



SPEED THE LIGHT



“Speed the Light not only impacts people’s lives through material necessities, but it also shares the love of Jesus which impacts where people will spend eternity.” –STL Participant

## A Twelve Month *Speed the Light* Journey

*Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father excepted through me.”*

It is my prayer that this resource will help equip you to make a difference around the world, through the ministry of Speed The Light.

Several years ago, while filling in at a Jr. High English class, I had an encounter with a student that forever changed the way I look at missions. Meagan was not an Assemblies of God student or even a faithful Christian, but she had a very inquisitive nature. She knew I was a local youth pastor and decided to ask me a series of questions, one of which still rings loudly in my ears to this day. She simply

asked, “Can anyone go to heaven without knowing Jesus?” On the surface this question seemed like a no-brainer, and I proceeded to share with her the proper scripture.

*John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

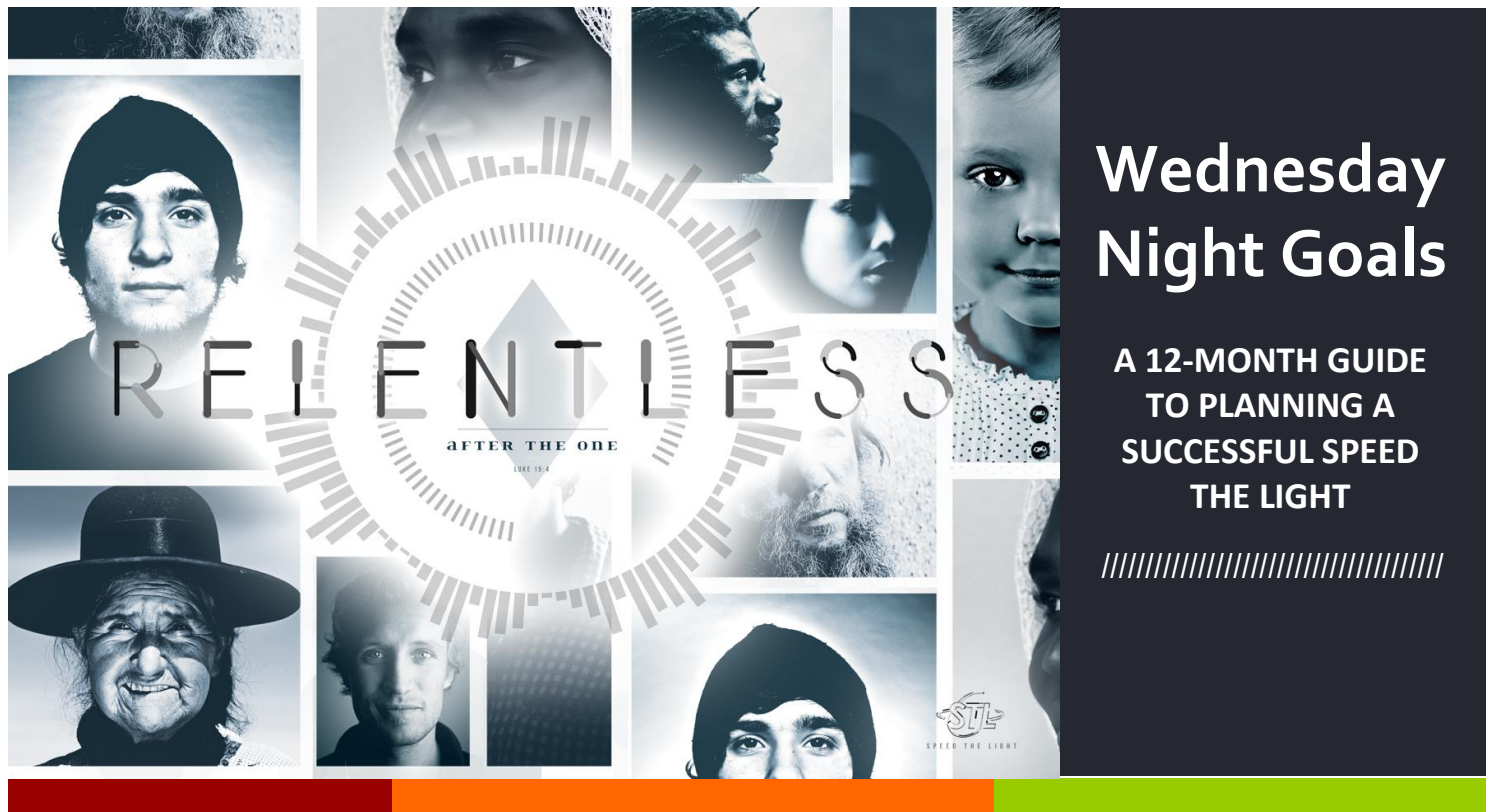
Proud of myself for having answered her question, I was shocked by her response. “What about all the people around the world who have never heard of Jesus? Do they get to go to heaven?” At that

