

2000 ELCA Youth Gathering Executive Summary¹

Jennifer Esser

ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation

February, 2001

WHO ATTENDED

Based on the registration materials, 2,983 congregations sent at least one young person to the Gathering (G2K). The average number of youth was 10 per congregation and ranged from one to as many as 71. The median number per congregation was eight.

Sixteen percent of the youth attendees were from rural congregations; 23 percent from congregations in small towns of less than 10,000 persons; 18 percent from small cities of 10,000 to 50,000; 18 percent from cities of 50,000 to 250,000; eight percent from urban cities of 250,000 or more; 11 percent from suburbs within 10 miles of urban cities and seven percent from suburbs outside of 10 miles of urban cities.

Three percent of the youth attendees were from congregations with less than 175 baptized members; 12 percent from congregations with 175 to 350 members; 14 percent from congregations with 350 to 500 members; 17 percent from congregations with 500 to 700 members; 17 percent from congregations with 700 to 950 members; 19 percent from congregations with 950 to 1,500 members; and 17 percent from congregations with over 1,500 members.

THE SAMPLE AND RESPONSE RATE

The sample of youth and adults who received the G2K evaluation questionnaire was representative of the youth and adults participants by geographic region and gender as were the responses. From the original youth mailing of 1,008 questionnaires, 495 were returned for a response rate of 49 percent. From the original adult mailing of 859 questionnaires, 573 were returned for a response rate of 67 percent.

PLANNING FOR THE GATHERING

When comparing all of the Gathering preparation materials and suggestions, identifying and building relationships with mentors may have a stronger impact than the *Playbook* or G2K video. About 20 percent of adults and 42 percent of youth indicated that they participated in the mentoring preparation suggestion. Of those, more than 90 percent indicated that these

¹ While most of the findings throughout the reported are in percentages, it should be kept in mind that even small percentages can reflect a large number of Gathering (G2K) participants due to the overall size of the Gathering. For example, 10 percent represents approximately 2,900 youth.

relationships were “somewhat” to “very valuable.” This suggests that the Gathering planners may want to emphasize the importance and benefits of identifying and using mentors for Gathering preparation.

G2K AND HOTEL REGISTRATIONS

Adults were asked various questions regarding the registration processes for both the Gathering and the hotel. About 58 percent had contact with their synod coordinator. On average, their contact with the synod coordinator was only fairly helpful (2.6 on a five-point scale with “1” as “very helpful”). This suggests that the role and significance of the synod coordinator should be reevaluated by the Gathering organizers.

Almost 50 percent of the adults indicated that they encountered problems making their hotel reservations. Their comments suggest three major problem areas: the accuracy of hotel reservations, the quality of the hotel facilities, and transportation difficulties to and from the hotel. The comments suggest that hotel registration, in and of itself, was not the total issue.

HOTEL LIFE

The level of youth and adult participation at the various hotel life events was about the same. The most frequently attended event was Club G2K Nightlife. Of the youth who commented on hotel life in general, about one-third complained about the lack of hotel life at their particular hotel. This suggests that hotel life activities, if possible, should be more evenly dispersed among all hotel locations.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Evening mass gatherings and the Beat were the two most frequently attended activities at the Gathering and both adults and youth rated these activities as “somewhat” to “very valuable” (“1” or “2” on a five-point scale). The youth identified keynote speakers and musicians such as Desmond Tutu, Mike Yaconelli, Lost & Found, and Ken Medema as being highlights of their mass gathering experiences. Eighty-three percent of youth found meaning in the theme “Dancing at the Cross Roads.” This suggests that keynote speakers, musicians, and the theme have a major impact on the overall experience of the gathering.

G2K LEARNING

About 36 percent of youth and 49 percent of adults participated in a learning activity. The learning activities were designed to teach youth about faith practices and spiritual gifts. Fourteen percent of youth were able to identify a spiritual gift and 89 percent of the youth who identified a spiritual gift indicated that what they had learned was applicable to their lives. This suggests that gathering organizers may want to emphasize the benefits of identifying spiritual gifts in order to encourage more interest among the youth and adults in pursuing a learning activity.

SAFETY

Ensuring safety throughout the gathering has always been a priority. About 25 percent of adults and 17 percent of youth indicated that they felt concerned about their individual or group safety at

least once during the gathering. The most frequently mentioned concern was safety while using public transportation. This may be directly related to the fact that a very high percentage of youth at the gathering are from small and rural towns and cities.

DIVERSITY IN G2K EVENTS

The gathering strives to support the ELCA goals of racial, gender and disability inclusiveness and diversity in all gathering events and activities. About 90 percent of youth and adults indicated that the goals of diversity were met to a “great extent” or to a “very great extent.” Respondents who felt otherwise often commented on the lack of diversity among participants.

GROUP FINANCES

About 87 percent of adults stated that they would prefer that youth groups were kept together, even if that meant paying more for a room that is not filled to capacity. About 88 percent of the adults also indicated that they would prefer their counselor unit stay within walking distance of the gathering site even if it meant paying more for rooms.

2000 ELCA Youth Gathering Evaluation of Youth Participants

Evaluation Report

Jennifer Esser

ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation

February, 2001

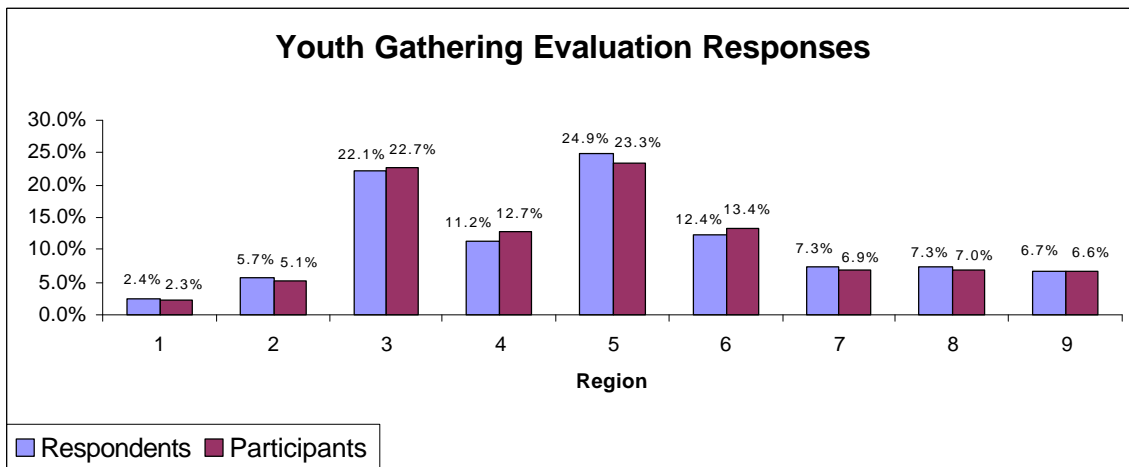
From June 28 through July 2 and July 5 through July 9, 2000 over 29,000 ELCA youth gathered in St. Louis, MO for the ELCA 2000 Youth Gathering (G2K). The Department for Research and Evaluation (DRE) has conducted both qualitative and quantitative evaluations of G2K. This is a quantitative report that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

Response Rate

In order to evaluate the experiences of youth participants, we invited a random sample of 1008 youth participants to complete and return a gathering evaluation questionnaire (see the attached appendix for a sample questionnaire). The youth sample was representative of the youth attendance at the gathering by age, region and gender. From the original youth mailing of 1008 questionnaires, 495 were returned for a response rate of 49 percent.

