

Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International Exploration of The Ark as Host Site for CPFI Annual Conference

April 14, 2025

Introduction

Three members of the Board of Directors (BOD) explored [“The Ark Encounter”](#) as a possible host site for a future CPFI Annual Conference. These members visited The Ark on December 19, 2024 and were hosted by AIG President Joe Boone as well as Event Sales Representative, Danny Donato and Hampton Inn Director of Sales, Sheena Smith. These three BOD members were Keith Allhands, Jill Boone, and Jeff Bates. Keith, Jill, and Jeff all live reasonably close to The Ark and were encouraged to explore this option by CPFI President, Jeff Copeland.

One of the primary reasons for considering The Ark was because over the last two years, the CPFI Annual Conference has reached maximum capacity before the registration deadline. Organization membership continues to expand subsequently leading to increased interest in the Annual Conference. Recent financial gifts to CPFI have been provided with a goal of expanding the impact on the pharmacy world through expanded growth and influence on members through equipping.

The Visit: Hotel

The exploration began with an extensive tour of the [Hampton Inn](#) which is adjacent to The Ark (literally on a corner of the property) and is a ten minute walk to the conference facilities. The hotel would serve as the primary housing arrangement for conference attendees. This hotel has capacity for up to 100 rooms, allowing for about 250 CPFI attendees.



The Hampton Inn has a conference room available which has a posted maximum capacity of 37 people. This conference room would be complimentary for our group and would likely serve well for the student retreat and/or BOD meeting(s).

This hotel also has an outdoor patio area with a fire pit as well as an overflow into the parking lot and grass

yard which would serve well for some fellowship events, perhaps including the singing-under-the-stars time of worship.



Adjacent to the outdoor patio area is a heated pool that is available for all hotel guests.

Additionally, exercise equipment is also available to hotel guests as well.



Complimentary breakfast is included for all Hampton Inn guests. The seating area for breakfast is posted to seat 95 individuals at any given time. The hotel also allows guests to take their breakfast outside to the patio as well. Clearly, CPFI attendees will come and go from that space, so it seems that seating for all attendees at the same time is likely unnecessary.

Cost for the rooms is about \$200/room/night (based on current costs). The Hampton Inn is currently willing to reserve 80 rooms for our event; additional rooms may be necessary, however. Negotiation regarding rates and number of rooms is likely going to be necessary. Parking at the Hampton Inn is complimentary for hotel guests.



The Visit: Getting from the Hotel to the Park

Because of extraordinary security, The Ark can only be accessed via their shuttle buses. Those entering The Ark must go through security screening each time they enter the park. This requires all CPFI Conference attendees to navigate a large parking lot, entering through the security gates and then onto the provided shuttle buses.

Moving to and from The Ark from the Hampton Inn will require a 10 minute walk. A golf cart may be needed for those who struggle with the walk from the Hampton Inn to The Ark in the morning and back in the evening (which will be available from the park or hotel). Attendees who stay at the Hampton Inn and are conference registrants will be allowed to enter The Ark property as often as they wish.

The Visit: Conference Space

Attendees will enter The Ark via the Welcome Center. Walking from the Welcome Center to the conference center is a very short, reasonable walk with Ark employees guiding guests to the correct location. The Ark itself is a separate building from the conference center but all of these facilities are easily accessible for attendees.



The Conference Space that would be provided for CPFI is located on the lower level of the conference center where ample room is provided. The conference center will set up the room as desired with either 8-person round tables or 6 person rectangular tables (or both). Seating for up to 250 attendees (or more) is included.

There will be a stage in the front of the room. Projection (with screens) and sound equipment is complimentary. Set up for musical instruments and vocal microphones is also complimentary. An audio/visual technician would be provided as part of the conference fee as well. The potential to record



(video or audio) is a simple add on. Video projection/streaming is available at a reasonable price (details would be estimated at a later date.) Meals (lunch and dinner) would be served in the same/adjacent room as the conference room. Menus were provided for a food bar (tacos, hamburgers, baked potatoes, etc.) and can be reviewed separately. Current pricing for these approaches is currently around \$14 to \$19 per person per meal. The Friday night cookout can be provided outside the conference center in a picnic area and would have a similar feel/price as meals inside.

An all-you-can-eat buffet restaurant ([Emzara's](#)) is also available a short walk from the conference center. This restaurant has an upstairs “private dining room” which could be reserved for our group should that be desired. The cost for an adult meal is currently \$19.99. Teens and children are less. (See contemporary pricing below)

Emzara's Buffet

Adjacent to the Ark, the two-story, themed Emzara's Buffet is an award-winning restaurant with a variety of delicious entrées, salads, and desserts (including food-allergy sensitive options). There are even kid-friendly options!

Hours

Monday–Saturday	11 a.m.–6 p.m.
Sunday	Closed

Prices

Adult and Youth (ages 11–59)	\$19.99
Senior (age 60+)	\$16.99
Child (ages 5–10)	\$9.99
4 and Under (ages 0–4)	Free



Hosting

the awards banquet could be held in the conference room with a nicer meal available – pricing is available for a variety of food options.

