



Youth Conversation Guide

Tuesday, October 23, 2018



on the table
your voice matters.

Community
Foundation
of the Chattahoochee Valley



Thank you for participating in *On the Table!*

Thank you for participating in *On the Table!* On a single day, Tuesday, October 23, you and your students will be part of an exciting initiative to discuss not only what's great about our community, but also ways to make it even better — more sustainable, just, safe, strong and vibrant. Through *On the Table*, your students will join thousands of others throughout the Chattahoochee Valley area who are coming together around tables.

On the Table is an initiative that invites Chattahoochee Valley residents from diverse backgrounds, neighborhoods and perspectives to gather over mealtime conversations to build personal connections and explore how we can work together to make our communities stronger. When we talk about our experiences and hear those of others, we connect and learn about what matters to all of us.

Young people are our future and their voices need to be part of these conversations. Engaging your students and encouraging them to share their views, values and voices in this discussion only strengthens our community.

On the Table is an excellent learning opportunity and can help your students:

- make a difference in their community or for the causes they care about.
- become more emotionally connected to their community.
- strengthen their ability to actively listen, think critically and speak thoughtfully.
- have fun and learn together.

We appreciate your facilitation and support in this important initiative!



Planning Your *On the Table* Conversation



Before Your Conversation

Be sure to pick up a host toolkit — a tote bag containing the Conversation Guide, note booklets, ‘Your Voice Matters’ buttons, a “Take Action Worksheet,” and a fun prop for pictures.

There is no one way to host an *On the Table* conversation. Below are some ideas to help you get started, but do not feel constricted by these options. We encourage you to customize your *On the Table* experience to best suit the individual needs of your school or community. The goal is for young people to gather and discuss ideas to improve their schools, neighborhoods and city and think about ways they can act to make it real.

- Host an *On the Table* conversation within your class.
- Partner with another teacher(s) at your school to host *On the Table* conversations across classrooms or grade levels.
- Invite community members (parents, local business people, clergy, community-based organizations, your city council member, etc.) to join your students for an *On the Table* conversation.
- Organize some after-school clubs to participate in an *On the Table* conversation together (e.g., get the basketball team talking with the drama club).
- Host a schoolwide *On the Table* conversation in the lunchroom, over breakfast, lunch or after school.

After Your Conversation

In today’s world, this act of coming together has never been more important. Talking — and listening — to our neighbors is an important first step toward creating a more collaborative and connected community. This year, a short, five-question youth survey will be available for those who take part in *On the Table* conversations. Students whose parents have not opted out of the opportunity will be given a postcard with a link to the survey following their discussions. An analysis of all youth survey responses will be included in a section of the post-event report which will highlight conversation themes and outcomes from *On the Table*. Student feedback and reflections are an important part of *On the Table*. Whether your students take the online survey or not, we encourage you to allow time for students to process their experience either as a group or individually.

For more information on the Youth Survey, email us at OnTheTableChatt@cfcv.com or call 706-718-9565.

For more ideas about hosting your *On the Table* event, including a “Take Action Worksheet” and other resources, visit OnTheTableChatt.com

Youth Conversation Lesson

Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to facilitate a group discussion where students come together to talk about the issues they care about and brainstorm ideas they think have the most potential to bring about change in our community.

Objectives

- Reflect on positive work occurring in their community (i.e., school, neighborhood or city).
- Identify work that still needs to be done.
- Discuss ways in which youth can make a difference.
- Collaborate with peers in a civil discourse.

Tools

- Facilitator Guidelines (page five)
- Conversation Starters (page five)
- Youth Host Guide (page six)
- Note-taking template (page seven)

Preparation

Have students sit at tables that seat 8-10 people. Depending on the composition of your group, we recommend mixing up ages, grade levels and schools (if applicable). In other words, to the greatest extent possible, try to get youth talking with other youth they don't normally get a chance to talk with. We also recommend trying to have at least one adult at each table, but DO NOT require that the adult act as the facilitator. Instead, the adult can act as a participant at the table with a student facilitator. You can prep students to facilitate discussions prior to the *On the Table* event. Use the Facilitator Guidelines and Conversation Starters on page five to help prepare your students.

Welcome and Introductions

Welcome everyone and explain that they will be participating in a momentous event where people from across the Chattahoochee Valley are meeting today as part of *On the Table*, sponsored by Community Foundation of

the Chattahoochee Valley. Today they're part of thousands coming together around tables just like yours to share ideas for moving our community forward. Explain that the hope is that these conversations will generate new ideas, inspire bold solutions and cultivate relationships and collaborations that strengthen our neighborhoods, communities and lives. Explain that rarely are youth given this opportunity.