Although the response rate is slightly less than half, the youth response rate is representative of the youth gathering attendance by age and geographic region of the ELCA (See Figure 1). The mean age for youth responses was 15.5 and the mean age for all youth participants was also 15.5. There was a slightly higher percentage of female and lower percentage of male youth respondents in comparison to the youth gathering attendance.

Figure 1



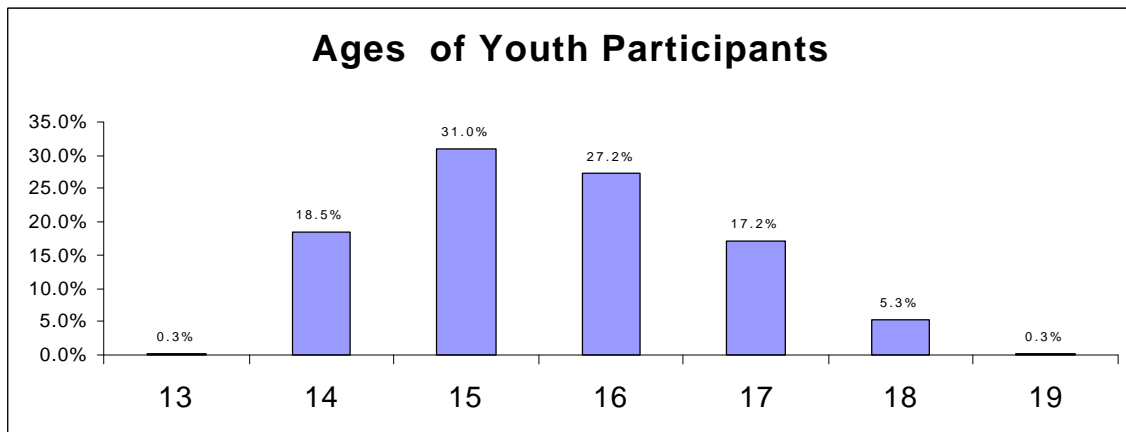
This was the first ELCA youth gathering for 85 percent of respondents. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents attended G2K as youth participants. Three percent of the respondents attended the LYO convention as voting members. One percent of respondents attended G2K as synod youth committee members. Less than one percent of respondents were gathering volunteers. Also, less than one percent participated in the Multi-cultural Youth Leadership Event, as well as the Definitely-abled Youth Leadership Event.

The youth respondents participate in the life of the church in many ways. The most frequently mentioned positions include: youth group member (91%), Sunday school student (58%), acolyte in worship (50%), usher (40%), vacation Bible school teacher (40%), music member (39%), lector during worship (36%), and nursery volunteer (34%).

Characteristics of the Gathering Participants

Based on the evaluation, we found that slightly over 77 percent of the youth respondents were 16 or younger, which compares to 65 percent in 1997 (See Figure 2). Over 60 percent were entering the tenth or eleventh grade. Among all youth participants from the registration materials, 58 percent were female and 42 percent were male.

Figure 2



The registration materials for G2K asked for the racial/ethnic characteristics of each participant. After the analysis, we found that 93 percent of youth participants identified themselves as White Caucasian, one percent of youth participants identified themselves as Multiracial, and three percent of youth participants identified themselves as one of the following: African American, Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Native Alaskan/American Indian. Three percent of youth participants left this section of the registration materials blank.

Findings¹

Planning for G2K

A G2K promotional video was sent to all congregations prior to the gathering. Twenty-nine percent of youth respondents indicated that they saw the video before deciding to attend the gathering. However, of those respondents who saw the video, 79 percent indicated that the video was either somewhat or very helpful.²

Prior to G2K, materials were sent to youth counselors that encouraged youth to complete a “spiritual gifts inventory” as part of their preparation for the gathering. Thirty-nine percent of youth indicated that they completed a spiritual gifts inventory. Of those, 45 percent indicated that the inventory was used when planning for events at the gathering.

In addition, youth were encouraged to identify and build a relationship with a mentor as another part of their gathering preparation. Forty-two percent indicated that they identified and built a relationship with a mentor. Of those, 91 percent indicated that this relationship was either somewhat or very valuable.³

Fifty-three percent of youth respondents indicated that they lead or took part in a worship service related to the gathering prior to G2K. Over half of those respondents indicated that their participation was part of their congregation’s normal worship service, while almost one quarter indicated that they participated in a special worship service just for G2K participants.

When asked for additional comments on pre-gathering activities or resources, 15 percent of respondents made a comment. Of those, 23 percent shared their ideas on fund-raising activities.

¹For more detailed information, see the youth frequencies found in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

²In this context, helpfulness was measured on a five-point scale, with 1 being “very helpful” and 5 being “not very helpful.”

³ In this context, value was measured on a five-point scale, with 1 being “very valuable” and 5 being “not very valuable.”

Hotel Life at the Gathering

There were both morning and evening activities at the G2K hotels. The most heavily attended events included dance clubs, “Club Live” and breakfast clubs. The least attended hotel events included comedy clubs and morning exercise classes (See Table 1). The fun clubs and “Club Live” were given the highest average ratings, while the breakfast clubs and morning exercise clubs were given the lowest average ratings on a five-point value scale.⁴ On average, the youth rated their *overall* hotel experience as a 2.3 on a five-point scale.

Table 1

Hotel Event (in order of greatest participation)	Participation (percentage)	Mean
Dance Clubs	72.7	2.1
Club Live!	41.0	2.0
Breakfast Clubs	37.2	2.6
Fun Clubs	29.1	1.9
Morning Eucharist	25.5	2.1
Rest Stops	20.8	2.3
Comedy Clubs	12.1	2.1
Morning Exercise Clubs	6.3	2.3

When asked to comment on hotel life at the gathering, 40 percent made a comment. Of those, 31 percent expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of hotel life at their hotel. Also, nine percent indicated frustration with transportation problems to and from their hotel.