moment, Speed The Light truly became a passion for me.

Since that day, one thing has been strongly on my heart: We need to eliminate Meagan's question! “Can anyone go to heaven without knowing Jesus?” We need to do everything in our power to ensure that someone dying without ever hearing the gospel isn't even an option.

We have our work cut out for us, indeed, but I believe that with your help, through our missionaries around the world, we can partner with Speed The Light to take the Gospel to every soul and every nation.

I've had the privilege of working at churches of all different sizes, communities, and missions focuses, and I have learned one thing: regardless of any of that, teenagers can do amazing things through Speed The Light. I want to take time to share with you a few thoughts, ideas and testimonies about what God has done over the years.



# Wednesday Night Goals

A 12-MONTH GUIDE TO PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL SPEED THE LIGHT



## YOUR TEENAGERS ARE THE BIGGEST FUNDRIASER YOU HAVE

One of the things that still amaze me today is the heart that young people have for reaching the world. Your teens are capable of such great things. Start off every year with a Speed The Light Service in your youth ministry.

Preach a STL themed message and give the students a chance to set individual goals. Add them up and create for yourselves a Wednesday Night Goal. When I say Wednesday Night Goal, I am referring specifically to how much your students can give, totally on their own.

**You will never reach your fullest potential unless you unleash the creativity of teenagers.**

Make a goal each month and make it fun! Give them something to work for that they will enjoy. I've listed some examples of what we have done in the past, but you know your city and your kids better than anyone, so I encourage you to be creative and see how excited your kids get!

I understand that in some churches the Wednesday night offerings go toward the Youth fund, but I would encourage you to pick a night to be Speed The Light night. For the sake of monthly challenges, I would say take up your offering the last Wednesday night of every month.

Coming from a youth group of 25-30 teens, I know from experience that it isn't always easy to raise money for STL. The following is a sample guide for monthly themes to raise funds, but feel free to get creative!

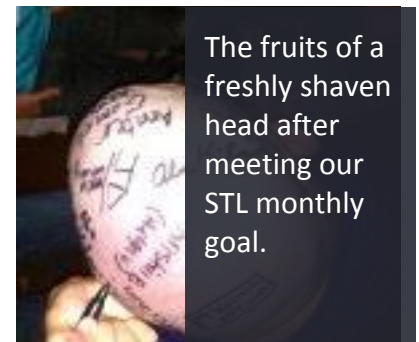


**Month:** January

**Challenge: Color the Youth Pastor's hair.** Allow your students to pick the hair color. Pink, blue, green and orange are all popular colors.

**Goal:** Set a goal that is realistic, but not super easy. If you think your kids can do \$100, set the goal at \$250.

**Our Result:** We set a huge goal of \$750, and we didn't come close to reaching it.



# Speed the Light allows teenagers across the globe to make a difference.

-Sydney, 16.

**Month:** February

**Challenge: Pie in the face.** For this challenge I got all of our youth workers to agree to take a pie in the face. We set a goal of \$100 per pie, and for every \$100 they raised they got to pick one of the adults to get a pie in the face.

