

SMALL GROUP CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR ORLANDO '17

Welcome to Orlando 2017! Thank you for being a sponsor this week and investing in the spiritual nurture of your youth. The convention experience is full of fellowship and fun, and it can also be a time when youth make a first-time commitment in their faith or begin to more seriously consider God's invitation for their life. **The convention schedule has a small group time for youth groups to connect and discuss their convention experience, often debriefing about worship and seminars, immediately after worship each morning. It is in this intentional space that youth group bonds are deepened, faith is strengthened, community and trust are built. This is a crucial part of the week because the process of discipleship continues after convention in the context of local churches and youth groups.** These conversations starters, based on the themes presented in worship, offer a jumping off point for your conversations during small group time. You know your group best — how they function, how they connect and what they need — so feel free to adjust as needed. Blessings to you for investing in this incredible and potentially life-changing week for youth and adults alike, learning about God's love!



WEDNESDAY AM, "God loves me...no strings attached!"

Speaker: Melody Pannell

Scripture(s): Psalm 139, Romans 8:35-39

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you feel about God truly knowing who you are, including your thoughts, words and actions?
2. Do you ever struggle with accepting God's unconditional love for you? If so, what makes that hard to accept?
3. Describe a time when you felt far away from God and a time when you felt close.

(Note: Waterless temporary tattoos of the word *beloved* will be distributed as youth worship ends. Consider a meaningful way to put these on during small group time. There is nothing that can separate us from God's love.)

WEDNESDAY PM, "God loves you...and so should I"

Dramatic presentation: "First Five" with Lisa Cameron and Abby King

Scripture: John 13:34-35

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think the main point was from the drama piece?
2. Who is on your list of people to not invite to dinner (no need to share - just think about it)?
3. How might opening yourself to one of those (from your list above) change you?

(Note: It is important to consider that you might have youth who have been abused/mistreated, whose offenders have personally and deeply wounded them. In such cases, offering a welcome or forcing forgiveness is not safe nor appropriate. Instead, we hope that this conversation will spark an openness for those we keep at arm's distance because of cliques, prejudice, assumptions, judgments, etc. It may be helpful to differentiate between the two. Also, there is no small group debriefing after evening worship, so these questions might be morphed with Thursday morning and/or a late night group check in, if you have one.)

Thursday morning, “The limits of our love ... the limitlessness of God’s”

Speaker: Kim Litwiller

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you experienced hurt/pain by the limits of human love?
2. Of the aspects of God's limitless love described in 1 Corinthians 13, which are the hardest for you to embrace/receive? Which are the easiest for you to embrace/receive?
3. In what situation or with whom do you struggle to love without limits?

(Note: There will be an invitation for youth to receive prayer and/or anointing as a response after the sermon.

Small group time might be a good time to check in with students personally about what that experience was like for them, and what they need moving forward.)

Friday morning, “Live out your passions. Love where you are at!”

Speaker: Scott Roth

Scripture(s): 1 Timothy 4:8, Matthew 22: 36-40

Discussion Questions:

1. Go around the circle and name your super power (or have others name gifts they see in other youth). What is it that you do that gives you passion and lights you up as a person? This is your superpower. It's something that makes you go above and beyond.
2. When your super powers combine, what can you as a youth group accomplish? Take inventory and brainstorm what you can do in your local community and beyond.
3. Name your group — give yourselves an identity that reminds/empowers you to show God's love as a verb. What can be your “bat signal” to gather and go love — faith with deeds.

(Note: At the end of the day you are all created to be amazing with the Holy Spirit and God wants to unlock your potential. Strive after that image God had of you even before you were born! Together go and take some fun pictures with the superhero cutouts that are outside of Chapin Hall. Post your pictures on Twitter, #MennoCon17 and #MennoLove.)

*****Special Invitation for Youth Leaders*****

Thursday, 1:30-2:30pm & 3-4pm--Featured Seminar with Mark DeVries on “Sustainable Youth Ministry” (aka, how not to burn out). Following this presentation, youth sponsors will have a special breakout session with Mark for a Q&A from 3:00-4:00pm, door prizes included!

Friday, 3-4pm--Gather at the Executive Board booth in the Exhibit Hall for an important discussion about the future of youth ministry and faith formation for Mennonite Church USA. Sponsored by:

