

SYATP PLANNING CHEAT SHEET

SEE YOU AT THE POLE takes place on the fourth Wednesday in September each year. As a Christian on a public school campus, you may be wondering how to prepare for this event. This guide is designed to help you get the ball rolling!

SYATP is meant to be a campus wide effort, organized by no particular club/organization/church. Sometimes you may find that a local church will send their youth pastors to your school to help lead the event or sometimes campus ministries like DOLLS or FCA will make big plans to ensure the morning is not complete chaos. Ideally, SYATP should be the coming together of all the Christian clubs on your campus to collectively to plan this event as a team. However, this is often difficult to coordinate since the event takes place very early in the school year. Unfortunately this means that many times students show up for SYATP and find that NO ONE is prepared to lead the event. Yikes!



That's where we want our DOLLS officers ready to step in. If no one else emerges as the ringleader during the event, people (boys and girls alike) will instinctively look to DOLLS, to take charge. Let's be ready with a game plan in case this happens!

The following is a possible schedule you could follow for SYATP:

PRAISE & WORSHIP (20 minutes)

- If possible, invite someone to play the guitar or the ukulele.
- If no musicians are available, bring speakers and an iPod
- Consider passing out lyrics for the songs you plan to sing
- If you have someone who can sing boldly and loudly, acapella music would be fine.

DEVOTIONAL (20 minutes)

- Chaplains can be ready with a short devo.
- Topics might include:
 - Student Rights
 - Make a copy of the Students Rights section of your DOLLS Handbook and pass this out to students.
 - Talk to them about common misconceptions about what students are free to say and do on campus regarding faith
 - ...this is, after all, the main reason SYATP was started years ago; as an effort to encourage students to exercise the rights they have on campus.
 - The Gospel
 - Some of the kids who show up won't know Jesus at all.
 - Time to introduce them!

TAG TIME- TIME ALONE W/GOD (15 minutes)

- Invite students to break apart into small groups of 4-5 people.
 - Ask them to share prayer requests as a group for about 10 minutes
 - Spend the rest of the time praying over the things mentioned
- Consider having a list of prayer items available for people
 - Pray for:
 - Your Campus- teachers, students, administration,
 - Your City- local church bodies, the community, city leaders
 - The County- our political leaders, the President, the upcoming election
 - The World- International affairs, peace, third world nations

CORPORATE PRAYER (5 minutes)

- Gather the entire group back together for a large group prayer
- Invite anyone to popcorn pray (i.e. jump in and pray for whatever is on their heart)
- You might consider wrapping up with one final song of worship.



DISMISS

- Encourage students to live out their faith throughout the day thru their actions
 - People shouldn't know we are Christ-followers just b/c they saw us circling a pole in the morning before school...it should resonate thru all areas of our lives.
- Encourage students not to say "Amen"
 - Translation: Don't let the prayer dialog end at the pole. As Christians, our conversations with God should be unceasing throughout the day.

**This schedule is based on an hour-long event.*

***Try not to stretch the event any longer than 1-hour, as people will get restless.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is See You At The Pole legal?

The answer to this question is a firm "Yes!" The right of students to gather and pray outside of instructional time—while at school—is clearly a Constitutionally protected form of free speech. This has been affirmed in regard to "Equal Access Clubs" by the 1990 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Westside Community Schools v. Mergens*. And in 1995, President Bill Clinton directed then-Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, to prepare guidelines for what the government deemed "appropriate religious expression on school grounds." These guidelines were issued and upheld by the government several times since. In them, See You at the Pole™ is specifically named as legal, appropriate, and protected:

"Students may also participate in before or after school events with religious content, such as "see you at the flag pole" gatherings, on the same terms as they may participate in other noncurriculum activities on school premises. School officials may neither discourage nor encourage participation in such an event."

If students who are praying are told by someone from the administration (or otherwise in authority at the school) to stop praying during See You at the Pole we recommend that you obey that authority and move your prayer time off campus. See You at the Pole is about praying, not arguing about your legal rights. You may want to bring a parent, youth worker, or other adult with you to speak to the authority later. If necessary, you may want to contact a legal group who can clarify your rights for the school official.

Can teachers and administrators participate in See You at the Pole?

This is perhaps the most complicated of all the issues we have dealt with. In *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, the Supreme Court of the United States has held that teachers do not shed their constitutional rights when they enter the schoolhouse gate. Since that time, however, courts have been reluctant if not resistant to state what rights teachers have on campus. The problem is one of endorsement. Teachers are authority figures on their school campuses. They have specific official responsibilities; because of those responsibilities, students often view teachers as agents of the state. What this means is that students view teachers as government officials. Therefore, when a teacher participates in events such as See You at the Pole it is possible for students to confuse a teacher or administrator's personal speech with their official speech.



In order to determine if a teacher has a right to participate in events such as See You at the Pole then, we must evaluate several areas. At what time of day is the event occurring? If it is during what is known as "non-contract time," it is possible that the teacher could participate without violating the constitution. What role is the teacher or administrator attempting to take in the event? If the teacher is merely showing up to observe the event, it could be constitutional. On the other hand, if the teacher is leading the prayer, or participating in the prayer, it could violate the constitution.

In short, protect your campus advisor. This may be the most public event DOLLS partakes in during the school year, and to be sure, your principals will be watching. Do everything in your power to use this time to prove that you are a student-led, student-initiated club and that your advisor only serves in a facilitative capacity.

Can parents, and/or adults, participate in See You at the Pole?

Yes, with reservations. Schools have policies concerning visitors on campus. As long as those policies are not discriminatory against religious people they should be complied with. For example, most school officials require that visitors check in before they enter the campus. Even though See You at the Pole™ is before school and usually outside, it is important for adults, even parents, to follow the policies set up by school officials. School officials have a legitimate interest in knowing who is on their campus at any given time. Because of the early hour of See You at the Pole™, it may be necessary for you to notify school officials the day before. If school officials permit visitors they should also permit you to enter the campus and participate in See You at the Pole™.

For more information, visit the official SYATP website at www.syatp.org