Events and Activities

There were many activities and events for youth to participate in during the gathering. The evening mass gatherings were rated as the most valuable (1.5), while the house party was rated as the least valuable (2.4, See Table 2).

⁴In this context, value was measured on a five-point scale, with 1 being “very valuable” and 5 being “not very valuable”

Table 2

Event (in order of greatest participation)	Participation (percentage)	Mean
Evening mass gatherings	94.1	1.5
The Beat	89.1	1.9
House Party	75.8	2.4
Morning Bible Study	73.7	1.8
Hip Hoppin’ Around St. Louis	35.6	2.0
Two Step Service	33.5	2.0

Youth were also asked about what their favorite activity/exhibit/area at the Beat. Eighty-four percent of respondents responded. Of these, 15 percent favored art and craft areas, while another 15 percent favored sporting event areas. The climbing wall and zip line were the next most frequently mentioned (11% and 8% respectively).

Youth were also asked to identify a speaker, emcee, Bible study leader, musician, or band that was particularly important to them. Eighty-eight percent of respondents responded. Desmond Tutu (16%) was mentioned most often, followed by Mike Yaconelli (10%), Lost and Found (9%) and Ken Medema (8%).

The youth were asked to indicate how well they liked the G2K theme “Dancing at the Cross Roads.” Eighty-three percent indicated that they really liked it, and found some sort of meaning in the theme.

G2K Learning Community

Learning opportunities were organized into three different styles or “hoods” (as in neighborhood) which included houses (traditional workshops), parks (large group experiences), and streets (interactive experiences). Thirty-six percent indicated that they participated in at least one G2K learning community. Of those, 68 percent described a learning session that they liked best. The two learning sessions that were most frequently mentioned were the labyrinth (17%) and the bishops’ beach (10%).

Of those who attended a learning community hood, 14 percent identified a spiritual gift or faith practice, but there was no consistent comments that identified a specific spiritual gift that was remembered or learned.

Of those who attended a learning community, the houses were least appealing (12%), while the parks were most appealing (28%). However, 35 percent indicated that all three types of learning opportunities were appealing.

Respondents were also asked to share any additional comments on the G2K learning community. Sixteen percent made a comment in this section, but, there was no consistency of comments in this section. Also, there appeared to be confusion in this section because some respondents commented on speakers that were not part of the learning community, such as Desmond Tutu and Mike Yaconelli.

Safety

Ensuring safety has always been a priority for gathering organizers. Eighty-three percent of youth indicated that they were not worried about their individual or group safety, while 17 percent indicated that they were concerned or worried at a specific time during the gathering. Of those that indicated a concern, 27 percent stated that they felt unsafe using the public transportation. The second most frequently mentioned safety concern was the respondents' hotel or hotel area (13%).

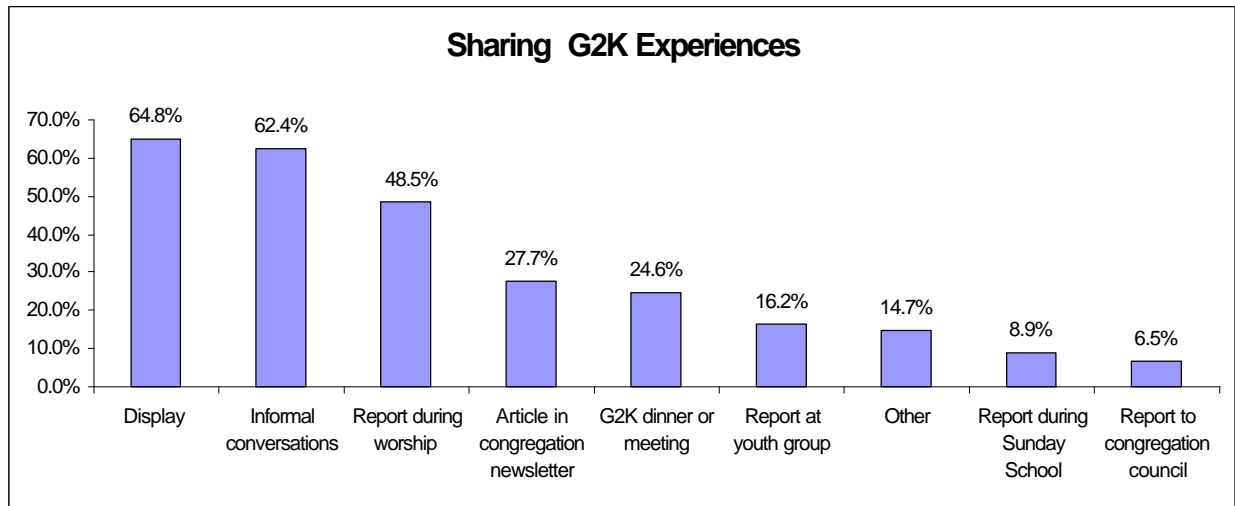
Diversity in G2K Events

It was the gathering organizers' intent to reflect and support the ELCA goals of racial, gender and disability inclusiveness and diversity in all of the G2K events. Over 80 percent of youth felt that these goals were met to a "great" or "very great" extent. Less than 5 percent felt that these goals were not met.

Reflections after the Gathering

There were many ways for youth to share their G2K experiences with their congregations. The most frequent way of sharing G2K experiences included informal conversations, displays, or presentations during worship services (See Figure 3).

Figure 3



Youth were asked to write about an experience that had a significant impact on them at the gathering, either positive or negative. Eighty-one percent responded to this question. Of these, 91 percent of the comments were positive, while nine percent were negative. Eighteen percent of the comments shared how Desmond Tutu’s talk influenced their lives, while seven percent shared that the mass gathering experiences of G2K had a significant impact on them.

Finally, respondents were asked to help planners for future gatherings by suggesting one aspect of the gathering that they should keep and one aspect of the gathering that they should leave out. Eighty-nine percent made a comment on what to keep, while sixty-six percent made a comment on what planners should leave out. The most frequently suggested aspects of the gathering that were suggested to keep included: Lost and Found (12%), the Beat (10%), Desmond Tutu (9%), and Ken Medema (8%). The only aspect of the gathering that many believed could be left out was the House Party (40%).

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



2000 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING EVALUATION
Youth Participant Questionnaire
 November 2000



Thank you for helping us evaluate G2K! Here's your chance to help planners and organizers prepare for the next Gathering. Please answer the following questions based on your own personal experiences at the Gathering. If you need more space for comments, feel free to attach additional pages as needed.

PLANNING FOR THE GATHERING

We're interested in what you and your counselor unit did to prepare for the Gathering. Your own congregation might have used some of these activities and resources before the Gathering, or maybe none at all. If you don't know anything about a particular resource or activity, just mark the "don't know" response, and go on to the next question.

