



STL Missions Service Tips

These services provide you the opportunity to draw much-needed attention and focus to the Speed the Light ministry. It is recommended to hold at least one of these services per year. This will be your best opportunity for vision casting and goal setting with your students and leaders. By keeping the mission of STL in front of your students and your church, you will be able to both encourage and motivate a culture of giving. Here you will find several different kinds of Speed the Light services, along with some ideas for selecting a Speed the Light project and decorating for your STL service.

Preparing for Your Speed the Light Service

1. Order STL resources.

STL resources such as videos, postcards, offering envelopes, media CDs, posters, banners, can covers, etc., are available from the national Speed the Light office. You can order directly from the Web site under STORE, or call 1.800.641.4310 and ask for the STL order form.

2. Schedule a guest speaker.

Invite a missionary or a special guest speaker (district Youth director, national STL director, etc.) to come and challenge your students.

3. Show a missions or STL video.

The STL Web site has the current theme video and many other missions videos available for free download. You may also want to check out what the Assemblies of God World Missions and U.S. Missions departments have available.

4. Plan a candle lighting service.

Challenge the students to do their part to take the “light of the gospel” into the world. Have candles ready for them to take and light after bringing their faith promises forward.

5. Spread the word.

Advertise in the church bulletin. Put up theme posters around the church. Create an eye-catching flyer, and mail it to your students. The national STL office has great theme postcards and vintage STL postcards to use. You can order these online or call 1.800.641.4310.

6. Decorate.

Decorate the youth room. The students will know from the minute they walk in that this is something special, something different from the “norm.” Hang national and state flags and put up missions posters which are available from the Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) and Assemblies of God U.S. Missions (AGUSM). Theme banners are also available.

7. Use messages straight from the field.

E-mail missionaries currently on the field and ask them to send a message to your students telling how STL helps them to get their job done. Read these messages to your students during the service. You can also check out the Stories section on the STL Web site for more missionary testimonies.



STL Service Decorating Ideas

It always adds a little something extra when you decorate your stage to help illustrate your message. When doing a Speed the Light service, there are several ways you can help create a unique atmosphere:

1. Recreate the mission field.

Use artificial plants to create a jungle atmosphere on the stage behind where the speaker is preaching. Burlap sacks work great to cover the pots of the artificial plants. You can also use brown paper grocery bags to cover them. For the floor, you can put down a brown canvas or tarp to make the ground look like dirt, or you can even use green artificial turf. Be sure to remove the pulpit to make it look more realistic.

2. Represent STL equipment.

One really creative idea for decorating for the STL service is to get as many different types of STL equipment as possible and put them on and around the stage. Use a motorcycle or 4-wheeler in place of the pulpit for the speaker to set his notes. If you can get a car through the doors of your church, it really works great. (NOTE: Be sure to drain the gas tank and put plastic underneath it to ensure that nothing drips on the carpet.) You can also do the same thing with: motorcycles, bicycles, boats, sound systems, video projectors, copy machines, overhead projectors, video screens, donkeys, camels, etc.

3. Reiterate the message.

People love it when the stage is decorated so that it corresponds with the theme and message for the day. For example, a good way to enhance a message on missions is to bring in a lot of artificial plants, put a small boat on one side of the stage, and (on the opposite side of the stage) create an area for the speaker to pretend to fish. A cast net, available at any local sporting goods store, can be spread out across the front of the stage or stairs.

Goal-setting Night

1. Quarterly Goal-Setting Nights

The Speed the Light missions services and personal goal-setting nights are the foundation of the STL program. These services should be held quarterly. This is where the bulk of STL giving comes from, and it is here that students are directly challenged to make a STL faith promise for the next 10 to 12 weeks.

2. Goal-Setting Cards

- Order goal-setting cards from STL. Speed the Light has individual goal-setting cards (item number 733-025) already designed for you—and they're free!
- Design your own. Use a desktop publishing program to create your own personalized goal-setting cards to fit your youth ministry's theme.
- Place goal-setting cards on the seats prior to service. This is a time saver! You can also place offering envelopes with their cards.



3. Presenting the Challenge

- Make a short-term commitment. After the message, challenge the students to set a short-term goal. The STL offering will be received on a special STL offering night 10 to 12 weeks from the goal-setting night. Have them fill out the goal-setting cards, bring them to the front, lay them down, and find a place to pray.
- Announce the total goal. Gather the cards, total the goals (be sure to have a calculator on hand!), and announce the total goals for the first quarter.
- Pray. Pray for the goals daily/weekly, and ask God to help provide for the need. With a short-term goal, it's easier to keep STL "out there" in front of the students. Announce the total in the church bulletin, advertise the next offering night on the bulletin board or in the monthly newsletter, etc. Constantly talk about STL. Keep the challenge before them.

Offering Night

Have your STL offering night 10-12 weeks after the missions service.

- **Two Weeks Prior to the STL Offering Night:** Mail the students:
 - a reminder letter for the upcoming STL offering night,
 - a copy of his or her goal-setting card, and
 - a STL offering envelope.
- **Before the Service:** Place a STL offering envelope on each chair.
- **Receive the Offering:** Encourage everyone to give. Ordinary giving for one student may be extraordinary for another. Ask students to put their offering in an envelope with their name and address on it, no matter how big or small the offering is.
- **Keep Record of the Giving:** If you plan to have an Awards Night, it is important to keep accurate records of each student's STL giving. Keep track using a spreadsheet program or a columnar book.
- **Two to Three Weeks After the Offering:** Have another STL goal-setting service and set goals for the next quarter.

