

Breakout Sessions

We are extremely excited about this year's sessions and speakers who are ready to pour into you. You will have the opportunity to choose between 20 different Breakout Sessions broken up into 4 basic categories; Discipleship and Spiritual Growth, Practical Ministry Strategies, Faith & Cultural Engagement, and Family & Ministry Life.

Discipleship & Spiritual Growth - 5 breakouts that would be useful for anyone interested in growing to better understand and disciple students. These breakouts range from practical discipleship tools to understanding how to care for the students you love.

Practical Ministry Strategies - 7 breakouts that would be useful to leaders specifically leading groups and teaching. These breakouts offer focuses toward different ministry areas and leadership development.

Faith & Cultural Engagement - 4 breakouts that would be useful for anyone who wants to better understand what is happening in the world around us and how to engage culture with faith.

Family & Ministry Life - 3 breakouts that would be useful for anyone serving in a student ministry position with an emphasis on thriving and balancing their family and ministry life.

9:45am SESSIONS

Creating a Discipleship Culture

Doug Franklin - LeaderTreks - High School Suite

What if discipleship wasn't just a program, but the very heartbeat of your youth ministry? Join Doug Franklin, as we explore how to move beyond events to build relationships that produce disciples. You'll learn practical strategies for leading small groups that foster spiritual growth, through Biblical truth. Whether you're a pastor or volunteer, this session will equip you to shift from talking about discipleship to doing it.

Key Takeaways:

1. The difference between discipleship programs and a discipleship culture
2. Tools to help your people live as everyday disciples in everyday life
3. Steps for multiplying disciples who make disciples

Let's rediscover the Great Commission—not as a task for a few, but as a lifestyle for all.

Girls Ministry

Kate Downing - BattleCreek Church - Room 157

Boy crazy, crop tops, and friend drama...these are the topics we often get stuck on when talking about ministering to teen girls. But, there is so much more to reaching the heart of teen girls with the Gospel! During this session we will demystify what girls ministry really is while learning how to implement practical tools for reaching and discipling teen girls.

When Suffering Breaks Into Life Like a Brick Through a Plate Glass Window!

Joe Novenson - Middle School Suite

There are few times when following our Lord is more difficult and when the sense of spiritual disequilibrium is more pervasive than when suffering seeps or slams into our lives. This will be a very humble attempt to just begin to equip the attendee with tools to face such times. When it seems like all hell is breaking loose, we must remember that heaven ain't surprised.

5 Takeaways From New Data on Teens, Social Media, and Mental Health

Chris Martin - Moody Publishers - Worship Center

Social media continues to be one of the chief discipleship forces in the lives of teens and students around the world. What does the latest data tell us about teens, their relationship with social media, and how it affects their mental health? How might this new data affect how you minister to students and equip parents to shepherd their teens? Let's talk about it.

11:00am Breakout Sessions

My Role in Response (*Youth Pastor Only)

Chad Poe – Through-Line Cohort - Room 155

When a pastor calls students to respond, many feel unprepared—not because they’re unwilling, but because they haven’t considered how God might use them. In this session, Chad will help leaders see how they can faithfully serve their churches and ministries by:

1. Preparing their hearts and lives in advance
2. Trusting the Lord in the moment
3. Staying ready for long-term faithfulness

Response is not just invitation. It’s thinking through immediate, intermediate, and long term opportunities the good news of Jesus provides.

Homosexuality, Transgenderism, and the Gospel – Caring Well for the Hurting

Dr. Tate Cockrell – Southeastern Baptist Seminary - High School Suite

With widespread gender confusion and same-sex attraction permeating culture today, adolescents and parents are confronted with the challenges of homosexuality and transgenderism in ways like never before. In this session, we will address how to rightly orient our thinking to minister well to those who might be struggling with same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria, as well as helpful tips for those who love those who struggle.

How a Conversation Can Save a Life

Jennie Landreth & Tiffany Soyster – Choices - Room 168

The abortion pill is being marketed to teens as “safe, effective, and easy”—but the truth is far more dangerous. Nearly 11% of those who take it experience serious or even life-threatening complications. With at-home abortions more accessible than ever and social media spreading misinformation, young women are making life-altering decisions alone and under pressure. In this session, you’ll learn how the abortion pill actually works, how culture is shaping your students’ views, and how a simple, grace-filled conversation can bring truth, hope, and save a life.