1. Did you see the G2K promotional video before deciding to come to the Gathering?

28.6%	Yes (<i>Please answer part B</i>)	B. How helpful was the video in helping you decide to come to the Gathering?					
62.0	No (<i>Please skip to question 2</i>)	<u>Very Helpful</u>		<u>Somewhat Helpful</u>		<u>Not Very Helpful</u>	<u>Mean</u>
		1	2	3	4	5	
9.4	I don't know (<i>Please skip to question 2</i>)	11.1%	26.7	40.7	12.6	8.9	2.81

2. Did you complete a "spiritual gifts inventory" (either on paper or on-line) before the Gathering?

39.3%	Yes (<i>Please answer part B</i>) →	B. Did you use this spiritual gifts inventory when planning for events at the Gathering?				
41.9	No (<i>Please skip to question 3</i>)	44.5%	Yes			
18.8	I don't know (<i>Please skip to question 3</i>)	55.5	No			

3. Did you identify and build a relationship with a mentor as part of your preparation for the Gathering?

42.3%	Yes (<i>Please answer part B</i>)	B. How valuable was this mentoring relationship to you?					
57.7	No (<i>Please skip to question 4</i>)	<u>Very Valuable</u>		<u>Somewhat Valuable</u>		<u>Not Very Valuable</u>	<u>Mean</u>
		1	2	3	4	5	
		30.7%	34.2	26.2	6.9	2.0	2.15

4. Did you and other youth members from your congregation lead or take part in a worship service related to the Gathering in preparation for the Gathering?

53.7%	Yes (<i>Please answer part B</i>)	B. What kind of worship service was it? Was it . . .				
46.3	No (<i>Please skip to question 5</i>)	<i>(pick one response from the list below)</i>				
		55.2%	Part of your congregation's normal worship service?			
		10.5	A special worship service just for youth?			
		23.0	A special worship service just for G2K participants?			
		11.3	Other:			

Any additional comments on any pre-Gathering activities or resources?

15.2% made a comment on pre-Gathering activities or resources.

AT THE GATHERING: HOTEL LIFE

5. Think back on the events and activities occurring at the Gathering hotels. First, mark those hotel life activities in which you personally attended and/or participated at least once. Next, please rate how valuable those experiences (*only* those in which you participated) were for you personally.

<u>Hotel Event</u>	<u>I participated</u>	<u>Very Valuable</u>				<u>Not Very Valuable</u>		<u>Mean</u>
		1	2	3	4	5		
A. Breakfast Clubs	37.2%	20.2%	28.1	31.5	14.6	5.6	2.57	
B. Morning Eucharist	25.5	34.5	37.8	16.0	7.6	4.2	2.09	
C. Morning exercise class	6.3	29.6	33.3	18.5	11.1	7.4	2.33	
D. Club G2K nightlife:								
1. Club Live!	41.0	39.4	30.1	23.8	5.2	1.6	1.99	
2. Dance Clubs	72.5	42.9	21.2	18.6	11.3	6.1	2.17	
3. Comedy Clubs	12.1	40.0	25.4	23.7	5.1	5.1	2.08	
4. Fun Clubs	29.1	42.4	33.8	15.8	5.8	2.2	1.91	
E. Rest Stops	20.8	30.1	34.4	21.9	7.6	6.0	2.25	

<u>Excellent</u>	1	2	3	4	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Mean</u>
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6. Please rate the overall quality of your hotel life experiences 30.1% 34.4 21.9 7.6 6.0 2.25

Any additional comments on the hotel life at the Gathering? 39.8% made a comment on hotel life.

AT THE GATHERING: EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

7. What did you and your counselor group actually do at the Gathering, and how valuable was it to you? Please mark the box next to those events in which you *personally* participated at least one time at the Gathering. Next, please rate how valuable those experiences were for you by circling the appropriate number along the 5-point scale.

<u>Event</u>	<u>I participated</u>	<u>Very Valuable</u>				<u>Not Very Valuable</u>		<u>Mean</u>
		1	2	3	4	5		
A. Two Step Service	33.5%	43.0	30.4	19.6	2.5	4.4	1.95	
B. Hip Hoppin' Around St. Louis	35.6	39.6	34.3	18.9	5.3	1.8	1.95	
C. The Beat	89.1	43.5	31.8	17.8	5.1	1.9	1.90	
D. House Party (Thurs night at the Dome)	75.8	36.2	21.9	17.3	14.2	10.4	2.41	
E. Morning Bible Study (TWA Dome)	73.7	49.6	33.6	10.6	3.9	2.2	1.76	
F. Evening mass gatherings (TWA Dome).	94.1	66.3	21.3	8.5	2.6	1.3	1.51	

7b.If you went to “The Beat,” what was your favorite activity/exhibit/area?

83.6 respondents commented on what their favorite activity/exhibit area was.

8. What did you think of the Gathering theme “Dancing at the Cross Roads”?

- 44.5% I *really* liked it; it was very meaningful to me.
- 38.1 I liked it; it was kind of meaningful to me.
- 18.2 I’m neutral about it; it was OK.
- 2.5 I didn’t like it; it didn’t really mean much to me.
- 1.7 I *really* didn’t like it; it wasn’t meaningful for me at all.

Appendix 1: Frequencies of Youth Respondents

9. Was there a speaker, emcee, Bible study leader, musician, or band that was particularly important to you, or that you felt made a connection with you? If so, who was that person/people or band(s)? *(If you can't remember someone's name, try to describe when/where you heard this person or what s/he talked about.)*

88.3% made a comment in this section.

10. Did you participate in one of the G2K Learning Community 'Hoods at least once at the Gathering? *(You might have gone to a workshop or participated in one of the learning opportunities without knowing it was part of a 'Hood.)*

36.2% Yes → → Do you remember one learning session that you liked the best? *(Describe in the space below, and then continue on to question 11.)*

63.8 No *(Please skip to question 13)*

11. Think about the learning session(s) you attended. Did you learn about any particular faith practice or spiritual gift that you remember? If so, write it in the first column below (pick the one you remember best if there's more than one), then rate how well you think that particular gift or faith practice was taught to you. Finally, answer the question in the third column.

If you didn't learn about or remember any faith practices or spiritual gifts, just go on to question 12 (This isn't a test -- so it's OK if you don't remember!).

a. Remember a spiritual gift or faith practice?

(Write in one below)

13.7% listed a spiritual gift or faith practice

Very Well

1 45.8%

b. How well was this gift/practice taught to you?

2 30.5

3 11.9

4 5.1

Not very Well

5 6.8

c. Can you apply this gift or practice to your life?

89.3% I learned something about this spiritual gift or faith practice that I can apply to my life.

