

2025 LCMS YOUTH GATHERING MEETING AGENDAS

In the [18 Month Planning Timeline](#) we recommend a variety of meetings with youth, parents, and Adult Leaders across the year leading up to the Gathering. These meetings allow for time together preparing in God's Word, community building, and logistical information sharing. It helps everyone, both those at home and those attending the event, understand what is expected and sets the group up for a successful Gathering experience.

We have created sample agendas for these meetings. Every group will be different, please adjust each of these as needed. Some information might be communicated via email, allowing you to consolidate meetings or add more community time. Other groups may choose to meet more often.

Below are included sample agendas for:

- 2 meetings with youth, Adult Leaders, and parents/families (typically one at the beginning of the planning process and one close to the event)
- 3 meetings for youth and Adult Leaders
- 3 meetings for only Adult Leaders being led by the Primary Adult Leader

OPENING YOUTH, PARENTS & ADULT PARTICIPANTS MEETING

Why: Use this meeting to cast vision on why you go to LCMS Youth Gathering, gather excitement, and give an idea of what the LCMS Youth Gathering is. Hopefully you have been promoting the LCMS Youth Gathering long before this meeting, but this is the "starting of the process/excitement" part of the journey. We also want parents and youth to be able to ask questions about the experience.

Who: Youth participants, their parents, and Adult Leaders. This should be your first time bringing the group together to start garnering excitement!

How Long: Approximately 90 minutes, if you include a meal.

- **Lunch and mingle, if you include a meal** (~30 minutes)
 - Make it fun and family friendly!
- **Open in Prayer and Bible Study** (30 minutes)
 - On the [Gathering website](#) there will be a series of Bible studies written specifically for opening these meetings. The idea is that they will help set up the theme **ENDURE** for participants before they get to the Gathering.
- **Watch the "[Why the Gathering?](#)" video** (5 minutes)



- Give a general overview of what the Gathering is, why your congregation values it, what's the end goal, and what to expect. You can pull information from the "[About](#)" page on the Gathering website. Share past experiences past youth and adults. (20 minutes)
- **Exploring ENDURE** (10 minutes)
 - Watch the "[2025 LCMS Youth Gathering Theme Reveal](#)" then read the theme verses. If you have time, share pieces of the [Theological Foundation](#) paper that are helpful. You can ask questions like:
 - What about these verses and theme stick out to you?
 - What questions does this theme prompt for you?
- **Logistical Details** (10 minutes)
 - Share what your church's expectations are for youth PRIOR to the week of the Gathering. This is different from church to church, but usually includes:
 - Gathering Dates and Location
 - Future Meeting Dates
 - Cost and Registration Deadlines
 - Fundraising Plans
 - Initial Registration Worksheets and Paperwork Deadlines
 - Initial Travel Information (including potential tourist options before/after the event)
 - Discuss if there is a desire to request an off-site servant event or on-site service-learning opportunity.
- **Questions?** (10 minutes)
 - Open the floor for questions from teens and parents. It can be good to familiarize yourself with the [FAQ](#) on the Gathering website before the meeting.
- **End in Prayer**

YOUTH & ADULT PARTICIPANTS MEETING #1: WHO, WHERE, AND WHAT

Why: *Use this meeting to give more details about the event and to build greater community and teamwork among the group attending. This is a great place to start empowering your youth to work together and consider how they can serve and lead.*

Who: *Adult Leaders and youth participants—everyone committed to going to the Gathering!*

How Long: *Approximately 90 minutes*

- **Open in Prayer and Bible Study** (30 minutes)
 - On the Gathering website there will be a series of Bible studies written specifically for opening these meetings. The idea is that they will help set up the theme **ENDURE** for participants before they get to the Gathering.



