

# Youth Delegate Fact Sheet

**So you've been asked to be a delegate** to Central Plains conference annual meeting! I bet you are wondering what in the world that means! I'm Shana Boshart, your conference youth minister, and I'll try to explain.

Your congregation is one of the 52 congregations that make up **Central Plains Mennonite Conference**. Every summer, these congregations send representatives (called "delegates") to a meeting where they fellowship, worship and make the decisions that keep Central Plains going.

## **We want to include you.**

Central Plains really wants to involve youth and young adults in our fellowship, worship and business. That's why we encourage every congregation to send at least one youth as a delegate. We want you to come to conference annual meeting because we think you should be there to influence the kind of church we are becoming.

At conference annual meeting the schedule is divided into blocks for worship, business and workshops with breaks for snacks and meals. We usually meet from Thursday evening through Sunday morning. You will probably travel to annual meeting with the other delegates from your church.

## **We'll be there to mentor you**

As a delegate, you'll be included in all meetings and activities, including voting. Plus, I'll have some extra things planned for you to help you understand and process all that you are seeing and hearing. Things like:

- A get-acquainted time just for the youth to get to know one another
- Lunch together with me and the other youth delegates
- A fun activity with a local youth group
- A one-on-one conversation with a pastor or conference leader
- Time to talk with conference leaders about church business or leadership issues.

## **About logistics**

Youth delegates don't all stay together in one place, so you'll want to ask what the other delegates from your church are doing for lodging. The lodging information is in the registration packet, so when you register, ask where the other delegates from your church will be staying. If you're wondering about who will pay the registration fee, ask your pastor or church council chair. Many congregations pay the way for their youth delegate.

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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Do I really get to vote?**

Yes, you really do! Don't worry if you feel unprepared. I'll try to give you all the background information you need and answer all your questions.

### **How many youth delegates will be there?**

It varies from year to year, but there are usually 15-20.

### **Does the youth delegate have to be a certain age?**

Yes. The conference by-laws state that a youth delegate must be at least 16.

**BUT**, younger youth are welcome to come and participate just like the other youth delegates; the only difference is they would not be able to vote.

### **Can I bring a friend?**

Yes! A friend can come and participate in all the same things you do, except vote.

### **Won't my friend feel out of place if s/he can't vote?**

No, there are actually lots of people at annual meeting who don't vote: conference and church-wide staff, guests and spouses of delegates. Your friend will be treated just like a youth delegate and will not feel out of place.

### **Why should I do this?**

It's an opportunity to shape the kind of church you want to be a part of. It's a good way to become more familiar with the other congregations in our conference and deepen your understanding of Mennonite Church USA. And, it's a great introduction to church leadership.

Here's what youth delegates from past years have said about their experience:

"I felt included and that they were actually listening to us."

"My mentor was awesome. She was very fun and easy to talk to."

"I had a really good time with the other delegates, and I more understand conference, which is good. The business meetings were long, but that's the reason we're here."

"This was a great learning experience for me, and I also had fun!"

### **Still have questions?**

Your pastor may be able to answer questions about what annual meeting is like. You can also give me a call or write me an email. I hope you'll come! I look forward to seeing you at Central Plains conference annual meeting!

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