10.7 I did not learn anything about this gift or practice that I can apply to my life.

12. The Gathering featured three different learning opportunities in the 'Hoods: Houses (traditional workshops), Parks (large group experiences with music and/or speakers in which you could come and go), and Streets (interactive experiences). Which of these three types of learning opportunities most appealed to you? *(Pick only one.)*

12.2% Houses 27.9 Parks 20.3 Streets 34.7 All of them appealed to me 5.0 None of them appealed to me

Any additional comments on the G2K Learning Community? In particular, was there a speaker or musician (or more than one) at a 'Hood who stood out or who you remember as being especially good or interesting?

16.4% made a comment in this section.

13. Ensuring participant safety is always a priority for Gathering organizers. Was there any time during the Gathering when you were especially concerned or worried about your individual or group safety?

83.3% No

16.7 Yes → Please describe that particular experience(s):

14. Gathering organizers strive to reflect and support the ELCA goals of racial, gender, and disability inclusiveness and diversity in all Gathering events and activities. From your perspective, how well do you feel these goals were met?

48.3% To a very great extent

41.9 To a great extent

3.9 To some extent

5.5 Don't know

0.4 Hardly at all

REFLECTIONS AFTER THE GATHERING

15. What have you done, or what will you do to share your Gathering experiences with your congregation?

(Mark all the responses that apply from both columns)

62.4%	Informal conversations with congregation members	8.9%	A report or presentation at Sunday School or an Adult Forum
48.5	A report or presentation during a worship service	6.5	A report or presentation to the congregation council
24.6	A meeting or dinner specifically intended for talking about the Gathering	16.2	A report or presentation at a youth group meeting
27.7	A letter or article written for your congregation's newsletter or bulletin	64.8	A display of pictures, programs, and/or other souvenirs
		14.7	Other:

16. Please share with us a G2K experience or experiences that had a significant impact on you, either positively or negatively, such as a particular mass gathering, the Gathering's theme, a particular speaker, etc.

81.4 percent answered this question

17. Pretend that you're one of the planners for the 2003 Gathering in Atlanta. What one event/activity/speaker/band, or other aspect of G2K would you want definitely want to keep? What one event/activity/speaker/band or other aspect of G2K would you definitely want to dump?

Keep: 88.9% commented in this section

Dump: 66.3 commented in this section.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF . . .

18. Did you attend the Gathering as a(n) . . .
(Pick all that apply to you)

97.2%	Youth participant
0.2	MYLE participant
0.2	DAYLE participant
3.2	LYO voting member
0.8	Gathering volunteer (including YSC)
1.0	Synod Youth Committee member
0.4	Other:

19. Was this your first time at an ELCA Youth Gathering?
(Not including synodical youth gatherings)

85.1% Yes

14.9 No

20. During the past year, in which of the following ways did you participate in the leadership of your congregation?

(Mark all that apply)

50.3	Acolyte in worship
15.8	Assisting minister in worship
39.2	Choir member or member of another musical ensemble
10.5	Congregation council member (who can vote at council meetings)
5.7	Congregation council member/representative (non-voting)
33.7	Nursery volunteer
36.4	Reader/lector in worship
58.4	Sunday school student
22.6	Sunday school teacher/assistant
40.4	Usher
6.5	Vacation Bible School student
39.8	Vacation Bible School teacher/assistant
91.3	Youth group member
19.0	Member of a congregation committee/group (not listed above)
11.5	Other

Thank you for your time!

Please return this questionnaire in the envelope provided, or to:

ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4193

2000 ELCA Youth Gathering Evaluation of Adult Participants

Evaluation Report

Liza Canino and Jennifer Esser

ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation

February, 2001

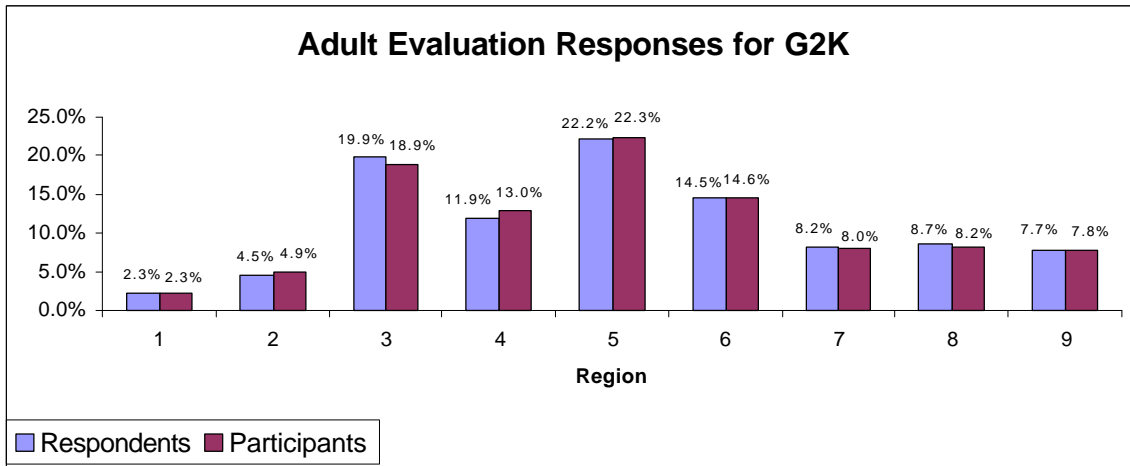
From June 28 through July 2 and July 5 through July 9, 2000 over 29,000 ELCA youth and almost 7,000 adults gathered in St. Louis, MO for the ELCA 2000 Youth Gathering (G2K). The Department for Research and Evaluation (DRE) has conducted both qualitative and quantitative evaluations of G2K. This is a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



2000 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING EVALUATION
Adult Participant Questionnaire



Frequencies
n=573; 66.7% response rate
November 2000

Thank you for helping us evaluate G2K! Your opinions and experiences will help Gathering organizers better plan and prepare for the next Gathering. Please answer the following questions based on your own personal experiences at the Gathering. Throughout this questionnaire, you will find space for brief comments on a specific topic -- if you run out of room, feel free to finish on the back page or attach additional pages as needed.

PLANNING FOR THE GATHERING

Last summer, all ELCA congregations received the youth ministry planning guide, 2000 Playbook, to use during the 1999-2000 school year. This guide had several resources that could be used in planning for the Gathering.

