

YOU CAN HOST **A**

**SERVANT
EVENT**





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Host a Servant Event



Serving and loving other people in Jesus' name are critical components of our Christian witness, discipleship and life in God's kingdom. Christians serve because they are thankful to God who already has loved and redeemed them. We have nothing to earn or gain; rather, we are simply giving thanks to God for what He has already done for us in Jesus. Service is an opportunity to practice and more deeply understand our vocations. We are eager to share His Word, to represent His love to the world and to grow in the Spirit. We love others because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

We are so grateful for our Servant Event hosts, and the opportunities they provide for young people to understand their faith more deeply, develop Christian community and serve in Jesus' name. We know the impact that Servant Events can have in the lives of young people. Servant Event hosts make that possible. Hosting a Servant Event not only provides opportunities for God's people, but it also gives opportunities to connect with your community before, during and after your event.

Thank you for considering hosting a servant event.

GETTING STARTED

Before you jump into hosting, consider what it might take for your congregation or organization to accept on this important task. The best place to start is study and prayer about service. John 13:1–17, Matthew 25:31–46, and Philippians 2:1–18 are some places you can begin.

There are also practical considerations. LCMS Servant Events are hosted exclusively by LCMS districts, congregations, schools, camps or Recognized Service Organizations. Congregations and organizations are free to design unique opportunities independently, within the parameters given in this guide. This resource provides guidance and suggestions for a successful event. If you are hosting service opportunities that are not specifically LCMS Servant Events, these resources may still be helpful, but understand some elements will not fit your context.

Consider both your capacity and your resources. Planning an LCMS Servant Event can start more than two years in advance, but it takes a minimum of six months. You will need to develop a leadership team to manage various aspects of the event. Appoint this team early to ensure you have the volunteers needed to successfully host.

The design of your event will need to account for the type of work to be completed, dates, length of time the project will require and number of participants needed. The size of a Servant Event will depend on capacity. Some may open to 20 to 30 participants. Others may have a larger capacity of 60

to 120 (or more), allowing up to 20 to 25 participants from a single congregation.

Servant Events can take on several “looks.” Some can be completed in one day or over a weekend. Others last a week, or ten days or more. (This resource will focus on events that are about a week long, but can be scaled as needed.) Events can include a variety of service, such as construction, mercy work or providing faith-based programming. Servant Events can connect with local agencies, including homeless shelters, food banks or soup kitchens. They can connect with Recognized Service Organizations or work with local individuals.

If you aren't sure about becoming a host, bring key leaders to join you in prayer. Talk and dream about what it might look like, and be realistic about what might prevent that from happening. You aren't planning alone. LCMS Youth Ministry staff, the Servant Events Committee and fellow hosts will help you along the way.

WHAT SHOULD A SERVANT EVENT INCLUDE?

A Servant Event includes the following components:

- › **Bible study, devotions and/or worship** that focus on Christian servanthood and relate to the participants' daily experience.
- › **Meaningful work** which is needed by the community and can be provided by the participants. The service

should be challenging enough to keep youth interested, but within their ability to accomplish with excellence. Servant Events also provide experience with models of service that participants can develop back home in their congregation and community.

- › **Time for discussion and reflection** on the day's happenings. Participants need the chance to relate their experiences of service to daily faith and life.
- › **Dedicated leadership** that includes people with the necessary skills to assist participants in carrying out their work, with competency and sensitivity for leading participants in worship, Bible study and in their understanding of Christian service. These leaders must be committed, and able to work with a variety of people.
- › **Adequate funding** of the event through donations, local resources and grants so registration fees can be affordable for youth.
- › If needed, the ability to provide **housing, meals and materials** for participants.
- › **Cross-cultural experiences** so participants can live and work among people with whom they may not ordinarily work or live. Events with people of different ages, life situations or ethnicities each provide a cross-cultural experience.
- › Opportunities for young people and adults to participate in **Christian community**, and to experience the joy of God's people working, learning and celebrating together.

Don't be overwhelmed if you aren't sure how you will provide these things right now. We have resources that can be helpful in breaking down each of these pieces into achievable steps. However, it is important for you to be realistic about your ability to host an event. Give yourself time to collect the resources, team and service work that can make your event a success.

Your Servant Event might look different than others. But all Servant Events include working with others, learning about a new culture and adapting to new surroundings. This allows us to examine ourselves spiritually, articulate our faith and strengthen our trust in the Lord!

WHAT TYPE OF SERVICE CAN BE DONE?

Servant Events typically fall into one or more of these categories.

