

Live Love(d) Revisited

Post-Gathering Bible Study



Participant's Guide

Introduction

It's been several weeks since we gathered together with 25,000 Lutheran youth, adults, and volunteers in San Antonio, Texas for the 2013 LCMS National Youth Gathering. As you think about your experience during those five days, what comes to mind when you hear these words?

The Riverwalk
The Convention Center
Gathering News
Bands/music
Your hotel
Thursday morning worship in the Alamodome
Speakers
Friends/relationships

A Mountaintop Experience

Sarah, the emcee for the Mass Events, described the National Youth Gathering as a "mountaintop experience." What does this mean? What moments felt like this for you? What might be some ways of recalling this Gathering experience when you feel uninspired in your faith?

During the opening Mass Event we imagined what the disciples experienced on the day of Pentecost. This was certainly a "mountaintop experience" for them. Read Acts 2:1-4 and recall how the opening Mass Event tried to portray what happened on Pentecost.

Remembering Pentecost was an appropriate start to the Gathering because, without Pentecost, none of us would believe in Jesus. Why was Pentecost necessary for us?

It's All About Love

At the heart of "Live Love(d)" is Jesus. During the Wednesday evening Mass Event we remembered His birth, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection. As a group, recall some of the scenes from Jesus' life portrayed that night.

Love Born
Love Sent
Love Died
Love Lives

With these scenes in mind, read 1 John 4:9-10. How is Jesus **real** love?

We entered the scene on Wednesday night when, responding to God's Word of Law, we confessed our sins by writing a specific sin on a sheet of paper and passed them down our rows. These sins were then dumped at the foot of the cross. Read 1 John 1:8-9. What did God do with these sins?

As the papers were dumped at the foot of the cross, the band played a song called "Lay 'Em Down." This song was upbeat—almost joyful. How is it possible that confessing our sins can be joyful?

On Thursday morning the Divine Service was a celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Why is Easter so important for our lives as Christians?

Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, which becomes ours at baptism, we are forgiven and restored children of God. How does this affect the way you look at yourself?

The LCMS National Youth *SENDING*

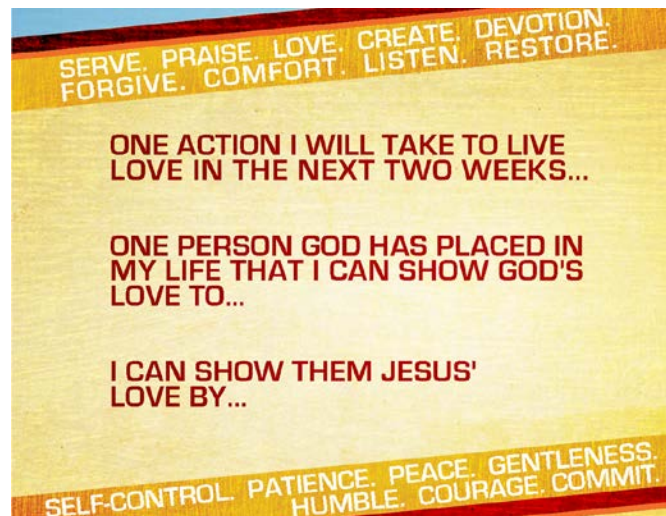
The theme for the 2013 LCMS National Youth Gathering was "Live Love(d)." Did you figure out why the "d" was in parentheses?

We gathered together in San Antonio, but we didn't stay there. Like He sent His people at Pentecost to bring His love to the world, so also God sent us back home to share His love with the people in our communities and congregations. Read 1 John 4:19-21. What is God's command to us?

Loving others is not easy. Read 1 John 4:13-16. How does God enable us to love others?

Dan, the Bible study leader, said: "God loves us and then we love God and we love each other...God first pours his love into us – unconditional love in Jesus – and in grateful response we love God and we love others." Fill in the blank: God loves us, and God loves _____ us.

During the final Mass Event, you had the opportunity to fill out a postcard with a concrete idea about how you can live love in a very tangible way back home. Have you received it yet? If not, do you remember the idea you had?



Sarah described herself as a “boring Israelite.” Like her, most of us don’t make the front page of the newspaper. Many of our acts of love go relatively unnoticed. But imagine what would happen if 25,000 people returned home and lived love for others. What kind of difference would this make?

Real love is never alone. It always involves God, and it always involves others. How can you, as a group, live love(d) in your congregation? In your community? How can your group make a difference in this broken and dying world?

Closing Prayer

O God, it was such an incredible blessing to gather with so many other believers to learn and grow and experience Your immense love for each of us. But we have now returned home, where sometimes it is hard to feel excited about living love(d). So we ask that each day You help us recall our baptism – remembering we are made new each day through You. Each time we gather for the Lord’s Supper, may we remember Your sacrifice and forgiveness. Each time we gather as a youth group and as a congregation, let it be a reminder of the larger community of believers with the same struggles, but who also have the same love in You. Forgive us when our love fails. Lead us to walk with You always, loving everyone you place in our path. In Your love and in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.