



SELECTING YOUR ADULT LEADERS

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. 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 (ESV)

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 a year, or longer, depending on your planning timetable. 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. Colossians 1:15-20 invites us to remember that God is the creator of all things, is in all things, and through Him all things hold together, 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 your 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

- **Know the Requirements:** LCMS Youth Ministry requires all adult leaders at the Gathering be at least 21 years of age, and be a member in good standing of your congregation, with written approval by your pastor (that document will be a part of the registration materials!).
- **Background Checks:** Although not collected or required for attendance, background checks should be mandatory for any staff or volunteer who works with minors in all ministry settings. (See <https://www.protectmyministry.com/lcms/> or <https://ministrysafe.com/the-safety-system/background-checks/>) These provide an additional safety measure and are probably an expectation of your church's insurance policy.



- PAL: 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. They 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 (e.g. attendance and reserving lodging) the group through the Gathering Office. The Primary Adult Leader is also responsible for managing or delegating responsibilities such as travel reservation, meal reservations and logistics, and other onsite logistics, etc.

The following questions would be important to address by your church’s leaders as part of your selection process for all adults:

- 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 supportive youth leaders?
- 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?

If you are the pastor or other church leader selecting the Primary Adult Leader to lead your church’s group:

- 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?
 - the time availability for pre and post-Gathering events and the entirety of the Gathering itself?

If you are the Primary Adult Leader selecting the rest of your team:

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. Supportive adults are critical to healthy youth ministry.
3. Create a job description (see the sample one provided below) that fits exactly what you are expecting and clearly defines their role both before, during and after the gathering.
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. Particularly lift up leaders who can or do support youth and youth ministry for the long term, not just this event.
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. If 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.
9. Sometimes there are more adults who desire to attend than your ratios allow: create an application process where interested adults share their motivations for serving. When receiving the applications, sort through, pray over and make the decisions for who will be on the team with your church’s leaders. Sample application below!



(SAMPLE)
YOUTH GATHERING ADULT LEADER JOB DESCRIPTION

An Adult Leader serving with our youth for the LCMS Youth Gathering is expected to serve...

I. As a Supportive Adult, not a Chaperone.

This means...

- a. Setting an example of faith in your worship, prayer, Bible study and service to Christ and His church and church leadership as you take on this role.
- b. Deliberately invest in healthy relationships with individual youth in our group ensuring they all have adults who are supporting them.
- c. Establishing a relationship with the parents of each youth. Supportive adults and engaged parents are a team. Parents will need to be kept well-informed and encouraged regarding their involvement in our group's pre-Gathering activities, with what is happening at the Gathering, and with any post-Gathering activities.
- d. Enabling and empowering each youth in your group to experience the journey to the fullest - spiritually, relationally, emotionally, etc.
- e. Actively encouraging each youth with their commitment and involvement in our group's pre-Gathering activities, while at the Gathering, and with any post-Gathering activities.
- f. Promoting trusting and loving relationship building with your group's youth and adult leaders, and identifying and working through conflicts that arise.

2. By having a "first-fruits" vs. "leftover" attitude.

This means...

- a. Making the youth and Gathering preparations a priority and investment.
- b. Taking a leadership role for Gathering planning and fundraising.
- c. Readily sacrificing your own desires and wants in order to do what is best for your youth and whole group, rather than what is best for you.
- d. Attending ALL pre-Gathering adult leader meetings for which you are available. If you are unable to attend a meeting, it is expected that your absence will be clearly communicated.
- e. Champion the youth in your ministry as they develop as disciples of Jesus and advocate for them in the congregation. Following your Primary Adult Leader's direction before, during and after the Gathering.



- f. Taking an active role in post-Gathering activities and celebrations back home after the Gathering.

3. As a trusted authority yet one that may not have all the answers immediately.

This means...

- a. Saying “let me look into that” when presented with a difficult question.
- b. Receiving the support of the Primary Adult Leader and fellow adult leaders as you work within the body of Christ.
- c. Taking time to personally rest and grow in Christ before and during the Gathering.
- d. Making use of resources, such as adult sessions and care services, provided to adult leaders before and during the Gathering.
- e. Participating in the Gathering with a growth mindset, ready to receive and/or give knowledge and resources.

4. Your responsibilities as one of our group's Adult Leaders, might include:

(add anything specific and unique to your church's process-see sample ideas below)

- a. Attend or plan our specific fundraising events.
- b. Provide consistent communication with our church about pre, during and after Gathering activities.
- c. Assist our youth with creating a post-Gathering thank you process.
- d. Lead two pre-Gathering parent meetings with your community group.
- e. Work with our church's Treasurer to track fundraising income, create a budget, and reconcile expenses after the Gathering.
- f. Assist with securing lodging and travel arrangements.

As an Adult Leader you will be served by our church in these ways:

(add anything specific and unique to your church's process-see sample ideas below)

- Consistent prayer as you serve.
- Financial support in this way:
 - All registration, travel, lodging and meal expenses will be covered. Any additional incidental expenses are each adult leader's responsibility.
 - Insurance covering your participation time at the Gathering.
- Care support in this way
 - A parent representative will check in with you regularly before and during the Gathering to see how you are doing.
 - Our pastor will connect with you to provide you with encouragement and counsel before and during the gathering.



Primary Adult Leader Additional Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Work alongside your pastoral staff and other church leaders to establish your team
- Lead the logistics of the gathering: managing your group's registration, booking transportation, meals, excursions, etc. Collaborate with your students, parents and other adult leaders to make appropriate decisions about all the logistics and details.
- Pray! Let the Holy Spirit guide your every move of this this leadership experience. Ask for help when you need it from your pastor and other church leaders. You're not alone!