



Over 80 Charlotte Metro students and staff experienced the Encounter 2011 conference over Christmas break. The theme elements of rethink, reconnect, and react formed the framework of our Winter Conference for students to “encounter” the Lord in new ways and to engage in His rich, wonderful and eternal plans. Our students returned to campus excited to see what God might do to use them to impact their college this semester as well as the world this summer and beyond...

RETHINK *who God is*

Students sacrificed four days of their break, giving up time with family, friends, and work to grow and be challenged in their faith. They had the opportunity to hear from a variety of Christian leaders and professors from around the country on the greatness of God and His call on our lives to go and make disciples of all nations. Kayla C. from ETSU reflected, “I am definitely challenged to think about how much I have really surrendered to God and how many ‘rights’ I am demanding. God has asked me to yield my right to a relationship, to a long life, to my own time and to the approval of others.



RECONNECT *with God and others*

There were many creative outlets for students to reconnect with God and reflect on what they were learning including: an art expression room, contemplative prayer journey, a prayer room, and writing stations to share their God-stories. Many students took advantage of these activities during their free time and produced powerful works of art and praise. Others enjoyed fellowship in the Global Village learning about the international partnerships in our region or perusing all the great Christian titles at the bookstore.

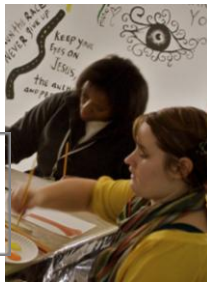
Reconnecting within campus communities was also emphasized. As the conference came to an end students were given the opportunity to share with others from their campus what they learned. An international student from ECU shared, “I am not a Christian. I am from Japan, and in my country we do not care about religion. I came to Encounter and now I have many friends. I feel such a strong connection with you all and I see how great God is. I want to continue to learn more about God and Christianity.” Encounter 2011 culminated on New Year’s Eve with a time of prayer as students prayed to be “the finishers”, the generation that fulfills the Great Commission taking the gospel to ends of the earth.

REACT to life change

On the last day of the conference students were able to put into practice what they were learning through a day of outreach to the Greensboro community. Groups of students handed out care packages of food and conducted community needs surveys. The goal was to meet a physical need, learn about the community needs, and transition to spiritual needs. Overall, students were able to have 125 gospel conversations and saw 26 people surrender their lives to Christ that day. Many were excited and challenged to continue to share their faith back on campus.

Some students were given the opportunity to share the gospel through social media like Facebook. One hundred and fifty students video-recorded their testimony and posted it on Facebook. Samantha S. from UNCG had this to say about the experience, *"This is the first time I've ever shared my faith this way. If each of us who did this only have 10 people view it online, then that means 1,500 people heard the gospel today! I want to use outlets that are important to our culture to share the gospel."*

Art
Expression
Room



Day of
Outreach



BOYS BOX

While Brian was able to invest in our students at Winter Conference, Jen stayed home and enjoyed playing with the boys! It was a nice break from our travels. We loved spending Thanksgiving in PA (which Jen's family turned into "Thanksmas" so we could celebrate both holidays together) and Christmas in Columbia. Jack's birthday was the first week of January – we cannot believe he's five already. Somehow he became a "kid" overnight! Sam's 3rd birthday is coming up in the beginning of February – he is still silly and imaginative. As I'm writing this he wants me to be a crocodile so he and "pirate Jack" can fight me with their blow-up pirate swords ☺ Josh is growing like crazy – and smiling and "talking"!



Thank you so much for your partnership in the gospel! Your prayers and support make it possible for students to be taught from the Word, trained in sharing their faith, and equipped to serve the Lord with confidence back on campus!