



Here are some practical ideas from experienced leaders to put these expectations into practice:

- **Meet with your group before you leave.** Share your expectations, sign the covenant, and listen to expectations the youth have. Answer questions, get to know each other and build group unity.
- **Check all forms for signatures and complete information** several days before you leave.
- **Keep Health and Release Forms** in an easily accessible place. Tell other adult leaders or responsible youth where they are in case there is an emergency with you, or you can't be reached.
- **Set firm boundaries and limits at the beginning.** You can always back off and give more freedoms as youth earn your trust, but it is nearly impossible to add limits as you go along.
- **Sit with your youth at all events.** If you only have one adult, sit in the middle of them. If you have more than one adult, sit on each end of the row and spread throughout. You can't make them listen, but you can make them be quiet so others can!
- **During Family Time, ask youth what they will do for Hotel Life:**
 - Play the games with them! Use this time to build relationships.
 - Know where youth are. Larger groups (or small groups you don't want to smother), may want to have youth check in with a designated leader within a certain time period. This not only lets you know they are safe and active, but also helps keep you aware of any issues or lonely kids.
- **Ask your congregation to make a one time investment in an inflatable twin mattress** and pump for adult leaders to use for years to come. For around \$25, this will give you a good night's sleep while helping you maintain appropriate boundaries and control with your youth.
- **Check rooms at the end of the night** to make sure youth are in their rooms. Stay up, in the hallway or check back frequently, until all rooms are quiet. Don't be afraid to knock on doors to ask them to tone it down.
- **Consider how you will manage hotel room keys.** Some leaders keep room keys so they know where youth are. Some leaders make sure they keep one key per room so they can enter if needed.
- **Attend the Adult Leader Meeting,** even if you have been a leader before. This meeting shares with you what to expect and gives you tips for being a leader at the Middle School Gathering.



"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now..." *Philippians 1:3-11*

What Does It Mean to be an Adult Leader?

Being an adult leader is a huge responsibility! You are entrusted by parents and the congregation to keep youth safe, share faith, and have a meaningful experience. It can seem like a daunting task, but you can do it! The Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) Board that plans this event has worked diligently to provide a safe, meaningful and fun environment for the weekend. Congregational leaders hold the primary responsibility for their young people, but you are not alone – the LYO Board and other adult leaders walk alongside you to support you, answer questions, and give encouragement along the way!

Please read through this document to know what is expected of adult leaders, and to make sure we are all on the same page as we enter the weekend. The LYO Board intentionally uses the term "adult leader" rather than "chaperone" for its events. Why? "Chaperones" are often passive observers watching from the sidelines until intervention for discipline is needed. "Adult Leaders" are active participants who use the activities offered to build relationships with youth. "Adult Leaders" are also proactive to avoid discipline issues through setting boundaries and limits, thinking ahead to what/who might cause problems, and taking actions to prevent problems.

Together we can create a faith nurturing and joyful community during the gathering. We thank you in advance for assisting us in providing a meaningful, fun and safe weekend for our youth!

What is Expected of Adult Leaders

- **Adults should be leaders first, and friends second.** Youth expect and deserve this from adults. The first step to trust and friendship comes when kids know you will protect them and hold them accountable to the limits that have been set. You may be the only mature adult-to-youth relationship a youth might have – bless them with this gift!
- **Adult leaders are expected to be responsible for the youth they bring.** Know where your youth are, and what they are doing. Sit with them at assemblies, clusters and meals. Supervise them in the pool. Be with them if they leave the hotel. This is not a vacation, but a responsible job! Parents have entrusted you with the lives of their children. Your congregation has entrusted you to be a model of the faith.
- **Adult leaders should spend time with the youth they bring.** Gatherings are designed to help you build relationships with youth that will continue when you get home. Use Family Time and conversations after the assemblies and clusters as a means to dig into deeper conversations of faith with youth. Use Hotel Life to laugh and play with youth. Use those in-between times to show them you really do want to know youth for who they are.
- **Adult leaders should be role models.** Youth will watch what you do much more than what you say. Use appropriate language and behavior. Dress appropriately. Follow the behavior covenant.
- **Adult leaders should be positive and flexible.** Your attitude greatly influences the attitude of your group. If you are excited and enthusiastic, your youth will be excited and enthusiastic. If you are complaining, your kids will complain. Last minute changes and unplanned mistakes are to be expected. Take up unsafe or flagrant issues with the appropriate personnel (the LYO Board or the hotel staff) or save comments for the evaluation form. Then keep your smiles, roll with the punches and trust that the LYO Board will work out schedule difficulties and other issues for this and future gatherings.

- **Adult leaders are expected to share rooms with the youth,** even if it means sleeping on a floor. While we understand that not every room will have an adult leader, we do expect that leaders will be spread out among the rooms to prevent late night escapades, inappropriate “inter-mingling” of youth, and to offer informal time to build relationships.
- **Adult leaders are expected to be firm with lights out.** Be respectful of other leaders and their groups and make sure your youth are in their rooms with lights out at the appointed time.
- **Adult leaders should think safety at all times.** Stop youth (including those from other groups) from running in the hallway and horseplay throughout the hotel. Youth should not leave the hotel without an adult leader.
- **Adult leaders should ask for help when needed!** We are servants together in ministry, and none of us by ourselves holds all the answers. Call Catherine, talk to a member of the LYO board or to other adult leaders when you need advice and encouragement!
- **Adult leaders should pray for their youth.** Pray for the assemblies, the speaker, the clusters, the adult leaders, and especially the youth you bring!



What Adult Leaders Can Expect from the LYO Board

- Leadership and decisions that promote a safe, fun and meaningful faith experience for you and your youth.
- Respect for you and your youth. We will listen to you, make appropriate changes as necessary, treat you as partners in ministry, begin and end meetings and activities on time, hold youth and adults accountable to our expectations, spend time with you and your kids, and be role models.
- Support and encouragement for you as a leader throughout the gathering weekend.
- Prayer support for you and your group prior to and during the gathering weekend.