An onsite ice cream shop is available for the traditional ice cream social. The surrounding space is very conducive to fellowship with plenty of room for kids to play in the exceptional playground area. All Ark Encounter guests except for CPFI attendees will have left the premises when the Ice Cream Social takes place.

One complimentary keynote session would be provided by [AIG: Ken Ham \(founder\)](#) entitled “Divided Nation, Culture in Chaos”. This session will be held upstairs in AIG’s main (massive) theater. CPFI will be given priority seating near the front and will have an opportunity to meet with Dr. Ham after the session.

Guests who do not stay at the Hampton Inn will need to park in The Ark parking lot. Cost will be \$15/day.



Three day (come and go) passes to The Ark Encounter are additional and are priced as follows:

- \$124.99 (Adults 18-59)
- \$114.99 (Seniors 60+)
- \$69.99 (Youth 11-17)
- FREE (Kids 10 & under)

Additional fees can be explored which allow guests to visit both The Ark and [The Creation Museum](#) (about 43 miles away).

Numerous [family-friendly programs](#) are offered throughout the day. There is an [onsite zoo](#) available as part of the park entry. The exact programming, of course, will vary before May of 2027. Further, there are numerous other pay-as-you go activities such as a [carousel](#), [zip-line](#), [camel riding](#), [virtual reality experience](#), etc.

Total cost to rent the conference space would be \$4,050. Food and Ark Encounter passes (see above) are of course, added to that price.

Recommendations

[Why should CPFI hold the conference to the Ark?](#) Though the schedule would look very, very similar to previous years, attendees would notice that the CPFI conference would have a different feel and experience if held at The Ark. First, The Ark provides more conference, congregating space than we have had in recent memory. The conference room, hallway, bathroom, and eating (lunch and dinner) would all be in the same vicinity. The stated goal of growing CPFI could be accomplished at this venue.

Second, The Ark would equip CPFI attendees to “be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15). Attendees could visit The Ark and learn together. Most all would stand in awe when considering the Creator who made Noah’s story possible. Seeing how [God worked through Noah](#) will help attendees see Jesus’ redemptive work today. The Ark Encounter intentionally focuses on bringing Genesis to life – highlighting how the Gospel is real in today’s world.

The Ark Experience pushes every visitor to consider God’s creation and His love for us. The Ark is an exact replica of the boat that Noah made in Genesis – nearly every program, experience, ... right down to the items in the gift shop, push visitors to consider God. CPFI programming would be complimentary in that regard. Holding the conference at the Ark would also allow attendees to hear from a world-renowned speaker (Ken Ham), as he addresses contemporary issues seen in our world today. Attendees will walk away from this conference having learned immensely from the conference speakers, but also from visiting The Ark Encounter.

Third, while other venues allow CPFI’s core value of Fellowship and Knowledge, holding the Annual Conference at The Ark Encounter would naturally augment and enhance more of CPFI’s core values; Faith Integration, Evangelism, Spiritual Growth, Christian Outreach, Christian

Ethics & Knowledge, Godly Encouragement, as well as Student Chapter Ministries would flourish in this environment. Including a lecture from a widely known Christian leader such as Dr. Ken Ham would be an amazing value-add to the conference.

Fourth, proximity to numerous CPFI student chapters such as University of Cincinnati, University of Kentucky, Sullivan University, and Cedarville University may enhance the growth and development of student chapters in this local, Midwest region.

Fifth, a stated goal of CPFI has been to hold the Annual Meeting further west than in recent years. The Ark Encounter's northern Kentucky location is more centrally located for many in the US. A reasonable drive (36 miles) from the CVG airport would make this site very accessible for many. The Ark Encounter is also very easily accessed off of I-75 as well.

Sixth, holding the conference at The Ark would result in some subtle differences in the creature comforts we have experienced in years past.

- The cost to hold the conference at this site would increase the overall cost a bit.
- Going from the conference center to one's room would not be a quick, five-minute stroll.
- Conference space would need to be vacated before 9pm. Events after that would be held at the hotel either inside the common area or outside in the patio area. This is primarily related to shuttle bussing schedules.
- The Ark itself may prove to be such a value-add that it becomes a distraction, decreasing CE programming attendance. CPFI attendees may choose to take part of the conference time to visit The Ark with family or friends.
- There may be a need to schedule a group visit to The Creation Museum on Saturday or Sunday afternoon, impacting travel plans for CPFI attendees.
- The Ark Encounter is a VERY family friendly, family inclusive venue! Families should be encouraged to tag along with their parents because there is SO much to do.

Next Steps

Keith, Jill, and Jeff all recommend that a visit to [The Ark Encounter](#) take place. Immersion in the environment would provide an opportunity to see that though some aspects of the conference are slightly different, the overall conference as a whole would be viewed as a value add.