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Top 14 Conference Tips!

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Here are some tips learned from our years of attending MACHE conferences. Some of these are probably going to be obvious, some are meant for fun and hopefully you'll find several helpful!

Conference tips:

1. Prepare a list of the resources you want to purchase and review at the conference. This will help you stay on track amidst the 200+ exhibit booths. For replacement resources, be sure to note the volume and edition numbers you need. If you make the list of required items detailed enough, a willing husband may be able to "hunt" them down by himself in the exhibit hall.
2. Drink lots of water to help stay hydrated.
3. Before leaving home, browse through your books and resources and create a mental inventory of what you own. (Of course a physical inventory is even better.) This will help equip you for both the exhibit hall and the used curriculum area.
4. If you start feeling overwhelmed from the volume of great ideas and competent presenters, take a sanity break. Get refreshed from a little exercise and fresh air, perhaps in conversation with a friend or in prayer.
5. Create a list of questions and ideas you want to investigate at the conference. Take advantage of Q&A time at sessions. Talk with experienced home schoolers at the MACHE Homeschool Help booth. If attending with a spouse, use available moments to share ideas and dreams and to "re-group" for the remainder of the school year.
6. Stop and say a word of thanks to session hosts. Consider volunteering to be one yourself next year and receive free conference admission.
7. Investigate Support Group or Co-op opportunities near your home at the MACHE Support Group booth. Volunteers are there to help and you'll find listings by county with specific information about each support group and co-op.
8. Layer or wear clothing that makes it easy to adjust to fluctuating temperatures in conference rooms.
9. Decide which sessions to attend before you get to the conference. There are over a hundred sessions to choose from. The Conference Edition of *The Paper MACHE*, December 2012/January 2012, lists all of the sessions with descriptions. As a couple, we use our drive time to the conference to decide how we will "divide and conquer". Note: You may need to do this before leaving for the conference if you only want to print the handouts for the sessions you plan to attend.
10. Plan to purchase CDs/MP3's of sessions that you find particularly motivating, that others highly recommend or those that sound great but that you can't get to.
11. We've found that a great time to hit the Exhibit Hall is immediately when the doors open Friday morning. With lower traffic and well-stocked exhibitor shelves you can rapidly acquire that list of "staples", leaving more time later in the conference to browse for new materials and those recommended by speakers. We bring an extra backpack specifically for Friday morning to enable a trip back to a car or hotel with purchases, a quick deposit, and time to make it back for the first session.
12. Find and thank a MACHE volunteer for their work to make the conference possible!
13. Review the "Getting the Most Out of Your Homeschool Conference" resource at www.mache.org.  Click on Resources and enter the title in the search box.
14. Download the workshop handouts from www.mache.org and print them before leaving home. (Yes, this is a repeat.)

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Source URL (retrieved on 06/18/2013 - 4:18pm): <http://www.mache.org/blog/1727/03-19-2012/top-14-conference-tips>