

## HOW TO START A CALVARY CHAPEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL MINISTRY

In the early part of 2003 my Senior Pastor, Bill Stonebraker, asked me to be involved with the start-up and operation of our private Christian school ministry. Prior to that time my only involvement in education was that of being a bible study leader and student.

By the grace of God, we opened our doors in September 2004 to twenty-one students in the Kindergarten through the Fourth Grades, and in 2012 we graduated our first high school senior class. At the writing of this piece, we currently service over 180 students in Kindergarten to the Twelfth Grades. The school is accredited by the Association of Christian Teachers and Schools (ACTS) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

In Christian service, we understand our participation in it is simply for the glory of our Lord and the benefit of His people. Operating a school ministry is a wonderful endeavor that must be accomplished according to God's Word, in faith, with much prayer, and godly counsel. At times, it is a hard and tiring effort, but those sentiments are diminished as you see the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the students and staff that will occupy your campus.

Let me encourage you. If Christ Jesus our Lord wants your church to have a school, then it will happen. As you go through the process, continually seek God's will, exercising diligence and remain faithful to the call. The effects of a school are tremendous as it will enhance and broaden the ministry of your Calvary Chapel.

This timeline/checklist is provided as a practical guide for Calvary Chapel-affiliate ministries that desire to start a private Christian school. Guidelines such as these were followed when we began the school ministry here at Calvary Chapel of Honolulu.

Please be sure to check the requirements and regulations established by your home State as you accomplish this venture in faith. If you need further assistance, please feel free to contact me at [ccs@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:ccs@hawaii.rr.com). May the Lord bless you!

In His Grace,  
Ed Arcalas  
Administrative/School Pastor  
Calvary Chapel of Honolulu/Calvary Chapel Christian School, Aiea, Hawaii

## RESEARCH/PLANNING

*If possible, begin this phase eighteen months to one-year from the first day of school.*

### **June to August**

- ***Senior Pastor and Board of Directors***
  - Does the Senior Pastor support and want a Christian school as a part of the ministry?
    - If the Senior Pastor is not absolutely supportive of the idea, then the school will not succeed. Having a school must be a part of God's distinct call given to your Senior Pastor because a new school will experience growth pains/challenges (financial, etc.) as it becomes established.
  - Will the school operate under same Board as the church?
    - Some Calvary Chapels have a separate Board for the school. Survey a few Calvary Chapel schools regarding this issue, and ask why they selected their particular philosophy of school governance.
      - The Senior Pastor and Board of Directors are to pray and make their decision concerning the issue of school governance.
  - Record a Corporate Resolution that the ministry is investigating the possibility of starting a private Christian school.
    - Solidify the decision in future Board minutes if the endeavor materializes.
  
- Count the cost (Luke 14:28-32) – financially, staffing, facilities, on the overall ministry, etc.
  
- ***School Administrator/Principal***
  - Who is this individual going to be?
    - Existing staff member/Associate Pastor or person currently not on staff.
  - Qualifications (to name a few)
    - Refer to 1 Timothy 3 – The Qualifications for an Overseer
    - A person that shares the heart of the Senior Pastor
    - Fear of the Lord
    - Dedicated to God's Word
    - Dedicated to God's people
    - Has a genuine love for children of all ages, grade levels
    - Loyal
    - Trustworthy
    - A Servant
    - A person that is teachable
    - A person that possess the mindset of the Calvary Chapel ministry (refer to the Calvary Chapel Distinctive/Venture in Faith DVD)

**Note:**

Many involved in the school start-up process mainly look for a person that possesses degrees and experience. This is important, but these factors should not take precedent over the qualities and factors stated above. As a Calvary Chapel ministry we have to remember God is able to do a supernatural work in and through a person that is available to Him (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Educated people are important, but a Christ-like, Word abiding, and spirit led individual is of utmost importance.

**Read:**

“Spiritual Leadership” by J. Oswald Sanders

“The Man God Uses” by Pastor Chuck Smith

- ***School Secretary***
  - New or existing staff?
  - An individual that is teachable, organized, a self-starter, faithful, diligent, is proficient with a word processing program, etc.
  
