go from simply attending the SYATP gathering, to taking responsibility for SYATP ... with just simple training. I love how this simple level of training, produces leaders who can mobilize a Christian witness on their campus!

**It may lead to on-campus Christian clubs:** After students have had a successful **See you at the Pole** event, I see them eager to do more. Some have begun leading daily or weekly prayer gatherings at their flagpoles. Some have started successful on-campus Christian Clubs, with various names.

## **SYATP FAQs**

- **Can't I just train my students to do SYATP?**

You can, but then it becomes an event of your church and something your students plan and support alone. And if another church does the same thing, you could end up with two SYATP events, looking like competing efforts. Nothing says we aren't communicating, like two SYATPs! Don't you want to see God do something BIG in your community? Something too big for your church to do by itself?

- **Can I train younger students to lead SYATP?**

With good adult support, even children in elementary schools, can participate in this training. They just need a higher level of supervision and support. Usually parents are welcome to coach and support their children. Your high school and junior high students will be encouraged, and challenged by these little ones' courage and boldness.

- **What if our training has only one student from a school?**

If you have only one student from a school, assign someone to brainstorm with them. If you have several students who are the only students from their school, you can put them in a special group and let them share their plans together. These individual students are the ones who need the most support and encouragement as they plan their event; but they may also be the ones who come back with the best stories. They are often the students who are most likely to pray alone at their flagpole.

If you do have a single student from a school, and you have time, ask them if they see any value in hosting another training opportunity for their school. Maybe they can recruit some more students to join them in the next training event.

- **Can public school teachers help?**

Since this training is an off campus event ... **Yes!** On the morning of *See you at the Pole*, depending on the school's administration, they may be able to pray at the pole with other teachers.

- **How much will our SYATP cost?**

Unless you provide food, the cost for the training is minimal. The video can be downloaded from [www.syatp.com](http://www.syatp.com) for free, and is also available on YouTube. Other costs for this event are up to you.

- **What is a "Saw You at the Pole" celebration?**

A **Saw You at the Pole** is an after-event, that allows the students to celebrate what God has done at their SYATP. It allows students to report on the number of their school's turn out, and give personal testimonies. You could bring in a band, the local student drill team, or rap group, to make the time a celebration of God working through students, to share His love and Good News. Close the service with a challenging message along the lines of "Your School = Your Mission field". This works best as a Wednesday evening community service, the night of SYATP; sponsored of course, by the churches that helped you support and promote the event.