- Did you use the *2000 Playbook* in any way to prepare for the Gathering?
 70.9% Yes (*Please continue on to question 2*)
 22.0 No (*Please skip to question 4*)
 7.1 I don't know/ don't remember (*Please skip to question 4*)

Of those 70.9% who used the 2000 Playbook:

- Which of the following did you use from the *2000 Playbook* in preparation for the Gathering?
 (*Mark all that apply from both columns*)

64.4%	Bible studies: Pilgrimage to the Cross Roads	29.4%	<i>Songs for the Road</i> sheet music
14.4	Roadside devotional assistance (preparing devotions for traveling)	13.4	Calling mentors to the journey (info on mentoring)
51.2	G2K CD: <i>Songs for the Road</i>	77.6	Living in covenant (establishing group covenants)
		51.2	Identifying gifts for vocation
		7.2	Other:

- In general, how helpful was the *2000 Playbook* as a planning tool for your congregation's youth ministry program?

Very				Not very
<u>Likely</u>				<u>Likely</u>
1	2	3	4	5
16.4%	31.9	36.6	10.4	4.7

- Did you use the G2K promotional video to raise awareness of the Gathering in your congregation?
 29.3% Yes (*Please answer part B*) → b. How helpful was the video in promoting the Gathering?
 62.1 No (*Please skip to question 5*)
 8.6 I don't know (*Please skip to question 5*)

Very			Somewhat			Not Very
<u>Helpful</u>			<u>Helpful</u>			<u>Helpful</u>
1	2	3	4	5		5
12.8%	22.4	50.0	9.0	5.8		

- Did youth members from your congregation complete the spiritual gifts inventory (either on paper or on-line) prior to the Gathering?
 52.0% Yes (*Please answer part B*) → 10.0 I don't know (*Please skip to question 6*)
 38.1 No (*Please skip to question 6*)

Appendix 1: Frequencies of Adult Participants

- B. Did you use or refer to the spiritual gifts inventory when planning for events at the Gathering?
 66.8% Yes
 33.2 No

6. Did youth members from your congregation **intentionally** identify and build a relationship with a mentor as part of their preparation for the Gathering?

20.4% Yes (*Please answer part B*) → B. How valuable, in your opinion, was this mentoring relationship for the youth?
 79.6 No (*Please skip to question 7*)

<u>Very Valuable</u>		<u>Somewhat Valuable</u>		<u>Not Very Valuable</u>
1	2	3	4	5
32.1%	28.6	30.4	6.3	2.7

7. Did you receive the pre-Gathering book *G2K Road Map*?

90.9% Yes (*Please answer part B*) → B. When you received *G2K Road Map*, how did you read it?

5.3 No (*Please skip to question 10*) (*Please mark one response*)

29.2% I read the entire booklet thoroughly.

3.7 I can't remember (*Please skip to question 10*)

49.5 I read through it all quickly, and read more thoroughly only the parts that really interested me.

5.6 I skimmed through it all, but didn't read anything closely.

15.3 I *primarily* used it as a reference to look up specific answers to my questions.

0.4 I didn't really read it at all (*Please skip to question 10*)

8. Please rate the helpfulness of *G2K Road Map* on the following topics:

Information on . . .	<u>Very Helpful</u> 1	2	3	4	<u>Not very Helpful</u> 5	<u>Mean</u>
A. Individual and group covenants.	34.2%	37.6	20.8	5.9	1.5	2.03
B. On-site registration processes and other "logistics"	37.2	34.1	18.1	7.0	3.7	2.06
C. "Dancing at the Crossroads" theme & vision	34.2	39.2	20.7	4.2	1.6	2.00
D. Hotel Life.	18.9	29.9	27.3	12.9	11.0	2.67
E. Two-Step Service projects.	23.5	35.4	27.0	8.6	5.5	2.37
F. Hip Hoppin' around St. Louis trips.	24.4	34.1	29.1	7.5	4.8	2.34
G. G2K Learning Communities.	19.0	30.9	32.8	11.4	5.8	2.54
H. The Beat.	25.8	39.6	26.0	5.7	2.8	2.20
I. General info on the daily schedule.	32.9	37.8	21.7	5.0	2.6	2.07

9. Did you receive *G2K Road Map* at the appropriate time in your Gathering planning?

54.9% Yes, there was plenty of time
 36.4 Yes, but earlier would have been better
 8.7 No, there was not enough time.

10. Looking back, do you now feel you were adequately prepared for the Gathering?

58.7% Yes
 41.3 No → Do you feel you needed: (*Please choose all that apply*)

Appendix 1: Frequencies of Adult Participants

- 38.0% More/better preparatory materials from the Gathering organizers.
- 70.7 More/better preparation within your own youth group.
- 39.3 More/better preparation on your own.

	<u>Very Meaningful</u>				<u>Not very Meaningful</u>	<u>Mean</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	
11. In your preparations for the Gathering, how meaningful was the theme, "Dancing at the Cross Roads" for you personally.	30.9%	31.2	21.4	10.2	6.4	2.30

INITIAL GATHERING REGISTRATION

In order to attend this gathering, all congregations mailed, or submitted via the website their registration forms starting in October of 1999.

12. Please consider the following statements on the initial registration process and rate your degree of agreement along this five-point scale by circling the appropriate number.

	<u>Agree Strongly</u>				<u>Disagree Strongly</u>	<u>Mean</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	
A. The instructions for registration in the "Registration" booklet were clear	30.8%	45.8	18.2	4.8	0.4	1.98
B. I had all the information I needed from Gathering planners in order to submit my registration.	35.1	45.3	14.5	3.7	1.3	1.91
C. The notice of our Gathering registration confirmation from Gathering organizers was timely.	23.0	25.3	25.1	17.9	8.6	2.64

[Note: Percentages in the "Part B" questions below represent the percentage of those who participated in the activity, not the total percentage of all respondents.]

13. Did you submit your Gathering registration (not hotel) on the Gathering web site?	25.3% Yes (Please answer part B) →	B. How easy/difficult was the on-line registration process?					
74.7 No (Please skip to question 14)		<u>Very Easy</u>				<u>Very Difficult</u>	<u>Mean</u>
		1	2	3	4	5	
		36.0%	44.0	12.0	5.0	3.0	1.95

14. Did you have any contact with your Synod Youth Coordinator while planning for the Gathering?	58.6% Yes (Please answer part B) →	B. How helpful for you was your Synod Youth Coordinator?					
41.4 No (Please skip to question 15)		<u>Very Helpful</u>	<u>Somewhat Helpful</u>		<u>Not Very Helpful</u>	<u>Mean</u>	
		1	2	3	4	5	
		31.1%	20.0	23.2	10.0	15.7	2.59

15. Did you participate in your synod's Counselor Training Program?	32.6% Yes (Please answer part B) →	B. How helpful for you was your synod's Counselor Training?					
67.4 No (Please skip to comments below and then question 16)		<u>Very Helpful</u>	<u>Somewhat Helpful</u>		<u>Not Very Helpful</u>	<u>Mean</u>	
		1	2	3	4	5	
		23.8%	26.8	32.7	8.3	8.3	2.51

Any additional comments on the Gathering registration process and procedures?