**Goal:** Everyone loves to see someone get pied in the face! Set a goal that guarantees that multiple people get pied. If you think the kids can do \$100, set your goal at \$20 a pie, and then be a good sport about it!!

**Our Result:** We set a goal of \$100 a pie and we had over \$1,300 come in. We got pied in the face 13 times collectively!



**Month:** March

**Challenge: April Showers contest.** This one is simple. You set a goal, and if the kids reach it then they win, if they don't then the youth pastor (and staff) wins. It's called the April Showers contest because it will take place the first Wednesday in April. The loser gets soaked with water balloons. I would suggest that when you start this, make the kids sign up, so if they lose they can't get out of it!

**Goal:** Set another realistic goal. If you set it too high the kids won't participate. If you set it too low then you are sure to get soaked!!

**Our Result:** We set a goal of \$500, the kids raised about \$250, and we unloaded on them!!



**Month:** April

**Challenge: Team competitions.** Every year we make April a big month for our youth ministry. We celebrate National Youth Sunday by allowing the kids to participate in ministry and having a special speaker. During the month of April we break down into teams and we give them points for church attendance, bringing visitors, and Speed The Light giving. The winning team receives some kind of special trip or party. I always make STL money a huge point getter.

**Goal:** There isn't really a goal, but I usually make every STL dollar worth 1,000 points.

**Our Result:** Every year April is one of the biggest months for Speed The Light. Our team competitions alone usually bring in anywhere from \$300-\$600.



**Month:** May

**Challenge: Shave and Sign Challenge.** Sounds easy right? If they reach the goal for the month then the YP(or YP's husband) shaves their head, and all the kids get to sign it with a sharpie marker.

**Goal:** This is another goal that I would set at a level that you think they can reach. It's only your hair, after all. It will grow back, and the signing will make for some great pictures!

**Our Results:** We set a goal of \$400 and they passed it, which meant that my head got shaved before service and they all got to sign it after service.

More than \$262 million has been raised for Speed the Light since its beginning in 1945.

**Month:** Summer (June-August)

**Challenge: Summer Challenge.** Youth ministry seems to see a drop-off in attendance and an increase in events during the summer time. I like to take the summer to really push STL. We divided the kids into 4 groups and gave each team an adult. This works great if you have parents that want to be involved. They were all challenged to do a fundraiser at some point during the summer...on their own! This keeps the YP from having to plan multiple fundraisers and gets the kids and parents involved.

**Goal:** Set a goal that is pretty high. If you have raised \$1,000 so far, then set a summer goal of \$1,000.

**Our Results:** We set a goal of \$4,000 dollars, challenging all 4 teams to raise \$1,000. We ended up raising \$1,700 during our summer challenge. We didn't reach our goal, but that's okay! Each team did a fundraiser of some kind. We had a yard sale, donut sale, bake sale, and even a Norwex party (kind of crazy, but they hosted a Norwex party and the proceeds went to STL). It was a lot of fun and gave our teens the chance to build relationships in small groups.

////////////////////////////////////

**Month:** September

**Challenge: Duct Tape challenge.** Basically this one ends with you being duct taped to a telephone pole outside while everyone laughs at you.

**Goal:** Set a very small goal, say \$20. For every \$20 they raise during the month, they get a roll of duct tape. If they raise \$100 then they have 5 rolls to tape you to a pole.

**Our Results:** Let's just say I was taped to the pole while everyone laughed.

////////////////////////////////////

**Month:** October

**Challenge: Lock-In.** A very simple challenge. If they meet the goal for the month then they get a Lock-In at the end of the month. I usually do a back to school lock-in in August, and the kids all want to know when the next one is going to be. October is a good time to let them "earn" a Lock-In.

**Goal:** I guess it just depends on how much you like Lock-Ins. I love them, so I set the goal low. Set the goal based on what you think a lock-in is worth.

////////////////////////////////////

**Month:** End of the Year (November-December)

**Challenge: Final Push.** This isn't so much of a challenge as it is a push. Set up a board of some kind that shows your yearly goal and how much you have so far. Find a creative way to keep up with it each week and send out reminders via text, email, facebook, twitter, and such.

