



# What is the Student Leadership Conference?

A Quick Guide to SLC for Students and Chaperones

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*We are excited to have you joining us for SLC this year! In order to help you prepare for this unique event, it might be helpful for you to know ahead of time what SLC is like. So here are a few phrases to describe SLC, and an explanation of the different elements of the SLC program with some ideas about how you can make the most of this unique event.*

## **SLC is...**

### ***Unified in Diversity.***

SLC typically has more than 40 schools participating from over 15 different countries. In addition to this cultural diversity, SLC participants also come from a variety of different theological/denominational traditions. SLC may not reinforce certain theological or lifestyle perspectives from your culture or denomination. However, we are united in our love for Jesus as our only Lord and Savior, and our desire to see lost people come to Him. It is important that we treat each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and are prepared to discuss any differences graciously in a spirit of openness and humility.

### ***Focused on Learning and Growth.***

While SLC is a lot of fun, the real value is found in what the participants learn and take back to their schools in knowledge, skills and character. The different program elements (which you can read more about below) are all designed to promote this kind of learning and growth. It is important that we come prepared to be challenged, to think deeply, and to ask difficult questions.

### ***Short and Intense.***

The SLC program begins on Wednesday evening and concludes late Friday night. The program is kept this short in order to minimize the disruption to your regular school program, and to keep costs down. This means that we pack a lot into the short time! Come prepared to make the most of the time. It is likely that you will feel tired at times, and perhaps be tempted to “check out” emotionally. Schedule time for further processing/debriefing and relaxing after SLC, so that you can fully engage during the event.

### ***Bigger than You and Your School.***

SLC provides a great opportunity to find out what God is doing through Christian schools in other parts of the world, and to be part of that through prayer, sharing words of encouragement, and developing partnerships. While the ACSI Europe team wishes to serve you and your school, we are at the same time seeking to do the same for other schools who may have quite different needs. Please be flexible and gracious if not everything is to your liking and choose to reach out to those whose needs you can help to meet.

### ***More than an Event.***

SLC does not begin when you arrive and end when you leave. Developing your leadership character and skills is a long-term process. Spend some time in preparation, both personally and with your school group, before you come to SLC. Plan to spend some time after SLC reflecting on what you have learned and how you will apply it, as well as implementing your action plan with your school group. Leadership growth always happens in a community with others!

*We are looking forward to serving you, and serving with you, at SLC!*

The ACSI Europe Team.

# Elements of the SLC Program

## General Sessions

(Wednesday evening, Thursday Morning, Thursday Evening and Friday Morning)

These general sessions involve everybody coming together for a time of worship through singing and to hear a plenary talk. Since we believe that God's Word speaks to us and is our guide for everything we do, these talks are grounded in Scripture, but will also have strong applications to leadership.

In order to make the most of these sessions:

- Read the Scripture passages ahead of time. The Bible references will be posted in the online learning environment that you will have access to a week before SLC. If English is not the language you usually read the Bible in, read the passage in an English translation as well as in your own language so that you are familiar with the vocabulary. Bring your Bible to the session.
- Pray for the speakers, that they will faithfully declare God's Word to us. Pray for yourself and other participants, that God would move and change us.
- Listen attentively and openly. You may not agree with everything the speaker says, but allow God to challenge your thinking, feeling and acting. It is important to discuss any questions you have.
- Take notes during the sessions. An outline will be printed in the conference book, along with space for taking notes. Write down ideas that you want to remember or think through more, and questions you want to ask your teachers or parents.

## Discussion Groups

(Immediately following each general session)

You will be assigned to a discussion group that will include 7 or 8 other students from different cultures and schools, facilitated by a fellow student. You will have one hour after each session to share with each other what you learned during the session and how God is speaking to you.

In order to make the most of discussion group times:

- Read the discussion questions ahead of time and check that you understand the English vocabulary. Discussion questions will be posted in the online learning environment before the conference, and printed in the conference booklet.
- Be at all discussion group sessions and use all of your time.
- Be willing to be uncomfortable. If you love to talk - listen! If you are shy - talk!
- Don't assume you have the only answer OR that your idea is not important. The purpose of the group is to share ideas and learn from each other, not to get a "correct" answer. It is OK to have a different opinion than others. Ask questions to help you understand what they are saying and why.
- Have fun! This is a unique opportunity to build friendships with others from around the world.

*If you would like to be a discussion group leader...*

- Discuss this with your chaperone. If they agree, they will communicate this to the ACSI Europe team.
- Be aware that facilitating a discussion is a complex task. If you are not confident with English, this is probably not a good role for you.
- You will need to participate in an online preparation course beginning in August. Please make sure that your chaperone provides us with an email address that you will access during the summer holidays so that you can get started on this before returning to school.
- If you are not chosen to lead a discussion group, please come to SLC willing to exercise leadership by being an active participant during discussion times.

## **Workshops**

(Thursday morning, Thursday afternoon, Friday morning)

Workshops are an opportunity to explore a practical issue related to leadership with a group of students who are also interested in the topic, under the direction of an experienced chaperone. You will choose a different workshop for each of the three sessions. Workshops are interactive, and include time for you to ask questions.

In order to make the most of workshops:

- Read through the list of workshop options that will be provided to you 2 weeks before SLC. Prayerfully consider which topics will be most relevant to you and your growth as a leader. Discuss your choices with your school group, so that you can plan to attend different workshops and share what you have learned with each other later.
- Be willing to ask questions when you don't understand.
- Use the opportunity to get to know a chaperone from a different school and learn as much as possible from them. This increases your network of positive adult influences in your life.
- Think about how this teaching or idea applies to your life and circumstances. Use the new information soon so that you will remember it by teaching someone else or applying it to something you face now.

## **School Debriefing Time**

(Wednesday evening, Thursday evening, Friday afternoon)

Debriefing time is important time together with your school group designed to share what you have learned during the day, pray with and for each other, and develop your school action plan. These times will be led by your chaperone.

In order to make the most of debriefing times:

- Be willing to share openly about how God is speaking to you through SLC. Be honest about your joys and struggles.
- Listen carefully to what your peers have to say. Ask questions to show your interest in their ideas and get a better understanding of what is important to them.
- Pray for each member of your group individually, and for your group as a whole.
- Be courageous with your action plan. Be willing to try something that is risky and requires a lot of effort. Try to think “outside the box” (beyond what is normally done in your school).

## **Interaction Time**

(All meal times, Thursday afternoon, Friday afternoon)

Interaction time is important for developing new friendships at SLC. This happens mostly in an unscheduled way in between other elements of the program. Some fun activities will be organized by chaperones, but the rest is up to you!

In order to make the most of interaction times:

- Be inviting and inclusive. Avoid sitting only with your friends at meal times, or hanging out only with your friends between sessions. Reach out to others who seem to be alone and invite them to join you.
- Look for members of your discussion group, or those you have met in workshops. Take some time to get to know them better. Ask questions about their school, their church and their country.
- *If English is your first language:* Be patient! Let those who are less confident with English have space to find the words they need.
- *If English is not your first language:* Be brave! Your English expression does not need to be perfect for your new friends to understand what you are trying to say.