

# Getting Ready for the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering

## New Orleans, LA

### An introduction to the Getting Ready materials

Welcome to the Getting Ready resources and what we hope will be an exciting and transformative journey for you and your group. There are several things we would like to make clear to you about these Getting Ready Materials before you begin using them. We're not as funny as David Letterman, but here is our Top 10 List of Things You Need to Know about the Getting Ready Materials.

1. These materials have been written with an awareness that one piece of curriculum will not work perfectly in all places. Therefore, please tweak these materials to fit the culture and needs of your group.
2. You will receive six months of curriculum. Each month will have a different theme:
  - **January** will introduce you to New Orleans.
  - **February** will introduce you to the theme ***Jesus Justice Jazz***.
  - **March** will introduce you to vocation and service-learning.
  - **April** will introduce your group's interest area (Health & Wellness, Literacy, Housing, The Environment, Arts & Culture, or Wealth & Poverty).
  - **May** will help your group plan how to celebrate and continue the growth and transformation you experience in New Orleans upon returning home.
  - **June** will cover all the small details we often overlook before a trip like this.
3. Each month's curriculum consists of three components:
  - The **Description** will help you understand the month's subject in relation to New Orleans.
  - The **Reflection** will help you think theologically about the month's subject. These first two components are meant to be used by the group leader for background information but you are welcome to share them with your entire group.
  - The **Lesson** is the component you will use directly with your group. We have created the lessons assuming you will use one lesson per month leading up to the Gathering. Each lesson should take you no more than 90 minutes to complete. Again, feel free to tweak it in any way that might make it more suitable to your group.
4. Each lesson will begin by stating its learning objectives. We want your group to grow in *knowledge* (what you know), *skills* (what you can do), and *sensibilities* (what you care about). We will be explicit about what changes we hope will happen with each lesson.
5. We are viewing ***Jesus Justice Jazz*** as a servant school more than your typical youth gathering. You will be taking part in one of the largest service-learning experiences ever. Your group's use of these Getting Ready materials will be vital in preparing your group to experience this servant school at its fullest.
6. Be sure to plan ahead. Each lesson offers suggestions on things to use with your group to help them prepare for their experience in New Orleans. Videos and other materials that are made available or suggested. Find the best way to obtain and make use of these resources prior to your group's meeting. Also, each month's description and reflection are designed to be read on-line. They are full of hyperlinks which, when accessed, will enhance your learning and knowledge of the subject being covered. Please take the time to explore the hyperlinks embedded in these texts.
7. Some of these lessons will require your group to talk about tough issues such as racism, poverty, and other injustices. Please do not feel as though you need to be able to offer up answers to all of the questions these lessons might generate. As Christian community, we are called to come together to seek meaning together. This is not an easy task, but it is the task to which we've been called.

8. Help your group fall in love with New Orleans. Find interesting ways to delve deeper into the beautiful and diverse culture of New Orleans. Have someone from New Orleans come and speak to your group. Find recipes for some of the unique food from New Orleans and plan a feast for your group. Take time to learn about Mardi Gras prior to Lent this year. View some of the educational and touching documentaries about New Orleans and hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Become lovers of jazz.
9. Take the time to share ideas with one another and feedback with the authors. We want to know how you are using the curriculum and how you are changing it to make it work better. What works well? What fails miserably? Email us at [rod.boriack@elca.org](mailto:rod.boriack@elca.org) to share your ideas, and to let us know how we can improve the upcoming month's curriculum.
10. **Lastly, pray.** Ask your leaders, your group members, and your entire congregation to enter into an intentional six-month period of focused prayer. Pray for your group, that the Holy Spirit might prepare each member to experience *Jesus Justice Jazz* to its fullest. Pray for the people of New Orleans, as they continue to recover and celebrate. Pray for the ELCA, as it works tirelessly with leaders, volunteers, and the city of New Orleans to construct a very different type of Gathering with youth.

All of the Getting Ready materials with links will be listed at  
[http://archive.elca.org/youth/gathering\\_getting\\_ready/resources.html](http://archive.elca.org/youth/gathering_getting_ready/resources.html)

We hope these Getting Ready materials will be informative, easy to use, and helpful. **Please let us know at [rod.boriack@elca.org](mailto:rod.boriack@elca.org) if they are or not.** They are meant to serve you and your group as you prepare for what will be an incredibly significant faith experience for all of us.

God's peace,

*Jeremy Myers* (On behalf of the Getting Ready authors.)