

Bring Your Pastor to School Day

by T. Chris Crain, Covenant Classical Christian School

Christian schools serve the church at large. As such, it is imperative that churches know about our schools so they may pray for us and support us as God leads them. Although our school draws students from many different churches all over our city, we determined that many pastors did not know much about Covenant Classical Christian School (CCCS) and the distinctive classical, Christian education we offer. To rectify this problem, our admissions and marketing director, Lindsey Moore, proposed a new event for CCCS, "Bring Your Pastor to School Day." I will explain how we coordinated this event and why it was a success.

At CCCS our student application requires parents to fill in where they attend church and who the pastor is. We track this data from year to year. To invite pastors, we used this data and sent them an invitation which specifically named the students from CCCS who attend their church and listed what grades they are in. When our students found out about the event, many also excitedly asked their pastor or youth pastor if he was coming.

It was important that the event have an attractive theme for students and the pastors. Columbia, SC, is NASCAR country so we asked Billy Mauldin, director of Motor Racing Outreach, an organization which ministers to NASCAR drivers and their families, to speak. We also have a former student, Jordan Anderson, who is on the junior league NASCAR circuit and who loves to share his faith and speak.

We were confident that these two men would draw a crowd. We met with Billy before the event and prayed together. He has a passion for Christian education and saw this as an opportunity to share with pastors how he ministers to NASCAR drivers and how our school's mission relates to his ministry. He also wanted to challenge students in their faith.

As pastors arrived, we greeted them, signed them in, provided refreshments, and gave them the opportunity to meet and mingle. Pastors often know other pastors in their denomination, but at this event they met pastors outside their denomination, an advantage we hope to leverage next when inviting them. Utilizing our student council to showcase our students, we escorted each pastor to the classroom(s) of the students who attend their church.

Teachers used the classroom time differently. In the grammar school some teachers involved the pastor in the lesson by having him read a book or lead a part of the lesson they were doing. Others interviewed the pastor and learned more about him. In the upper school, the pastor observed a classical school in action as teachers and students dialogued.

After classroom visits, the school assembled for chapel. We worshiped together and then heard an inspiring message. I spoke very briefly about the importance of classical, Christian education and asked pastors to pray for us in the future.

When chapel was over the students escorted their pastors to a catered lunch and ate with

them. Pastors don't always get a chance to spend one-on-one time with young people in their congregation. This event provided them an opportunity to develop deeper relationships with their young parishioners.

"Bring Your Pastor to School" was certainly a marketing event. We've often heard, "You are the best kept secret in Columbia, South Carolina!" We saw this day as a move towards changing that. When a parishioner says, "What about Christian schooling?" the answer the pastors can now say is, "Have you considered CCCS?" Our admissions and marketing director is following up with the pastors and arranging meetings for those interested in learning more about CCCS. Our goal is for churches to see our school as a partner in discipling students and parents to know and love the Lord more.

But the event was more than just marketing for our particular school, although that was an important aspect. As a kingdom-minded school we promote the idea of Christian education. In Columbia not all pastors support Christian education. We've no idea where these pastors stood on that issue, but this event allowed us to showcase a Christian school in action, a persuasive apologetic for sure. We distributed literature about Christian education and opened the door for further discussion.

Of the forty-nine pastors we invited, thirty-four came. All of them had a positive experience because they learned about our school, were edified by interesting speakers, and connected with at least one student from their church. We think "Bring Your Pastor to School Day" took the checkered flag.

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