15.3% of respondents commented in this section.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Due to the decision to postpone reserving rooms at the Adams Mark Hotel until the resolution of a discrimination lawsuit against the hotel chain, several problems arose in the Gathering hotel reservation and confirmation process. While these problems stemmed from steps taken by the external housing company and were outside the control of ELCA staff, Gathering organizers are well aware of these situations and regret the

16. Did you encounter any significant problems when making your hotel reservations?

50.3% Yes (Please answer part B) →
 49.7 No (Please skip to question 17)

B. How serious was this housing reservation problem for you?

	Very Serious			
	Not Very Serious			
	and Inconvenient			
	or Inconvenient			
	1	2	3	45
	36.2%	30.0	22.3	8.8
	2.7			

Please briefly describe the nature of the problem(s) you encountered:

Of the respondents who indicated that they had a significant problem, 86.3 percent made a comment.

On-Site Registration

When you and your group arrived in St. Louis, you probably registered for the Gathering at the America’s Center and registered your group at your hotel (although not necessarily in that order).

	<u>Very Easy to Manage</u>				<u>Very Difficult to Manage</u>	<u>Mean</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	
17. Please rate the “Gathering registration” process.	50.7%	31.0	9.8	5.4	3.2	1.80
18. Please rate the “hotel registration” process.	25.6%	26.1	16.3	11.9	20.1	2.75

At the Gathering: Hotel Life

19. Please think back on the events and activities occurring at the Gathering hotels. First, mark those hotel life activities in which you personally attended and/or participated at least once. Next, please rate how valuable those experiences (only those in which you participated) were for you personally. [Note: Percentages in the “Valuable” columns represent the percentage of those who participated, not the total percentage.]

<u>Hotel Event</u>	<u>I participated</u>	<u>Very Valuable</u>				<u>Not Very Valuable</u>		<u>Mean</u>
		1	2	3	4	5		
A. Counselor Orientation (at the hotel) . . .	78.0%.	33.1%	29.8	19.2	9.1	8.2		2.29
B. Breakfast Clubs.	38.0	31.3	28.9	23.2	8.5	8.1		2.33
C. Morning Eucharist	38.9	54.9	26.0	12.1	5.1	1.9		1.73
D. Morning exercise class	2.6	53.8	15.4	15.4	7.7	7.7		2.00
E. Club G2K nightlife	61.4		36.4	29.0	21.3	6.5	6.8	
	2.18							
F. Rest Stops	17.8		32.0	27.0	25.0	10.0	6.0	2.31

Appendix 1: Frequencies of Adult Participants

	<u>Excellent</u>				<u>Poor</u>	<u>Mean</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	
20. Please rate the overall quality of your hotel life	19.9%	25.7	21.4	10.4	22.6	2.90

Any additional comments on the hotel life at the Gathering?

53.4% made a comment in this section.

At The Gathering: Events & Activities

21. Did your counselor unit intentionally schedule daily small group time into your planned activities at the Gathering?

78.0% Yes (<i>Please answer part B</i>)	B. Did you use the material in <i>Devazine</i> for your small group time?
22.0 No (<i>Please skip to question 23</i>)	23.7% Yes
	76.3 No

22. Did your counselor unit use the G2K Journal in the “Guidebook” (distributed to all participants) for your small group time?

43.2% Yes
56.8 No

Appendix 1: Frequencies of Adult Participants

23. Please check the boxes to indicate in which of the following events you *personally* participated, at least once, at the Gathering. Next, please rate how valuable those experiences in which you personally participated were. A “Very Valuable” experience would be one which had a significant impact on you. [Note: Percentages in the “Valuable” columns represent the percentage of those who participated, not the total percentage.]

<u>Event</u>	<u>I participated</u>	<u>Very Valuable</u>				<u>Not Very Valuable</u>		<u>Mean</u>
A. Two Step Service.	35.6%	38.6%	25.9	10.7	9.1	15.7	2.38	
B. Hip Hoppin’ Around St. Louis	38.6	23.1	37.5	22.2	12.0	5.1	2.38	
C. The Beat	99.8	50.5	34.6	11.7	2.8	0.4	1.69	
D. House Party (Thursday night in the Dome)	79.8	16.3	15.4	21.5	17.2	29.5	3.28	
E. Gathering Academies (for adult leaders) . .	15.9	53.9	27.0	12.4	2.2	4.5	1.76	
F. Morning Bible Study (TWA Dome)	78.0	69.3	22.7	4.8	3.2	--	1.42	
G. Evening mass gatherings (TWA Dome)						94.6	79.3	
	16.3	3.2	1.1	0.2	1.27			

24. Did you participate in one of the G2K Learning Community ‘Hoods at least once at the Gathering?
 49.2% Yes (Please continue on to question 25, below)
 50.8 No (Please skip to question 27)

[Note: Percentages in Q 25 represent the percentage of those who participated, not the total percentage.]

25. The structured learning opportunities at the Gathering were designed to teach youth about faith practices and spiritual gifts, and how youth might use their gifts in witness and service.

	<i>Faith practice & Spiritual gifts were taught . . .</i>					<u>Mean</u>
	<u>Very Well</u> 1	2	3	4	<u>Not Very Well</u> 5	
How well did the learning session(s) you attended teach youth about faith practices and spiritual gifts?	26.5	39.9	26.1	6.3	1.1	2.16

26. One new addition to the learning opportunities at G2K was the distinctions between Houses (traditional workshops), Parks (large group settings with music and/or speakers in which you could come and go), and Streets (interactive experiences). Which of these three types of learning opportunities most appealed to you?

9.1% Houses 15.7 Parks 6.6 Streets 66.9 All of them appealed to me 1.7 None of them appealed to me

Any additional comments on the G2K Learning Community?

27.6% made a comment in this section.

Appendix 1: Frequencies of Adult Participants

27. Ensuring participant safety is always a priority for Gathering organizers. Was there any time during the Gathering when you were especially concerned or worried about your individual or group safety?

74.1% No

25.7 Yes → *Please describe that particular experience(s):*

27.4% of all respondents wrote a comment on safety at the Gathering.

28. Gathering organizers strive to reflect and support the ELCA goals of racial, age, and disability inclusiveness and diversity in all Gathering events and activities. From your perspective, how well do you feel these goals were met?

38.4% To a very great extent

49.5 To a great extent

7.0 To some extent → *Please describe any experiences or observations where you feel these goals were not met:* 11.3% made a comment on inclusiveness or diversity at the gathering

0.9 Hardly at all

4.3 Don't know/can't remember

At The Gathering: Group Finances

The following information will help us help congregations plan for the 2003 Gathering in Atlanta.

