



## SAMPLE MEETING AGENDAS

In the timeline we provide, we suggest meeting with your whole congregational group and just your adult leaders several times in the year leading up to the Gathering. Planning Meetings with youth, parents and adult leaders can be adjusted to your needs. Some congregations may need fewer standalone Gathering meetings due to other opportunities to connect with parents and youth. Some “Adult Leader Meeting” material and planning may be communicated or decided over email rather than a face-to-face meeting.

Below are included basic agendas for

- 5 for youth/adult participants (with at least two with parents/families)
- 3 for only adult leaders being led by the Primary Adult Leader

Youth and Adult Participant Meeting #1: Promote and Recruit!

**When:** by September 2021

**Why:** Use this meeting to cast vision on why you go to Youth Gathering, gather interest and excitement. Hopefully you have been talking up 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:** Adult leaders and youth; **add parents!** This is as much for parents as youth to garner excitement!

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

- **Lunch and mingle if you hold a meal-** make it fun and family friendly! (30ish min)
- **Open in Prayer when ready to start the meeting!**
- **Devotion or Bible Study!**
  - By August there will be at least one Bible study and another shorter devotion for you to use. These will focus on the theme, In All Things, and key verses in Colossians. Be sure to check for updates and new resources on the Gathering website. (20 min)
- **Show “Gathering in 60 Seconds” video** (1 min)



- **LCMS Youth Gathering - What is it and why is it a big deal?**
  - 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 what you learned if you went to the National Lutheran Youth Workers Convention in Houston. (20 min)
- **Critical Details**
  - Share Gathering dates, cost, registration deadlines, initial travel info, fundraising timelines and information that parents need to know. While you might not know all your details now, this is a good time to share the what you do know and your initial plan. (20 min)
- **Questions?**
  - 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. (10 min)
- **End in Prayer**

## Youth and Adult Participant Meeting #2: Community and Covenant

**When:** by November 2021

**Why:** *Use this meeting to build community among your group. Build relationships, grow in trust and respect, set boundaries for behaviors and expectations.*

**Who:** *Adult leaders and youth participants- everyone committed to going to the Gathering!*

**How Long:** *Approximately 90 minutes*

- **Open in Prayer and Devotion** (10 min)
  - On the Gathering website there will be a series of Bible studies and shorter devotions for you to use. These will focus on the theme, In All Things, and key verses in Colossians. Be sure to check for updates and new resources regularly for you to use.
- **Community Building Icebreaker Games**
  - 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. (15 min)
- **Game #2 - Scribblish** *Supplies: timer, paper cut into long, skinny strips (about 2"by11"), 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. (10 min)
- **LCMS Youth Gathering- What is it and why are we all going?**
  - Overview of the week in the Gathering city and what to expect; share what you learned if you went to the National Lutheran Youth Workers Convention in the Gathering city that summer (15 min)
- **Covenant and Pre-Gathering Expectations**
  - 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 fundraising, meeting participation and other topics. Take time to use the covenant and technology covenant pieces provided 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 on and then sign it in your last meeting. (25 min)
- **Fundraisers**
  - Share information and expectations for future fundraisers (10 min)
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (5 min)
- **End in Prayer**



## Youth and Adult Participant Meeting #3: Build Your Team!

**When:** by February 2022

**Why:** Use this meeting to build greater community and teamwork by playing together. 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 60-90 minutes

- **Open in Prayer and Devotion** (15 min)
  - On the Gathering website there will be a series of Bible studies and shorter devotions for you to use. These will focus on the theme, In All Things, and key verses in Colossians. Be sure to check for updates and new resources regularly for you to use.
- **Team Building Game: 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. (15 min)
- **Team Building Game #2: Moon Landing** ([Download the information here.](#))
  - *Supplies: Print out of activity information and pencils*
  - 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. (20 min)



- **Empower your crew**
  - 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!
  - One way you can do this is break your group up to handle a few simple activities.
    - Utilize “How to lead a devotion” to help students prepare to lead preparation or Community Group devotions.
    - Use “Youth Opportunities to Serve in the Houston Community” to help youth think through how the group can keep a servant mindset throughout.
    - Create a group to help support and strategize how to connect and share the experience of the Gathering to parents, congregation and peers.
    - If you have a group of musicians, share with them any Gathering music that’s been released or look forward to that release date and have them learn it. (20 min)
- **T-shirt Planning**
  - If you plan to do a congregational t-shirt for your group, this is a great time to get ideas from your youth.
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What’s Next!** (10 min)
- **End in Prayer**

## Youth and Adult Participant Meeting #4: Experience and Planning

**When:** April 2022

**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**
- **Devotion** (15 min)
  - On the Gathering website there will be a series of Bible studies and shorter devotions for you to use. These will focus on the theme, In All Things, and key verses in Colossians. Be sure to regularly check for updates and new resources for you to use.



