

12-MONTH Gathering Planning Timeline

Use this tool to know when to complete items for Gathering preparation.

JULY 2023

- Complete the Handbook Series on gLearn
- Identify a Primary Adult Leader for your group
- Contact your Gathering Synod Champion to learn more about the Gathering, MYLE, the tAble and Young Adult Gathering
- Follow the Gathering on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok)
- Sign up for the Gathering's gNews
- Assess fundraising needs/goals, and if anyone in your group might need financial assistance
- Begin to identify and target eligible adults and youth to attend the Gathering, Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE), the tAble and Young Adult Gathering

AUGUST 2023

- Begin to contact transportation companies and get quotes (if applicable)
- Create and approve a baseline, conservative trip budget
 - Program and registration fees
 - Housing costs
 - Transportation costs
 - Food costs
 - Free time, extras and group shirts
- Develop a fundraising and participant payment plan
- Set trip dates (travel time + event dates + optional additional fun time = trip dates)
- Create adult leader pre-Gathering meeting schedule
- Create youth participant pre-Gathering meeting schedule
- Hold parent informational and youth interest meetings
 - Purpose of the Gathering
 - Hand out all needed forms and paperwork
 - Trip overview and vision
 - Dates and costs
 - Fundraising and payment timeline
 - Are participant payments in manageable amounts? For example, \$200 monthly.)
 - Pre-trip meeting and involvement expectations
- Firm up fundraising plans and goals, set dates
- Identify and confirm adult leaders for the Gathering

SEPTEMBER 2023

September 15: Priority registration opens online, financial assistance opens online

- Begin to collect registrations and deposits
- Register your congregational group in priority registration
- Submit non-refundable deposits (\$150 per person)
- Start Getting Ready Materials and regular pre-trip meetings (suggested monthly)
- Register for the 2024 ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza

OCTOBER 2023

October 15: Financial assistance closes

- Begin team-building meetings; focus should shift from informational to group building and growing spiritually
- Create a group covenant
- Host adult leader meetings
 - Expectations
 - Trainings – required on gLearn and additional trainings
 - Getting Ready Materials and pre-trip meetings

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2023

November 1: Priority registration deadline

November 2: Regular registration opens

- Log on to registration portal to confirm all registrations and deposits have been confirmed
- Continue fundraising
- Finalize transportation to and from New Orleans
- Getting Ready Materials and pre-trip meeting

JANUARY 2024

January 15: Hotel assignments released (priority registration only)

January 17-21: 2024 ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza (The E)

- Start researching food options and free-time activities (perfect if you are at the E!)
- Continue fundraising
- Getting Ready Materials and pre-trip meeting

FEBRUARY 2024

February 14: Regular registration closes

February 15: Late registration opens

- Begin submitting hotel rooming lists and payments via registration accounts
- Continue fundraising
- Getting Ready Materials and pre-trip meeting

MARCH 2024

- Design and purchase group shirts (if applicable)
- Continue fundraising
- Adult leaders meeting
- Getting Ready Materials and pre-trip meeting

APRIL 2024

April 15: Registration closes

April 30: Final balance due (registration and hotels)

- Prepare and gather all liability forms with insurance card copies (make 3 copies)
- Prepare tax-exempt information (if applicable)
- Continue fundraising
- Getting Ready Materials and pre-trip meeting

MAY 2024

May 15: Final details released

- Schedule commissioning service for your participants
- Schedule return activities
- Getting Ready Materials and pre-trip meeting

JUNE 2024

- Have a parent and participant final meeting
 - Give housing contact information
 - Adult contact information
 - Group Itinerary (departure and arrival times)
 - How will the group share its story?
 - Review food and spending money needs
 - Detailed packing list
 - Covenants (each parent and youth signs; adults sign their own as well)
- Double check collection of all paperwork and forms
- Print final confirmation letter from the Gathering office
- Collect final trip payments
- Prepare participant calling cards and handout (a business card with all adult leader numbers listed as well as the Gathering's Infoline number)
- Getting Ready Materials and pre-trip meeting

JULY 2024

July 13-16: MYLE & the tAble

July 16-20: ELCA Youth Gathering and Young Adult Gathering

- Share ways parents and congregation members can “join in on the fun” as well (Livestream? Follow the official hashtag? Facebook group?)
- Make a plan for devotion time at the Gathering. Is this something some of the senior or junior youth can help lead?
- Commissioning serve for all Gathering, MYLE, the tAble and Young Adult Gathering participants
- Prepare two trip binders (one for primary adult leader, one for church office)
 - Participant emergency contact information
 - Release of liability forms and insurance forms
 - Group itinerary with housing site information
 - Signed covenants
 - Calling tree and plans on how you will update parents and guardians
- Have a final meeting with adult leaders to go over expectations, concerns, typical day, etc.
- Have a plan for a group identifier to see through the crowds (something tall and portable)
- Prepare first-aid kits for each adults
- Remind families of departure times
- Hold a blessing and sending service

DURING THE GATHERING

- Have fun! Fully participate. Be positive— even when it is hard to be. Remember that youth are always watching and paying attention
- Upon arrival, call or email the church office to let them know you have arrived safely. Fill them in on any important changed information
- Check in and meet with your adult leaders regularly to go over daily schedule, expectations, concerns, God sightings and prayer
- Have regular devotions with your group (Final 15 is a great free and provided resource!)
- Take time to breathe
- Bond with your group, engage in conversation, have fun, laugh, live in the moment

1-4 WEEKS FOLLOWING THE GATHERING

- Collect and share pictures, post online
- Collect participant reflections
- Celebrate; get together to share stories!
- Begin to dive into the Taking It Home lessons
- Share with and thank the congregation and family members (Dinner? Dinner and program?)