- **Who?: Get to Know You Games** (20 minutes)
 - These are particularly helpful as you start to develop your group. You can pick any game you like but be sure to keep it light, easy for everyone to do and not require a lot of deep sharing or physical touch. This may also be a good time to connect youth with their Community Group if your group is larger. Here are two examples:
 - **Game #1 – M&M Icebreaker**
 - Pass around a large bag of M&Ms and let everyone take a handful without eating any. (If you need to social distance, you can give out little bags of candy.) They can take as many as they want as long as there is enough for everyone. Even if people don't want to eat them, they should take a few. Do not give any other instructions.
 - Once everyone has their M&Ms, they are asked to share one thing about themselves for each M&M. You can pick a topic or question for each color, like green is a hobby you enjoy and red is a favorite book or movie. Let everyone share based on their number of candies.
 - **Game #2 – Scribblish**
 - Supplies: timer, paper cut into long, skinny strips (about 2"x11"), and pencils.
 - Everyone gets a piece of paper and at the top writes a person, place or thing that can be drawn. Everyone passes their paper to the left. The next person draws an image to represent that word, like Pictionary, directly below that. They fold the top word back and pass to the left only showing the picture they drew. The next person writes down the word what they think the picture is. They then fold back the picture and pass it to the left so only their word is showing. You continue like this around the group until the sheet get back to the person it belongs to. You can then unfold them and see who was able to stay the closest (or who went the furthest) from the original word.
- **Where?: New Orleans** (10 minutes)
 - Watch the "[Welcome to New Orleans!](#)" video. Depending on your group, discuss what excites them or makes them nervous about the city. This can be a great opportunity to talk about travel plans and safety. Also, have Adult Leaders be on the same page when it comes to how your group will handle New Orleans locations, like Bourbon Street.
- **What?: Empower your Crew** (15 minutes)
 - Encourage your youth to own as much of the experience as possible. Hopefully in your adult meeting you have discussed ways in which you can pass off responsibility, like restaurant reservations and research, fun stuff to do before or after the Gathering in the city, leading Community Groups time, travel pieces, etc. Use their familiarity with technology, apps, their phones, etc., to your advantage!
 - You can use this time to let youth and adults research or discuss what restaurants or foods they want to try. If you do a congregational t-shirt this is a great time to get ideas. Discuss if you want to take part in an on.



- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What’s Next!** (15 minutes)
 - Reminders of upcoming fundraising or financial deadlines.
- **End in Prayer**

YOUTH & ADULT PARTICIPANT MEETING #2: COMMUNITY & COVENANT

Why: *Use this meeting to build relationships, grow in trust and respect, and set boundaries for behaviors and expectations. Coming in with similar expectations helps everyone to know what to expect and sets everyone up for success.*

Who: *Adult Leaders and youth participants—everyone committed to going to the Gathering!*

How Long: *Approximately 90 minutes*

- **Open in Prayer and Bible Study** (30 minutes)
 - On the Gathering website there will be a series of Bible studies written specifically for opening these meetings. The idea is that they will help set up the theme **ENDURE** for participants before they get to the Gathering.
- **Community Building Icebreaker Game** (30 minutes)
 - The idea of these games is to make them more cooperative. Once you are done with each, be sure to debrief each one of them to talk about what you saw in the group. Particularly discuss how people worked together (or didn’t) and how the group communicated.
 - **Tallest Tower**
 - Supplies: gumdrops, dry spaghetti, paper, tape or paperclips, other odds and ends.
 - Split into teams or your Community Groups and give each the same amount of materials to each group. Give them 10 minutes to see who can build the biggest freestanding tower. Afterwards, it is helpful to debrief about how you communicated, made decisions, and supported each other as you were building.
 - **Moon Landing**
 - Supplies: Print out of activity information and pencils ([Download the information](#)).
 - You are a member of a space crew scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. However, due to mechanical difficulties, your own ship was forced to land at a spot 200 miles from the rendezvous point. Survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200-mile trip. 15 items are listed as being intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank them in terms of their importance for your crew, to allow them to reach the rendezvous



point. The 'expert' answers were compiled by a team of scientists and engineers at NASA.

- **Review of “[Why the LCMS Youth Gathering?](#)” Video** (5 minutes)
 - Overview of the week in the Gathering city and what to expect. Share any updates you have seen or particular pieces that might be important in writing your group covenant.
- **Covenant and Pre-Gathering Expectations** (20 minutes)
 - Take time to use the “[Creating a Covenant](#)” Adult Leader Resource on the website to create your unique group covenant. Start the process on what behavior is encouraged and what behaviors are not acceptable prior to and during the event. Have youth speak into the pieces and language of the covenant so they have greater ownership of their collective behavior. You can revisit this later and then sign it in your last meeting.
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What’s Next!** (5 minutes)
- **End in Prayer**

YOUTH & ADULT PARTICIPANT MEETING #3: EXPERIENCES AND PLANNING

***Why:** Use this meeting to help participants begin to make plans to personalize the experience, prepare them for the experience, and help them to take the most out of the experience*

