

## 2025 LCMS YOUTH GATHERING KEY TERMS

*We know there are a lot of words we use around and about the Gathering that can be confusing to some. This resource is designed to help you know exactly what we are talking about as you prepare for the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering. Please know these may be subject to some change.*

**Adult Leader Resources** – Online resources available on the Gathering website to help Adult Leaders plan and prepare to attend the event.

**Bible Study** – Scripture based study led by gifted team of leaders from across the country who will help participants unpack issues raised in the previous night's Mass Event and help experience a unified orientation for the rest of our programming.

**Community Group(s)/Community Group Time** – It is important to be in community as a congregational group around God's Word throughout the event. We suggest there is one time a day, when and where works best for each group, to have time to debrief and discuss what you have experienced. Daily Community Group Questions will be available in the Gathering Guidebook and Gathering App and will often be presented at the end of each Mass Event.

**Congregational Groups** – All participants come to the Gathering as a part of a group associated with an LCMS congregation or school. These groups can be all from a single congregation or from multiple congregations attending together. Each group is required to have at least one Primary Adult Leader and one participant and to have approval from the pastor associated with their home congregation or school.

**Congregational ID** – Unique number associated with your congregation, assigned by the LCMS and is required for registration and communicating with the Gathering Office.

**District Events** – Event or activity hosted by an LCMS District that gives groups the opportunity to gather and celebrate their District community. District Events are planned by District Coordinators.

**Gathering HelpLine/The HelpLine** – Call/text line to connect participants to the Event Base office in case of emergency or assistance. Numbers will be provided closer to the event and will not be active until 24 hours before on-site registration at the Gathering.

**Gathering Office** – When onsite at the Gathering, the Gathering Office is where you can address registration or wristband issues after registration is complete.

**Gathering Updates** – Regular communication sent to Primary Adult Leaders via email and Zoom meetings.

**Guidebook** – Informational book provided to participants that houses session information, maps, community group information, and worship materials.

**Info Booths** – Located at both facilities, find trained Ambassadors, YAVs, or Gathering planners who can answer logistic or schedule questions. Info Booths also have access to the manifest of Lost and Found items.

**Interactive Center** – Convention center floor that provides a wide variety of activities for participants to explore the Gathering theme. This center will feature hands-on learning opportunities, sports, crafts, games, service opportunities, New Orleans adventures, and other events throughout the day. The following are part of the Interactive Center:

- District Zone
- Thematic Floor
- Recreation
- Service Learning
- Gathering Store
- Exhibitors
- Youth Booth

**Morning Meeting** – This meeting is held by Gathering Ambassadors in each of the Gathering hotels. Adult Leaders are encouraged to attend to learn about changes to Gathering programming and/or ask questions.

**Orientation** – During registration, one adult leader from each congregational group should attend one of the Adult Leader Orientations.

**Servant Events** – Participants will engage in acts of mercy and service in the name of Jesus both Off-site servant events in the New Orleans community as well as surrounding communities and shorter on-site service-learning options at the Convention Center. Please note many of these need additional forms and/or pre-registration before the Gathering.

**Special Needs** – A team works with individuals and groups to coordinate accommodations for as many physical, developmental, and sensory needs as possible. These participants should fill out a Special Needs form along with their registration. Food allergies must be managed by individuals and groups.

**Superdome/The Dome** – Nickname for stadium venue where Stadium Events (Mass Events and Worship) take place.

**Youth, Adult, or YAV Poll** – At every Gathering since the first, we poll adults, youth and YAVs to understanding changing issues, beliefs and concerns. The results of the poll provide feedback that enables the church to better serve its youth.

**Wristbands** – Credential given to planners and participants to determine access to Gathering program areas. Wristbands are often different colors and cannot be replaced if they are lost.

## **Sessions**

These workshops are held in meeting rooms, ballrooms, and theaters of the convention center and (possibly) hotels near the convention center. Presenters dig into God's Word, a variety of important topics, and tell their witness of God working in their lives. Most sessions are speaker-based while some provide opportunities to laugh and learn with presenters and performers.