- **Former Gathering Attendees**
  - Invite 2-3 former youth that have attended previous Youth Gatherings, to come and share their experiences and what to expect with this year's crew. (20 min)
- **App Planning (20 min)**
  - Have youth who can download the app for the Gathering. Within the app there will be listed the different opportunities for sectionals, on-site servant events 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 want to be absolutely sure 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**
  - Spend some time as a group talking through travel etiquette and planning. 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 maids, and other appropriate places. If you are flying, consider what they may not know if they haven't flown recently. Youth will need to be reminded to have a photo ID and how to protect their valuables at the hotel and throughout the city. You can make it fun and include how to pack a suitcase, how to navigate the city, and other topics in travel they may experience. (20 min)
- **Finances and Fundraising Update**
  - Explore what is still needed and what youth are responsible for. If you have made your fundraising goal, consider having youth write thank you notes. (5-10 min)
- **Covenant Reminders**
  - Revisit your pre-Gathering behavior, covenant and technology 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. (10 min)
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next! (10 min)**
- **End in Prayer**



## Youth and Adult Participant Meeting #5: Final Details and Prayer

**When:** June 2022 (or about 2 weeks prior to leaving)

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

**Who:** Adult leaders, youth participants & parents!

**How Long:** Approximately 90 minutes

- **Open in Prayer**
- **Final Gathering theme devotion or Bible Study**
  - On the Gathering website there will be a series of Bible studies and shorter devotions for you to use. These will focus on the theme, In All Things, and key verses in Colossians. Be sure to check for updates and new resources regularly for you to use. (15 min)
- **Review Final Details, Finances and Fundraising Update**
  - Explore what is still needed. Share travel details, packing list and all information to make sure everyone knows everything necessary to leave healthily and on time. Don't forget to collect any forms you will need! (10-15 min)
- **Review how Parents and Congregations Can Connect During Gathering**
  - Encourage parents and youth ministry champions in your congregation to watch the live stream of the mass 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. (10 min)
- **Covenant Reminders**
  - Revisit your covenant of Gathering behavior including your technology covenant. Ask youth and parents if there's anything they would like to change, remove or add to the covenant. Have youth and parents physically sign a collective poster of the covenant. Post this on your hotel room door at the hotel during the Gathering to remind all youth of their expected behavior during the trip. (10 min)
- **Make plan for bringing the experience back to the Congregation**
  - Share with the group any follow up meetings and plans to share the experience with the congregation when you return. (10 min)



- **Pray!**
  - 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 even have some intentional time for worship together too! Give details on when the Commissioning service and congregational blessing will happen. (20-30 min)
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10-20 min)
- **End in Prayer**



## SAMPLE ADULT LEADER MEETING AGENDA

Adult Leader Meeting #1: Intros, Expectations, and Invitations

**When:** August 2021

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

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

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

- **Open in Devotion & Prayer** (10 min)
- **Get to Know Your Adult Team**
  - Introduce yourselves, your experience at the Gathering and why they wanted to go on to the Gathering. This is also (20 min)
- **Introduction to Gathering**
  - This may be less important if you have experienced adults, but consider showing the following Gathering videos (5 min):
    - What is the Gathering? <https://youtu.be/QbGw8dVAvMc>
    - 2019 Gathering in 60 Seconds: <https://youtu.be/hOECFFmfaa8>
    - Impact of the Gathering: <https://youtu.be/4YOHnnLS2Ng>
    - 2016 Gathering Recap Video: <https://youtu.be/6By6AZmW8VY>
- **Expectations of Adult Leaders**
  - Share what your expectations are for your adult leaders. You can use the “Selecting 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. (20 min)



- **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
  - **Youth Ministry Leader Facebook Group:** Connect with over 4,000 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.
- **Nuts & Bolts: Adult Leader Costs**
  - 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 specifically task for them to help you invite and prepare youth to join. (15 minutes)
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10 min)
- **End in Prayer**

## Adult Leader Meeting #2: Caring for Your Youth

**When:** *January 2022*

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

**Who:** *Adult leaders joining you for the Gathering*

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

- **Open in Devotion & Prayer** (10 min)
- **Creating Community Groups**
  - 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. (15 min)



- **Planning District Event**
  - 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. (10 min)
- **Second Chair and Leadership Roles**
  - Your Primary Adult Leader (PAL) will be the one who communicates regularly with our 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 PAL 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. (10 min)
- **Handling Difficult Issues and Crisis**
  - Use resources provided on the Gathering Website and YouthESource to talk about how to handle when difficult issues or crisis come up with your group. The Gathering often brings up challenging topics, and it's important to prepare. Ensure everyone has both the HelpLine, each other and student numbers in their phones. (20 min)
- **Risk Management**
  - 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 Blue Crew and Young Adult Volunteer instructions, and keeping appropriate boundaries. You can refer to the written resource on the website or the End Goals podcast on risk management. (15 min)
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10-20 min)
- **End in Prayer**

## Adult Leader Meeting #3: Review the Plans and Finding Support

**When:** May 2022

**Why:** to pray for each student 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**
  - During this time pray for each youth specifically by name and with specific requests for that young person. (10 min)



- **Adult Leader Sessions**
  - 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 ahead to take advantage of these trainings. (15 min)
- **Hotel Rooming Assignments**
  - 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. (10 min)
- **Review Event Plans**
  - 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. (20 min)
- **Review Covenant and Technology Covenant**
  - Make sure everything important is included. Encourage adults that their adherence to the covenant is important, too. Review what appropriate discipline you will collectively use and support. Once you are done, make copies for every participant to have. (10 min)
- **Extra Adult Packing List**
  - 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. (15 min)
- **Questions, Comments, Reminders of What's Next!** (10-20 min)
- **End in Prayer**