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## **CRU: Building Christ-Based Relationships at Illinois State University**

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## Everything starts with the Bible:

Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru) is an interdenominational campus ministry with the overarching goal of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all nations. This research focuses on the ISU Chapter of Cru, which actively seeks to “turn lost students into Christ-centered laborers” through evangelism, creating disciples, worship, and actively studying the Bible (Interview with Matt on 2.21.12).

Spiritual growth, spiritual multiplication, and living in community with others are main themes evident in this Cru movement.



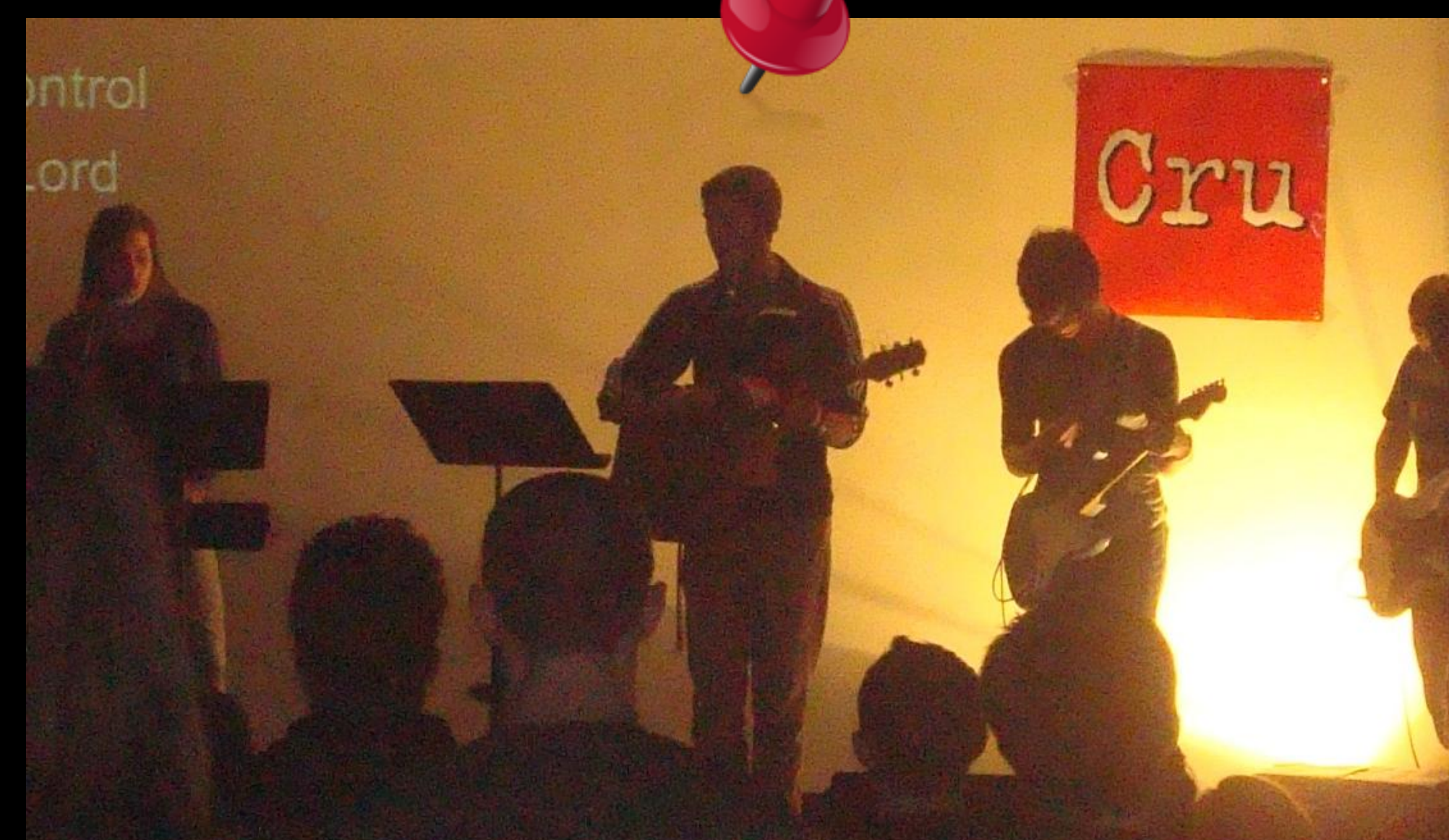
Above: “God gives us the Bible. It is his personality written out for us.” [Jennifer, while leading the Manchester Bible study | Picture taken by Mamie, a female Bible Study leader.]

## Ethnographic Methods:

I used visual anthropological methods (interviewing and participant observation) that included the collaborative production and selection of images of people, places, and events Cru members believe to be important.

## CRU: BUILDING CHRIST-BASED RELATIONSHIPS AT ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

BY CASSANDRA JORDAN, REBECCA GEARHART\*



Left: Mamie (left) is on a date with a member of the Manchester female Bible Study (right), building a relationship and living life with each other. This friendly outing is a small way of sharing faith and the message of the Gospel. [Picture taken by Mamie]

## Evangelism: active faith-sharing

Cru members actively share the Gospel to students who are uncertain about their path.

Multiple leaders remarked that it is the Holy Spirit working through them to soften the hearts of non-believers to hear the word of Jesus Christ.

Cru provides different spiritual conversation-starters: *Knowing God Personally* booklet, Soularium, & various spiritual surveys.

Sharing faith beliefs can be intimidating, but for Eric, a Cru leader, “seeking to make His name known” through evangelism is one thing that sets Cru apart from other campus ministries.



Left: Jeremy introduces Soularium to me during an interview. Soularium is a picture-based tool that helps believers share their faith in Jesus Christ to non-believers. By asking key questions about faith, the believer can engage in one-on-one spiritual dialogues with non-Christians.



### Bible Studies: Getting to know God Personally

Nearly 70-80% of Cru members actively participate in a Bible Study on the ISU campus. Studying the Scripture is one way for Christians to get to know God personally, and leading a Bible Study is another way for Cru members to challenge themselves in their journey with Christ. “When explaining a passage or faith to someone, it becomes real to you” [Interview with Jennifer on 2.24.12]

Above: At the end of a men’s leader Bible Study, Jeremy (right) and David (left) pray together over their lives. Studying the Scripture in a Bible Study is not merely a way to help other know God, it helps you know God. [Picture taken by David]

## Creating Disciples | Spiritual Multiplication

“Cru is not just a social group” [Interview with Eric on 2.24.12]. Jesus tells Christians to go and make disciples of all nations. Creating disciples is more than simply sharing faith; it is about building long lasting relationships and living life together. By truly living life with others and sharing discipleship experiences, a discipler equips their disciple in a way that they could do it with others in the future. Throughout the process of discipleship, a Christian pours themselves and their knowledge into a few people, intentionally growing in their life with God. If one person discipled two people, and those two people disciple two more people, eventually the whole world is reached. This growth in disciples by actively sharing faith is spiritual multiplication

## Conclusions

The ISU Cru movement is a Christ-centered evangelistic campus ministry whose members focus on building and living in community with people while creating disciples and sharing faith with an emphasis on evangelism. Experiencing the Cru movement in person illustrated the ways in which Cru members believe God is actively at work in their lives.

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