- ***Acquire and Read the following books and materials on Christian Education/Starting a Christian School and Related Topics***
  - “The Philosophy of Ministry of Calvary Chapel” by Pastor Chuck Smith (available at [http://media.wix.com/ugd/604de4\\_21090c353d9243cc3c376ee1eae83853.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/604de4_21090c353d9243cc3c376ee1eae83853.pdf))
  - “The Calvary Distinctives” by Pastor Chuck Smith
  - “Foundations of Christian School Education” by ACSI
  - “A Classic Excellence” by Chapin Marsh, Ed.D
  - “The Master Teacher” by Brian Nixon, PhD
  - “Management Principles for Christian Schools” by James W. Deuink
  - DVD: “Mandatory Reporting for School and Church Leaders” available through Calvary Chapel of Downey ([www.calvarydowney.org](http://www.calvarydowney.org))

**September**

- ***Conduct a Survey (optional)***
  - Ask how many parents would be interested in enrolling their child(ren) in the school, grade levels and services interested in.
  - Give details about the planned school (approximate tuition and fees, philosophy, educational objectives, etc.).
    - This will give you an idea concerning the thoughts others have of your ministry starting a Christian school. Ultimately your school will open if it is the will of the Lord, and by the decision of your Senior Pastor/Board of Directors.
      - In-House (place survey in weekly bulletin, newsletter, etc.)
      - External ministries (send surveys to other Calvary Chapel and similar churches in the area [The Board needs to determine an area in which the school ministry will service).
        - May create online survey to receive feedback on the start of your new school ministry.
  
- ***Determine and Develop***
  - Philosophy of Christian Education the school will adopt and follow
    - Two major thoughts:
      - *Missionary* – the school is an outreach ministry, and is opened to families regardless of religious background
      - *Discipleship* – the school serves as a support to those in the Body of Christ (at least one parent is a born-again believer) and serves as an extension of the Christian home. The school partners with the parents as they are ultimately responsible for the spiritual, academic, social, and physical education of their child(ren) [Deuteronomy 6].

Note:

Both of these philosophies are alive and well throughout the Calvary Chapel School Movement. The Senior Pastor, Board of Directors, School Leadership, etc. are to pray about God's vision for the school and decide upon the philosophy.

The Philosophy of Christian Education will serve as the foundation for the operation of the school ministry.

- What does the Lord want to do through the school ministry?
  - Who is God calling you to serve?
  - What is His will and objective?
- Missions, Vision and Statement of Faith (Proverbs 29:18)
- School Curriculum
  - Christian or secular publisher? Important topic to discuss and pray about before making final decision.
  - A MUST READ: <http://www.christianvssecular.com/>
- ***Locate a Calvary Chapel school that will serve as your mentor school***
- ***Acquire a Self-Study Accreditation Instrument to use as a guide in the planning of the school***
  - A self-study document provides very useful information concerning qualities that make a school and excellent institution of learning.
    - Contact The Association of Christian Teachers and Schools (ACTS), The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) or equivalent.
      - Some private schools must be licensed in the State of operation, thus instructions can be obtained accordingly.
- ***Contact the following agencies/organizations/associations that can assist you in starting a private Christian school.***
  - Calvary Chapel Mentor School
  - Association of Christian Schools and Teachers (ACTS), Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), etc.
  - Bob Jones University Press (BJUP) offers many resources on their website (free of charge or for purchase). This is an excellent source of information regarding the start-up and operation of a Christian school.
- ***Contact the following agencies in your home State about private school requirements, licensure, reporting obligations, General Excise and other taxation issues, etc.***
  - Department of Education
  - Department of Consumer Affairs and Commerce (registration of school name, logo, etc.)
  - Department of Health and Human Services (immunization and health requirements of students and staff, etc.)
  - State Department of Taxation and Internal Revenue Service
  - Fire Marshall/Local Law Enforcement/Emergency Medical Services
  - Other agencies
    - At the discretion of Senior Pastor/The Board of Directors, you may want to enlist the services of an attorney, Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or other professionals to assist you in the school start-up process.

□ **Determine**

- Start-up Costs
  - Facilities/Equipment/Supplies
    - School Office
      - Furniture, computers and software, copy machine, laminator, paper cutter, etc.
    - Classroom
      - Whiteboards, bulletin boards, storage, computers, furniture, flags, pencil sharpeners, etc.
    - Cafeteria – food and beverage service
      - Outside catering service?
      - Equipment/Supplies
        - Cold storage
        - Service carts, trays, utensils, etc.
      - Staffing/volunteers
    - Off-campus Resources
      - Is there a park near the school that can be used for physical education, events, etc.?
      - Are permits required?
- Operational Costs
  - The following information is needed to determine student tuition and fees
    - Staffing (Teachers and Support)
      - How many staff members do you need to start the school?
      - What type of compensation package are you going to offer?
        - Include salaries, payroll related expenses, medical, dental, and other benefits.
    - Initial grade level offering
      - Determine total enrollment capacity
        - Will you Combined (multi-grade) classes?
        - What is your scope of ministry?
          - Elementary, Middle and/or High School?
          - What is your ultimate goal?
            - Grade levels may be added on a yearly basis, if desired
    - Services Offered
      - Before and After School Enrichment (supervision and servicing of students before and after classroom hours. This is NOT preschool!)

