

THE GATHERING PROGRAM... A NONSTOP EXPERIENCE (ALMOST)

The Gathering program is a journey filled with daily experiences and opportunities for growing in faith, serving others, stretching hearts and minds, and remembering that God is with us every step of the way as we cross back and forth through the familiar and unfamiliar.

You'll find that the Gathering is a very full experience that goes from sunrise and into the late evening each day. But it's not about filling time, keeping busy, or packing a lot of life into a few days. The following brief descriptions of the core Gathering program components should give you at least a taste of what it's about and how meaningful it will be for youth and adults.

COMMUNITY/HOTEL LIFE

Some of the most memorable relationships and conversations you'll have will occur at your hotel.

Your Gathering day begins and ends in your hotel. Mornings at the hotel include opportunities to get up and get going with music and community building activities, or a worship experience with daily Eucharist. Evening activities include dances, live music clubs, and other fun activities where you can play or hang with new friends.

A Community/Hotel Life Team staffs each hotel and is responsible for providing hospitality, leadership, and communication for you and your group. This team consists of hotel pastors, adult counselors, and young adult leaders who have volunteered to help make your Gathering experience meaningful, memorable, and fun.



ALAMODOME MASS PROGRAMS

Morning dome experiences

Grounded in the Word of God with thousands of young people, the morning dome experiences in the Alamodome will be interactive Bible studies that are larger than life and swirling with technology. This is the place to discover the excitement of how faith and life meet at the cross, and to be sent into the day with Jesus.

Evening dome experiences

Bring an open heart and mind—the evenings are alive! At night the Alamo dome shifts into high gear with guest speakers, Christian bands, videos, lights, and special effects. Each night has a different emphasis and flavor, providing memorable moments ranging from deep personal transformation to wild laughter.



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INTERACTION CENTER

The Interaction Center is quite a journey! Located in the Henry B. González Convention Center, the Interaction Center has something new at every crossing and corner.

Climb walls, play beach volleyball, explore different ministries of the church, donate a pint of blood, get a massage, hang out, create art, dance, listen to live music, or just crash on a couch. Pump up your adrenaline on a massive high ropes course, zip down wires, fly through the air like a bird, check out colleges or seminaries, learn some martial arts, and take a spiritual journey. Augsburg Fortress Publishers will be there with books, souvenirs, and resources to support your ministry and reinforce the Gathering experience. There's always something Spirit-filled and lively going on in the Interaction Center!

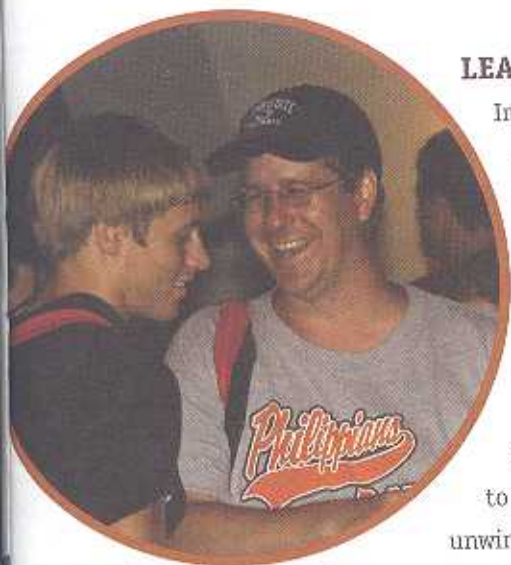


YOUTH MINISTRY ACADEMY FOR ADULTS

The Youth Ministry Academy is provided by the Youth Ministry Network and offers training and support for pastors, adult professionals, and volunteers. Take an afternoon of the Gathering to enjoy workshops, networking, a place to relax, or worship. No sign-up or registration needed—just show up!

- **Come for the learning:** Music and worship, keynote speakers, and workshops.
- **Come for the well** (networking and support): A place to relax and breathe, youth ministry resource displays, computers to check your e-mail, chaplains, youth ministry leaders to network with, and free stuff.

