

2000 ELCA Youth Gathering Evaluation of Adult Participants

Evaluation Report

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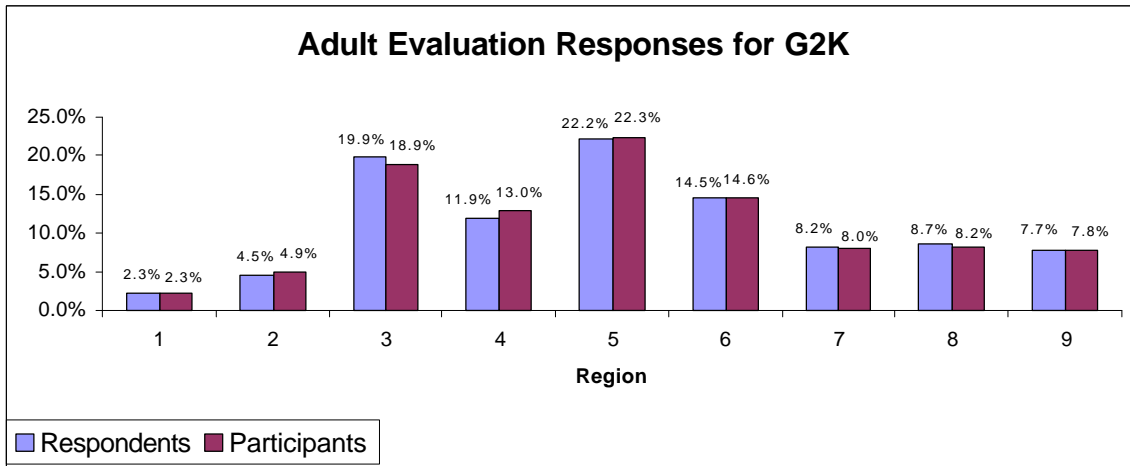
From June 28 through July 2 and July 5 through July 9, 2000 over 29,000 ELCA youth and almost 7,000 adults gathered in St. Louis, MO for the ELCA 2000 Youth Gathering (G2K). The Department for Research and Evaluation (DRE) has conducted both qualitative and quantitative evaluations of G2K. This is a quantitative report that only addresses the experiences of adults who attended G2K.

Response Rate

In order to evaluate the experience of adults who attended G2K, we invited a random sample of 859 adults to complete and return a gathering evaluation questionnaire (see the attached appendix for a sample of the questionnaire). By region and gender, the adult sample was representative of the adult attendance at the gathering. From the original adult mailing of 859 questionnaires, 573 were returned for a response rate of 68 percent.

The adult response rate is representative of the adult attendance by geographic region of the ELCA (See Figure 1).

Figure 1



This was the first ELCA youth gathering for 59 percent of respondents. Sixty-three percent of the respondents attended the gathering as an adult lead counselor, while 28 percent were adult participants but not lead counselors. Sixteen percent were congregation pastors, while 15 percent were congregation youth directors. Slightly over half of the respondents (52%) were between the ages of 31 to 45.

Planning for the Gathering

The 2000 Playbook

Seventy-one percent of respondents indicated that they used the 2000 Playbook to prepare for the gathering. The information covering covenant building and Bible studies were the most frequently used, while the devotional assistance and mentoring information was the least used (See Table 1).

Table 1

2000 Playbook Contents	Percentage Used
Living in covenant	77.6
Bible studies: Pilgrimage to the Cross Roads	64.4
Identifying gifts for vocation	51.2
G2K CD: Songs for the Road	51.2
Songs for the Road sheet music	29.4
Roadside devotional assistance	14.4
Calling mentors to the journey	13.4

The G2K promotional video

29 percent of the respondents used the G2K promotional video to raise awareness of the gathering. On average, the helpfulness of the video was rated as a 2.7 on a five-point scale.

Spiritual gifts inventory

52 percent of respondents indicated that their youth group completed the spiritual gifts inventory. Of those, 67 percent indicated that they used the spiritual gifts inventory when planning for events at the gathering.

