



PLANNING YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP TIME

If you're planning to take full advantage of all that the Gathering has to offer, you're going to want to make the most of what we call "Community Group Time." This is our short hand for debriefing time within your congregation's group.

Below are some quick tips on how to prepare and plan for this time, what to talk about, and some resources for leading your youth into great discussion on the topics discussed at the Gathering!

- Depending on the size of your group, you'll want to split into smaller groups, ideally no more than 4-6 students. This will facilitate greater discussion and group bonding when you're strapped for time. Keep these groups the same throughout the event.
- The Primary Adult Leader should establish some expectations surrounding how much time you will build into your day for Community Group Time. The time allocated should include enough time for your small group of 4-6 youth and at least 1 adult leader to find a spot somewhere in the convention center, hotel, etc. to have quiet discussion. It is recommended to set aside at least 30 minutes per day of Community Group Time.
- Depending on your group covenant expectations for cell phone use, it might be beneficial to encourage students to keep cell phones out of sight during community group time. They have a new physical Bible to use instead of a digital version!
- Ask open ended questions, not just questions with a yes or no answer. This helps students to think, wrestle with, and articulate their answers.
- Be ok with the silence! If a student says they're not sure how to answer or they don't know, that's ok. Let them think about it while you move on and ask another student, then come back to them if appropriate. They may need some one-on-one guidance from a leader to talk about whatever they're thinking. It might also be helpful to ask the question in a different way or ask questions that encourage more specific answers that can stimulate different thoughts.
- Some open-ended questions to get your group started talking:
 - What's the thought that most sticks out to you from the sessions you went to today?
 - What from God's Word jumped out at you today? Say more about that...
 - Which of the speaker's stories that you've heard today resonates with you the most? Why is that?
 - What's your biggest takeaway from all the things you've heard and seen and learned today?
 - What opportunities did you have today to lead, serve and grow?



- Highs and lows of the day are another great tool to get students talking about their experience.
- Be clear in your communication about the value of this time together. Expect students to show up and not miss it. The adult leaders need to model how they value this time as well by emphasizing it to your group.
- Adult leaders can and should also share their highs and insights for the day, opportunities and experiences.
- Always start and end in prayer together!