Before: Assigning Roles

Have each group assign a note taker, a youth host, a timekeeper and a presenter.

During:

On the Table Conversations

Using the conversation starters, the youth host should guide a conversation, while the note takers capture the main ideas of the discussion, and the timekeepers monitor the clock.

After: Next Steps

- Allow enough time for groups to begin to think about and discuss actions they could take to address some of the issues they raised in their discussions.
- Each student presenter (one per group) shares the main ideas from his or her group discussion.
- Students whose parents did not opt out of their participation in the youth survey should be given a postcard that includes a link to the youth survey. These can be picked up from the Community Foundation or MCSD office.
- Ask students to join the *On the Table* discussion online using the hashtag #ChattChatYouth on Facebook and Instagram. If your school has a policy against using social media during school hours, encourage your students to join the conversation at home.
- Following *On the Table*, please take time to complete a short survey. Your responses will help us all better understand the needs and passions of your students – and how we will work more effectively to hear their voices in the community.

Roles for Your *On the Table* Event

Youth Host

- Create a friendly and welcoming environment.
- Keep the group focused and on task.
- Make sure everyone is participating and has time to talk while also respecting those students that may choose not to share.
- Make sure no single student is dominating the conversation.
- Be a participating member of the group.

Note Taker

- Capture the main ideas suggested by members of your group.
- Complete the note-taking sheet on page seven.
- Be a participating member of the group.

Timekeeper

- Monitor the clock.
- Keep the group focused and on task.
- Be a participating member of the group.

Presenter

- Discuss with your group to select the main ideas to share with the class.
- When presenting, be sure to state the issue your group focused on first, followed by the solution(s) your group identified.
- Be a participating member of the group



Conversation Starters

To help get the conversations started, we've compiled a list of sample conversation prompts, which are also included on the Youth Host Guide (page six). There's no need to start with the first question or to take them in order.

- After welcoming everyone, go around the table and have participants introduce themselves and share their favorite thing about their community.
- Describe a strong, well-functioning school, neighborhood or community. What are the qualities and characteristics? What makes it strong?
- What is our city doing well?
- What is the most important issue facing our community?
- What can we each do to make our school, neighborhood or city better?
- Let's choose an issue affecting our community and talk more specifically about how we'd address it.

Youth Host Guide

Your voice matters! At the Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley, we believe when we come together and learn from each other, we have the power to make an impact on our community and our future. We also know big ideas can spring from small conversations and today, thousands of people are coming together around tables just like yours to identify ways we can make our community even better.

As a host, you have an important role. Your job is to keep the group focused on the conversation at hand, ensure every that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate and make sure that no one person dominates the conversation. Before you begin, be sure your group has assigned a note keeper, a time keeper and a presenter.

Leading Your Table

1. Welcome everyone and invite each person to introduce himself or herself.
2. You group may have already identified a specific topic for your conversation. If not, you can use any of the sample questions below to help get your conversation started.
 - What are the qualities and characteristics of a strong, well-functioning community or school? What makes it strong? What is our city doing well?
 - What is the most important issue facing our community?
 - What can we each do to make our school, neighborhood or city better?
 - Let's choose an issue affecting our community and talk more specifically about how we'd address it.
3. If your table will be presenting to a larger group, ask the presenter in your group to lead the group in identifying the main ideas to share.

After Your Conversation/Next Steps

Continue the Conversation on Social Media! Use the hashtag #ChattChatYouth to share photos, ideas and see what other people are saying about *On the Table*.





Jot Down Your Notes

Important issues discussed at your table

Notes:

What are your group's big ideas?



The Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley, Inc., is one of 10 community foundations across the U.S. participating in *On the Table*, a national initiative funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation following a successful pilot in 2017. *On the Table* replicates an annual civic engagement initiative of the same name developed by The Chicago Community Trust in 2014. Support for *On the Table* advances Knight Foundation’s work to help cities attract and keep talented people, expand economic opportunity, and create a culture of civic engagement. Knight Foundation believes that successful communities are equitable, inclusive and participatory. Additional support for the local project is being provided from the Community Foundation’s Community Endowment Funds. For more, contact the Community Foundation at 706-320-0027 or visit cfcv.com.



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