Mentoring relationships

20 percent of respondents indicated that youth members from their congregation had intentionally sought relationships with mentors as part of their preparation for the gathering. On average, the value of the mentoring relationships was rated as a 2.2 on a five-point scale.

G2K Road Map (pre-gathering book)

Ninety-one percent of respondents indicated that they received the G2K Road Map. About half of these respondents indicated that they read through the entire booklet quickly, and then read the parts that most interested them thoroughly. Fifty-five percent indicated that they received the G2K Road Map in plenty of time for planning purposes, while 36 percent indicated that more time would have been helpful.

Respondents were asked to rate the helpfulness of the various topics covered in the G2K Road Map on a five-point scale. The average rating for the various topics ranged from 2.0 to 2.7, with 1 being “very helpful” (See Table 2).

Table 2

Topics in G2K Road Map	Mean
“Dancing at the Cross Roads” theme & vision	2.0
Individual and group covenants	2.0
General info on the daily schedule	2.1
On-site registration and other “logistics”	2.1
The Beat	2.2
Hip Hoppin’ around St. Louis trips	2.3
Two-Step Service projects	2.4
G2K Learning Communities	2.5
Hotel Life	2.7

Fifty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they felt adequately prepared for the gathering, while the other 41 percent indicated that they felt unprepared. Of those respondents who felt unprepared, 71 percent indicated that they needed more or better preparation within their own youth group, while 39 percent of adults needed more or better preparation on their own. Thirty-eight percent indicated that they needed more or better preparatory materials from the gathering organizers.

In preparation for the gathering, 62 percent of adults found personal meaning in the theme “Dancing at the Cross Roads” (indicated by a “1” or “2” on a five-point scale).

Thirty-four percent of respondents commented on the pre-gathering materials and assistance. Of those, 19 percent made comments regarding the late arrival of gathering materials or hotel confirmations.

Initial Gathering Registration

Respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding the initial registration process. The registration booklet and the information needed to submit the registration material were clear and thorough (indicated by an average of 2.0 and 1.9 respectively on a five-point scale). However, respondents were less likely to agree that confirmation of gathering registrations were sent in a timely fashion (indicated by an average of 2.6 on a five-point scale).

Twenty-five percent of respondents indicated they had registered for the gathering on-line. The on-line registration process was rated as fairly easy (indicated by a 2.0 on a five-point scale).

Fifty-nine percent of respondents indicated they had contact with their Synod Youth Coordinator. The helpfulness of synod youth coordinators was rated as somewhat helpful (indicated by a 2.6 on a five-point scale).

Thirty-three percent of respondents participated in their synod's Counselor Training Program. The helpfulness of the training was rated as somewhat helpful (indicated by a 2.5 on a five-point scale).

When given the opportunity to comment on the gathering registration process, 15 percent of the respondents chose to comment. There was not any consistency of comments in this section.

Hotel Reservations

Fifty percent indicated that they had significant problems making their hotel reservations. On a five-point "level of seriousness" scale, 66 percent rated their problems as very serious and inconvenient (indicated by a "1" or "2" on the scale).

Of the respondents who indicated that they had a significant problem, 86 percent made a comment. Ten percent of the comments discussed the implications or problems associated with their group being housed in different hotels.

On-site Registration

Eighty-one percent indicated that the on-site registration process was very easy to manage (indicated by a 1 or 2 on a five-point scale), while 32 percent indicated that the hotel registration process was very difficult to manage (indicated by a 4 or 5 on a five-point scale).

When given the opportunity to comment on the on-site registration, 35.5 percent of respondents made a comment. There was not any consistency on the comments in this section.

At the Gathering: Hotel Life

Respondents were asked to indicate which hotel life activities they attended and rate the activities on a value scale of 1 to 5. The most heavily attended hotel life events included Counselor Orientation and Club G2K nightlife. The morning Eucharist was rated as the most valuable (See Table 3). On average, the adults rated their *overall* hotel life experience as a 2.9 on a five-point scale.

