

Congregational Time

The purpose of congregational time is multi-faceted. It is a time to connect, plan, debrief, and join together as a group. This is really your time to do what your group needs to do.

As you plan, make congregational time an expectation and set a time. There is the suggested time on the schedule so that you can be finished by the time all need to be in their rooms. If you have leaders in the youth group who might want to help lead, this is a good time to do that and encourage them.

On the 29th your congregation will be assigned a time for discovery worship. This coincides with skillshops. If your discovery time is during session 1a, then you will go to discovery at the start time of skillshop session 1, and will have 30 minutes to use the discovery stations. For the following 30 minutes you will have time together as a congregation to use as you wish. If you are 1b, you would have time with your congregation for the first 30 minutes and then go to discovery for the second 30 minutes. The number (1, 2 or 3) designates which skillshop session and the letter (a or b) designates the first half or second half in discovery.

Ideas for Congregational time include:

Highs and Lows (what was the high of the day and the low of the day)

What are plans for the following day—set time and place to meet

Discuss any group dynamics that need to be addressed—could be put up (encouraging words) to reward helpful behavior and discuss things that might not be aiding the group.

Daily ideas (in addition to the above)

December 27—Theme: What the World Sees (Branches)

- Discuss any new insights as to how you understand your oneness or Yonity with God.
- Consider reading John 17:20-26, the passage where Jesus prays for his Disciples. How is this also a prayer for us now?
- Ask if anyone wishes to share their drawing from their small group journal
- Optional activity – create a pin the tail on the donkey type person and give each person in your group a body part (Leave the torso on the wall as a starting piece). Have them write on one side of the part how people perceive them and on the other side how they think God perceives them. Have them all take a turn closing their eyes or putting on a blindfold and taping their body part to the torso on the wall. Don't tell them which side to put face up and which to put against the wall – this can lead to discussion as to why they put it the way they did. Also discuss how the body turned out (chances are the parts aren't in the right places) and how that represents the Kingdom of God.

December 28—Theme: How We Come From Different Backgrounds and Strengthen Our Faith (Trunk)

- This day the groups went to service. If you did not have time to debrief the service project, tonight would be a time to do that. May discuss how service may be taken to home and shared.
- Discuss people you have met who have impacted your life that come from a different background. Or people that you look up to or have learned about in school.
- Optional activity – Write names of people from history on a piece of paper and give each person a name(Choose people that your youth group would know at least why they are known). Have them draw a picture that would represent this person if they lived right now. Then have them explain who their person is and why they represented them the way they did in their drawing. Note: choose people that you can explain to them if they don't know who it is.
- Consider discussing which skillshops look interesting to people, the next day is skillshop day.

December 29—Theme: We See Our Leaves While God Sees Our Roots (Roots)

- This day has skillshops. It would be a good time to discuss what skillshops were attended and what they may have learned.
- This day also had discovery. Talk about what stations they did, and which were most meaningful to them.
- Why is it important to know that God sees our true selves?
- How is being part of a group, like this youth group aid in your faith life and in showing your true self all the time?
- Optional activity – have participants share their "I am from" poems from small groups.

December 30—Theme: Not Earned But Freely Given (Seeds)

- This congregational time is likely to be done mostly on the trip home. If stopping somewhere for lunch it is a good time to debrief.