***Who:** Adult Leaders and youth participants—everyone committed to going to the Gathering!*

***How Long:** Approximately 60–90 minutes*

- **Open in Prayer and Bible Study** (30 minutes)
 - On the Gathering website there will be a series of Bible studies written specifically for opening these meetings. The idea is that they will help set up the theme **ENDURE** for participants before they get to the Gathering.
- **App Planning** (20 min)
 - Have youth who can download the Gathering App. Within the app there will be listed the different opportunities for sessions, on-site service-learning, and exhibitors. Give youth time to explore the possibilities and encourage conversation with others in the group. When they have had a chance to begin to see how they might personalize their experience, ask them...
 - What are a few things you absolutely want to experience and why?
 - What are some opportunities here that you won’t get in other places?
 - What do you want to bring back from the experience?
- **Traveling and Etiquette Planning** (15 minutes)
 - Spend some time as a group talking through travel etiquette and planning. You can use the “Traveling and Serving Well in New Orleans” (*Coming Summer 2024*) sheet on the Adult Leader Resource page.
 - Many young people will not have traveled without their parents and may not know basic pieces we take for granted. This can include:



- Tipping in restaurants, hotel cleaning staff, and other appropriate places.
- Appropriate behavior in a hotel lobby or room.
- Proper identification documents when flying.
- How to protect valuable at hotels and throughout the city.
- What to bring and not bring on the trip.
- How to navigate in the city.
- **Finances and Fundraising Update** (10 minutes)
 - Explore what is still needed and what youth are responsible for. This can be time for your discussion on how you will manage funds for food during your time in New Orleans. If you have made your fundraising goal, consider having youth write thank you notes.
- **Covenant Reminders** (10 minutes)
 - Revisit your pre-Gathering expectations and covenant. This can be especially true if youth are not participating in pre-event activities as they should. Ask youth if there's anything they would like to change, remove, or add to the covenant.
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10 minutes)
- **End in Prayer**

FINAL YOUTH, PARENTS & ADULT PARTICIPANTS MEETING

Why: Use this meeting to gather final documents, share final information and details, and pray over the crew going!

Who: Adult Leaders, youth participants, and parents!

How Long: Approximately 90 minutes

- **Open in Prayer and Bible Study** (30 minutes)
 - On the Gathering website there will be a series of Bible studies written specifically for opening these meetings. The idea is that they will help set up the theme **ENDURE** for participants before they get to the Gathering.
- **Review Final Details, Finances and Fundraising Update** (15 minutes)
 - Explore what is still needed. This can include:
 - Final Travel Details
 - Packing List
 - Review covenant information, especially how technology will be used. It is important parents are also invested in the covenant and that everyone signs a final copy.
 - Hotel Information
 - Ensure all paperwork is signed and turned in.



- **Review how Parents and Congregations Can Connect During Gathering** (10 minutes)
 - Encourage parents and youth ministry champions in your congregation to watch the livestream of the Stadium Events. Talk with youth and parents about how much contact to expect and how youth can share the experience while still being sure to stay present at the event.
- **Make plan for bringing the experience back to the Congregation** (10 minutes)
 - Share with the group any follow up meetings and plans to share the experience with the congregation when you return.
- **Pray!** (20 minutes)
 - Spend some intentional time in prayer for your group; have parents gather around and lay hands on their child and pray individually; pray as small groups; pray as a large group. This would be an awesome opportunity to invite your pastor or other pastoral staff to this meeting to join you and lead you in this time of intentional prayer for safety, experience, and spiritual transformation for your crew. You could also have some intentional time for worship together! Give details on when the Commissioning Service and congregational blessing will happen.
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10–20 min)
- **End in Prayer**

ADULT LEADER MEETING #1: INTROS, EXPECTATIONS & INVITATIONS

Why: *Get to know your team, share expectations, and start making plans.*

Who: *Adult Leaders selected and committed to joining you for this experience!*

How Long: *Approximately 60–90 minutes*

- **Open in Devotion & Prayer** (10 minutes)
- **Get to Know Your Adult Team** (15 minutes)
 - Introduce yourselves, your experience with the Gathering, and why they wanted to go to the Gathering. You can add some fun questions here as well.
- **Introduction to Gathering** (10 minutes)
 - Watch the "[A Day in the Life of the Gathering](#)" video. Take time to go through any questions people have after watching it, especially if you have new adult leaders who have not experienced a Gathering.
- **Expectations of Adult Leaders** (20 minutes)
 - Share what your expectations are for your Adult Leaders. You can use the "[Equipping your Supportive Adults](#)" resource to talk about what we hope Adult Leaders will do and to work through specific job descriptions. This time can be extended for Adult Leaders to share some of their strengths and gifts they bring to the team.



