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LEADERS' RESOURCES

PHOENIXFEST.CA/LEADERS



Get Ready For Phoenix Fest

Hey Youth Leaders,

Thanks so much for choosing to bring your students to Phoenix Fest! We have a team of people preparing and praying for a meaningful weekend for you and your students.

One of the things we wanted to do was send out a couple weeks of small group discussion questions for you to use with your group as you get ready to attend. As students process what it means to own their faith, they need to see the authentic faith of adults who are in close proximity to them, and they need to have a safe space to voice their questions and doubts. As a team we've designed a weekend where the priority of relationships and the need for authenticity have the opportunity to move your students forward in their faith.

These two lessons will help your students get the most out of Phoenix Fest. Feel free to use them with your group over the couple weeks prior to Phoenix Fest. As you facilitate these discussions we pray they will move your students closer to Jesus.

See you at Phoenix Fest!

PS: After Phoenix Fest, we'll be posting a follow-up discussion guide to help your students unpack what they experienced over the weekend.

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**GET READY FOR
PHOENIX FEST DISCUSSION**

Week 1: Relationships vs. Rules

GOAL OF DISCUSSION:

To help students understand that the point of following Jesus isn't following rules — it's to love Him, and love others.

SUMMARY:

Rules aren't bad. God gave them to us because He loves us and wants us to have full lives. But sometimes, it's easy to think that rules are the point—that they are the things that make you “in” or “out” when it comes to faith. But Jesus taught us something very different, and it's this: Relationships are greater than Rules.

When we read about Jesus interacting with people, He put the relationship first every time. He loved rule-followers and rule-breakers. He talked to them, hung out with them, and made them feel welcome. That's what it means to put relationships ahead of the rules. That's the life of adventure Jesus is inviting us into.

SCRIPTURE:

Acts 15:1-22 - especially vs. 19: “And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Would you call yourself more of a rule-keeper or a rule-breaker? Why?
2. In what ways do rule-keepers get frustrated with rule-breakers? In what ways do rule-breakers get frustrated with rule-keepers?
3. Why do we tend to count people out if they've broken certain rules?
4. When it comes to our faith, what's the danger of only focusing on following the rules?
5. If someone asked you why a relationship with Jesus is more important than the rules, what would you say?
6. How have others influenced you moving closer or further away from Jesus? Why do you think relationships influence our decisions more than rules?
7. It can be tempting to count out people who are known as rule-breakers. What's wrong with taking that approach with them? What's a good way to respond instead?
8. If we lived in a way that gave priority to relationships over rules, how might this change how 'outsiders' view us Christ-followers?
9. What are you looking forward to most at Phoenix Fest? If you've been before, what have you enjoyed most about Pitch in the past?
10. What do you hope to take away from the weekend?



**GET READY FOR
PHOENIX FEST DISCUSSION**

Week 2: Don't Let Doubt Keep You Out

GOAL OF DISCUSSION:

To help students see the importance of being real and honest when they deal with doubts.

SUMMARY:

Here's an unspoken rule we tend to live by: 'honesty about some things is good, but honesty about everything isn't'. Maybe you know someone who's honest about everything. They are probably super critical and not very nice to be around for long periods of time. Well that same unspoken rule seems to be in place at church as well. It feels like there are some things we talk about all the time, and others we don't talk about at all.

For most people, one of those areas we don't talk about is doubt. Think about it for a second: Do you ever have doubts or deep questions when it comes to God or the church? I bet we *all* have! The problem is that it sometimes can feel weird to talk about these questions in church. I mean, what if God hears? Would He be mad? What if other church people hear you? Will they get mad at you? Will they judge you?

Here's what we want you need to know. Whether you've been a follower of Jesus forever, or you're just here to get out of your house, this is a place where we want you to feel welcome and safe. And that includes any questions or doubts you have. We want you to know that doubts aren't necessarily bad, either. In the stories we read about Jesus in the Gospels, some of His closest friends had their doubts about Him too. The truth is, doubt is normal and it shouldn't be shameful or embarrassing. We can find strength as we talk about them and bring them to Jesus.

SCRIPTURE:

John 20:24-31 - especially vs. 27: "Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!"

Mark 9:14-29 - especially vs. 23-24: "What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes." The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How would you define doubt. Give an example of something you heard or seen, and thought, "there's no way that's true."
2. Why does the idea of being honest about our doubts make most of us uncomfortable?
3. Interact with this statement from Kara Powell: "Doubt isn't toxic to faith; unexpressed doubt is."
4. Thomas felt safe to honestly express his doubts with his friends. Why is it important for us to have people we can honestly share our doubts with?
5. Jesus went straight to Thomas when He entered the room. What does that tell us about Jesus when we struggle with doubt?
6. What are some amazing things God has done for you (or people around you) in the past? Why is it important to remember those things when you deal with doubt?
7. What's one way we can keep moving towards Jesus even when we have doubts?
8. What's one way we, as a group, can help each other work through our doubts?
9. If you feel comfortable sharing... What's maybe a doubt or question you are bringing with you to Phoenix Fest? What conversations do you want to have that weekend?





