

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A YOUNG ADULT at Virginia Synod Youth Events

(or an adult of any age, really!)

## → Be sure to agree to the expectations as listed on the “Small Group Leader Information Sheet”!

There is some \*very essential\* information contained in about a half-dozen bullet points, and unlike software fine print, where you just click yes on the terms and conditions without looking at them ***☞ You really \*do\* have to read and agree to all of the items described in that list!***

## → You’re there for others!

If you attended Lost and Found, Winter Celebration, or Kairos as a youth, you know that many caring adults gave of their time and love to nurture you through your formative years in the Christian Faith. Now it’s your turn to give your all to a new generation of youth for this weekend! You will undoubtedly enjoy the company of others and the familiar feelings of joy in the event itself, but your primary purpose is to serve the participants who are there.

***☞ Remember that if you attended youth events as a participant, coming back as an advisor or leader will be a new experience and may feel very different from what you remember. Your expectations will be different from those of the participants, so at every point during the weekend, you should ask yourself: “Am I here for myself or am I here for the youth?”***

## → You serve as a model!

During the day, as a small group leader or assistant and someone not the age of participants’ pastor or parents, you have a special kind of credibility for the participants, and you can show them that it’s okay to be a person of faith even at their age, particularly by mingling with them at Large Group and meals. At night, if you’re not being housed with your own congregation, you will be with one or two other college-age students in a cottage with a congregation and their leaders. You can help encourage them to take seriously the “Cabin Conversation” time and provide a good example of the kind of sharing that can go on there. Not all congregations do this, but many of you know how valuable it is, so we’re counting on you to help make it happen! Naturally, all of the event expectations - attendance at all activities of the entire event, lights out time, substance restrictions - apply to you as well. Your example in that regard can be an important one!

***☞ Please make a note on your event registration form if you have a preference for the congregation you would like to be housed with and if there’s another group leader you would particularly like to work with!***

## → Your own faith grows!

We have had countless stories from surprised young adults who find that the events mean even more to them now than when they were participants themselves! The experience of

putting your faith into words for these young minds can be frightening and daunting, but also exhilarating, as you find yourself saying something that will truly make a difference in the life of another person. At the same time, there is an assurance that comes with telling your own faith story, as a way of saying to yourself as well as others, "Yes - I truly believe these things."

***☞ Be ready to share your own faith story, and be ready to be changed!***

## → You visit with your friends!

Since some of you college-aged leaders will not be there as advisors for a group of youth, you will have your Saturday free time truly free! This is a perfect time for you to gather and catch up with your old friends, make new ones, and engage in some reflection on how all of this is affecting you faith-wise and other-wise to be at Lost and Found now that you're out of high school.

***☞ Don't pass up this opportunity to work on your own vocational discernment!***

## → You serve in a role of risk and responsibility!

At Virginia Synod Youth Events we take our calling to build faith-formative relationships with young people very seriously. Part of that task sometimes involves being in close proximity and honest conversation with the participants. There is no way to completely eliminate the risks that are involved with this work, but we insist that every adult at our events abide by the expectation that we will never engage in inappropriate or unwelcome touching, suggestive or intimate conversation, or any other inappropriate behavior with either youth or adults. Avoid spending time alone with a single youth or in an isolated spot. Please keep an eye on each other for any actions that cause you concern or could be misinterpreted by anyone watching.

***☞ Make sure you maintain good and appropriate boundaries with each other and especially with the youth participants.***

### **One more expectation in particular needs to be emphasized:**

All adults at youth events, including young adults who are not congregational advisors, are required to be in their own assigned cottages or living spaces as soon as the evening's activities have ended. That means that on Friday and Saturday nights, as soon as the final large group gathering in Dogwood Auditorium is done, you must immediately go back to your assigned cottage unless you are engaged in a specific assignment from Synodical Youth Director Dave Delaney.

There are a lot of good reasons why this is a good and helpful rule, but it is so strongly stressed here because it is one of the important published safety features of our events.

Participants' parents and many others are counting on this guideline and others being followed to give them confidence about Lost and Found as a safe place for their children. Please encourage your friends to be aware of this important point, and thank you again very much for answering this important call to service. You are evidence of the Spirit's work in the Virginia Synod!