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*Adapted from the 2016 LCMS Youth Gathering Pre-Gathering Materials*

*As we prepare to experience the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering together, we covenant with one another as an intentional Christian community.*

**Before the 2024 Gathering, we will:**

* Participate in all meetings and fundraisers
* Worship regularly
* Ask people to pray for us and the Gathering

**We agree to honor each other during this experience by:**

* Showing concern for others’ physical, emotional and spiritual well-being
* Using words that build people up
* Gathering in public spaces only (not in sleeping rooms)
* Having positive attitudes
* Understanding that leaders will sometimes make decisions that we don’t like but we will be supportive anyways

**We agree to care for each other in our group by:**

* Being on time
* Helping each other
* Considering others’ sleeping needs

**We agree that we are called to be responsible to one another and to the families and congregation we represent and that we will behave in the following ways:**

* When we are frustrated with someone we will talk to the person(s) involved or seek the help of an adult leader in resolving the problem
* Wearing our congregational shirts and appropriate bottoms each day
* Not using put-downs or insults (even in jest)
* Carry a copy of our emergency form with us
* Use common sense and Christian care when issue isn’t covered by this covenant

**We expect our adult leaders to:**

* Show patience and be flexible
* Show us a lighthearted, loving and fun side of themselves
* Consult youth in decision-making as much as possible

**We willingly agree to these expectations:**

* Always let an adult leader know where you are
* No using drugs, alcohol or tobacco products
* Participating fully in the Gathering
* Abide by lights-out time
* Always travel in groups of three or more
* No sexual activity

**After the 2024 Gathering, we will:**

* Bring back stories, photos and other mementos to share
* Participate in sharing these experiences with the congregation including submitting my blog post to the primary adult leader by July 30
* Worship regularly
* Show care not to leave those who did not attend out of conversations and encourage them to join us for other youth ministry opportunities

**When someone fails to follow the covenant, we will handle the problem in the following ways:**

* Private conversation with primary leader for minor issues
* Youth may be asked to spend part or all of the day under direct supervision of an adult leader
* Zero tolerance area (alcohol, drugs, violence, theft, etc.) will result in consulting the proper authorities and participant may be sent home at their or their family’s expense at the discretion of the primary adult leader or Gathering leadership

Participant signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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*Adapted from Linda Staats, Phoenix, Ariz.*

*Please read and discuss with your group. Add your own ideas based on input from your group. Have each participant sign the covenant.*

**I will:**

* become familiar with the objectives and guidelines of the Gathering and strive to achieve these objectives and communicate them appropriately
* conduct myself in a manner that reflects my Christian faith and positively represent my family, local congregation, my synod and the Gathering
* care for myself physically, emotionally and spiritually, with a goal of positive well-being and overall health
* support and participate in all activities, honoring my own physical and psychological comfort levels, and work together to learn and grow from this experience
* uphold the authority of those responsible for the program or activity in which I am participating and assist one another in every way to encourage learning and faith

formation

* honor the schedule and be punctual for events
* be aware of and keep quiet times
* be mindful of others’ right to privacy and respect their personal belongings
* be responsible and accountable for the stewardship of all resources entrusted to me
* use all facilities made available to us with care – if I hurt or accidentally damage

property, I will take responsibility for the damage done and inform my group's adult

leader or a member of the Gathering planning team immediately

* treat everyone with respect, patience, courtesy, dignity and consideration – I will not tolerate the humiliation or ridicule of anyone in any environment where I am present
* honor the equality of all people, avoiding all forms of discrimination and respect the

dignity of each person without regard to status, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, sexual

orientation or physical or mental abilities

* use positive reinforcement and effective communication skills – I will not criticize nor engage in unhealthy competition, comparison, or use physical discipline or force as a retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by another

**I will promote an environment that is physically and psychologically safe for myself and others:**

* I will use language that is positive and appropriate.
* I will refrain from using tobacco, vaping, recreational drugs, and alcohol.
* I will refrain from using or distributing illegal drugs.
* I will follow the established guidelines for prescription and over-the-counter drugs and medications.
* As a person under the age of 18, I will follow the instructions of my parent(s) or guardian and the guidelines established by my group and this event for the intake of my personal prescribed drugs or medications.
* I will refrain from purchasing, possessing, viewing, downloading or distributing pornography.
* I will not bring weapons or items intended to harm others at home.
* I will respect our group’s guidelines for use of technology which states \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**I will:**

* be respectful of the physical boundaries of individuals and use only appropriate touch and expressions of affection
* avoid inappropriate language and conduct that offends or that takes advantage of another for my own personal benefit
* not engage in any form of unwanted affection, inappropriate sexual activity or sexual harassment
* not visit or gather in private rooms of others, unless it is a sanctioned, scheduled group meeting
* as an adult, avoid situations where I am alone with a youth to whom I am not related

I have read the covenant and understand that a violation of any part of this covenant may result in the loss of my status as a leader or participant in the Gathering ministry and the loss of the privilege to take part in the Gathering. I agree to accept the consequences implemented, which may result in me being sent home at my own expense or that of my parent(s) or guardian.

Participant signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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*Adapted from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod’s youth ministry covenant*

As a participant of the ELCA Youth Gathering, I agree to:

* show respect for myself and all other participants of this event as well as the facility staff and property
* participate in all parts of the Gathering
* refrain from bringing or using alcohol or other non-prescribed drugs including tobacco products
* abide by curfew times and quiet hours
* be intentional in avoiding using offensive language
* refrain from engaging in sexual activity
* follow the open-door policy, which states that visitors of either gender who are attending the Gathering may visit friends in their room during free time if the door to the room is left open and if all roommates agree to the visitor being there
* keep my phone on silent during all activities of the event
* have fun!

A warning will be given for breaking the covenant about: respecting others, curfew, participation in the event, language, open door policy.

Stronger corrective action, including a participant being sent home, will be enacted for repeatedly breaking the covenant items or the following: possession or use of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco products, sexual activity, acts of violence.

The primary adult leader or Gathering leadership will make all decisions concerning consequences. If a participant is to be sent home, they will be financially responsible for any costs.

I agree to live in this covenant for this event. I understand the consequences if I choose to break this covenant.

Participant signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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*Use this template as a guide for creating your covenant together. Feel free to add or take away sections so that you can create a covenant that works best for your group.*

**As we prepare to experience the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering together, we covenant with one another as an intentional Christian community.**

We agree to honor another during this experience by:

We agree to care for each other in our group by:

We expect our adult leaders to:

We willingly agree to these expectations:

We agree that we are called to be responsible to one another and to the families and congregation we represent and that we will behave in the following ways:

When someone fails to follow the covenant, we will hand the problem in the following ways:

Participant signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_