□ **Tuition and Fees**

- What will the students be charged to attend the school?
- What fees will be charged?
  - Textbook, field trips, computer and/or laboratory/technology, etc.
  - Application fee
  - Student assessment fee

□ **Select what School Curriculum you will use**

- Christian verses Secular
- Hardcopy verses e-Text

- If you are thinking about using electronic textbooks other considerations will arise (i.e. who is going to purchase tablets, internet controls, etc.)
- Contact publishers representative
- A MUST READ: <http://www.christianvssecular.com/>

### **October to November**

- ***Visit Calvary Chapel Mentor School to observe operations***
  - Acquire policy and procedure manuals, handbooks, forms, school related information, calendars, schedules, bulletins, flyers, newsletters, tuition and fees, etc.
  - Have School Secretary receive training concerning procedures, etc.
  - Ask questions, ask questions, and ask more questions!
  - This may take more than one visit
  
- ***Develop***
  - Teacher Applications
    - Interviewing process/hiring criteria
  - Student Applications
    - Enrollment criteria
    - Student entrance assessment
  - School related forms
    - Discipline/Administrative Discipline Referrals
    - Incident Reports
    - Tardy, Re-admittance, etc.
  
- ***Determine***
  - School Colors
  - School Motto
  - School Mascot
  - Are students required to wear uniforms?
    - Consult at least three uniform providers locally and abroad. Insure that the provider will be able to meet your needs in a timely manner and to your expectations (day to day, physical education, and field trip uniforms [any uniform color differences to distinguish grade levels?])
  - Year around or traditional school year calendar?
    - Beginning and ending dates, vacations, days-off, half-days, etc.

### **December**

- ***Advertise and announce opening of school***
  - In-house (sponsoring church bulletin, newsletter, etc.)
  - Have Senior Pastor write a personal letter to Calvary Chapel Senior Pastors in the area in which the school may serve (be prayerful and sensitive if they operate a school)
  - Bulk mailers
  - Christian radio, etc.
  - Open House and Informational Meetings for interested parents, church members, etc.
  
- ***Distribution of Teacher, Staff, and Student Applications***
  - Specify due date/return deadlines on all applications
  - Student Applications

- Include Philosophy Of Christian Education, Entrance And Enrollment Qualifications, Tuition And Fees, Information On Church Attendance, Tuition Assistance, etc.
        - Develop Entrance Assessment
        - Require students to submit past report cards, Stanford Achievement Tests or equivalent, and teacher recommendations.
    - Teacher/Staff Applications
      - Include church and spiritual requirements, educational qualifications, job description, extended duties, expectations of those on staff, vision of ministry, compensation package, reference forms, etc.)
- **Determine**
  - Catering services
    - In-house or outside service (Department of Health Permit/Clearance)
  - School Photographer
  - Yearbook Provider
  - Employee Screening provider (background checks) – Some States offer this service to private schools or there are agencies that offer these services (i.e. ACCUFAX, private investigation/security service providers, etc.)
- **Establish School Supply Provider Account**
  - Office Max, Office Depot, Costco, etc.
- **School Accounts Receivable (Tuition) and Financial Related**
  - In-House?
    - Is the school able to handle all accounting, payroll and related, financial services and needs of the operation?
  - Outsourced?
    - Research Accounting and Payroll Service Providers
  - Investigate Services Related to Tuition
    - The Board of Directors may want to consider the following suggestions.
      - *FACTS Management*
        - This service collects tuition from tuition payees and establishes a payment plan. Funds are received on basis determined by the payee, and then deposited directly into the school’s bank account.
      - *DEWAR, Tuition Insurance*
        - Insurance tuition is paid by parents that carry a balance on the year’s tuition (the tuition is not paid in full at the time of enrollment).
          - In the event of disenrollment (discipline, relocation, etc.) a major percentage of the tuition is paid by the tuition insurance provider which reduces the payee’s financial liability (out-of-pocket costs).

- Collection Agency
  - Enlist the services of an agency to collect delinquent tuition payments (this is if you are not able to negotiate a workable plan with tuition payee)

## **January**

### **□ *Develop***

- Policy and Procedure Manual (consists of the following)
  - Parent and Student Handbook
  - Teacher and Staff Handbook
  - Related policies and procedures (Crisis Intervention and Evacuation Plan, Hazardous Material List, etc.)
- School Calendar
  - Start and End Dates
  - Holidays and Vacations, Back to School Night, Special programs (Christmas, Easter, etc.), Half-days, Teacher Intercession, etc.
  - Drills – fire, lockdown, etc.

