

HELPFUL LEADER INFO:

So much to say, so little space to do so! Here is a list of helpful pieces of information for you as you engage in this resource.

- **It looks like a lot. Well, it sort of is.** There are nine months included with two sessions for each month. There is a main session and a Going Deeper session. On the next page, you will see suggestions to help you use this resource in a variety of ways and times. (For example, if your group meets two times a month, or on Sunday mornings, or you can only do these materials in a weekend retreat, be sure to check out our suggestions.)
- **This resource has a strong justice emphasis.** We are called to action by Christ through our words and deeds. Youth want to make a difference in this world, make it a better place for everyone. We had this in mind as we wrote. Spend time before each session studying the materials and getting yourself ready to engage in the discussions and the work of the sessions.
- **The topics covered in this resource come from topics expected to be a part of the Gathering through Mass Gatherings, Interactive Learning and Service Learning.** This is why it's important to engage in this Getting Ready Resource, to prepare your group to engage fully in the Gathering.
- **The Going Deeper sessions will take your group into deeper learning of the topic beyond the initial session. Please try to use these.** Especially note that the March Going Deeper session is on human trafficking, a topic that will surely be addressed in various ways at the Gathering due to its looming presence over Houston.
- **The resources are built around the faith-formation process of devotion, caring conversation, rituals and service.** Each session incorporates these practices.
- **A ritual we encourage is lighting a Christ Candle at the beginning of the session during the opening prayer.** It does not need to be the Christ Candle from your sanctuary – and probably should not be. Just get a candle that will last through the year and keep it as a visual reminder of the light of Christ present for us and the world.
- **A warm-up activity is included with each session in which you will put on paper in large print a word or phrase.** You can have these printed on 24-inch by 36-inch paper at a copy store or office supply store, or you can write them on a newsprint sheet. Perhaps have a youth with a flair for art create it for you! You will post this on a wall and encourage the youth to write their responses on the sheet.
- **You can save these as the year progresses as a reminder of your learning and growth through the year.** Share these via social media after each session!
- **There are a lot of video links in the curriculum.** If the internet is available during your sessions, you can just click the link to play the video. If you do not have access to the internet during your sessions, download the videos to your computer before the sessions. You can also use YouTube Red on your phone or tablet; select "Save" to save the videos to an "Offline Videos" folder you can access without using the internet or data.
- **Each session has the same style sending for ritual.** The sending has youth standing up during the sending as a visual action. If you have youth in your group that are not able to stand, please be cognizant of this and create an inclusive way to use the sending. This also goes for any of the activities given in the session.

If you need help thinking through this, please don't hesitate to contact the Gathering office (gathering@elca.org) or Chelle Huth, Gathering Curriculum Manager (chuth@uls.edu) for ideas.

MEETING ONCE A MONTH:

Each session (main and Going Deeper) is written to be about 45-50 minutes long. If you are meeting for two hours, use both sessions, combining where it makes sense.

MEETING TWICE A MONTH:

Do the main session at your first monthly meeting, then do the Going Deeper session at the second meeting.

SUNDAY MORNINGS (ABOUT 30 MINUTES):

You will break all the sessions into two parts (using one part each Sunday.) Here's what that would look like:

First Sunday:

- Have the large-print page up for the warm-up activity.
- Do the intro and gathering prayer.
- Do the experiential-learning piece.
- Explain the focus of the session.
- Do the sending activity.

Second Sunday:

- Review the large-print page from the warm-up activity from the previous week.
- Remind them of the intro and do the gathering prayer.
- Do the word section of the session.
- Do the sending activity.

You will then do the same for the third and fourth Sundays, using the Going Deeper session.

SUGGESTED USES, WAYS AND TIMES

RETREAT:

Friday:

- Do group-building activities and the Gathering for Community session.

Saturday

- Combine the sessions on Gathering for Love and Gathering for Relationships for your morning session.
- Do the Gathering for Compassion session after lunch.
- Do the Gathering for Home session in the afternoon.
- Do the Gathering for Advocacy session after dinner.
- Do the Gathering for Justice – Going Deeper session in the evening.

Sunday

- Do the Gathering for Purpose session.
- Do the Gathering for Purpose – Going Deeper session.
- Depart in love!

For help with any of these suggestions, please don't hesitate to email Chelle Huth at chuth@uls.edu.