

SELECTING YOUR ADULT LEADERS

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
Hebrews 13:7-8 (NIV)

Choosing adults to serve as leaders with your church's group participating in the LCMS Youth Gathering is both a blessing and hard work. The request will invite someone into a ministry commitment which will last over a year. The task might seem daunting and exhaustive, but the sacrifices are well worth it. Adult leaders are charged with the high honor of being your group's spiritual and trip leaders. Jesus Christ is with you in this process. Psalm 46 invites us to remember that God is in charge of all our living, including this special opportunity within the whole of your church's ministry.

The information below will provide support and ideas for all those who are responsible for making sure that this unique aspect of your youth ministry happens well, whether they are actually participating in the Youth Gathering or not. This could include the pastor, other church/school professionals, and a board who oversees youth ministry in your church.

Things to Know and Think Through in the Selection Process

- The LCMS Youth Ministry Office requires that all adult leaders taking youth to the Youth Gathering be at least 21 years of age. In addition to this, it is strongly recommended that they are a member of your congregation and are approved by the pastor.
- A background check, while not required, provides an additional safety measure.
- The "Primary Adult Leader" of your group will lead your church's other adult leaders in accomplishing what needs to happen with and in your group. He/She will serve as the liaison between the Youth Gathering and your church's leaders, youth, and parents. The Primary Adult Leader is responsible for registering the group and making reservations for lodging, travel, meals, onsite logistics, etc.
- The following questions would be important to address by your church's leaders as part of your selection process:
 - Do your church's leaders have a vision for youth ministry which would influence what kind of adult leaders would need to be selected?
 - Is your church willing to identify, train, and equip adults to serve as great youth leaders?
 - Does your church have a Youth Gathering Adult Leader job description for both the Primary Adult Leader and additional adult leaders so selected adults know what to expect?
 - What will your church do to consistently provide spiritual and support care for your adult leaders?
 - Does the adult who is being selected and asked to serve have a love for the Lord and teens?
 - Does the adult who is being selected and asked to serve have the time availability for pre-Gathering events and the Gathering?
 - Does the adult who is being selected and asked to serve, especially if their service is as the Primary Adult Leader, have...

- an understanding of what it means to be responsible with minor youth?
- a positive reputation within your congregation?
- previous experience with youth?
- respect from your church's youth?
- good organizational skills?
- the ability to manage people in stressful or unplanned situations?

Ideas for Identifying Adult Leaders

- 1) Take time to pray with church leaders and youth about the selection process, asking God for His wisdom and guidance.
- 2) Value the position so much that adults being asked to serve know the importance of their service with youth.
- 3) Create a job description (see the sample one provided below) that fits exactly what you are expecting.
- 4) Create a recruitment pool which has at least three times the number of adult leaders needed (i.e., if you need three adults, identify nine adults to ask). Ask youth, other staff members, church council, and other leaders about adults they know who they believe would serve well with youth or are adults who could be developed into solid adult leaders.
- 5) Work through a process to rate adults from the recruitment pool with an "ABC" rating, inviting selected and trusted parents, youth and church leaders to assist you with the process.
- 6) Methodically invite people to consider serving in this way:
 - a) Ask adults with "A" ratings first.
 - b) Provide the adult with your job description.
 - c) Ask that they give the invitation and position prayerful consideration.
 - d) Provide a time you expect an answer, but make sure it is not an immediate answer. Give the Holy Spirit time to work on their heart.
 - e) Ask them to talk about the invitation with others who know them well, to discern if they would be blessed and could bless others through serving in this position.
- 7) Graciously accept a "no", and move on to the next adult on your list.
- 8) When they say "yes", thank them and pray with them asking God's blessing on their service. Inform them of any initial meetings they should expect to be part of to further prepare them for their service.