

Session 3 Keynote: AI & Ministry: Tool or Threat?

Share a story or use the following prompt questions.

“How many of you have used AI before?”

“How many of you are slightly nervous about it?”

“How many of you are intimidated by it?”

AI is a tool that can either distract from authentic ministry or strengthen it. The difference depends on whether we use it to replace relationships or support relationships.

AI is already shaping the world teenagers live in:

school

social media

entertainment

communication

relationships

even their faith

The question is not whether AI will impact ministry.

The question is, Will the Church learn how to use it wisely?

What AI Changes for Ministry

Teens already use AI for:

homework

advice

content creation

emotional support

entertainment

searching spiritual questions

For many teens, AI is becoming the first place they go with questions.

That means that those in ministry can no longer assume:

we are the primary voice

we are the first source of answers

we automatically have attention

AI creates both opportunity and risk.

Some opportunities are:

Faster preparation

Better organization

Creative brainstorming

Translation/accessibility

More time for relationships

Risks are:

Laziness

Inauthenticity

Misinformation

Replacing prayer with productivity

Losing the relational and human element of ministry

The world now assumes that there is nothing AI cannot do, but in reality there are many things that it is limited for doing.

First and foremost, AI can generate content, but it cannot replace encounter.

AI cannot:

love a teenager

sit beside someone in grief

pray with authentic faith

discern the Holy Spirit

offer the sacraments

build true Christian friendship

model holiness

Throughout history, the Church has always adapted to new technology; the printing press, radio, television, internet, social media.

But technology becomes dangerous when it replaces presence instead of supporting it.

The reality is, teenagers are not ultimately searching for better content. They are searching for authentic witnesses.

Healthy Boundaries for Using AI

So, knowing this, here are some guidelines for using AI within ministry.

#1: Don't Fake Authenticity

Don't use AI to:

pretend to be spiritually deeper than you are

automate personal relationships
replace real pastoral care

Teens can sense what is fake.

#2: Pray Before Prompting

Don't let AI become your first source instead of the Holy Spirit.

Before planning:

pray first

reflect first

discern first

Then use tools wisely.

#3: Use AI to Support Ministry, Not Replace It

If AI saves you time...

use that time for:

conversations

discipleship

prayer

listening

mentoring

The goal of ministry is not efficiency. It's transformation.

Closing

As I mentioned before, AI is a tool that can either distract from authentic ministry or strengthen it. The difference depends on whether we use it to replace relationships or support relationships.

Artificial intelligence may shape the future, but only authentic disciples can lead people to Jesus.

Close in prayer.