

How to keep a convo with a student going.

EMBRACE TANGENTS: if they tell you their favorite food is their grandma's French toast, ask them to tell you about grandma. Take the bait and run with whatever other material they give you.

ASK OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS: Avoid questions that can be answered with yes/no. Try why, how, and when questions instead of "do you like _____" kind of questions. Try things like:

- "How did that make you feel?"
- "Why do you like that?"

DON'T GIVE UP: It takes about 6 questions before they even think you really care. Here's a set of questions that are essentially intro questions. Keep going when these questions are done.

- Hey, How are you?
- What's your name?
- What school do you go to?
- How did you hear about Encounter?
- What do you like to do in your free time?

PLAY DEVIL'S ADVOCATE: Don't do this with sarcasm, but feel free to push at a student's answers to get them to talk more. If they say "God is so good", you could say "Would you say that to a friend whose mom is diagnosed with cancer? How do you know God is good?" Or if they say, "I think sex before marriage is wrong." You could say, "Ok. So do you think people should get married to have sex?" etc...

GIVE SPACE: Let your question sit before you follow up with another question. Sometimes rapid firing a question is fun. Other times, it just shuts them down. Embrace the silence and give them a few seconds to think about their answer. If you do break the silence, try clarifying your question before abandoning it or thinking they are not going to answer.

SOME CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION IDEAS:

BUCKET TESTIMONY: pick an item (bucket, purse, backpack, suitcase, basket, etc) and have a different person each week come with 10 items inside. As they pull each item out, they tell you why they put it in there and what it means to them.

A-Z QUIZ: Make an A-Z quiz for your group using each letter as your guide or use the one we gave you.

TRUTH AND LIES: Have them write down one random thing that is true of them and 2 random things that are lies. Then repeat them to the group and have them guess which one is the truth

PASSIONS and PET PEEVES: Ask them what they are passionate about and what royally bugs them? Suggested topics:

- Food and beverages.
- Cars and driving
- Sports and rules
- School, teachers, tests, and grades
- Friends, facebook, and cell phones
- Celebrities

TELL THE WORLD: If given the opportunity to produce an hour long TV show with a professional team about any subject you wanted, what would you do your TV show about and why?

SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES: Have them describe their own personal spiritual journey. What role has the church played in their faith? Family? Ask about specific camps, retreats, events, books, messages, or mentors that have really helped them?

WORD ASSOCIATION: say a word or list of words and have them describe it as positive or negative and why. Here's a list of words to try:

- Church
- Jesus
- Prayer
- Athlete
- Musician
- 100 degree heat
- Justin Beiber
- Cell phone
- Facebook
- Camping
- Snow
- Books
- Beach
- Sister
- Brother
- Parents
- Work-a-holic
- Ego
- Leader
- Home school
- Meat lover
- Vegetarian
- Hunting
- Republican
- Democrat
- Etc...

SECRETS: What is one thing that is true of you or your friends that you would:

- Not want your school to know
- Not want your parents to know
- Not want your neighbors to know

DESCRIBE IT: a list of stuff to describe.

- Most embarrassing moment
- Your greatest fear and what it would be like if it really happened
- Your 3 most valuable things you have to know where they are at all times
- Your future hopes or dreams. Describe the kind of person you want to become, family you want to have, job you want to do, place you want to live. Etc.

WOULD YOU RATHER:

- ALARM: talk radio or your dog's bark
- EMBARRASSING: food in teeth or something hanging from your nose
- ENDURANCE: swim through sewage or walk across burning hot coals
- FEARS: covered in spiders or covered in snakes
- FUTURE: president of United States or world's richest person
- SUPER POWER: fly or disappear
- REPUTATION: good grades and bad reputation or bad grades and good reputation
- PET: a dog that can talk or a parrot that can defend your home
- KILL AND EAT: a pet turkey for thanksgiving or pet lamb for Passover
- FILM: make one or star in one
- SERVE: clean a homeless guys feet or clean your school bathrooms
- EXTREME: base jump off a high rise or bungee jump off a bridge
- SURPRISED: by a wedding proposal or blindfolded car ride to birthday party