# Focus Group Discussion Guide – Millennial Focus Groups

**Introduction and Purpose (10-15 minutes)**

**Welcome**

Thank you for joining us today to share your views. We appreciate your time and look forward to an enjoyable, robust discussion. My name is [*your name here*] and I’ll be your guide for our time together.

**Our topic today…**

Today we’re discussing what it means to be a part of a church. What do you like, what would you change, and how would you describe being a part of a church?

 **Housekeeping/ground rules**

A few quick housekeeping and ground rules before we begin.

Today’s conversation is very informal, so let’s be on a first-name basis (*that’s why you have the name card in front of you*). Some of the folks around the table may have different opinions than you – that’s OK. We all come from different church backgrounds and life experiences. Each of you have something to contribute to the conversation. If you find yourself having a totally different set of experiences, or a different opinion than the rest of the group, I need to hear it, since your view represents a sizeable portion of people out there who just don’t happen to be in today’s discussion. I want all of views represented and it’s important for you to speak up.

To that point, there are no right or wrong answers…we’re only interested in your honest feedback. We’re not looking to have you answer questions in ways you *think* we want you to answer. You can say what’s on your mind and we’ll remain friends long after this discussion. In fact, you provide the greatest benefit by sharing exactly what you think – good and bad. I’m not selling anything today and you can’t hurt my feelings. Some of my questions may seem obvious or repetitive, but please keep in mind that we’re holding these conversations with a number of people in multiple locations and ultimately want to reach people with varying expertise or background.

Use this time to build off of each other’s ideas.

One final point…people often say such helpful things in these discussions and I just can’t write fast enough to get them all down. So that I’m not slowing us down by writing notes or relying solely on my memory, would you mind if I tape record our conversation? *The recording is purely for internal use and will not be shared with anyone or used without your consent in any marketing materials. You’ll remain anonymous in the final report findings.*

**Introductions**

Before we start with our discussion, let’s take a few minutes to introduce each other.

[*Go around the room – ask the following:*]

* Tell us your name, where you live, your home church (if applicable), and share a gift that was particularly memorable to you – it can be something you’ve either given or received. What made it special?

Are there any additional questions I can address before we get started?

Great – let’s get started.

**Full discussion (75-90 minutes)**

**Peer Groups (engagement)**

Let’s start with sharing some ideas about friendship and peer groups –

* What do you feel are the most important qualities of a good friend?
* Think back to when you were in elementary and high school…how did you meet new friends?
* How would you describe a peer group?
* Who do you consider your own peer groups?

[*probe for attitudes on different groups – school, church, work*]

Now, let’s think about peers in your church congregation –

* How important is it to have other young adults in your congregation?
* On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest), how important is it to have specific programs for young adults in the church?
	+ List programs you would like to see in the church?
* Describe some ways for a church to embrace young adults, even if there aren’t many of them in a congregation?

**Warmness and Safety (exploration)**

Let’s talk a little bit about what it means to have a warm and safe environment in church –

What words would you use to describe a warm, safe church environment?

What makes you feel comfortable to ask questions or voice concerns and issues in church setting?

* Share some times when you’ve been made to feel very comfortable

What doesn’t make you feel comfortable to ask questions or voice concerns and issues in church setting?

* Share some times when you’ve been made to feel rather uncomfortable

What is your expectation upon entering a church where you’ve never been before?

Show of hands – how many of you have gone to a new church and been surprised by the greeting you received?

* Tell us what made it special or not special

**Welcoming (exploration)**

What makes you feel included or excluded from the congregation as a young adult?

Share some of the moments (actions, experiences) that help you develop relationships within the church

* How about outside of church with other Christians?

Now, share some of the moments (actions, experiences) that may have pushed you away from the church or other Christians?

**Authenticity (exploration)**

What do feel other generations need to know about teens and young adults in the church?

Now, let’s rephrase the question – same idea, but this time I’d like you to start your answer with an “I wish” or a “Here’s how” reply

* “I wish other generations \_\_\_\_\_\_”
* “How to get members involved is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

What issues are important to you that you don’t hear the church talk about?

Jot down a few cultural issues that are most important for you

* How do these issues align with what you hear from the church?

What are your expectations from pastors, youth workers, or other adults when difficult or tough conversations need to happen?

[*probe for specific topics/conversations*]

**Essential qualities of church community (exploration)**

For this section, we’re going to explore some of the essential qualities of a church community –

Let’s start with this question…if the LCMS were a person, how would you describe that person?

[*follow up with gender, age, occupation, personality, etc.*]

What qualities of this person appeal to you? What detracts?

Describe a time when you’ve seen the church come together in a positive way

When conflict happens in the church, how do you feel the church should handle it? How does this align with your experience?

What does diversity mean to you?

Using a standard grade scale (A through F), grade the LCMS on diversity

* Let’s go around and explain our grades.

**Parent’s role (exploration)**

Now, I want to talk about the role of parents in the faith life and hear your opinion –

What can parents say or do that would help encourage/expand faith conversations in their home?

When you think back to your own family, how did you know that faith was important or not important to your parents?

* Describe some of the ways your parents shared their faith with you. What was the impact on you?

**Opportunities for Leadership and Service (exploration)**

How important is it for you to serve in your congregation?

[*probe definition of serve*]

How important is it for you to be a leader in your congregation?

[*probe definition of leader*]

What are your expectations of congregations serving their community?

What specific traits do you believe young adults bring to leadership in the congregation?

**Characterized Confirmation process and Youth Ministry (exploration)**

How well do you feel the church prepared you to share your faith?

[*probe macro-micro: world, community, workplace, family*]

Describe for us your Confirmation process. What impact did it have on your faith?

**Final Thoughts and Wrap-Up (exit)**

One final thought…Imagine you’re in charge of a welcoming committee in your church aimed at your peers – what do you feel would be the most appealing aspects of community to them?

Thank you for your time and for all of your feedback.

We had a great discussion and we covered a lot of topics.

Is there anything I’ve missed?

Is there anything else you’d like to share?

THANK YOU