Speed the Light Sunday

- Ask your pastor if you can schedule a STL service on national Speed the Light Sunday (the third Sunday in October). Invite your district Youth director, the national STL director, a missionary, or another guest speaker to challenge your church in giving to STL.
- Check out other segments on www.speedthelight.com for resources to promote and distribute on Speed the Light Day (or whatever day you choose to promote STL to the church).
- Consider making a special challenge. Two possible ideas are the Envelope Challenge and the Potato Chip Can Challenge.

Envelope Challenge

1. Take 50 STL envelopes and write dollar amounts from \$2 to \$100 on each, counting by twos. The 50 envelopes total \$2,550. Prepare enough envelopes for the entire congregation.
2. Place the envelopes on the altars with the amounts facing up.
3. Instruct the speaker to challenge the people at the end of the service to come up and select an envelope. The number written on the envelope is the dollar amount they will give. They may give their offerings before they leave the service or within six weeks.
4. Option: Number the envelopes \$1 to \$100. If all envelopes are selected, you will raise \$5,051.



Potato Chip Can Challenge

1. Buy 100 (or more) cans of potato chips and cover them with STL can covers (available for free from STL at 800.641.4310).
2. Line the cans along the altars.
3. Challenge the congregation to take a can, eat the chips, and fill the empty can with:
 - Quarters only (approximately \$165 per can x 100 = \$16,500)
 - Mixed change (approximately \$65 per can x 100 = \$6,500)
4. Set a date for them to return their “change offering.”

(Note: Tennis ball cans work as well, but may not provide the same incentive!)

Awards Night

Have an Awards Night in January to celebrate the youth group’s total STL giving for the past year, and to honor those who gave to STL.

Why Have an “Awards Night”?

- Celebrate a “win” for your youth ministry. You set a goal, you gave it your best—that’s a “win!”
- It is important to honor each student who gives—no matter how much or how little they contributed. (Do not announce the total amount each student gave, only the category in which they placed. Total giving is recorded on the certificate you present to the student that night.
- An Awards Night will challenge the youth group to do more for STL next year.
- This will also give you a chance to motivate and inspire students to give to missions in the future.

Keep Good Records

Students receive an award based on the amount they gave to STL; it is important to keep accurate records of their STL giving from the beginning. All offerings received—no matter the size—need to be in STL envelopes with the student’s name and address.

Invitations

- Mail out formal invitations to everyone two weeks prior to the event. Print two types of invitations that look exactly the same but with different wording.
- For those who will receive an award—Make sure the invitations state that the student will receive an award (e.g., “Your presence is requested on Saturday night as we honor you for your gracious giving to the ministry of Speed the Light.”).
- For all others, send an invitation to the event (e.g., “Join us as we celebrate this year’s giving to Speed the Light.”).

Decorations

- Posters. Make posters and/or banners with previous years’ giving listed on them and place them on the walls all throughout the room.
- Roll out the red carpet. Make a runway down the center of the room. Get a roll of red plastic table covering from a party supply store, place it down front, and roll it up the aisle when you are ready to begin the awards ceremony.
- Lighting. Line the stage and runway with white twinkle lights (Christmas lights) or rope lights.



- **Backdrop.** Make a stage backdrop. Hang shimmer curtains on the wall as a backdrop. Cut out the STL logo from poster board, cover it with colored foil, and hang it in front of the shimmer curtains.
- **Balloon bouquets.** Make balloon bouquets out of gold or silver star mylar balloons and other latex balloons in accent colors. Place them around the room or on white columns up front.

Awards

- Determine the categories. For example:

Bronze	\$1 - \$24
Silver	\$25 - \$99
Gold	\$100 - \$299
Platinum	\$300 - \$499
Double Platinum	\$500 - \$999
Diamond	\$1,000 +
- Place students in the appropriate category according to their giving.
- Determine and order the awards. (Use the STL logo available on the Media page.) For example:

Bronze	Pens, keychains, plastic water bottles, etc.
Silver	Nylon backpacks, thermal mugs, etc.
Gold	Nylon duffel bags, leather padfolios, etc.
Platinum	Leather backpacks, leather CD cases, etc.
Double Platinum	Jackets, sweater pull-overs, etc.
Diamond	Watches, denim varsity jackets, etc.

Awards Presentation

- Set the mood. Play a CD of soft instrumental music.
- Prepare an envelope for each category. Place the award certificates for each category inside the envelope and seal with a gold seal.
- “And the envelope, please.” Break the seal, open the envelope, pull out the certificates, and call the students up individually to receive their awards. Have them stand up front until everyone in that category receives their award.

Goal Revealing for the New Year

After all of the awards are presented, reveal the goal for the new year.

Refreshments

- **Cake**—Have a special cake made with the STL logo, with your new STL goal, or with last year’s amount given and “Congratulations!” written on it.
- **Punch**—One large bottle of apple juice to one 2-liter bottle of ginger ale makes a great punch.

Your Speed the Light Calendar

It has been said that the way to succeed is to plan your work, and then work your plan. In other words, program what you prioritize. Strategically plan to promote STL giving throughout the year, including offering services and fund-raising events. A Sample STL Calendar will give you ideas about how to keep Speed the Light in focus all year long.