

CHALLENGE

Hi Parents,

At Dive Student Ministry, we love partnering with you in your teen's spiritual life. I am excited to share with you that our summer trip this year is **Challenge Conference 2026** this coming July. Challenge is the Evangelical Free Church of America's national youth gathering that only happens every other year.

Why Challenge?

There are several reasons why our youth ministry chose Challenge as our summer event:

1. Challenge is gospel-centered. At Dive, we earnestly desire that all our events begin and end with solid Gospel-centered teaching.
2. Challenge equips students to stand confidently in their faith.
3. Challenge provides post-event tools for each student to help them continue to pursue Jesus after the conference.
4. Challenge allows students to honestly evaluate their current walk in their faith and helps them take next steps.
5. Challenge offers space for our youth ministry team to connect with students on a deeper level—helping us, as youth leaders, to continue to minister to each teenager. We love partnering in walking through life with your student.

Challenge blends the best of camp fun, conference worship and teaching, and mission trip service. This blend creates a unique environment that moves beyond the “trip high” to building momentum in students' lives. Students will learn from amazing teachers and in-depth breakout sessions. They'll discover more about world issues through the Reach Global and Apex Experience (one of my personal favorite parts of Challenge!). And they'll serve and worship with thousands of other students from across the country!



Challenge 2026's theme is ***even here**. In the Book of Psalms, one truth resounds again and again: God's *nearness*. In every place, every circumstance and every unfiltered emotion, the psalmist returns to the same reality: **God is with us**.

*"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, **even there** your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." (Ps 139:7-10)*

From desperation to delight, from doubt to devotion, the Psalms show us a loving God who meets His people in every moment. At Challenge 2026, we'll step into this ancient collection of prayers and songs to encounter the same unchanging truth: the loving presence of God transforms every place we stand. And as students return home, they'll carry with them the deep assurance that, no matter where they are or what they face, God is **even here**.

We'll drive to Kansas City and stay in hotels near the convention center where Challenge is held. Additionally, students will have opportunities to serve in the city alongside trusted ministry partners.

Our leadership team hopes you will seriously consider supporting your child in attending Challenge 2026. It is an opportunity I don't want anyone to miss. On the next page, you'll find the most frequently asked questions. If you have any questions about this event, email me at rgamble@crossroadsefc.com. And while you're at it, check out <https://www.challengeconference.org/> to get a glimpse into what this exciting week could mean for your student.

In Him,

Rich Gamble

Associate Pastor | Crossroads Church

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Who is Challenge for?

We're offering Challenge to our current senior high students (students currently in our 9th – 12th grade small groups). In our prior experience, Challenge is too demanding for our younger junior high students as the week is long and the days are packed.

What are the dates of the trip (including travel)?

The conference dates are July 12-18. We'll drive to Kansas City on Sunday, July 12. The conference starts on Monday, July 13. The Conference ends on Friday night, July 17. We'll get a good night's sleep and then return on July 18.

How much does it cost to go?

Our current estimate is \$850-\$1000/person (includes transportation, hotel, conference registration, and 13 meals). This is the closest estimate for cost right now. The largest variables are transportation and hotels. Our goal will be to not go above \$1000, and wherever possible, to bring that price down.

What is the cost breakdown?

- \$360 conference registration (includes 13 meals once the conference starts)
- \$200-270 hotel (assuming 4 people per room)
- \$200-350 transportation
- \$40 Monday activity and lunch prior to conference
- Students will be responsible for purchasing 2-4 meals on the road, conference swag, snacks, etc.

How is this trip paid for?

We can raise support from Crossroads, friends, and family to help us reach our financial goal! In addition to the deposit that you pay when you register, Crossroads will have an offering in the spring to help raise support to send us to Challenge. Last time we went to Challenge, that offering gave each participant about \$525! I can't guarantee that will happen every time. I think it's wise to anticipate that there will be about \$200-\$300 remaining that you will be responsible for. You will have to raise your own money and work hard to contribute to your trip fund. By completing the Challenge application, you agree to be responsible for the remaining balance due by May 17, 2026.

What does a day at Challenge typically look like?

7:00 - 9:00	Breakfast
9:30 - 11:00	Morning Gathering – Worship and teaching, small group breakouts.
11:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 5:00	Afternoon Options – Equipping Labs, Outreach, Service, and Apex Missions Experience
4:45 - 6:30	Dinner
5:30 - 7:00	Prayer Moves
7:00 - 9:00	Evening Gathering – Worship and teaching.
9:00 - 9:45	The Huddle – Small Groups.
9:45-11:00	Evening Options – Worship concerts, outside plaza activities, and more!
12:00	Lights Out in hotel rooms

How do I sign up?

Registration opens in February and will be open through March 1. You'll be able to register via www.crossroadsefc.com/youth or on the Church Center app. A \$100 deposit will be required at the time of registration.

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