- › **Construction Events:** Volunteers help improve the physical living situation of individuals by building new homes or repairing existing homes. Potential projects would include painting, ramp building or repair work. Construction might benefit disaster victims, mission congregations, elderly or disadvantaged families or outdoor ministry sites.

- › **Crisis Events:** These events help with relief efforts after a devastating natural disaster. Disaster recovery often means helping right away in clean-up efforts, as well as months later to complete renovations and repairs.
- › **Environment Events:** These events involve activities that care for the world God gave us, like gleanings, recycling, litter pick-up, cleaning streams or refurbishing public park areas. Work may be sponsored in cooperation with local conservation, forest or park service groups.
- › **Human Care Events:** Participants work directly with people, perhaps helping physically, emotionally, or mentally disabled individuals; working with children who are at-risk; spending time with the elderly in resident homes or reaching out to migrant farm workers and their families.
- › **Multicultural Events:** These provide participants with the opportunity to learn about ethnic or cultural groups while working on projects within the community. This could include leading Native American or Hmong children in day camp activities and learning more about their ethnic group and traditions.
- › **Outreach Events:** Participants have an evangelistic outreach emphasis in the community, such as helping staff a Christian camp or vacation Bible school for neighborhood children, or helping publicize and/or lead a church sponsored community event.

Determining the type of service should start by spending time getting to know the needs of your community. Ask local organizations or community members, and listen to them well. This will help you to determine where service can be of most use. If you have already made connections for service with organizations or individuals in the community, lean into those. If not, looking for opportunities can lead your congregation/organization to long-term connections to help share the Gospel beyond the short-term Servant Event.

WHO WILL ATTEND YOUR SERVANT EVENT?

One of the things to consider as you start planning a Servant Event is whom you would like to join you. This may depend on the type of service you provide, as well as limitations in housing and transportation. The target audience of your Servant Event might be:

- › **Junior High/Middle School youth** are between 5th and 8th grade. These youth need specific instructions for their work, but often have energy to get a lot of physical work done.
- › **Senior High/High School youth** are between 9th and 12th grade. These youth are more responsible and have more skills. This is often the population from which workers for Servant Events are drawn.

- › **Young Adults/College students** are working on undergraduate and graduate degrees and usually top at ages 26–28. This group might be less available for events, but participants can bring lots of skills and impact in their service.
- › **Families of pre-teens and teens** provide a unique experience for teens, parents and younger siblings. Entire families serving together may have powerful faith conversations, and a chance to learn and grow together.

SERVANT EVENT HOST RESOURCES

You are not on your own to plan your Servant Event! LCMS Servant Events has many written resources to walk you through the planning process. This includes documents specifically for:

- › Event Planning
- › Leadership Team Development and Roles
- › Promotion and Registration
- › Risk Management
- › Budgeting and Finances
- › Community Building

When you sign up as a host of an LCMS Servant Event, you will receive support and resources from the staff of LCMS Youth Ministry. This will include:

- › In-person training every fall at low or no cost
- › Access to LCMS Servant Events Host Portal for promotion and management of event
- › Promotion of event on LCMS Servant Event website and LCMS Youth Ministry social media
- › Promotion at LCMS events such as District Youth Gatherings and LCMS worker conferences
- › Support from LCMS Servant Event Committee and LCMS Youth Ministry Staff

SERVANT EVENT DEFINITIONS

The resources provided by LCMS Servant Events use specific vocabulary that will be helpful to define as you start.

LCMS Servant Events: programs staffed and run by LCMS Youth Ministry out of the LCMS Office of National Mission in St. Louis.

LCMS Servant Event Committee: a group of volunteers that works closely with LCMS Servant Events to help promote, support and direct Servant Events for teens across the country.

Leadership team: the Event, Community Life and Service Directors, as well as any other additional leaders who are key to running your event.

Participants: the adults and youth from your congregation or others who are attending the Servant Event.

Youth participants: those attending your Servant Event who are under 18 or not yet out of high school.

Adult leader: the adults who register, prepare, and bring youth participants to Servant Events.

Church groups: participants who attend together from a single congregation.

Service sites: locations around your community where participants will serve.

Service crews: groups who serve at each service site. These are typically smaller groups that include at least one adult leader. Often these groups contain a mix of church groups.

FIRST STEPS TO HOST A SERVANT EVENT

Once you have drafted a basic plan with your team, you will fill out a New Host Form. This will be sent to our office for approval. LCMS Youth Ministry staff will reach out to you with questions and next steps. The information you will need includes:

- › Host entity contact information
- › Year of event
- › Primary leader contact information



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