



ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

The Gathering is an amazing space to assist our young people in understanding their baptismal faith, discovering their identity in Christ, and living out their unique vocations. However, it is most effective when youth ministry leaders identify end goals, tie it to future ministry, and anticipate where problems may occur.

The Gathering has a long history of being a “*Mountain Top Experience*” for the many youth who have taken part in one or more since 1980. Yet one might ask, “What can I do to bring it home? Do I have to leave it all in Houston? How can the message of “*In All Things*” become a part of my everyday walk?”

We’ve provided some activities and questions for your adult and teen leaders to process before, during and after the Gathering. Youth leaders put a lot of effort into planning and fundraising for the Gathering; these questions and activities are designed to help you get the most impact not just for the five days of the Gathering but the years between.

Before You Go:

Questions for adult and teen leaders

1. What would you like your group to experience, in preparation for and on the way to the Gathering? How can you help make that happen?
2. What can you do to come together as a team, before the Gathering?
3. What is my group going to need for this experience to be as successful as possible for all those attending? (Including your adult leaders)
4. Even for the healthiest group going, what might damage or cause problems for the group at the Gathering? What can we do before we go to prepare for facing the problems that we and/or others might cause?

Questions for all participants

1. What have you heard about the Gathering?
2. What are you hoping to get out of the Gathering experience?
3. What is the Theme: “*In All Things*,” all about? What does it mean?



Activities

- Read the theological paper and its talking points. Read the book of Colossians regularly.
- Create prayer teams to pray for Gathering leaders, adult leaders, fundraising efforts, etc.
- Be active in Worship! You are part of your church – Be there!
- Take ownership in the event and help in the planning. Anticipate the challenges and help in planning solutions. In what area can the youth in your group take responsibility and support? Evening Devotions? Prayers? Service? Food?

During the Gathering:

Questions for adult and teen leaders

1. How can you step out of your comfort zone, and visit and talk with others who you are less comfortable with?
2. How can you support the plan you have laid out as a group?
3. What gifts, skills, passions and experiences am I seeing in our youth that I want to explore more when we get back?
4. What are topics that have come up during the Gathering that we want to study more when we get home?

Questions for all participants

1. Explore with your group, “what is the impact you feel in being together with thousands of Baptized believers?” Does it change your connection and understanding of the Christian church?
2. Who did you meet today that encouraged you in your faith walk?
3. Prayer requests?
4. What ideas, thoughts or methods can you work together on to share with your congregation about what you have experienced?

Activities

- Watch your group for those members who may not feel included. Gen Z is made up of awesome leaders! Be a leader and look out for others.
- Attend Mass Events, Bible Studies and do community group time. Choose sectionals and find time to explore the interactive center. Be a part of it all but don't be afraid to take the down time you need!
- Interact with international attendees and attendees from other states



- Meet a new person each day outside your group
- Use student-led prayers each day to center your group's focus on God.
- Explore vocational opportunities
 - Visit LCMS Universities and organizations in the exhibitor area
 - Participate in the Interactive Center and servant events.
 - Talk to adult leaders and ask them how they live out their vocation in their professions.

After the Gathering:

Many participants will have an awesome “Mountain Top Experience” at the Gathering. Yet, as the disciples discovered with the Transfiguration, and as shared in the hymn,

*“Tis good, Lord, to be here! Yet we may not remain;
But since Thou bidst us leave the mount, Come with us to the plain.”
“Tis Good, Lord, to Be Here”, LSB 414*

We ask ourselves: **NOW WHAT?**

Questions for adult and teen participants

1. How can we support youth as they integrate what they learned back into the congregation?
 - How can we share the story of the Gathering experience to the congregation so they can support and encourage the group as they return?
 - In working together for this experience how might that continue with other projects at church and beyond?
 - What is the role for youth as servant leaders in your church? What new ideas can you bring to the forefront for your congregation?
2. How can adults especially continue the relationships built so that they can become long term supportive adults?
3. How can we use tools we are provided like the End Goals podcast, Gathering podcast of speaker recordings and others to help develop healthy youth ministry?

Questions for all participants

1. How will you integrate your experience at the Gathering back to our home congregation?
 - What spiritual practices do you want to make a part of your everyday life? What tools do you need to do that?
 - You ARE a member of your congregation! In what area of ministry or what new ministry can you and your youth ministry activate yourselves?



2. How are you going to share the experience with your family? How can what you experienced change your relationship with them in a positive way?
3. As a student in your school, what are you bringing back to impact your school environment, “IN ALL THINGS” for Christ?

Activities

- Keep a prayer journal and continue to study Colossians.
- Continue a text chain or other communication to encourage each other and hold youth and adults accountable to changes they desired to make.
- Shadow members of your congregation to watch them living out their vocations at home or work.
- Find opportunities to serve at church or school – live out your vocation of sharing the love of Christ through your actions.
 - Lead a small group
 - Vacation Bible School
 - Fundraisers for community organizations that you believe in