**SAMPLE from Bentonville “Conversations that Matter” guide for table leaders**

Large group:

* General socializing as people arrive and get drinks and appetizers
* There will be a scripture passage on the appetizer table to set the tone
* Prayer will be offered in large group before going to individual tables
* People can take their drink &/or appetizers with them to their table

Conversation menu:

* Introductions around tables, as people finish their appetizers

After introductions around the table, let your people know:

* They can engage in answering questions, but if they would rather not, that’s fine.
* It is fine and good to follow up on what someone says (add a comment, ask a clarifying question, this is conversational)
* **Begin discussion of the question on the first card that is on the table**

As that conversation winds down, the facilitator lifts the card. At that time, servers will bring salads.

* **Second question** (discuss over salad)

As that conversation winds down, the facilitator lifts the card.

* **Third question** (discuss over main course)

There may be additional social conversation as the main course is finished; then facilitator lifts the card

* **Fourth question** (discuss over dessert)
* **The bonus/take home question** can be found on a small card under each placemat.

Table discussion leader tips/discussion management:

* The facilitator’s role is to keep the conversation on track, invite further reflection on what is shared, encourage sharing from everyone, and look out for those who might tend to dominate; take time with each question (the hope is to get into good conversations – not just to check off having answered each question)
* A floater will move between kitchen and dining area to monitor progress and communicate between table leaders and servers, checking on when to bring out the next course
* It is okay to go first in answering a question if you want to (to model openness and vulnerability), but you might also want to just throw the questions open to the table to see if someone else jumps in. You can play that by ear.
* It is better to **NOT** “go around the table” in a certain order when answering questions (except for initial introductions upon sitting down). That way no one feels pressured to share, and the conversation has a more natural/random feel.
* Some people might need a little nudging, but mostly let them volunteer to speak. If someone is being really quiet, you might find a way to encourage or draw them out.
* Try to tactfully re-direct if someone is dominating the conversation too much.
* Don’t get too far afield from the question at hand – the questions are timed with the food.
* Try to make sure people get a chance to answer, if they want to, without rushing the conversation.
* To follow up on what people say, you can use phrases like**,** “Tell us more about that.” Or “How did that work out?” etc., to enhance the feeling of engagement.

At about 8:20, a leader will give a “10 minutes left” announcement. Dismissal is at 8:30pm.

The kitchen servers will bus tables.