### **□ *Investigate***

- School Management Program (computerized attendance, grading, report and transcript processing/document, etc.)
  - Some systems are made to interface with existing Church finance programs
    - Software providers included RenWeb, Headmaster, School Minder, etc.
- Is school covered under the Church Insurance Policy?
- Student insurance coverage
  - Students are required to have medical insurance coverage to be enrolled in school

### **□ *Conduct Teacher Interviews***

- Conduct a Panel Interview
  - If possible, include Senior Pastor, Board member, Educator, etc.

## **February to May**

### **□ *School Licensing Inquiry***

- PLEASE CHECK the requirements of your home State, County, City of operation
- Different requirements based on locale. Some agencies require the school to be in operation for a certain amount of time, etc.

### **□ *Acquire School Management Software***

### **□ *Begin Student Enrollment/Interview Process***

### **□ *Hire Teachers/Staff contingent upon enrollment, etc.***

- Conduct background checks
- Assign Entire School Administration, Teachers, and Staff
  - To read “The Calvary Road” by Roy Hession and other devotional books



- ***Order and Purchase***
  - School Curriculum (Teacher and Student Editions, supporting materials, etc.)
  - Classroom furniture and fixtures
  - School Supplies

### **June to July**

- ***School and classroom preparation***
  - Install whiteboards, bulletin boards, bookshelves, filing cabinets, etc.
  - Have teachers work on individual classroom décor, configuration, and set-up
- ***Teacher/Staff Orientation***
  - Introduce Campus-wide Discipline policy
  - Have entire staff read “Policing Innocence: Is Your Child Really Safe?” by Rebecca Andrews (this book deals with child molestation)
  - Discuss Philosophy of Ministry
  - Review Policies and Procedures of School

### **August**

- ***Close School Enrollment***

## IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN/OPERATION OF SCHOOL

- ***First Day Of School (depending on school calendar selected)***
  - Go in the Lord with the determined start date
  
- ***Operate the school faithfully as the Spirit of the Lord leads***
  - Establish prayer groups
  - Keep in touch with Calvary Chapel Mentor School
  - Conduct yearly assessments for students
    - Stanford Achievement Test 10 (SAT 10) – All grade levels
      - Contract examination distributor in November for students to take in the Spring
    - High School (College Entrance and related): PSAT, SAT, ACT
      - May have to negotiate with neighboring school for students to sit for examinations.
  - Conduct regular classroom visitations and teacher assessments
  - Weekly Teacher/Staff
    - Morning Devotions
    - Afterschool Meetings
  
- ***Get ready to grow in the midst of your joys and challenges***
  - Keep your Senior Pastor and The Board of Directors informed about everything
    - Include the school in your monthly Board meeting discussions and document accordingly
  - Keep in touch with Calvary Chapel Mentor School
  - In December
    - Start enrollment process for the next school year
    - Assess teacher/staff needs for the next school year
  - The Lord will see you through every situation
    - Trust in Him
  - Be blessed and enjoy the fruits of God’s work
  - Pray and learn as you move forward in God’s call

## RELATED QUESTIONS/TOPICS

### □ *What about Preschool?*

- Classes for students below the Kindergarten grade level (less than five years-old)
- The operation of a preschool is much different than an Elementary, Junior, and Senior High Schools. It is important to check the requirements and regulations in your home State regarding the staffing, facilities, etc. of a preschool.

### □ *What about Accreditation?*

- Accreditation is the process in which a school voluntarily submits itself to an outside agency that measures the school and its operation against certain standards. The areas of examination may include the School's Philosophy of Education, Governance, and Administrative Process, Teacher and Staff Qualifications, Curriculum and Instruction, Technology, Health and Safety, Facilities, etc. Accreditation is a continuing improvement plan for the school ministry as is accomplished through the completion of an intensive "Self-Study Report" and "Team Visitation" conducted by a group of qualified educators.
- Accreditation Agencies
  - *National* – This type of accreditation evaluates certain types of schools. For example, our school is recognized by The Association of Christian Teachers and Schools (ACTS) which evaluates our school program not only academically, financially, etc., but according to the Christian values and principles that we possess. Other Christian school use The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), American Association of Christian Schools (ACCS), etc.
  - *Regional*- This type of accreditation is usually based on locale. These agencies are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The regions are Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern and Western. Since our school is located in Hawaii, we are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).