Letter to Staff & Student Leaders  
 **INTRODUCTION**   
  
Welcome to the Awkward Campaign!

This campaign was birthed out of the derecognition of all InterVarsity chapters in the California State University system during the 2014-2015 school year. We couldn’t have a table during club fairs nor utilize campus meeting rooms for free. Instead of seeing this as an obstacle for the gospel, we began to imagine how it could be a gospel opportunity. Through God’s faithfulness and the Awkward Campaign, our Christian students grew in boldness and our conversions almost doubled from the previous year! Imagine what God could do on your campus! ☺

Thank you for bringing the Awkward campaign to your campus. This article is designed to help you think through what training your students need to do it well. We will cover 3 topics for you to keep in mind:

1. How to help the Proxe station bear fruit in your ministry 2. How to disciple students through this campaign  
3. How to utilize the Bridge Builder Tool

**BEARING FRUIT IN YOUR MINISTRY**   
There have been some important improvements in how we do Proxe campaigns in the past few years. First, please remember that Proxe stations do not run themselves. Many staff introduce students to the Proxe script, and wonder why we don’t get in better conversations at the Proxe station. We have found that it is far more fruitful to assign a Proxe coach who is in charge of quality control at the Proxe. [Please see the video here to learn more.](http://evangelism.intervarsity.org/how/proxe-station/5-people-who-make-proxe-stations-better)

Also, we have found that it a common mistake to spend all the training and energy to bring the Proxe to campus, only to run out of steam for follow-up. Honestly, follow-up is at least as important as the Proxe campaign itself. Please see our article on [11 things about great follow-up](http://evangelism.intervarsity.org/how/strategy/11-steps-great-follow-up) and [*How Follow-Up Changed My Life*](https://collegiateministries.intervarsity.org/blog/follow-changed-my-life). Please do not make follow-up an afterthought.

Lastly, please make sure your students actually share the gospel. Some campuses have the habit of skipping the 4th panel, the gospel summary. Please help your students actually do the 4th panel well. The goal of the Awkward campaign is to train students to be bridge builders to the gospel. Leading students through panel 4 helps them practice bridging awkward conversations to a gospel invitation!

**SUPPLIES**  
  
Please make sure to purchase or borrow these supplies to get your station ready for campus:  
- 4, 30”x40” pieces of foam core  
- Duck Tape or Velcro to secure the banners to the foam core

- Red circle sticker dots for the voting (going with all red on the blue panels looks really sharp!)  
- Easels or table-top easels to display boards on campus or a tent (in which case you will also need black fabric, fishing line, and Velcro, [see instructions for putting together the tent version](https://2100.intervarsity.org/resources/proxe-setup-instructions-tent))

**DISCIPLESHIP**

There are a few key discipleship issues that arise directly from Awkward. One is about how comfortable students are engaging awkward issues. You may need to have a discussion of the awkward issues on panel 2 (race, politics, religion, sexuality & gender, and poverty) during your training session. They do not need to understand all the theological concepts around the public sphere, but hopefully they can engage thoughtfully in proxe conversations with an underlying belief that the gospel is good news in each issue.

Please also help students understand the John 8 passage and the main point. Jesus did not get caught up in the polarity of kill or not kill. He sought the third way that brought transformation to all involved. The question in the script about what they like about this Jesus is key to transitioning to the Gospel. We do not want students to get caught up in over-explaining the story or adultery issue; the point is that Jesus offers transformation.

Make sure your students are comfortable sharing the Big Story Gospel outline. Go over it together, ask them to practice it with one another, and consider even giving them an assignment (i.e. to practice it 4 times before they help with the Proxe). Remember, the more they do it, the more comfortable they become.

Have students practice the 2 invitations for response after they share the Gospel, the first one is the invitation to follow Jesus and the second one is the invitation to join the community. Make sure they are comfortable giving both asks.

You may also want to use a discipleship cycle with your students while coaching the Proxe Station. Here is an example of a D-Cycle that has been created to coach the Proxe experience well:

**HEAR THE WORD**  
  
John 8:1-11, The Woman Caught in Adultery, Main Point: Jesus longs for transformation through conflict. He shows his love and concern for people and the issues in the world by building bridges between awkward situations and transformation. What risks are you willing to take on campus to introduce student to Jesus, the ultimate bridge builder? Take a minute and ask Jesus to reveal in your own life where he wants to go deeper with you and invite you to take risks this week.

