

36 attend Summer 2015 Youth Pastors Retreat

Kaeleigh Moffitt
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The Summer 2015 Youth Pastors Retreat was held from August 14-16 in Jefferson, Maryland. Thirty-six youth pastors from around the country gathered together in the beautiful Catoctin Mountains to personally refuel, share best practices and make plans for the upcoming semester of Youth Ministry. The weekend provided a refreshing getaway and a great environment to build a foundation for the upcoming year.





Kaeleigh Moffitt, the National Youth Ministry Coordinator, noted what an amazing group of people were present. “I was initially concerned about hosting this retreat while I was still in the beginning stages of my pregnancy; however, I was blown away by the level of leadership and willingness present in all of the youth pastors. Each one of them stepped up in different ways and helped make the retreat exactly what they needed it to be.”



The weekend featured education and activities focusing on the five elements of Youth Ministry: Connect, Inspire, Empower, Contribute and Expand. Participants learned how to incorporate these monthly themes into their local communities in a way that is down to earth and practical. Everyone shared deeply with each other about the obstacles they face in being the best older brothers and sisters they can be to the youth, and participated in activities that represented the process of overcoming these obstacles.



The youth pastors were split into small groups based on their community size so that their discussions and

sharing could be relevant to their community. These small groups will be used throughout the year during Youth Ministry small group web calls in which youth leaders will share about how things are going locally. Many of the youth pastors found that the most valuable part of the retreat was having time to share and listen to other youth pastors. This allowed for effective problem solving and planning for the future.



Participants were able to hear about some of the best kept secrets from communities around the nation through presentations from Ray Burns, Toyo Hagiwara, Sungil Fleischmann, Matt Quantz, Leilani Owens, and Sasha Drost. They also got a chance to experience different styles of leadership and activities, as parts of the retreat were led by various youth pastors. They also spent time with Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA, who shared about the importance of having a spiritual high ground when met with adversity.



By the end of the retreat, the youth pastors gathered truly felt like they were one national team. Although they may have the unique needs, challenges and advantages of their own communities, they left the retreat knowing with confidence that they have many fellow youth pastors who are working toward the same goal of bringing God's children back to their Heavenly Parent.

