

2024 Breakout Seminar Options

Contextualizing Culture and Youth Ministry

Emmie Thompson - Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church, Lookout Mountain, GA

It's a tale as old as time: how do we "be in the world but not of the world"? Specifically, how do we as youth leaders and parents equip our youth in navigating this tension in step with the Spirit? Everyone is different and there is such a polarizing spectrum of opinions on what is 'acceptable' for Christians to engage in and what isn't. In light of this, we can tend to react to what our youth are consuming in fear instead of in love, pushing them further away from us. What if we looked beneath the surface and saw what messages are drawing our students in? Instead of reacting, what if we engaged it with them, comparing it to the richness of Scripture and God's heart for us? All humans are made in the image of God. In light of this, humans create in both God's grace and in our sinfulness. Therefore, all human artifacts, to varying degrees, bear common grace insights and fallen aspects. How can we learn from them, and in it showcase the perfection of beauty and truth of God and His Word?

In this seminar, I want to take some time to walk through a practice my church's youth ministry has been doing for decades: "culture updates." We will look at an artifact (whether a song, article, advertisement, or trend) that speaks to the spirit of the times, something that our students are inevitably engaged with (though, in varying degrees) and submit it to God's Word. In doing this, students can see that God's Word and Kingdom is relevant and transforms all things, including our music, movies, video games, social media, memes, and what we do with our relationships and desires. Jesus' reign is not separate from how we live the rest of our lives! This, perhaps more than anything, is what our students need to see modeled and connected. The culture and world we live in is quite literally always showcasing humans' desire to be in right relationship with God, others, and creation (in other words, longing for forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation). It is important we show our students how to have compassion and grace, while standing confidently in God's truth, beauty, and goodness.

Extending Mercy: Walking alongside Students in Today's Unstable World

Edward Ruiz - Counselor, Life Counseling Center

How do we relationally come alongside our students who live each day in our unstable world filled with doubts fears, worry, and pressure from peers, parents and performance? In this breakout we will look to see how we can lovingly confront the hearts and minds of our students with the beauty and truth of the gospel and build their confidence in Christ.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Praising God for Longevity in Student Ministry

Isaac Terwilliger - Grace Chapel, Lincoln, Nebraska

Most youth workers aren't known for slowing down long enough to reflect and take note of the tapestry God has woven throughout their ministry. This discussion-based breakout will give us the space to reflect upon and share stories of just starting out in ministry, where we are today, to where we hope God will lead in the future. Come ready to look back over your years in ministry, then be ready to share some insights from those reflections, and be ready to receive encouragement, new perspectives and ideas, and hopefully renewed energy for student ministry

-

Anxiety: Walking with Students in the Valley of Shadows

Laurie Bradley - Counselor, Life Counseling Center

Anxiety is not as simple as we want it to be, each person's journey is unique. It can drive each of us away from or toward Christ – or sometimes both. Let's consider some causes, types of spiritual struggle, and responses to anxiety you can bring with you as you minister to students and their families.

In a World: The Untold True Story of a Man and his Mission to Heal the World, One Movie at Time

Matt Hedinger - Old Cutler Presbyterian Church, Palmetto Bay, FL

This is a practical guide on how to use movie clips in your teaching. We will discuss philosophy, biblical grounds for this approach and tips and tricks on how to do it well.

Breaking the Silence: Caring for Students in Crisis

Dr. Sandra Cruise – Counselor, Life Counseling Center

In today's world, 1 in 4 young women will experience abuse in a dating relationship by the age of 20, and many more face domestic abuse at home. As youth pastors and leaders, we are called to be on the front lines of care for these students. Join Dr. Sandra Cruise in this eye-opening seminar, where you will learn to identify signs of abuse, explore why abuse is on the rise among youth, and discuss practical, Scripture-based approaches to helping those who are suffering. This session will equip you to respond with wisdom and compassion, offering hope to students in crisis.