You can learn more about the Youth Ministry Network by going to the Network Web site at www.elcaymnet.org, call 1-866-352-2638, or e-mail info@elcaymnet.org.



LEARNING VILLAGE

In the Learning Village there are dozens of places to pause and hear, learn, and experience the things of life and God. There are artisans, teachers, and friends who will share their stories of faith and life. There is role-playing, prayer centers, a labyrinth, food, music, workshops, dancing, and opportunities to be strengthened and encouraged as followers of Christ.

This is not just another set of workshops. This is an intense, hyperactive, in-your-face experience with our living God and people of faith. You'll have your world turned upside down as you push your faith to new limits. And you'll find rest stops on the journey where you can unwind, unravel, unload, and be refreshed.

SERVANTLIFE

ServantLife puts faith into action through caring for people, developing healthy communities, and valuing a culturally diverse world. ServantLife (off-site options) and Way-of-Life (on-site options) help connect youth each day with people and ministries in San Antonio and around the world. It's all part of the journey with Jesus! Learn more about ServantLife on page 10.

SATURDAY NIGHT IS A FIESTA!

We celebrate with all our energy, heart, and soul because we live in God's grace and forgiveness. Saturday night is for celebration, music, food, fun, and dancing together. It's one huge evening fiesta complete with fireworks! The cost of food for the fiesta night is included in your registration fees.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

A significant part of the Gathering experience and preparation is the sharing of our blessings and resources with others. There will be special opportunities to gather offerings (monetary and in-kind gifts) that will be given to designated ministries and community organizations, both domestic and global. This is also a wonderful opportunity to involve the entire congregation! Watch for more details on the Gathering Web site and in the Getting Ready Book (January 2006).

YOUTH SERVANT CORPS

The Youth Servant Corps (YSC) will play a vital role in the Gathering. Each week, 200 youth and their adult counselors will assist the Gathering program teams in a variety of ways. YSC groups will remain in their groups as they serve approximately 2 - 4 hours per day, allowing plenty of time to participate in other aspects of the Gathering program. YSC volunteers will receive a reduction in the Gathering registration fee (\$175) and housing will be provided in a downtown hotel.

PLEASE NOTE: This volunteer opportunity for youth groups is reserved for congregations of the Southwestern Texas Synod, the Gathering's host synod. A Youth Servant Corps application letter will be mailed directly to congregations of the Southwestern Texas Synod about two weeks following this Registration Book.



GATHERING REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

Before you mail your registration or register on-line by September 15, 2005, please be sure that you have:

- become familiar with the registration information beginning on page 16.
- designated a Primary Leader.
- opened a Gathering MissionPlus account (Optional but makes life a lot easier!). See page 22.
- found your Region/Synod and Congregational numbers and written them on each form.
- collected completed and signed registration forms from every participant.
- double-checked that all forms have the required signatures of parents, participants, or leaders.
- indicated your housing preference.
- specified your choice and day of ServantLife experience.
- included the correct per-person payment for Gathering activities:
 - If paying by check, send only one check per congregation, payable to "ELCA Youth Gathering," Include your Region/Synod and Congregational numbers in the memo line.
 - If registering on-line and paying by check, send your congregational summary sheet from the Web site and mail it with your payment. Do not send the individual registration forms.
 - If making a payment through your Gathering MissionPlus account, include your account number on the Primary Leader Registration Form.
- kept your Medical/Emergency Forms. Do not send them with your registration—keep them and bring them to San Antonio.
- made back-up copies of everything for your records.

THE DAILY GATHERING SCHEDULE

(The following schedule is subject to change. Additional schedules will be available at a later date for Community/Hotel Life activities, the Learning Village, and ServantLife experiences.)

