

Recruiting ACT members...

the

fun

way



## ACT mugs

ACT has a membership magazine, prayer diary and website, all of which are appreciated by the Association's members. But they don't necessarily get noticed by the typical Christian teacher who is not yet a member of ACT. And therein lies the problem.

So, I pondered, how can ACT get its logo and web address in front of prospective members in a fun and cost-effective way? The answer was obvious: mugs... mugs for the staffroom... mugs for the classroom... mugs for the home... mugs for the church... and funny, colourful, Christian mugs at that!

So, in February 2004, a 'design a mug for a Christian teacher' competition was launched on the ACT website. The glittering prize awaiting the fortunate winners was obvious enough – they would each receive a set of the six winning mug designs.

It was not long before I received a host of witty slogans and strap lines by email. Although clever and amusing in their own right, some suggestions were (how can I say this politely?) not quite what I was looking for in terms of promoting the right image for ACT. Failed (but greatly appreciated!) entries include:

- I'm a christian... not a mug
- I'm a teacher... not a pushover



- Beware! Hot teacher!
- I'm a role model... not a supermodel
- I'm a supermodel... not a role model
- Teaching = big vocation + long vacation
- One coffee: stirred, not shaken
- Teachers: called by God... shouted at by parents

Slogans that almost made the cut (and are worthy of special commendation) include:

- 'When you've done all you've got to do... I will be there,' says the Lord
- I love sand and water... not SATS
- I have a yearning for teaching and learning
- Special measures? Make mine a pint!

The winning six entries are:

- Prayer and strong coffee: just keep it coming!
- Remember... they are all God's children
- The best teacher is Jesus!
- Special measures? My mug runneth over!
- In the early years, Jesus taught amid sand and water
- RE is... Real Education

All six designs are now available for just £2 (plus p&p) each. Imagine how great they will look in your school staffroom? Why not buy a set for your church kitchen? Or keep a set at home and bring them out every time you host a Bible study group or prayer meeting?

To order them simply contact the ACT Office by mail, email, fax or telephone.

## ACT postcards

Now, I mused, if the mugs work... and Christian teachers are prompted to ask their friends about the Association... how can I make it easy for them to help their colleagues make contact with ACT? Well, we have now produced pre-addressed freepost postcards (which also carry our web address) in different designs, each one aimed at a slightly different group of prospective teachers.

As I discussed options with Alex, the designer, we began to entertain the thought that animal designs could be every bit as appealing as designs featuring educational scenarios. The outcome was pleasing. The final eight postcard designs offered a veritable chocolate box of choice. There was



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Now, I reflected, all I need to do is persuade ACT members to request the cards and start giving them out with – and here's the important bit – a personal invitation to join ACT. Something along the lines of: 'I'm a member of the Association of Christian Teachers and I think it's brilliant. You really should join. Please use this card to get in touch. It costs only £10 for your first year's membership. Why not give it a go?'

The cards are absolutely free. So why not get your hands on a bundle and give them out to teachers, teaching assistants, student teachers, retired teachers, schools' workers and school governors at church?

To order them simply contact the ACT Office by mail, email, fax or telephone.

## *The ACT screensavers and wallpaper designs are a great way to advertise ACT for free*



### **ACT screensavers**

Once the postcards had been printed it seemed a shame not to make more use of the lovely designs. With this in mind, I contacted Paul, ACT's web designer, and challenged him to produce computer screensavers and desktop wallpaper designs based on the eight postcard designs.

The fruits of Paul's labours are now freely available on the ACT website.

The ACT screensavers and wallpaper designs are a great way to advertise ACT for free. Just imagine the scene: your computer has been running a while and the ACT screensaver is busy projecting a succession of attractive ACT postcard designs onto the screen. In walks a Christian colleague to ask you if she can borrow your long-arm stapler. She notices the screensaver and makes a mental note of the pithy domain name: [www.called-to-teach.org](http://www.called-to-teach.org) and resolves to visit the site at the first opportunity to find out what it's all about. Once there she asks herself why, in twenty years of teaching, she had never heard of ACT before... and resolves to take advantage of the Association's special introductory membership rate and join immediately for just £10.

To put a screensaver on your computer visit the ACT website and click on the **Free downloads** portion of the menu bar at the top of the homepage.