Checkpoints for a Healthy Marriage While Serving in Ministry

Chris & Wendy Trent – Georgia Baptist Mission Board - Room 169

Balancing marriage and ministry isn’t easy, but it’s possible — and worth it. In this session, Chris and Wendy Trent will share practical checkpoints for cultivating a healthy marriage while serving in the church. From building spiritual unity and financial wisdom to strengthening communication, intimacy, and family rhythms, you’ll walk away with real tools to help your marriage not just survive ministry life, but thrive.

Interrupted: The Way Of Ministry And Motherhood as We Walk With Jesus

(For women serving in ministry, volunteers or paid staff)

Gianna Rakes – New City Fellowship - Room 157

After nearly 15 years of ministry, I've learned a crucial lesson: life and ministry, especially motherhood, are often defined by interruptions. As Bob Goff says, "Loving people the way Jesus did means living a life filled with constant interruptions." Jesus modeled this perfectly. Even during moments of deep communion with His Father or focused time with His closest friends, Jesus willingly embraced interruptions to care for people around Him.

In this session designed specifically for women who are serving in ministry and navigating motherhood, we'll explore Jesus' example to discover how we can navigate our own lives amidst constant interruptions. How can we remain available and compassionate like Jesus while also guarding against burnout? How do we balance meaningful relationships, essential rest, and the call to serve beyond what we believe we can manage? Together, we'll unpack practical insights for walking with Jesus—and ministering like Jesus—as we juggle the beautiful complexities of motherhood and ministry.

Riding Horseback vs. Rocketship: Maximizing the Long-Term Impact of Short-Term Missions

Kevin Andrews – SLAM Missions - Room 166

Short-term mission trips hold incredible potential for meeting real needs while discipling students into Jesus' teachings and ministry methods. The lasting effects of these temporary experiences are often left to chance rather than developed with intentionality. We will explore ways to buck mediocrity and boost the trajectory of community service efforts without the need to be a rocket scientist. These tips and priorities have been gleaned from scripture and experience and can be applied to local, domestic, and international mission efforts. Let's serve better with the long-term in mind!

Building an Invitation Culture

Brian Preston – BattleCreek Church - Middle School Suite

Explanation can be as follows: The cultural ground is shifting — and though the challenges are real, this is also an incredible opportunity for revival. When the church shows teenagers that we are seriously about sharing and inviting to the gospel weekly then they will get serious about inviting their friends. In this breakout, we'll explore how to cultivate a culture where sharing the gospel is natural, expected, and contagious. You'll leave with practical steps and encouragement to equip your ministry for evangelism in even the most resistant environments. Let's build that culture together!

From Noise to Influence to Impact: Mastering Communication with the 4 Audiences Who Shape Your Ministry (*Youth Pastor Only Session)

Kerry Ray – YM360 / Topic: Practical Ministry Strategies

Let's be honest: great youth ministry often gets lost in the noise of bad communication. You can have the best events, an incredible small group curriculum, and a rock-solid team of committed volunteer leaders—but if students aren't showing up, parents are confused, volunteer leaders feel unclear, or your church staff is out of the loop, it's not a ministry problem—it's a communication problem. Your ministry's impact rises or falls based on your ability to communicate with the four audiences that shape everything you do: students, parents, volunteers, and church staff. Each audience is unique and needs something different, and great youth ministry leaders know how to speak to each with clarity, consistency, and purpose. So, let's cut through the noise and level up your ministry's potential for influence and impact. In this practical, strategy-packed breakout, we will unpack these four critical audiences and explore a proven communication framework that will help you capture students' attention, earn trust and support from parents, empower your volunteer leaders, and build alignment and credibility with church leadership. If you're ready to stop chasing people down and start leading them forward, this session is your next step.

2:30pm Breakout Sessions

To A.I. or Not to A.I.

Jeff Wallace – Student Leadership University - High School Suite

As technology rapidly advances, how should Christian pastors and church leaders ethically and theologically approach the use of AI in ministry—ensuring it serves the church without compromising biblical principles?