**MAIN SESSION
OVERVIEW**

2019 Theme: Rise

MAIN SESSION SUMMARY:

Students face daily opportunities to turn inward and focus on their own problems or turn outward and engage in the issues and challenges that surround them. From their view, the problems they encounter may seem overwhelming and can cause them to question whether they can really make a difference. We believe that if students start building a Jesus centred life now they will be more prepared to make changes personally and in the world around them - and rise to what God has for them.

MAIN SESSION GOAL:

To encourage students to start building a Jesus-centered life

**MAIN SESSION
SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS**

As we get closer to the event, it is our hope to post small group questions for you.

MAIN SESSION THEMES

FRIDAY PM :

Rise - Choose Hope

SATURDAY AM :

Rise - Choose to Love

SATURDAY PM :

Rise - Choose Community

SUNDAY AM :

Rise - Choose to Trust

SUNDAY PM :

Rise - Choose to Contribute and Cause Change

MONDAY AM:

Rise - Choose to...

On Monday, we'll give space for your students to reflect on what has been presented over the weekend and begin to chart the course forward. We believe through the sessions the Holy Spirit will be speaking to students and inspiring them to life change. Our prayer is that each student will carry this forward into the weeks and months that follow Phoenix Fest.

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How to lead a Small Group at Phoenix Fest

One of the goals for each of our speakers is to set the table for you to have really great discussions with your students. Each session talk is like an appetizer for the main course. The main course is the small group time you'll have with your students at the end of each talk. We don't view these small group times as a time-filler, rather this is the time when deep discussions happen and life change begins. With this in mind, here's a few tips to lead a productive small group discussion...

TREAT IT WITH IMPORTANCE

You students will know if this small group time is important to you by how you treat it. Give it time and space. While great conversations can happen as you walk, small group will need a bit more time than the time it takes to get back to your campsite. Find a space that keeps distractions to a minimum. Sit facing each other.

KEEP IT SMALL

About 8-12 students is about ideal. The hope is for every student, who feels comfortable, will share personally during each small group opportunity as a way of processing what they heard and experienced.

KEEP QUIET

This is an opportunity for your students to share... so let them! Speak as little as you need to keep the conversation going and on track.

SILENCE IS OK

It takes students about 10-12 seconds to process their thoughts... sometimes we can hijack this time because the silence feels awkward. By allowing silence and waiting for the answer, it trains students to know that you really expect an answer - and won't just eventually 'tell them the answer'

KEEP IT REAL

Expect students to share doubts and questions about their faith. This is a good thing because it shows they trust you and that they are making the faith their own. For faith to take root, it needs to be processed out loud. As Kara Powell says, "Doubt isn't toxic to faith... unexpressed doubt is."

BE AFFIRMING

Your role is not to be the one answering all the questions. You are there to provide a context for students to discuss their questions and wrestle with them. Don't feel you need to answer these questions. Just because your students share a question or doubt doesn't mean necessarily they expect an answer right then and there - or at all. We know it sounds counter-intuitive, but this may be the first time they've actually shared what they did personally. So the best thing to do is affirm their honesty and commit to figuring it out together. This is not the time to pull out your apologetical textbooks and argue their doubt away. These will however provide the topics for ongoing conversations throughout the weekend and beyond.

DON'T FEEL THE NEED TO GET THROUGH ALL THE QUESTIONS.

The questions are there for a guide, but if your students go in another direction, follow what they're interested in and where the energy is taking the group. Small Group questions for each session will be displayed on the screens in the Blair Theatre, and posted on our social media platforms for you to access.

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How does Phoenix Fest Compare to Pitch?

If you've been to Pitch in the past you and your students will experience similarities and differences between Phoenix Fest and Pitch. We've outlined a few of each to help students who've been to Pitch before prepare to have a great weekend.

FOCUS ON YOUR GROUP

We will continue to place a high priority on providing a context for your youth group to build connections and grow as a group together.

GROUP MANAGEMENT

We will continue to provide a safe environment for your youth to have fun and grow spiritually. We expect that you will handle your own groups discipline challenges internally. We will have EMT support on-site if your youth need health support.

CHALLENGING TEACHING

We will continue to provide Jesus centred teaching that we hope will stir your students to ask questions and work to own their faith personally. If you disagree with something a communicator says we encourage you to speak directly with that person.

WELCOMING FOR ALL

We will continue to provide a context where students that are struggling with any issue will not feel judged and unwelcome but will experience love and encouragement.

NO BIG TOP

Because we have a limited attendance capacity this year, our budget will not afford us the ability to have a big tent for us to meet in. We will be packing out the Blair Theatre for the main sessions and will look to budget the Big Top for next year.

EPIC EVENTS

There will be a couple opportunities throughout the weekend for the whole camp to engage in what we're calling 'Epic Events'. One of these events will be a foam party! Think of a huge slip and slide meets non-allergenic biodegradable foam bubbles. You'll want your bathing suit for this. We're keeping the other event under wraps at this point, but it'll be epic. These events will be optional of course, but why would you want to do anything else?

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE FUN

We want to encourage groups to come prepared with interesting activities they can offer to other groups to experience - seeking to contribute to the culture and fun of the weekend.

TALENT SHOWCASE

We plan to continue a long history of featuring the talent and abilities of your youth but we are working to remove the negative nature of a talent competition.