### **ACT local groups**

Christians working in schools and colleges today seem to have an unprecedented work-load. Huge expectations are placed upon them. In addition to assessing, planning, teaching and marking, many teachers report that they have to manage increasingly challenging pupil behaviour whilst struggling to keep up with ever-changing government targets. Is it any wonder that many teachers sense a loss of focus? Or that others begin to question whether they are living up to their calling?

That's where you could come in! As an ACT Local Event Organiser you could help to make a difference by providing opportunities for Christians involved in education to meet together in a supportive and encouraging environment.

As one ACT member commented recently, 'My local ACT group saved my professional life. I mean it! I felt so burdened that I honestly thought about quitting teaching for good. But just being able to talk, share and pray with other Christians who understood what I was going through was a real source of encouragement. I still struggle – but now I am reminded that I am not alone. And I have regained the sense that God calls me day by day to make a difference to the young people I work with.'

I would like ACT to find new ways to help you help Christians working in schools and colleges in your area – regardless of whether they are ACT members... yet.

'But,' you ask, 'I've never organised a prayer-and-share supper in my life! I couldn't do that!' Don't let that stop you. Prayer-and-share suppers are a great event idea. But I wonder whether we sometimes limit the events we think we ought to organise to those which are overtly focussed on



prayer and praise. After all, sometimes a social evening (perhaps pizza and ten-pin bowling) might turn out to be just what the doctor ordered.

But don't worry, even an evening at your local Mega Bowl can still include a time for sharing and prayerful support – just try stopping a room full of teachers talking about school! And once Christian teachers begin sharing, my experience suggests it won't take long for them to begin offering practical tips and prayerful support to one another.

So... how does it work? Most existing ACT Local Groups get together once a term, but there is no rule of thumb for what works best. Any ACT member can become a Local Event Organiser. All you need to do is contact the ACT Office. ACT will send out an information pack and ask for formal permission to put your contact details in *ACT Now* and on the ACT website. Then you receive contact details for ACT members living in your area together with a questionnaire to circulate to those members (and other Christian contacts in local schools and colleges) asking whether they would like to be part of a local group; when they would prefer to meet; and what kinds of meetings they would prefer to attend.

Then it's just a case of getting people together for that all-important first meeting. You might get 80 people together; you might only get three. But whatever the response, you can be sure that everyone who attends will be blessed and encouraged by the opportunity to share in a time of fellowship.

ACT Local Groups are a great way of serving, supporting and uniting Christians working in education. They are also a wonderful way of letting Christians know that ACT exists and inviting them to join the Association.

To order a Local Event Organiser Information Pack simply contact the ACT Office by mail, email, fax or telephone.

## ACT directors

Have you ever thought of serving ACT's members at a national level? As ACT's Chief Executive I am always on the look out for people who might be called to serve God in education by being part of the Association's Board of Directors.

The Board meets three times each year (in addition to ACT's one-day conference and AGM each November). Members of the ACT Board are technically Trustees of the charity and Directors of the company limited by guarantee. The Board sets the budget; holds the Chief Executive to account; and decides what ACT ought to be doing and how.



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There are also opportunities for ACT Directors to represent the Association on a number of national bodies including: the RE Council of England and Wales, the Values Education Council of the UK, the Schools' Ministry Network, the Education Sunday Steering Group, the Annual Christian Teachers' Conference Steering Group, and the Biennial Christian Headteachers' Conference Steering Group. In addition, ACT Directors are sometimes invited to represent the Association at special conferences in England and overseas.

If you have a heart for ACT's ministry and a passion for helping the Association to serve God faithfully and would like to find out more about being an ACT Director please contact the ACT Office by mail, email, fax or telephone.

■ Rupert Kaye, ACT Chief Executive

### Dates of forthcoming ACT Board meetings

#### 2005

Friday 21 – Saturday 22 January 2005  
Board Residential Weekend (one night)

Saturday 2 July 2005 (10:30am – 4:30pm)

Saturday 1 October 2005 (10:30am – 4:30pm)

Saturday 19 November 2005  
ACT Day (10:30am – 4:30pm)

#### 2006

Friday 20 – Sunday 22 January 2006  
Board Residential Weekend (two nights)

Saturday 8 July 2006 (10:30am – 4:30pm)

Saturday 30 September 2006 (10:30am – 4:30pm)

Saturday 18 November 2006  
ACT Day (10:30am – 4:30pm)