

## Fort Lauderdale, FL Youth Ministries started a new youth group called SWITCH

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The Florida Youth Ministry started a new youth group called SWITCH (Shining with Identity, Truth, Character, and Heart) for the new academic year, leading to many new people attending the first events of the year.

“It was perfect to have this month’s theme as Connect, because we were able to incorporate it into the new start,” said staff member Leilani Owens. “Participants were able to get to know one another, connect with new friends, meet someone new, and most importantly, were able to reach a deeper level of connection that they may not do in their daily lives.”

The night of their first event began with light-hearted activities that were fun and energizing. They also got to learn each others’ names through a fun activity called the Blanket Game, where a blanket creates a wall between two teams, and a representative from each team must try to say the other person’s name first once the blanket comes down.

Later on in the evening, the staff implemented activities provided on the Youth Ministry website to help create a space where participants can connect on a deeper level. They were able to have participants open up and share with one another on a level they have never reached before. They shared about their insecurities, barriers blocking them from being their true selves, and reflections on how people view them versus how they view themselves. They were able to discuss how connection with others is important, and how to begin with connecting to and reflecting upon themselves daily.

“It was amazing to see how willing they were to share and become vulnerable and honest with one another,” said Leilani. “Getting them together and starting our youth group for the year gave them a place to not only discover things about themselves and other people, but also to feel a sense of belonging.”