Disciple-shift

Jason Pittman – PACT Ministries - Room 155

Is our teaching and leadership truly making a difference? Are our students grasping what we're sharing? How can we know if they're growing spiritually? Where is each student on their spiritual journey? These questions often weigh heavily on our hearts as we work to disciple young people. But what we really need is a shift in perspective—from focusing on the group as a whole to focusing on the individual. Join Jason Pittman as he offers practical strategies for moving from group discipleship to a more personalized, one-on-one approach.

Key Ingredients to Being a Great Volunteer

Chris Hargrove – YM360 - Middle School Suite

Youth ministry volunteers are more than just names on a spreadsheet. They are more than just people who help pull off a Wednesday night, Sunday morning, or the next big event. They are shepherds, guides, and for many students, an example to follow. In this breakout, we'll unpack what it means to be a great volunteer by exploring some of the key ingredients every volunteer team needs. Whether you're new to serving or have been in the game for years, this session will encourage you, challenge you, and help you lead with greater purpose.

Building a Healthy Volunteer Team That Feels Empowered to Lead (*Youth Pastor Only Session)

Justin Park – RockPoint Church - Room 167

Are you tired of managing volunteers who show up but don't truly own the vision? Ready to move from doing ministry yourself to multiplying leaders who thrive alongside you?

This session will transform how you think about volunteer development. You'll discover practical strategies for creating a volunteer culture where team members don't just fill roles—they become empowered leaders who recruit others, take initiative, and drive ministry innovation.

Stop being the bottleneck in your ministry. Learn to develop leaders who develop other leaders. Your volunteers—and your students—will thank you for it.

Fear, Worry and Anxiety

Courtney Caroland – Courtney Caroland Counseling - Room 157

What do I do when one of my students is struggling with Anxiety? How should I respond? According to the National Institutes of Health, nearly 1 in 3 teenagers from 13 to 18 will experience an anxiety disorder. It is certainly on the rise, especially in a post-pandemic world. It's not a matter of if you have a student with anxiety, but when you have a student with anxiety, how will you respond? You and the leaders in your ministry need practical tools, rooted in scripture, to help come alongside students and their families who are dealing with anxiety. This workshop will aim to give you an understanding of what anxiety is and will equip you with practical tools and resources for the mind, body, and heart to help those who are struggling with anxiety.

Trauma Meets Trust: Healing Through Trust-based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

Deidra Love - Hamilton County Schools - Room 166

Trust-based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention, which provides a framework for healing through the trusting connections children need to grow. This workshop will review how trauma changes the brain, body, biology, belief system and behavior for children who have experienced adversity, and participants will receive an introduction to Connecting Principles to meet attachment needs, Empowering Principles to meet physiological needs and Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors, promoting growth and well-being.

Thriving in Ministry Without Burning Out You or Your Family

Chase and Jess Acuña - Standing Stone Ministry - Room 168

Serving in ministry is one of the greatest privileges on this side of eternity, and the immense reward of witnessing the Gospel impact lives is unparalleled. However, those who have served in ministry also understand the challenges—including heartbreak and discouragement. Statistics highlight this reality, with a significant percentage of pastors currently at risk of burnout and many leaving the ministry each month.

This workshop addresses a crucial question: How can individuals embrace the beautiful call of ministry and thrive without experiencing personal or familial burnout?

Join Chase Acuna, a pastoral counselor, and his bride, Jess Acuna, a spiritual director—both serving with Standing Stone Ministry. Drawing from their personal journey through burnout in pastoral ministry, their path to health as a family, and their subsequent experiences, they will share valuable insights and five practical principles on how to flourish in your calling without burning yourself or your family out.

Head, Heart, Hands: How to make Whole Disciples through the Apostle's Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments

Andrew Slay - Westwood Baptist Church - Room 169

Do you have a proven and time-tested method for taking new believers and making them deeply committed disciples of Jesus? In this session, you will learn how to make whole disciples who love Jesus with their head (Christian doctrine), heart (Christian vitality), and hands (Christian living/ethics) by implementing a proven method of discipleship that goes back to the time of the early church. Most discipleship programs lack in either doctrine, ethics, or spiritual formation. In contrast, the proven discipleship program that the early church has utilized for over 2,000 years has made faithful disciples who follow Jesus with their entire being. Come join us in this session to learn how to make whole disciples “the old-fashioned” way.