**RESPOND ACTIVELY**  
Participate in the proxe station this week. Be open to Jesus teaching you something, not just going through the motions. Talk to someone that you wouldn’t normally. Share with others about how God is working in your life as well.

**DEBRIEF & INTERPRET**  
  
How did the proxe station go for you? Did you get to talk to people you didn’t expect? How did you experience Jesus in your interactions? What did he show you about himself? Yourself? Others? What did you learn about how God and the gospel fit into awkward conversations?

**BRIDGE BUILDER TOOL**  
  
The Awkward Campaign is an evangelistic campaign that disciples Christian students as bridge builders, turning awkward situations into bridges to the gospel. Through the large groups, small groups, and proxe, students are developed as public theologians, relating God to the public sphere: culture, economics, politics. (Books for further reading on this subject are: “Uncommon Decency” by Richard Mouw and “Confident Pluralism” by John Inazu.)

The cornerstone of the Awkward Campaign is the Bridge Builder Tool. Every Large Group has students interact with this tool on a colorful card to develop their skills. Every Small Group has a two-sided handout with this tool as their active response to hearing the Word. By the end of the 3 week series, our hope is that students know and live out the 3 steps to being a bridge builder. Therefore transforming themselves and their campuses as they become bridge builders to the gospel. The discipleship of your students through this campaign won’t be complete without the Bridge Builder Tool, so make sure you use it as suggested!

**TIPS**  
  
The test campuses often ran the first small group before the proxe. Students in the chapter met Jesus personally in John 8 before they led students through the proxe, which utilizes John 8 on panel 3.

* A sample letter to the editor is included in the materials to run the week before the proxe as a way to engage and invite the campus into the faith conversation.
* One campus invited the university president to attend a faculty/staff lunch during the campaign to discuss how the university can engage in awkward conversations.
* Another campus hosted a discussion between two faculty about the role of faith on campus. The students asked their professors to give extra credit to students who attended the discussion and many did!
* What new ideas will you think of? ☺

The campaign resources are listed below. May God embolden your students, draw campuses to Jesus, and make all awkward situations gospel opportunities!

**CAMPAIGN RESOURCES**

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| **Item** | **Description** |
| Proxe | A typical 4 panel proxe. There are two scripts included. One for recognized chapters and one for derecognized chapters. |
| 2 LG talks | Both talks include calls to faith and active responses with the Bridge Builder Tool. |
| 3 SG Bible study guides | All guides include active responses with the Bridge Builder Tool. Make sure small group leaders print the two-sided handout for each small group member. The first and third guides include a call to faith. |
| Pocket Proxe | The pocket proxe is panel 2 and 3 with a shorter proxe script. |
| Bridge Builder Tool Card | Utilize these cards at Large Group for the active responses. |
| Graphics Pack | Awkward logo and cell phone image for posters, social media, school newspaper ads, etc. |
| Letter to Staff/Student Leaders | A guide to help you prepare for God to work in and through your chapter during this campaign. |
| Letter to the Editor | Example of what a student could write to the school paper to invite the campus into the awkward conversation. |

**OVERVIEW OF BIBLE PASSAGES IN THE CAMPAIGN**

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| Bible  Passage | **Main Point** | **Active Response** |
| LG 1:  **Acts 17** | Learn from the culture around you and turn awkward situations into gospel opportunities. | Consider an awkward conversation you had and work through the bridge builder tool. |
| LG 2:  **Mark 12** | Don’t get stuck in either/or, find the third way to move an awkward situation into a gospel opportunity. | Consider an awkward political discussion you’ve and work through the bridge builder tool to find a third way. |
| SG 1:  **John 8** | Identifying the personal tension on both sides allows Jesus to invite each party to receive forgiveness. | Fill out the bridge builder tool with an awkward moment from the past week. |
| SG 2: **Matthew 20** | Jesus isn’t manipulated but asks good questions to discuss the deeper issues at hand. | Practice asking good, open-ended questions to get more skilled at “get in their shoes.” |
| SG 3:  **Acts 4** | Peter and John turn an awkward situation - jail!- into an opportunity to engage & invite the religious leaders to consider their own relationship with Jesus. | Utilizing a case study and the bridge builder tool, consider how to engage a professor who isn’t kind to Christianity. |