Table 3

Hotel Event (in order of greatest participation)	Participation (percentage)	Mean
Counselor Orientation	78.0	2.3
Club G2K nightlife	61.4	2.2
Morning Eucharist	38.9	1.7
Breakfast Clubs	38.0	2.3
Rest Stops	17.8	2.3
Morning exercise class	2.6	2.0

When given the opportunity to comment on hotel life at the gathering, 53 percent made a comment in this section. Of these, 57 percent commented on the problems and difficulties with transportation.

At the Gathering: Events & Activities

Small Groups

Seventy-eight percent of respondents scheduled daily small group time. Of these, 24 percent used the material in *Devozine*, and 43 percent used the G2K journal in the guidebook for their small group time.

Events

There were various activities and events for youth to participate in during the gathering. The events with the most attendance were *The Beat* (100%) and the *Evening mass gatherings* (95%). Both of these were rated as “very valuable” while the *House Party* was rated as “least valuable” (See Table 4).

Table 4

Event (in order of greatest participation)	Participation (percentage)	Mean
The Beat	99.8	1.7
Evening mass gatherings	94.6	1.3
House Party	79.8	3.3
Morning Bible Study	78.0	1.4
Hip Hoppin' Around St. Louis	38.6	2.4
Two Step Service	35.6	2.4
Gathering Academies (for adult leaders)	15.9	1.8

Forty-nine percent of respondents reported participating in one of the G2K Learning Community Hoods at least once during the gathering. Sixty-seven percent indicated that all three types of learning opportunities (*houses, parks and streets*) appealed to them. Overall, the respondents felt that the learning sessions taught youth about faith practices fairly well (indicated by a 2.2 on a five-point scale).

Safety

Ensuring safety has always been a priority for gathering organizers. Seventy-four percent of respondents reported that they had not been concerned or worried about their personal or their group's safety, while 25.7 percent reported feeling concerned or worried at a specific time about their individual or group safety.

Inclusiveness

It was the gathering organizers' intent to reflect and support the ELCA goals of racial, gender and disability diversity and inclusiveness in all of the G2K events. Over 85 percent of adults felt this that these goals were met to a "great" or "very great" extent. Less than 10 percent felt that these goals were not met.

At the Gathering: Group Finances

When given the choice between keeping housing costs to a minimum by mixing youth groups in hotel rooms (to fill the room to a four-person capacity) **or** preferring youth groups be kept together, (even if that meant paying more for a room that is not filled to capacity) 87 percent preferred that youth groups were kept together.

When given the choice between paying more for a more expensive hotel that is within walking distance of the main gathering site **or** choosing a hotel primarily based on its affordability, even if it meant commuting to the main gathering site, 88 percent preferred to pay the higher cost hotel for walking distance convenience.

Reflections After the Gathering

When asked to write about an experience at the gathering that had a significant impact on them , either positive or negative, 86 percent responded to this question. Of these, 74 percent were positive, while 26 percent were negative.

Thirty-nine percent of the positive comments shared how Desmond Tutu's talk influenced their lives, while 19 percent shared how all the speakers at the mass gatherings were positive. Eighteen percent also shared how Ken Medema's music was a highlight of the gathering. Many indicated that they would like him to come back for future gatherings.

Forty-six percent of the negative comments discussed dissatisfaction with the House Party. Seventeen percent also gave negative feedback on the metrolink and transportation problems, while 11 percent indicated housing problems.

When asked for suggestions on how gathering organizers can improve ways to help congregations prepare and plan for the gathering, 63 percent chose to comment. Of these, 25 percent asked for better explanations and more details ahead of time. Fifteen percent expressed a need for better transportation to and from the main gathering site. 13 percent indicated that the language used to describe the events was confusing, and suggested that simplified explanations and clearer language should be used in all printed materials.

For the conclusions of the youth and adult G2K reports, please see the attached executive summary.