



WISCONSIN  
CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

## Opening Doors at Knock Knock

by Lisa Hart

The weekend before Thanksgiving was an exciting and busy time. For many people in our congregations, it was the opening weekend of deer hunting. For 67 middle school youth and their adult leaders, it was the Knock Knock Retreat. This retreat is sponsored by the Conference Youth Ministry Team (CYMT) and is held at Pilgrim Center each November.

Knock Knock is designed to bring middle school youth together to experience the wider church while strengthening the bonds they have with the other youth and adult leaders from their congregation. During their time at Knock Knock, participants moved through five “Doors” (workshops) that focused on topics that affect middle school youth...Family, Friends, Hurt, Influence and Fun ‘n Games. In each workshop, they were able to explore the ways in which their faith can play a role in these areas of their lives.

*“The Doors (workshops) were very meaningful and I think I can use what I learned about my faith.” (youth participant)*

*“I liked the Doors and being able to relate to the drama team members.” (youth participant)*

One of the highlights for youth participants was the Drama Team. This team consisted of high school youth who partnered with an adult to lead the “Doors.” They were able to connect with the middle school youth and share experiences in a way that adults could not. The Drama Team also took leadership in “get to know you” games, as well as improv games. Saturday evening was filled with lots of laughter when the team put on an improv show, which included several of the middle school youth.

*“I liked how the drama team members were also teenagers and they have real life experience.” (youth participant)*

The music and worship leadership of [Bryan Sirchio](#) was also a highlight. For many years, Bryan has been a part of this retreat and has written numerous songs specifically for Knock Knock. His ability to connect the themes of the weekend with the lives of the

youth and the faith journey they are on has been invaluable. The worship was, as always, interactive, inclusive and very meaningful. During worship we also collected an offering of \$250, which we asked Bryan to use to support the ministry of [Haiti Allies](#).

This retreat was not only meaningful for the youth, but for their adult leaders, as well. It was an opportunity for adults to develop a deeper relationship with the youth they brought. Adults were given a glimpse into the lives of their youth, had the opportunity to share some of their experiences from their middle school years, and even reflect on their life and faith journey now.

*“The Doors gave me things to reflect on and apply to my life.” (adult participant)*

*“The Doors gave the youth a chance to share their stories.” (adult participant)*

Looking ahead...the high school youth and their adult leaders have the Jesus Core Retreat January 9–11 at Pilgrim Center. This retreat is also sponsored by CYMT. It is a time for high school youth (individuals or groups) to come together, reflect on their faith journeys, have time for silence and meditation, rest and renew. The weekend is also filled with a lot of fun! Music and worship leadership is provided by [Andra Moran](#). We hope to see you and your youth there!