



BEFORE YOU CONNECT!

The Huether Lasallian Conference provides an opportunity for educators in the Lasallian Region of North America (RELAN) and beyond to come together to explore educational and spiritual issues of special interest and importance. In alignment with this year's conference theme, "Great Things are Possible: Our Lasallian Mission Reimagined and Renewed," the Office for Lasallian Education at Christian Brothers Conference, in consultation with the Huether planning committee and other stakeholders, has reimagined this year's conference and pivoted to a totally virtual gathering, the first in the history of the Huether Lasallian Conference! Through keynote addresses, focused breakout sessions, panel presentation and casa conversations, participants will explore how Lasallians continue putting creative energy and attention to those entrusted to our care, and as we are inspired by the story of Joseph, respond to challenges posed to the world today.

PREPARING FOR A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

At this point, many of us have attended a webinar, meeting or professional development opportunity online. To assist you in preparing for Huether, we have collected the following 11 tips from blueskyelearn.com, gps.com and missiontolearn.com to ensure a wonderful experience in November.

1. Have a Dedicated Space

You may already have one if you've been working remotely, but if not, get ready to hunker down for a few days. Make sure your space is quiet and comfortable so you can focus and not feel compelled to get up and move around during a session. When you're at a conference in person, you attend sessions at a dedicated location and dedicated room, leaving (most) of the distractions behind. Virtual should be no different.

2. Eliminate Distractions

Homes and offices often teem with distractions fighting for our attention, so you need to prioritize the time you've set aside for a virtual conference. The following tips should help:

- Start by finding a quiet, comfortable space in which you can set up your computer.
- Tell anyone who might be tempted to call, text or drop by that you're busy with a commitment that requires your full attention.
- Grab some coffee, water and a snack. Preplan lunch and other snacks.
- Set any important tools you may need nearby (e.g., laptop charger, earbuds, phone, notepad, pen, etc.).
- Shut the door (depending on who's around, you may need to add a "Do Not Disturb" sign).
- Close unrelated tabs and windows on your computer.
- Turn off notifications on your phone and computer.
- If needed, create alerts to remind yourself of important sessions.

- Take advantage of scheduled breaks during the conference to use the bathroom, have lunch, etc.

3. Dress the Part

Okay, maybe you don't have to put on full conference garb, but don't use the virtual conference as an excuse to lounge around in pajamas all day. Wearing real clothes will help you feel more productive and more present during the virtual conference, instead of on your way to take a nap.

4. Go as a Group

If you can, attend—and *attend to*—the conference with your colleagues. These days, you may not be able to be in the same room physically with these people, but you can still all agree to attend some or all of the same sessions, and you can use “back channels” like text messaging, Slack or a Twitter chat to communicate with each other during and between sessions.

Having others involved in your conference experience can help boost your motivation, increase your attention and provide some accountability for learning. Also, consider convening as a group (e.g., by Zoom or Skype) at the end of each conference day and/or after the event to share your experience with the event and key takeaways. Making this kind of effort can go a long way toward reinforcing learning and ensuring that you actually put what you learned at the conference to work.

5. Network!

One of the reasons we love attending conferences is connecting with colleagues we don't often get to see. You can still connect with colleagues throughout this event through chats, breakouts and special events. Make sure you take advantage of the opportunities to connect and have fun throughout the event.

6. Visit the Exhibit Hall

Part of the conference experience is roaming the exhibit halls. Not only do sponsors provide valuable resources and tools to support us as educators, but they help make these events possible. Be sure to check out the exhibit hall booths, connect with representatives and find out what new and exciting opportunities our sponsors and exhibitors have to offer!

7. Stay Active on Social Media

Going along with networking, following the conference hashtag on social media is another way to interact with attendees and presenters. Get involved in discussions or keep an eye on them as the day goes on to pick up any great information shared that may have not been shared during a session. Use #Huether2020 to follow along at this conference.

8. Take Breaks

As organizations become more experienced with virtual conferences, many have started taking a different approach by shortening some sessions, shortening some days or at a minimum making sure

they provide enough breaks for you to stand up, stretch, get some food, check your email and be able to be present during session time. So, make sure you do all of those things! If you sit down all day and barely eat, you'll be burned out after day one!

9. Setup an Out of Office Responder

If you were attending a conference in-person, you'd most likely have some sort of out of office email response set up. Why do anything differently for a virtual conference? If you have an out of office email up you'll feel better about not checking your email every five minutes and those who are emailing you will know that your response may be delayed.

10. Catch it On Demand

No matter the length or style of the virtual conference you're attending, there is a good chance you won't be able to attend all of the sessions you'd like. We strongly recommend that you review the entire program and star any sessions you are interested in attending. Registered attendees will be able to access recorded sessions for 60 days after the conference.

11. Schedule Replays and Reviews

One of the big benefits of virtual conferences is that most sessions are recorded. That means you can access sessions you weren't able to attend live, and it means you can review sessions you were able to attend live. Following the conference, be sure to log in to access the recordings and continue your learning post-Huether. The key to making that happen is simple: ***schedule it***. Don't just assume you will make time at some point, actually make multiple appointments with yourself—or, possibly your group of co-attendees (see Go as a Group above)—to play recordings, reflect on them and identify ways to put key takeaways into action. As a reminder, you will have access to recorded general and breakout sessions for 60 days following Huether.

RECORDINGS/SCREENSHOTS

Presentations may be recorded and/or screenshots may be produced throughout conference sessions. Additionally, screenshots may be posted on Christian Brothers Conference social media channels, [@Lasallian_RELAN on Twitter](#) and [@LasallianRELAN on Facebook](#). By registering for the Huether Conference, I acknowledge consent for screenshots to be posted and shared on social media.