

2009 ELCA Youth Gathering Videos

The videos on the enclosed DVD are provided to help youth, leaders, and congregations develop deep discussions, a vision of the Gathering experience, and a feeling for the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering's theme: *Jesus • Justice • Jazz*. You can also find the videos on the Gathering Web site at www.elca.org/gathering.

How to use the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering video segments

Chances are you need no help at all in figuring out how to use and discuss the Gathering videos as your congregation talks about participating in the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. But if you're looking for some suggestions or ideas, here are a few:

1. The primary videos to use are the first three: *Marked*, *Opportunity*, and *Invitation*. These three segments each serve a specific purpose and are meant to be viewed and discussed in sequence. The additional videos, *Hearing Voices*, can be used to further explore the experiences of two different people in post-Katrina New Orleans—a survivor and a volunteer.

Use the options menu in your media player to access the **Spanish language voice over** or **English captioning** for each video.

2. Preview the video segments before showing them to a group. Consider how to best use them with youth, parents, and the entire congregation.
3. Set the stage for watching the videos by sharing some simple introductory comments about the upcoming 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering. Examples of information shared as part of an introduction to viewing the videos:
 - The 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering is coming up in July 2009 and is going to be in New Orleans, Louisiana.
 - About 36,000 Lutheran youth and adults from all over the United States will be part of the Gathering.
 - The Gathering theme is *Jesus • Justice • Jazz* and will be built around our experiences of justice and service as followers and companions of Jesus Christ. As Christians, we strive for lives that are generous, loving, and just, and New Orleans will be a place of learning, practice, encouragement, humility, and sending.
 - Worship, Bible study, learning, community service, bands and music, prayer, fun, recreation, speakers, and meeting new people are all part of the Gathering.
 - The video segments we're about to watch and talk about will give us a glimpse of what's at the heart of the Gathering in New Orleans.
4. Show the videos *Marked*, *Opportunity*, and *Invitation* one after another without discussion. You can shave some time from each video by stopping the first two before the credits roll at the end and letting the third video play through the end of the credits. **OR...** you may decide to show each video and have some discussion after each one.
5. Talk about the imagery, stories, and message of each video and how they relate to the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering experience and how our lives are changed forever when we're marked with the cross of Christ. Work from the following questions, or craft your own to fit your group and setting. Use your own words. Talk about your next steps in planning and preparing for the Gathering.



These videos and the discussion guide are also available online at
www.elca.org/gathering

Suggested discussion questions for the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering videos

Video #1: *MARKED* (01:18 minutes)

1. What images caught your attention? What have you heard about New Orleans?
2. This is an unusual introduction to the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans! There aren't many words and it's not oozing with details and information, but what DOES it tell you about the Gathering experience and community we're being invited to be part of?
3. The only words in this video are, "Whoa. That's gonna leave a mark." What does that mean when you think about your own faith, what we'll be doing in New Orleans, and our congregation? What kind of mark do we leave when we serve and love others as people who follow Jesus; what kind of mark does Jesus leave on us as a result? (You might want to reference your group's previous servant learning or mission trip experiences. What kind of mark did Jesus leave on you from that experience?)
4. When we baptize someone, we often say "...child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." What does it say about who we are, what God has given us, and what we are called to do when we're marked with the cross of Christ?

Video #2: *OPPORTUNITY* (03:39)

1. Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast states and New Orleans in 2005. The 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering is happening 4 years later. What has life been like in New Orleans and other areas of the Gulf Coast since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita? How do you think their situation and needs will change over the years to come?
2. Why is it so important to be with people who have experienced tragedy or difficult things, and to not forget them as time and life moves on? The Gospel of Matthew ends with these words of Jesus after his resurrection, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b) "I am with you always." "I won't forget you." These are powerful words to have faith in and to remind each other of.
3. What opportunities and challenges do you think you'll personally face in going to New Orleans? What will our group face?
4. Pastor Ewbank talks about "...a real encounter with the Holy Spirit—alive and kickin'!" What does he mean? Why does he make it sound like both an invitation and a warning?