**Goal:** Look at where you are at for the year, and set the goal for the rest of your faith promise.

One of the reasons I love the monthly challenge is that it opens the door for your teens to get creative in how they raise money.

**Never call an idea stupid. Trust me, it makes you look bad when it works!**

If you have done something creative every month, then odds are that you are going to be **blown away** by your students. You will have a lot of testimonies to share. I have seen a lot of amazing things over the last few years, and I want to share some of the stories with you!

## Holy Cow

There was a young girl named Danielle. She was only in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade when she made a pledge for STL. She wanted to give \$600!! In order to do this she raised a cow. Yes, that's right. I said a Cow. After paying for the cow, the feed, the shots and all that good stuff she made a profit of...yep, you guessed it...\$600! It took over a year, but she paid every penny of it!

## Many More

College Freshman Hannah, received a \$1,000 college grant which she gave to STL. College student CJ, made sure to pay a \$200 pledge he made while home on Christmas break.

## The Great Flamingo Flocking

Ali and Emily were 2 normal teenage girls. They weren't particularly faithful members of our youth group, but it just so happens they were at church the night we made our personal pledges for STL. The girls decided to get together and set a goal of \$400. Ali and Emily are both creative in nature and decided that the only logical thing to do was to purchase pink flamingos, put them in peoples yards, and then charge them money to remove them. It sounded a little too criminal for me, so I told them it wasn't a good idea, and that the church wasn't going to be involved in any way. Luckily for me and for STL, the girls didn't let my negativity distract them from the mission at hand. A month later they had raised over \$400 and decided to stop the project. The community, however, decided to keep it going. I'm not sure what became of those flamingos, but people in the community continued flocking each other's yards and sending the money to the church. We ended up with over \$500 for Speed The Light!!!

**Bottom Line: Use your Students to the MAX. It will not only allow your group to raise more money for STL, but it will also instill in them the heart for missions. The most important thing you can do for your students is to teach them to give.**

## **Remember, it's not about the amount you raise. It's about the heart you have to give!**

Once you have set your individual goals, set some group goals. Every youth group can do at least 1 fundraiser a year devoted to STL. I understand that most churches don't have youth budgets, and in order for the youth ministry to function they must fundraise. But I also believe God will honor your ministry if you take some time to give towards STL as well. If you are able, I would suggest doing a few group fundraisers each year. There are a ton different fundraisers that you could try out, but I like the ones that are low risk and high reward (meaning you can't possibly lose money).

**Car Wash:** Cheap and easy. Usually you can put on a car wash at the church or some place around town for very little expense.

**Pie and Cake Auction:** It's a lot of fun and tastes amazing! I am constantly amazed that pie and cake auctions work. Think about the logic behind them for a minute. We ask people to spend their own money making pies that we turn around and sell back to them way over market value! This is one of my all time favorites, and usually works anywhere.

**Fireworks:** This type of fundraiser has huge potential. The only problem is that it has good and bad potential. I've seen fireworks make over \$10,000 and I've seen it take churches 2 years to recover from the loss. If it's been a wet year, then you might look into it. However, if you've been in a drought, leave this idea alone!

Just remember when  
the Gospel reaches  
every soul, we can stop  
fundraising.

**Pledge type fundraisers:** There are a number of fundraisers that require you to take pledges for various things. One of the most popular is the walk-a-thon. You get people to promise to give "x" amount per mile you walk, and after the walk to collect the money. My personal favorite is one we did in Alabama at White Castle. We had a burger eating fundraiser. Sounds intense, but the premise is great. White Castle burgers are pretty small, and a bigger person can eat up to 10 of them without getting sick. It's really a quick way to make \$1,000. Get 10 students to get 11 people to pledge \$1 per burger, then have them each eat 10 burgers.....\$1,000 just like that! Getting burgers from other places might cut down the number of burgers you can eat, but hey, it's easy and it's fun.

**Tournaments:** You can pretty much create a tournament for anything you can think of, charge an entry fee, and give the proceeds to STL. Golf, basketball, xbox, and various things like that are all fun and exciting.

