



**2023 Franciscan University of Steubenville Youth Conference
Small Group Discussion Questions**

Small Group Tips:

- Remember to keep your questions open-ended. Avoid yes/ no questions. In addition, ask clarifying questions to brief answers, such as “Why?” or “How?”
- Silence is okay in small groups. Sometimes, the youth need time to process the questions before answering them.
- As the leader to the small group, avoid talking too much. This is a time for the youth to process their thoughts. If they have questions or need mentoring, give a shorter answer than let them know you can talk more together after the small group.
- The questions below are meant to be a springboard for you to ask further questions and facilitate conversation among the group. You do not need to ask every question. Choose the ones you think are best for your group. Feel free to ask follow-up questions as they process. You can ask even more specific questions from the keynote content.
- Your primary concern should be developing relationships with your small group. This way, every young person has an adult that is focused on getting to know him/ her.

Friday Evening Questions:

Goal: to establish the foundation upon which we will build upon through the rest of the weekend. We want young people to begin to be aware that Jesus is a refuge for the burdened (all of us) and desires to set us free.

Friday Night Keynote Scripture: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28). We also looked at Mark 5 and Jesus freeing the demoniac, healing the hemorrhaging Woman, and raising Jairus’ daughter back to life.

Entering into the Conference Weekend:

- Where are you (physically, spiritually, emotionally) coming into this conference weekend?
- What are two words you would use to describe your relationship with God right now?
- How have you seen Jesus working in your life during the past few months?

Experience of Praise and Worship:

- Describe your experience of praise and worship this evening.
 - What was something the worship leader said that struck you? Have you ever prayed like this before? What did you enjoy about this style of prayer? Why? What was difficult about praying like this? Why?

Keynote:

- What is a refuge? Is a refuge necessary? Why/ why not?
- We also have refuges in our own personal lives. What refuges exist in your life? What do these refuges provide for us?

- In Matthew 11:28, Jesus invites to himself all those who are burdened. What are some burdens young people may be coming into this conference weekend with? What burdens do you see your friends carrying? What burdens are you carrying? Where do these burdens come from?
- In the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 5, we find Jesus entering into and changing the lives of three different people: the demoniac, the hemorrhaging woman, and Jairus' daughter. Which story do you most relate to? Why?
- *For the small group leader: we encourage you to share parts of your story of how Jesus came and freed you from your own burdens. At the end of this small group session, please share your story with your young people. In addition, invite them to share their own stories of how Jesus has worked, or hope he will work, in their life this weekend.*

Adoration:

- What was your adoration experience like tonight?
- Throughout this weekend, Jesus will continue to come into our midst. What do you believe, or hope, Jesus wants to do in your life this weekend?
- Are you hesitant to bring your burdens to Jesus? Why or why not?

Men's Session Questions (prior to the session):

- *Take some time to discuss the morning:*
 - From Mass this morning, what is one thing that struck you from the Mass or the homily? Why?
 - How does Jesus become a refuge for us in the Mass?
 - Follow up with an encouragement on how to participate more fully in Mass at your home parish. Also, help them to see the connection between the Mass and eucharistic adoration.
- "Do I have what it takes?" In one way or another, men all around us are attempting to prove, "yes, I have what it takes". Whether in relationships, athletics, or masculinity in general, men generally want to be seen as competent, put together, and in control. How do you see men around you trying to prove that they 'have what it takes'?
 - How does the 'voice' of the world influence men to prove themselves? How does the voice of God influence this question?
- *For the small group leader: We encourage you to share how, through Jesus, you have come to understand yourself as a son/ man of God.*
- Note: you can also use some of the questions below to help them begin to consider the content that will be presented.

Men's Session Questions (after the session):

Goal: For the young men to be aware of how the world attempts to define who they are, but it is ultimately the Father who gives them their identity and worth as men, brothers, and sons.

Men's Session Scripture: The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17), with particular emphasis on the voice of the Father, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

- Note: if you didn't get to use the questions above earlier, feel free to include them now.
- In what ways have you tried to prove that you 'have what it takes'?

- When you succeeded, how did that feel?
 - These places could become false places of refuge for us, places where we feel competent, secure, knowledgeable, etc. Why might that be harmful for us?
- When you failed, how did that feel?
- Our pursuit of trying to prove that we have what it takes (including our successes and failures) can often turn into an identity, “I am ____.” How could the enemy use this against us? How could the Father use this for good?
 - How do you discern between the voice of the world and the voice of the Father?
 - *Please Note: This will be discussed during the Saturday afternoon session.*
- In our Baptism, we are made into sons of the Father. How should knowing this inform how we should live?
 - How can this identity we receive become a refuge for others?
- What was your experience of the prayer time after the talk?
- Did God say anything particular to you? Did anything stick out to you in the time of prayer?
- How can you pray with your friends more after this weekend? How can this kind of prayer be incorporated more in your youth ministry?

Women’s Session Questions:

Goal: For the young women to be aware of how the world attempts to define who they are, but it is ultimately the Father who gives them their identity and worth as women, sisters, and daughters.