Video #3: INVITATION (10:28)

1. How are we connected with the people who live in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast area (or in other places of the world)? What does our faith have to do with it? Our baptism?
2. Wendy, the youth minister, talked about a friend who came to help her after the hurricane. Wendy said, “She was Jesus to me.” When you think about different stories in the Bible, how did Jesus approach people in pain or need? When have you recognized Jesus in another person—the presence and actions of God right then and there?
3. One of the big questions about all this is, “What difference does it make?” (Our going to the Gathering in New Orleans, serving others, helping people continue to rebuild after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, caring about others, living as a servant as Jesus did?) As companions and followers of Jesus, how are we to live? Read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and the story of Peter and John’s bold preaching and healing (Acts 4:13-22).
4. Pastor Keen hopes that everyone coming to New Orleans will have a “hallelujah moment” that will last a lifetime. What would a “hallelujah moment” be for you? What do you hope will happen?
5. What kinds of things will we need to do, talk about, pray about, or plan for before our experience? In what areas do we need an extra measure of God’s guidance and mercy?
6. Pray for all places and people in need around the world. Name specific situations, people, and places. (Keep a prayer list posted that you can refer to whenever you gather. Add to the list each time you meet.)

HEARING VOICES

Rev. Sean Ewbank video (03:11)

1. Pastor Ewbank responded to an older woman who needed her roof fixed. He did the work even though he felt inadequate and like someone else could have done the job better. Have you ever felt inadequate, small, or uncertain when faced with helping someone or responding to a problem or issue in the world? How did you work through it? Have you ever thought to yourself “someone else can take care of this” or “it’s not my problem” when faced with the decision to help someone? What did you end up doing? Why?
2. “God used me to make a difference” is what Pastor Ewbank ends up saying about his experience of trying to help someone. God uses a Samaritan in the parable of the Good Samaritan to take care of someone who has been beat up and left to die on a road. (Luke 10:25-37) God uses Peter and John to boldly tell others about Jesus and to heal a man who can’t walk. (Acts 4:13-22) What happens when we give into the gospel—get lost in it—and are moved through life by the Holy Spirit? What things might change or be different in the world, or in your everyday life?
3. This may be a good jumping off point for discussions that encourage people to think about how the gospel changes and challenges us. It may also be a good point to talk about “the next steps” needed to make a difference.

Wendy Garrigues video (03:24)

1. In what ways do you imagine Wendy's life and ministry were turned upside down after Hurricane Katrina? If you were in her shoes, what would you have done?
2. "What do I do?" That's the question Wendy asked of God in the face of all the chaos and change in her life. Sometimes we just don't know what to do. How do you think God works when we're confused and searching for answers? Where do answers and direction come from when you're stuck? Remember the story of Jesus sending the disciples out to preach and heal people? (Mark 6:6b-13) Odds are most of the disciples were wondering to themselves, "What do I do?" There was no well-written plan or easy-to-follow instruction book. They went out anyway and amazing things happened as they wandered the roads and villages and met up with all kinds of people. God was working through them; even in their uncertainty.
3. What opportunities for caring for people who are suffering, living in turmoil, or in pain are here right in front of us—in this community? What resources or abilities do we have right now that we could use to do something? (Create a list of assets or resources. Talk about how you might connect them and use them. These can be personal, congregational, or community assets.)



Other resources on ELCA opportunities for servant learning and the hurricane recovery efforts can be found at:

- ▶ "Journeys for Youth and Young Adults" (www.elca.org/camps/journeys)
- ▶ ELCA Disaster Response (www.elca.org/disaster)
- ▶ The 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering Web site (www.elca.org/gathering)
- ▶ The ELCA Youth Ministry links page (www.elca.org/youth/links)
- ▶ Spike Lee's HBO documentary film *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* (www.hbo.com/docs/programs/whentheleveesbroke/)
- ▶ The PBS American Experience program *New Orleans* (www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/neworleans/index)
- ▶ The PBS Tavis Smiley program *Right to Return: New Home Movies from the Lower 9th Ward* (www.pbs.org/kcet/tavissmiley/special/righttoreturn)

© 2007 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ELCA Youth Ministry
8765 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

1-800-638-3522, ext. 2447
www.elca.org/youth
www.elca.org/gathering