### **Speed the Light Sunday**

One Sunday in October is designated National Speed The Light Sunday. This is the one time a year that gives you a vehicle to take STL before the adults at your church.

**Speaker:** Find someone who has a heart for missions and a heart for STL and have them come and speak to your adults. The National STL Director or the District Youth Director are great examples of who to call.

**Service:** If your Pastor is willing, have the entire service revolve around SLT. Load up on resources from the National Office. Put info in the bulletins, use STL backgrounds during worship, and if possible, show the STL theme video. If you have STL banners, hang them up in the sanctuary or foyer area.

**Offering:** Give your adults the chance to give! In a normal service, most churches take up the offering before the preaching. During the STL service, take up a separate STL offering as part of your alter call time.

### **Final Count**

Make a big deal out of your end of the year amount! No matter how small or big it may be, get excited and start building for next year! Just remember when the gospel reaches every soul, we can stop fundraising.

End the year with some kind of STL party!!!! Do not be discouraged if you missed out on your goal! Be encouraged by the fact that God has started something great in your youth ministry, and what God starts, God finishes!!!!

### **Final Words: A Testimony of God's Faithfulness**

**-From a young youth pastor at a church of about 75 adults**

"I want to share with you what God has done in our youth group for Speed The Light over the first 6 months of 2008. The first Wednesday night of the year we had 16 people in attendance in youth, only 9 of those were teens. The rest were adults and about 4 college students.

I preached on Speed The Light and we took up pledges. When I added up the numbers it came out just short of \$1200, so we made a goal of \$100.00 a month. I challenged our teens to bring their STL offering on the last Wednesday Night of each month, and I told them we would do some fundraiser later in the year to make up any difference.

I will just be honest with you, I didn't have very high expectations because my wife and I had made a \$500.00 pledge and another adult who was in service made a \$250.00 pledge. I have learned now that God can speak to people after pledge time and that's alright.

Our first two months went by and we had done alright. We had taken in a little over \$130.00 in offerings. Then came our March offering. **Continued...**

## SPEED THE LIGHT 2013-2014

As I was getting ready for service, an adult in our church stopped by with an envelope and said his son, who was one of the college students in attendance, wanted to give this to STL. When I opened it, there was \$200.00. Our offering for that night totaled at \$255.00.

The April offering was down at around \$57.00, so I decided to try and motivate the kids a little and I told them if they would bring over \$100.00 for STL in May, then I would color my hair pink. Not only would I color it, but I would wear it pink to the Six Flags trip. I preached for just the 2<sup>nd</sup> time on STL and the offering came in at \$125.00. However, I was a little discouraged when we took up the June offering. It came in at around \$55.00.

Later, as I was getting ready for Sunday School, a girl from our youth group came up to me, said she had an offering for STL, and handed me an envelope. She was one of the original 3 teens we had when we got here in November, but she'd been kind of distancing herself from us and I was a little worried about her. She has always been the one girl in our youth who I know has a great personal relationship with Jesus, it's just been getting her to let what's on the inside come out. When I took the envelope back to my office, I opened it and the first thing I saw was a \$100 bill, then a 2<sup>nd</sup> and then a 3<sup>rd</sup>. She had given \$360.00 to STL.

When I asked her about it, her response almost brought tears to my eyes. She said, "That is all the money I made from babysitting this summer. I've been praying about it and I feel that is what the Lord wants me to give." It was so encouraging and exciting to see God move in her life, and I can't wait to see how the Lord blesses her. In the first 6 months of the year we have been able to give just under \$1000.00 to STL without a single fundraiser, and as we have given the Lord has blessed our youth financially. We have been able to raise over \$3,000 for our youth group over this first 6 months of the year and our attendance has gone from 9 teens in January (3 in November) and has grown to as many as 28 in youth service. We even set an 11 week streak of at least 20. I believe in STL and I can't wait to see how God uses our group over the second half of the year."

# SPEED THE LIGHT

Essential Transportation . Creative Communication

Souls Saved . Lives Changed