- **Review Online LCMS Youth Ministry resources** (10 min)
 - [Gathering Website](#): Take some time to familiarize your team with the Gathering website and all the tools found there noting that resources will continue to be added to the website.
 - [LCMS Youth Ministry Facebook Group](#): Connect with over 6,000 other Gathering Adult Leaders to ask questions, discuss youth ministry-related topics, and be mutually encouraged as we together prepare for the Gathering.
 - [End Goals Podcast](#): This is a short podcast put out every other week that focuses on youth ministry topics. In the year up to the Gathering and beyond, some of the episodes will speak directly to the Gathering experience.
 - [youthESource.com](#): Your one-stop shop for free LCMS Youth Ministry resources. New Bible studies, devotions, skits, games, youth culture articles, and blog posts are added every week.
- **Adult Leader Costs** (15 minutes)
 - Review any Adult Leader costs and their responsibilities to fundraise. If you haven't already, have them give information for them to go through background checks. Finally, review what's needed next, including specific tasks for them to help you invite and prepare youth to join.
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10 min)
- **End in Prayer**

ADULT LEADER MEETING #2: CARING FOR YOUR YOUTH

Why: *Focus on ways that you can care for your youth before, during, and after the Gathering.*

Who: *Adult Leaders joining you for the Gathering*

How Long: *Approximately 60–90 minutes*

- **Open in Devotion & Prayer** (10 minutes)
- **Creating Community Groups** (15 minutes)
 - If your group is more than 5–8 youth, it might be beneficial to separate them into Community Groups. Take time to consider the best way to do that so youth feel comfortable sharing openly and honestly with the youth and adults in their group. This can be a great to talk about how to direct a small group including using open ended questions and allowing for silence as teens process.
- **Planning District Event** (10 minutes)
 - By this point in the planning process, you should know more from your [District Coordinator](#) about your District event. Discuss how this might fit into your plans and budget.



- **Second Chair and Leadership Roles** (10 minutes)
 - Your Primary Adult Leader will be the one who communicates regularly with the Gathering Office. However, it can be helpful to have a second chair leader who is familiar with all the paperwork, plans, travel and hotel itinerary, and other key pieces. This way if your Primary Adult Leader was unable to help for any reason, your group would still feel confident. This is a great time to choose that person and to discuss other roles like helping with food, taking pictures, social media posting for your congregation, and more.
- **Handling Difficult Issues and Crisis** (20 minutes)
 - Use resources provided on the [Gathering Website](#) and [YouthESource](#) to talk about how to handle difficult issues or crisis when they come up with your group. The Gathering often brings up challenging topics, and it's important to prepare. Ensure everyone has both the HelpLine and other student numbers in their phones.
- **Risk Management** (15 minutes)
 - Have a quick conversation to review the risk management procedures from your congregation. This should include things like never being alone with a youth, encouraging youth to listen to Gathering Ambassadors and Young Adult Volunteer instructions, and keeping appropriate boundaries. You can refer to the "[Safety and Risk Management](#)" resource on the website or the End Goals podcast on risk management.
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10–20 min)
- **End in Prayer**

ADULT LEADER MEETING #3 – REVIEW THE PLANS AND FINDING SUPPORT

Why: *To pray for each student, planning on how support Adult Leaders in Sessions, and finalize/review the plan for the event.*

Who: *Adult Leaders joining you for the Gathering*

How Long: *Approximately 60–90 minutes*

- **Open in Devotion & Prayer** (10 minutes)
 - During this time pray for each youth specifically by name and with specific requests for that young person.
- **Adult Leader Sessions, Orientation and Morning Meetings** (15 minutes)
 - Review the app and discuss what Adult Leader Sessions each adult wants to attend. While your availability to do this might be limited, we do encourage Adult Leaders to plan to take advantage of these trainings. Also discuss who will go to orientation as well as morning meetings at your hotel to get up to date information for your group.
- **Hotel Rooming Assignments** (10 minutes)
 - Review the hotel room assignments and make sure everyone feels confident about them. Include some time to check the best transport or walking strategy from your hotel.



- **Review Event Plans** (20 minutes)
 - Go through your event plan from your Commissioning Service to sharing about your event with your congregation. Plans will change and nothing will go exactly like you expect so be willing to be flexible. However, having every adult on the same page helps make sure your youth have the best experience.
- **Review Covenant and Technology Covenant** (10 minutes)
 - Make sure everything important is included. Discuss how to hold each other accountable since adherence to the covenant by adults is important as well. Review what appropriate discipline you will collectively use and support. Once you are done, make copies for every participant to have.
- **Extra Adult Packing List** (15 minutes)
 - Work together to decide what additional items adults should pack including a first aid kit, extra sunscreen, etc. This is also a time when you can consider supportive adult connections like Post-Its of encouragement for in the hotel room or cards you can write to each youth (or parents or both) during the event to encourage them that they will receive upon coming home.
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10–20 min)
- **End in Prayer**

