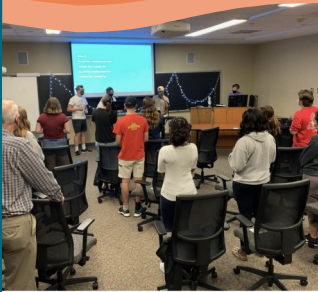


Musical time of worship at  
Large Group



*"College is a critical time in your life to be exploring who you are, who you are created to be, and what you believe."-Kathryn, IV Staff*

Bible Study discussion  
time in the HUG lounge



## Faith, Friendship, and Fun – By Rebecca Berry

Finding a community has been the biggest factor that helped me through my first year in college. Time is required to create friendships and build bonds with others, but once they begin to form it is magic like no other. It's normal to not instantly find where you belong on campus. One of the best ways to find new friends who share common interests with you is by trying new things such as clubs and sports. I finally found my place on campus at InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, an interdenominational faith-based group on campus filled with fun times and friendships.

Now you are probably asking, "What is InterVarsity?" I also had no clue what InterVarsity was when I first went. A girl I met on my first day on campus was going to an event they were holding so I decided to tag along. After going once, I was hooked. InterVarsity, or IV for short, has multiple values all centered around the [visionary statement](#) of, "to establish and advance at colleges and universities witnessing communities of students and faculty who follow Jesus as Savior and Lord: growing in love for God, God's Word, God's people of every ethnicity and culture, and God's purposes in the world." To follow in this mission, IV holds many events such as Large Group, Small Group, prayer, outreach, and more. Each of these activities provides a diverse way to experience worship to help reach a diverse student population.

### Large Group

Large Group was the first official IV event I began attending. Each week we play games that bring us closer together and participate in musical worship. The real fun comes with the main activity. It could be any number of things and you do not know until you arrive! From speakers about different faith-related topics, to Studying the Bible, or going on a prayer walk, Large Group provides a variety of ways for people to see how they best connect with God. Another special part of Large Group is the fellowship. InterVarsity is a Christian club but not the only aspect we focus on. There is a stereotype of how Christian kids are all about God, and while that is a commonality at IV, we are still regular college kids. Before and after, many IV members spend time socializing together. We share stories, get life advice, rant, and all the other things a standard group of friends does.

### Small Group

After I went to a few Large Groups and absolutely loved it, I started also attending Small Group, also known as Bible Study. Here is a small and more intimate group of people with the focus of observing and discussing different passages of the Bible. When asked about his favorite part of Bible Study, Gabe, a sophomore leader told me, "My favorite part of Bible Study is a tough question to answer because I love all of it... It's always awesome when someone gets excited in Bible Study sharing a point they found that completely covers a question I've already prepared because it shows we're finding the same gems and are taking away the same truths." Studying the Bible with an array of beliefs is special because it can provide a view of the story that someone else may not have considered. This helps make Bible Study a beneficial experience for people at all levels of Christianity. Beginners who have never seen the passage before may notice a fact that someone who has read the Bible 100 times has never noticed. Additionally, members who are well versed in the Bible can help cultivate a better understanding for someone who is experiencing the Bible for the first time.

### Commonality

Every member of InterVarsity comes in their own way for their own reason. As I was conducting interviews for this paper, I got to learn how our stories are more similar than I thought. From asking around, I found that many of us lacked a Christian community of peers in our youth and were longing for that connection. InterVarsity is an amazing place that fulfills this desire. Whether you have had tons of experience sharing your faith with peers or none, IV provides a place to have that connection with other people of all faith backgrounds longing to have that community.

## Outreach

Outreach is a large component to InterVarsity. We are not just called to serve God ourselves but to help others meet him as well. Our InterVarsity staff member Kathryn discusses the positive impact our outreach opportunities have: "We believe that Jesus is good news and good news is meant to be shared, outreach is about loving people in the place that they are. It helps us to have a greater love for the campus at large." One event we tried this year and plan to continue in the future was called Donut Dash. Members of the Loyola community texted IV a religious question and we, as members, went out and delivered a donut while answering their questions. Kathryn said that this was her favorite event we did this year because, "it gives people the opportunity to ask the spiritual questions that are important to them and builds curiosity and challenges IV students to think critically about their faith and articulate what they believe." This is just one example of events we hold to encourage others to get involved with God. Part of outreach is also having a focus on service. One off-campus retreat held over Spring Break is called Plunge. In this, students travel to Washington D.C. to participate in service projects and grow closer to God in the process. Having time to serve others can help individuals strengthen their own faith. InterVarsity has a variety of events both on and off campus to help others and serve surrounding communities.

## Off-campus Fun

Finally, if I have not sold you yet, InterVarsity does fun off-campus trips. My first week of college we travelled to the Inner Harbor for a scavenger hunt. There we split up in teams and took pictures at different sites. This was not only a ton of fun but a great bonding experience to get to know the leaders and other new members. Since then, we have done many other things such as bowling, ice skating, Christmas partying, and more! Anna Giardino, one of the co-presidents for InterVarsity, said that her favorite off-campus event is ice skating. "Hands down, ice skating, get everyone out and everyone is really bad, so it is fun... When you are around like-minded people, it helps you create like-minded friendships." Members of the IV community may not be able to participate in some weekly events so having these fun side trips can help reach a larger community. It is important to hold events where everyone can come together, temporarily forget the stress of college, and have fun. Off-campus trips also provide another great opportunity to grow closer to each other. Anna talked about one of the times she grew closer with her current close friends was on a car ride back from one of the off-campus activities we have.

## Check Us Out!

InterVarsity is more than just a club; we are a community. Together people of all denominations can come together in fellowship and faith. Unlikely friendships are forged due to getting to meet people you may have not interacted with otherwise, and fun is had. If you are looking for a place to grow in your faith while also having tons of fun and creating friendships, come check out InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Smiling group outside at D.C.  
Plunge



*"Don't let FOMO  
cause you to do  
things you wouldn't  
normally do and to  
not rely on parties  
as your only social  
connection"-Gabe,  
Sophomore leader*

Silly group photo in front of the  
Christmas tree

