

## NJ Synod Youth Ministry Retreats - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Updated 1/14/2015*

Please note: This information related to the two annual youth ministry retreats, Among The Wolves and the Winter Youth Assembly.

1. Who should register your participants?

Our online registration is set up so that one person - ideally the primary adult leader for the group - will register everyone in the group at one time.

2. What if someone needs to cancel?

Cancellation can only be done by phone or e-mail. The youth leader must call Debbie Crawford at the Synod office (609-586-6800) or e-mail changes to her at [dcrawford@njsynod.org](mailto:dcrawford@njsynod.org). There will be a cancellation fee based upon how close to the event date you cancel. If you cancel by the registration deadline, the cancellation fee will be \$10 per person. If you cancel after the registration deadline, but less than a week prior to the event the cancellation fee will be \$25 per person (and you will still get a t-shirt). If you cancel less than a week prior to the event - no refunds are possible!

3. Can I replace one participant with another?

Yes. Prior to the registration deadline, simply email Debbie Crawford at [dcrawford@njsynod.org](mailto:dcrawford@njsynod.org) with the change. After the registration deadline you can only replace someone who is the same Gender and Grade, since the housing & small group assignments will have already been completed. There is no fee to replace a participant.

4. Where can I find a paper form to give out to my youth?

We have created an "Event Participant Information Sheet" that you may print and hand copies to the youth/parents to collect the information you'll need to register them. These EPIS can be found on the appropriate event page (ATW or WYA). Note that these forms are not to be submitted to the registrar - they're only intended to help congregational leaders with the online registration process.

5. What about the covenant and insurance information?

These are important documents and must be filled out, signed and brought to the event. Without them it is not possible to attend the retreat! These forms are available on our synod's website on the Among The Wolves and Winter Youth Assembly pages. **These forms must be submitted at the time of event check-in!**

6. How are event payments being handled this year?

Payment must be received in full at least one week prior to the event. Checks should be made out to New Jersey Synod, ELCA with a notation that it is for ATW or WYA registration. Please mail checks to:

ATW or WYA (whichever is appropriate)  
New Jersey Synod  
1930 Highway 33  
Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

7. Can participants come for only part of the event?

(for example: arriving Saturday morning, or leaving Saturday evening)

Unfortunately, no. We know that young people and adults are often involved in many activities and have many responsibilities, but allowing these exceptions just isn't feasible. Thank you very much for your understanding and compliance with this policy.

8. Can I make changes to any of the registration I have submitted (such as t-shirt size)?

YES - that can be done by calling Debbie at the Synod office (609-586-6800).

9. What is the ratio of adults to youth?

We recommend a ratio of 4 or 5 youth to 1 adult. We allow a maximum of 7 youth for each adult participant.

10. Do we need male adult sponsors if we are bringing boys / female adult sponsors for girls?

If at all possible, yes. However, we understand it can at times be difficult find other adults who can make such an important commitment. We ask that you make every effort to get an adult sponsor of that same gender to be responsible for the housing of those youth.

11. What's the deal with Background Checks for the adult sponsors?

The New Jersey Synod adopted a Safety Policy for Synodical Youth Ministry Events in 2012. These policies include requiring all adult participants attending a synodical overnight event to have a *national criminal/child abuse clearance check* done through the New Jersey Synod's account with LexisNexis®. This needs only be done once every four years, or whenever the adult changes their congregational membership. There is no fee to have this done.

Here is how to get your Background Check:

You fill out the Background Release Form and submit it to the Debbie Crawford at the Synod Office. This form can be found at [www.njsynod.org/youth](http://www.njsynod.org/youth), or contact Debbie Crawford - 609-586-6800 or [dcrawford@njsynod.org](mailto:dcrawford@njsynod.org).

Once you fill out this more, send it to Debbie via email or mail to the Synod Office: 1930 Highway 33, Trenton, NJ 08690. Once she receives it, she will input the information into the LexisNexis® secure server. The report is then generated and electronically placed into the synod's online secure account.

If you have any questions about these or anything else relating to these youth events, please don't hesitate to contact us:

Registration and Housing questions:

Debbie Crawford - [dcrawford@njsynod.org](mailto:dcrawford@njsynod.org); 609-586-6800

Event questions: Event Coordinator/s - *listed on the appropriate event webpage*  
or Jason Reed - [jreed@njsynod.org](mailto:jreed@njsynod.org); 609-586-6800

Lots of info and more found at: [www.njsynod.org/youth](http://www.njsynod.org/youth)

Winter Youth Assembly facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Winter-Youth-Assembly-NJ-Synod/319596413011>

Among The Wolves facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Among-The-Wolves-Event-Page/285012314849524>

From *Safety Policies for Youth Ministry Events of the New Jersey Synod, ELCA*,  
Adopted by the New Jersey Synod Council February 2012

## 2. Background Reports

- a. Any adult or young adults attending as a registered participant at a synodical overnight event must complete a national criminal/child abuse clearance check (report) through the New Jersey Synod's account with LexisNexis®. See *Background Checks FAQs-NJ Synod Youth Ministry Safety Policy Supporting Document* (referred to hereafter as *Background Checks FAQs*) for details on how to do this.
- b. This report must be completed prior to the event. In the case of a last-minute adult/young adult leadership change or addition, every effort will be made to allow them to complete a report at the start of each overnight event.
- c. All information received is confidential and will not be shared with others in their congregation or the synod.
- d. Criminal/child abuse clearance checks must be redone every four years or whenever membership changes to a new congregation.
- e. In case an adult or young adult attending as a registered participant does not have a Social Security Number (which is needed for a national criminal/child abuse clearance check) a request for an alternative procedure shall be made of the Synod well in advance of the event, and granted at the Synod's discretion.