Sunday, July 2, 2006

10am-evening Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) and Definitely-Abled Youth Leadership Event (DAYLE) registrations and counselor training sessions

Monday, July 3

MYLE and DAYLE continue

Tuesday, July 4 and 11

MYLE and DAYLE continue (July 4)

1-5pm Gathering early-bird registration
1-5pm Gathering counselor training sessions

Wednesday, July 5 and 12

MYLE and DAYLE end (July 5)

8am-8pm Gathering registration
9am-6pm Gathering counselor training sessions
3-6pm Interaction Center open
7-7:30pm Warm-up in Alamodome
7:30-9pm Opening mass gathering in Alamodome
9:30-12:00pm Community/Hotel Life activities

Thursday, July 6 and 13

Early morning Community/Hotel Life activities
10-10:30am Warm-up in Alamodome
10:30-11:30am Bible study in Alamodome
12-1pm Departure for ServantLife
1-5pm ServantLife
Learning
Interaction Center
Youth Ministry Academy
7-7:30pm Warm-up in Alamodome
7:30-9pm Mass gathering in Alamodome
9:30-12:00pm Community/Hotel Life activities

Friday, July 7 and 14

Early morning Community/Hotel Life activities
10-10:30am Warm-up in Alamodome
10:30-11:30am Bible study in Alamodome
12-1pm Departure for ServantLife
1-5pm ServantLife
Learning
Interaction Center
Youth Ministry Academy
7-7:30pm Warm-up in Alamodome
7:30-9pm Mass gathering in Alamodome
9:30-12:00pm Community/Hotel Life activities

Saturday, July 8 and 15

Morning Community/Hotel Life activities
10-10:30am Warm-up in Alamodome
10:30-11:30am Bible study in Alamodome
12-1pm Departure for ServantLife
1-5pm ServantLife
Learning
Interaction Center (open until 6pm)
Youth Ministry Academy
6-10:00pm Fiesta!
10pm Fireworks

Sunday, July 9 and 16

Early morning Prepare to depart
9-9:30am Warm-up in Alamodome
9:30-11:30am Closing Eucharist

Sunday, July 9 (between Gathering weeks)

3pm LYO Convention begins

SERVANTLIFE, A WAY OF LIFE!

IT'S MORE THAN "EVENTS"

ServantLife is designed to deepen a life-long commitment for putting our Christian faith into action through caring for people, developing healthy communities, and valuing a culturally diverse world. ServantLife (off-site options) and Way-of-Life (on-site options) are important parts of the Gathering program. You can register in advance for an off-site experience or join one of many service options woven into each day. Either way, you are invited to make ServantLife a way of life!

ON-SITE SERVICE OPTIONS (WAY-OF-LIFE)

Got a minute? An hour? Walk-in service opportunities will be available for everyone at the Gathering.

Servanthood is a Way-Of-Life involving simple yet meaningful acts of kindness like handing out water to thirsty volunteers, organizing school supply kits, writing letters of advocacy, or sewing a quilt to send to a shelter. Just show up!

OFF-SITE SERVICE OPTIONS (SERVANTLIFE)

You can commit a larger part of your day to service by signing up for off-site options when you register. All off-site opportunities away from the Henry B. González Convention Center area will take place from noon to 5:00pm on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. Be sure to indicate your preference for an extended service experience:

- Care (Person-to-person experiences in child care centers, nursing homes, community agencies, etc.)
- Construction (Work with building projects, light carpentry, painting, etc.)
- Culture (Experiences with the rich, historic cultural tapestry of San Antonio.)

SERVANTLIFE STARTS BEFORE YOU COME TO SAN ANTONIO

What are the gifts of your group? How can those gifts be used in your home community, congregation, or families? Servanthood is part of every day, not just one event. Check out the Gathering Web site for ideas, Bible studies, activities, and a step-by-step guide for starting where you are. The ELCA *Journeys for Youth and Young Adults* is a valuable service resource as well. You can find *Journeys* at www.elca.org/dcm/camps/journey/journey_search.asp



PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR OFF-SITE SERVANTLIFE EXPERIENCES

1. CHOOSE AN EXPERIENCE

Rank your preferred service experience on the Primary Lead Registration Form: Care, Construction, or Culture.

2. PICK A DAY

Rank your preferred day for ServantLife: Thursday, Friday, or Saturday.