Women’s Session Scripture: The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17), with particular emphasis on the voice of the Father, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

- *Take some time to discuss the morning:*
 - From Mass this morning, what is one thing that struck you from the Mass or the homily? Why?
 - How does Jesus become a refuge for us in the Mass?
 - Follow up with an encouragement on how to participate more fully in Mass at your home parish. Also, help them to see the connection between the Mass and eucharistic adoration.
- “Am I enough?” In one way or another, women all around us are attempting to prove, “yes, I am enough”. Whether in virtual or tangible relationships, athletics or academics, or femininity in general, women generally want to be seen as competent, valuable, and desirable. How do you see women around you trying to prove that they ‘are enough’?
 - How does the ‘voice’ of the world influence women to prove themselves? How does the voice of God influence this question?
- *For the small group leader: We encourage you to briefly share how, through Jesus, you have come to understand yourself as a daughter/ woman of God.*
- In what ways have you tried to prove that you ‘are enough’?
 - When you succeeded, how did that feel?
 - These places could become false places of refuge for us, places where we feel secure, desirable, loved, secure, valued, etc. Why might that be harmful for us?
 - When you failed, how did that feel?

- Our pursuit of trying to prove that we are enough (including our successes and failures) can often turn into an identity, “I am ____.” How could the enemy use this against us? How could the Father use this for good?
 - How do you discern between the voice of the world and the voice of the Father?
 - *Please Note: This will be discussed during the Saturday afternoon session.*
- In our Baptism, we are made into daughters of the Father. How should knowing this inform how we should live?
 - How can this identity we receive become a refuge for others?
- What was your experience of the prayer time after the talk?
- Did God say anything particular to you? Did anything stick out to you in the time of prayer?
- How can you pray with your friends more after this weekend? How can this kind of prayer be incorporated more in your youth ministry?

Saturday Afternoon Questions:

Goal: to encourage young people to begin, or continue, their journey of creating an interior life with the Lord and to equip them with the tools to discern the voice of God.

Saturday Afternoon Keynote Scripture: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16)

- In prayer, do you take time to try and ‘listen’ to God’s voice? What is that process like? As Christians, how are we supposed to ‘hear’ the voice of God?
- What are some ways you can develop your interior life upon returning home?
 - How might you bring in moments of silence during your day?
- In what ways do we see Jesus speaking through his Church today? In what ways has Jesus spoken through his Church this conference weekend?
- *If time allows, lead your group through Lectio Divina with Luke 10:38-42. This contrasts Martha’s ‘doing’ of many things with Mary’s quietness sitting at Jesus’ feet.*

Saturday Night Questions:

Goal: For young people to see the offering Jesus makes of himself to them personally and then accept that offering so their lives may be transformed in the Holy Spirit.

Saturday Night Keynote Scripture: The Woman at the Well (John 4:5-29,39-42)

- What in the talk most impacted you? What area of your life did the talk make you think about?
- What is different about the refuge Jesus offers you as opposed to the many refuges the world offers?
 - Why do we often choose what the world offers rather than what Jesus offers?
- Upon returning home, many of us will still carry many burdens. How can we carry these burdens differently after this conference weekend? How can we rely more upon Christ to help us carry our burdens?
- Has your image of Jesus changed after the talk and eucharistic adoration? How?
- What did God do in your heart tonight during eucharistic adoration? Did he speak anything specifically to you?
 - *Help the youth understand that, even if they didn’t feel anything, God is still working in their lives and calling them to an intimate relationship with him.*

- Do you have any questions about what you experienced tonight?
- *If time allows, lead your group through Lectio Divina with the Woman at the Well (John 4:5-29,39-42).*
 - How does the woman react to Jesus offering himself to her?
 - What is your response to Jesus offering himself to you?
- *Note: be sure to follow up with those young people in your group who gave their life to Jesus for the first time during the commitment call.*

Sunday Morning/ Afternoon Questions (possibly during the ride home):

Goal: To encourage young people that they are able to remain in Christ by returning to the Church, which is a refuge in the world. Within this Church, we also take part in Christ's mission to bring others into this refuge.

Sunday Morning Keynote Scripture: "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone."

- What about the Sunday morning talk most impacted you? What area of your life did the talk make you think about?
- What did your experience at this conference show you about God's love?
- What is one thing you can do to foster your relationship with Jesus after the conference and every day? How can you continue to foster a relationship with the Holy Spirit?
- What are some ways you can serve Jesus and the Church?
- What are some challenges you are going to face returning home?
- What will you do if you struggle to live your life in Christ or if the circumstances at home make it challenging to live your faith?
- How will you stay connected with your youth group, friends, and community members who are striving to live as followers of Christ?
- How can you bring this conference experience back to your parish, youth group, high school, family, friends, etc.? How can you share this faith with others?
- What did you hear this weekend that gives you hope for going back home today?
- When you encounter those burdens that you brought with you to the conference, what is your 'action plan'? How will you seek refuge in Christ and his Church as opposed to the world?
- If you could ask the Holy Spirit for two things, what would they be?
- Continue to ask questions based on what you know about each of the youth in your small group and how they experienced this weekend conference.