29. Please estimate the cost per person for your group's travel to the 2000 Youth Gathering:¹ (Round trip, not including extra costs for side trips while in St. Louis):

Mean: \$326 per person

Median: \$250

Mode: \$500

30. Please estimate how much you, personally, spent on food while you were in St. Louis:²

Mean: \$115

Median: \$100

Mode: \$100

31. Gathering organizers have different options for trying to keep housing costs affordable at Gatherings. Please consider your own congregation's preferences and your experiences at this Gathering to think about two possible housing choices. Out of each pair, please choose only **one** option that best reflects how you might make the decision.

Choose one response (from either the left or right column) that best reflects your opinion.

A. Rooming Assignments

87.1% I would prefer that youth groups are kept together, even if that means paying more for a room that's not filled to capacity (i.e., paying the full price for a quad with only three people in it.)

-OR- 12.9% I would prefer to keep housing costs as low as possible, even if that means mixing youth groups in hotel rooms (i.e., filling a quad room with two youth from my congregation and two youth from another congregation selected by Gathering organizers.)

¹ The costs here may be far less than accurate. Even though Q. 29 requested only transportation costs, it appeared that some respondents included such costs as hotels and the Gathering registration fee. Where they itemized what they included, the non-transportation costs were subtracted; when respondents just noted that they had included non-transportation costs in their final figure, the response was changed to a missing value.

² Some respondents appeared to estimate the food costs as a cost per day, not as the total cost (in retrospect, the question might be worded too ambiguously). In order to compensate, the amount noted was multiplied by 4 if the respondents said this was a per day cost OR if the cost noted was under \$40. The amounts listed above reflect those changes.

Appendix 1: Frequencies of Adult Participants

Appendix 1: Frequencies of Adult Participants

B. Distance from Main Site

- 87.6% I would prefer that my counselor unit stays at a hotel that is within walking distance of the main Gathering site, even if that means paying a higher price for downtown luxury hotels. **-OR-** 12.4% I would prefer to choose a hotel for my counselor unit based primarily on its affordability, even if that means that we're not within walking distance of the main Gathering site.

Any additional comments on affordability and other financial issues at the Gathering?

27.2% made a comment in this section.

Reflections After the Gathering

32. Please share with us an experience or experiences at the Gathering that had a significant impact on you, either positively or negatively, such as a particular mass gathering, the Gathering theme, a particular speaker, etc.

85.9% made a comment in this section.

33. Do you have any suggestions on how Gathering organizers can improve the ways they help congregations prepare for, and plan for their active participation in the Youth Gathering?

63.0% made a comment in this section.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF . . .

- | | |
|--|--|
| 34. Did you attend the Gathering as a(n) . . .
(Pick all that apply to you) | 35. Was this your first ELCA Youth Gathering?
(as an adult or youth, but not including synodical or pre-ELCA youth gatherings) |
| 63.5% Adult lead counselor | 58.5% Yes |
| 27.6 Adult participant (but not lead counselor) | 41.5 No |
| 15.5 Congregation Pastor | |
| 15.4 Congregation Youth Director | |
| 0.3 DAYLE counselor/caregiver | |
| 0.2 MYLE counselor | 36. Your age: 18.4% 21-30 |
| 1.2 Gathering volunteer | 52.3 31-45 |
| 1.7 Synod Youth Committee member | 29.3 46-65 |
| 0.7 Synod Youth Coordinator | |
| 0.3 ELCA Churchwide/Synod Staff member | |

Thank you for your time!

Please return this questionnaire in the envelope provided, or to:

ELCA Department for Research and Evaluation, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4193

Please use the back of this page, or attach additional pages, to add any more comments about your experience at the Gathering that will help planners for the 2003 Youth Gathering.

Reflections on Themes from G2K Case Studies

Jennifer Esser and Kenneth Inskeep
Department for Research and Evaluation
November, 2000

In March of 2000, the Department for Research and Evaluation (DRE), in consultation with the Youth Ministries/Gathering Team, selected four congregations to participate in a case study evaluation. This qualitative approach has given us the opportunity to address what the *impact* the youth gathering has on *congregational youth ministry*. DRE facilitated focus groups at each of the congregations prior to the youth gathering and spent time with each of the groups at the gathering. The following reflections and themes were found in the four case studies:

◆ *Experiential process*

The four case studies reflect that youth participated in G2K as an experiential process. When asked what parts of the G2K program had the biggest impact on their lives, youth often shared stories about specific experiences they had at the gathering. Some of these common experiences include: meeting new friends, volunteering with others in various social service settings, playing in the Beat with new and old friends, and being together in mass gathering events. The interactive opportunities made the gathering an experiential process.

◆ *Adult leadership*

The four case studies reflect the influence and impact of adult leadership among the youth in the church. Adult leaders tend to make the general decisions about what opportunities will be provided to the group. This raises the issue of power. Adult leadership provides the opportunities for youth to experience the church. For example, adult youth ministry leaders decide if their congregational youth have the access to attend the youth gathering. The invitation to attend the youth gathering initially passes through the hands of youth directors, leaders, or pastors, prior to youth having the option to attend the gathering. Furthermore, adult leadership sets the tone for their youth to experience the gathering. If congregational youth leaders are vested in the gathering as a life-changing experience, then in effect, their youth will anticipate the gathering as a life-changing experience. On the other hand, if youth leaders come to the gathering with uncertain expectations, their youth will also come to the gathering with uncertain expectations.

◆ *Tradition*

All four congregations valued their own traditional youth ministry events, such as annual servant events, summer camps, summer choir tours, etc. . In three of the four case studies, congregations were committed to doing other summer youth events that had been successful in previous years. The national youth gathering was a new experience for these congregations that youth directors were willing to try, but were more invested in their annual, traditional events that had been done in previous summers. On the other hand, one of the four congregations had an adult leader who had an extensive history with previous youth gatherings at the national and regional levels. Attendance at the national youth gathering was part of this congregation's tradition.

◆ *Relationships*

In the four case studies, there is a powerful impact of the “relationship aspect” of G2K. Regardless of the program content, youth in all four case studies raised the issues of acceptance and relationships. Youth resonated with the daily theme “There is a place for me” throughout the gathering. The majority of youth came to the gathering with friends and mentors (namely their youth directors or leaders) and valued new friendships and relationships that emerged during the week of G2K. Many youth commented that the gathering was a unique experience that was “so cool” because there were so many Lutheran youth hanging out together, where everyone was accepted.

◆ *Renewal*

When asked what youth were going to “take home” from G2K, many expressed a sense of renewal. Faith formation and rejuvenation were often mentioned. Common themes included: trying harder, participating in more church-related activities, sharing the word of God, taking more risks, becoming a Lutheran pastor, and forming a better relationship with God. This sense of renewal was common among all the youth who shared what they would “do” after G2K.