

Choosing a Theme for the Passion Week

'Mission week' may be a very good 'in house' description of what is being planned, but it is a very unhelpful? way of communicating it to the rest of the university! To the average unbeliever 'mission' is a negative concept, and it is certainly not a politically correct one!

An **'Passion Week'** does not have the same negative connotations, but suffers from sounding rather dull. It's an accurate description, but it is hardly going to get anyone excited about the impending activities.

It is important, therefore, to pick an attractive and engaging theme for the week, by which it can be publicly known. Not only will this theme be prominent in all the advertising, but it can be consistently used whenever the week is referred to. This can make all the difference and cannot be over-emphasised.

Selecting the theme of the week is one of the biggest decisions you will make. You need to liaise with your speaker about this – both you and they need to feel comfortable with it before you move forward.

What you **do** want in a theme

- The theme should give an idea of what the whole week is about. In this sense, it is more than just a title – it is a description of the purpose of the week.
- The theme should be something that can be reflected and included in the individual titles of the week; this very clearly connects the individual talks, and shows how they link together as part of the whole week.
- It should be easy to explain the theme's content to anyone when inviting them to the mission. E.g. 'Hi! We have got a week of events called "Think again!" where we are asking people to think again about some of the biggest questions about life and God.'

What you **don't** want as a theme

- ❖ Something that is too ambiguous, or confusing. If it takes major explanation as to why you picked it, then it is too complicated! It should be very obvious as to why the week has the theme that it does.

- ❖ Something that is too specific on one topic and doesn't allow for a breadth of talk titles.

Good examples

Jesus for Sceptics

- Appeals to those who are sceptics, describes the purpose of the week well and can be used for many different talk titles. E.g. *Sceptical about a God of love – why does he allow suffering? Sceptical about the resurrection – could it be possible?*

What Kind of God?

- An intriguing question that lies at the heart of many of the objections that people have. E.g. *What kind of God doesn't stop the suffering? What kind of God sends sincere people to hell?*

Convinced?

Relevant?

- Each is a simple bold question. Great for advertising and publicity. The word can easily be used in many different talk titles. E.g. *Convinced that Christianity is arrogant – how can there be only one way to God? How is Jesus relevant in a world of many religions?*

Think again!

The search!

- A bold statement that describes the purpose of the week. Each is a concept which can be used throughout the different talks. E.g. *Think again about faith – is it just a psychological crutch? The search for satisfaction – where can it be found?*

Uncover

- If you are using the 'Uncover' gospels, that can be given away during the week, the simple title can be used in each talk title. E.g. *Uncover hope – if there is life after life? Uncover my identity – what am I worth?*

Story

- Everybody got a story. And if you share stories with each other you can easily also talk about the way God has impact in your life. And how God can be involved in their stories. E.g. Story of the lonely, story of the sick, story of the sportsman.

Bad examples

Cross Examined

- The 'play on words' is not immediately obvious to most people. Neither is it a very accurate description of the week – the talks will be doing more than just examining the cross!

Making your Mark

- It took the CU leadership several minutes to try to explain what was meant by this title. How was a member of the public going to understand it on their own? (The subtle link to Mark's gospel was lost on everyone!)

Identity

- Too focused on one particular topic – it allows for two good talks ('Our identity' and 'Jesus' identity'), but it is almost impossible to deliver a whole week of talks connected to the this theme.

Jesus Awareness Week

- Could it be that this sounds a little bit dull? – Would it motivate many people to come?

This is your mission, and you know your students best. However, you will find that the mission week will be enhanced in many ways if you select your chosen theme according to the helpful advice above. It has been tried and tested!