- **Adult Sessions** – Some sessions are designed to equip and encourage adult leaders to lead their youth ministry, know youth culture, and strengthen youth ministry back home.
- **Affinity Groups** – These are topical gatherings for adults in different types of youth ministry. Held during the sectional times, each affinity group will be an open discussion time for adults to gather ideas from others in similar ministry types.

## **Stadium Events**

All events that take place in the Caesars Superdome are considered Stadium Events including...

- **Mass Event** – In the evenings of most nights, we will all come together at Superdome for Mass Events where the Gathering band, inspiring speakers, and performers will encourage and challenge us in God's Word. These are opportunities for teaching and celebration, which makes them distinct from worship.
- **Mass Event Plus** – Entertainment act (comedy, concert, etc.) or additional programming that can take place in the stadium after Mass Event.
- **Worship** – On Wednesday morning we will gather for the Divine Service and celebrate the Lord's Supper. Following worship, we will end our time together with a 15-minute commissioning and sending.

## **Gathering People**

**Care Team** – The LCMS Youth Gathering provides a team of pastors and caring adults who assist adult leaders, youth, and volunteers. The Care Team handles non-emergency issues a congregational group may face and are accessed by calling or texting the HelpLine. (See *Crisis Care Team*)

**Crisis Care Team** – The LCMS Youth Gathering provides access to a team of professional counselors available for adult leaders and youth 24-hours a day to handle emergency issues with participants and adults. This team is accessed by calling or texting the HelpLine. (See *Care Team*)

**District Coordinator** – The LCMS is organized into 35 districts, 33 of which are defined along geographic lines. Most Districts have at least one person who is trained to assist the congregations in their district to prepare for and enjoy the Gathering.

**Gathering Ambassadors** – Vital adult volunteers (ages 25+) who wear yellow shirts serve in a variety of roles such as hotel liaisons and in program areas such as Stadium Events, Interactive Center, Sessions, Bible Study, traffic/safety

support, and late night. Ambassadors are selected through an application process and given roles for the entire Gathering.

**Primary Adult Leader (PAL)** – The adult leader who serves as the liaison between the Youth Gathering and your church's leaders, youth, and parents. The Primary Adult Leader is responsible for registration and will receive most of the direct communication from the Youth Ministry office.

**Team Flex** – Short term adult volunteers who serve in a variety of roles in blue shirts and swag. Team Flex is not limited, so any adult 18+ can apply. These volunteers can opt into a service based on their schedule, choosing one day or the whole Gathering. They will only be given credentials for the days they serve.

**Young Adult Volunteers (YAVs)** – A group of volunteers between the ages of 19 and 25 who wear orange, YAVs serve as role models for teen participants while working in specific areas of the event such as Stadium Events, Interactive Center, Sessions, Bible Study, traffic/safety support, and servant events. They are sometimes called "Orange Nation".

## **Other LCMS Terms**

- **CUS** – The acronym for Concordia University System.
- **CPH** – [Concordia Publishing House](#) is the official publishing partner of the LCMS.
- **End Goals** – This is the podcast from LCMS Youth Ministry and [KFUO Radio](#).
- **LCEF** – [Lutheran Church Extension Fund](#) is a partner of the LCMS who provides faith-based financial services. They provide easy-to-use church bank accounts (for registration payments), pre-paid debit cards (for groups attending the Gathering), and some on-site banking.
- **LCMS Youth Ministry** – A unit of LCMS Office of National Mission, based in St. Louis, MO. This office/staff directs the planning and implementation of the LCMS Youth Gathering.
- **Office of National Mission (ONM)** – The LCMS Office of National Mission works within the borders of the United States and supports the programs and resources available to LCMS congregations, districts, schools, Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs) and other Lutheran organizations.
- **Set Apart to Serve** – An [initiative](#) of the LCMS to recruit church workers.
- **YouthESource.com/ESource** – [YouthESource](#) is LCMS Youth Ministry's resource website.
- **YouthLead** – Teen leadership training and associate resources lead by LCMS Youth Ministry. (This event is formerly known as Lutheran Youth Fellowship or LYF.)
- **7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry/7P** – This is the platform of seven key ideas that LCMS Youth Ministry believes are critical for healthy congregational youth ministry. More information about the 7 Practices can be found on [youthesource.com](#).