

STUDENTS FOR YOUR ESL SCHOOL

Advertising

You must advertise your ESL School in as many ways as possible the first few years of your program. After that just doing social media, a printed brochure and word of mouth will probably be all that you need.

Social Media:

1. Church Website

Have an easy tab on the main screen of your church website that says “English Classes.” Do not bury it under ministries, missions, etc... Have all relevant information about your ESL Classes posted there along with a contact phone number that will easily get to a human being (no phone trees). If you expect to have a lot of students from a specific language group, it is helpful if the person answering the phone speaks that language.

2. Church Facebook Page & ESL Ministry Facebook Page

Put regular announcements about your English classes and other activities sponsored by your ESL Ministry on the church Facebook page regularly. Ask all of your teachers to share these posts when they see them (some of your teachers will become Facebook friends with students who will then see these posts and share them with their friends).

3. WhatsApp and other Social Media groups that potential students may see/follow.

Ask people in your community if they are in social media groups that could advertise to potential students. For example, in the Houston area many of the new Venezuelans are on a specific WhatsApp group together and share resources and information with each other.

Brochure: You need to create a simple English brochure about your classes. It should include the following information:

Description of Classes

Cost

Address

Dates and Times

Is Childcare available? Is it free?

Contact Information (This should not be a phone number that leads to a phone tree. It should be a phone number that is answered by a person, especially one that speaks the language of many of your potential students. If it is a website address, there should be a

prominent link on the homepage that says “English Classes.” It should not be a link hidden underneath missions, ministries, etc...)

Where do you put these brochures? Any place that immigrants will find them. I suggest printing about 2,000 brochures (do not pay for fancy glossy brochures, do them on the church copier) about a month before your classes start and put them in some of the following kinds of places:

- Public Libraries
- Western Union Offices or anywhere that wires money
- International Grocery Stores
- Dry Cleaners
- International Restaurants
- Fast Food Restaurants
- Nursing Homes/Assisted Living Homes
- Lawn Care Businesses
- Apartment Leasing Offices
- Public Health Department
- Salvation Army
- Thrift Stores
- Elementary Schools (ask them to make them available to their ESL students’ parents)
- Flea Markets
- Ethnic Churches
- Construction Companies

Who is responsible for distributing the brochures? You are as the Director, however, it is perfectly acceptable to ask your teachers and others to help you with this.

If you are a new ESL School just getting started, ask your Pastor if you can include a brochure in each Church Bulletin on a Sunday morning about one month before your classes start. Then make a pulpit announcement asking each congregation member to carry that brochure with them that week and to give it to someone they think might benefit from the classes.

In addition to a full-size brochure, you can have business cards made that have all pertinent information on them about your classes. These are easy for your teachers and others to carry with them and hand out as they go through their daily lives.

You can also do postcard size advertisements. You can do English on one side of the post card and another language on the other side.

Church Sign

Does your church have a sign on a main road that you can advertise on?
Can you create a sign at Office Depot/Staples that can be put on the side of the road near the church?
You may need to check county regulations if your church does not already put out signs for other activities.

Public Service Announcements

Radio
Newspapers
Foreign Language Papers

Paid Advertisements in Foreign Language Papers

Interviews with local newspapers and television stations

(Many are looking for good human interest stories.)

Letters to Businesses that hire a lot of immigrants

Letters to Ethnic Churches

Public School Officials

Find out if your local school board has an ESL liaison position. It might be called TESOL or ELL or NLL. Contact this person to let them know about your classes. Explain that 95% of the classes are secular life skill vocabulary and that you only do one short 5 minute devotion in each class. If they will meet with you, take your curriculum with you to show them and a sample of a devotion. Ask if you can advertise your classes through them.

Contact the closest elementary school to the church and find out how many students are in their own ESL classes. Make an appointment to see the principal and do the same explanations as above. Ask if you can send home announcements about your ESL Classes for the parents of their students.

Does your church or a nearby church do volunteer work with a particular Elementary School? Perhaps they tutor children during the school day. Contact the head of that ministry to see if there is a way for you to send advertisements home with those children.

If you do not know of any of these connections, pray and ask God to connect you to the right people.

Immigrant Organizations in your community

Do some research to find out if there are any immigrant organizations in your community, i.e. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Contact them and ask them how you can best advertise to their specific immigrant group.

Refugee Resettlement Agencies and connected organizations

Does your city have a Refugee Resettlement Agency, i.e. World Relief, Catholic Christian Charities, etc..? Contact them to inform them about your English classes.

Other ESL Schools in the area

If another church has an ESL School on a different day/time from yours, ask them if they would be willing to display your brochures. Remember to reciprocate by offering to display their brochures at your school.

BEST ADVERTISEMENT POSSIBLE: Word of Mouth

As your program grows you will develop a reputation within the local immigrant community. Their word of mouth is your best advertisement.