

What's stopping you?

Perhaps you have some concerns about committing to a year serving on one of Youth Encounter's ministry teams. You're not alone. Below we have listed some of the questions we have heard over the years as well as some helpful advice.

YOUTH ENCOUNTER

Are you affiliated with any particular denomination?

No. Youth Encounter has grown from the Lutheran tradition and confesses Lutheran theology, but it is our desire to serve the entire body of Christ regardless of denomination.

Are you the same as Lutheran Youth Encounter?

YES! Youth Encounter is our promotional name; our corporate name is still Lutheran Youth Encounter. Our confessional theology remains Lutheran. We hope to share the Gospel with everyone.

Youth Encounter comes from a Lutheran tradition. What if I'm not Lutheran?

Youth Encounter is excited to partner with churches outside of the Lutheran tradition and welcomes non-Lutheran participants. For more information about us and what we believe, check out our mission and theology statement at www.youthencounter.org

MINISTRY TEAM

What is the schedule like for the year?

The team schedule for the year will depend upon what type of team it is. All teams will participate in an initial team training in Minneapolis, MN in mid to late August. After training the team will either go to their host church or will begin their tour. Additional training will take occur during the year. All teams will receive breaks during the year. There would be a two-week at Christmas, another one week break around Easter, and possible a lone week-end break around Memorial Day. The team year will conclude in August with a debriefing period and a celebration of the teams ministry.

Where do teams go?

Traveling Ministry Teams mostly visit churches but can also be booked at senior centers, community centers, hospitals, outreach centers, colleges, high schools, elementary schools, summer camps and detention centers. Most of the churches we visit are Lutheran, but this often depends on the region in which a team travels. Each region is assigned a Church Services Representative who books the schedule for the entire year.

Community based teams are assigned to a single congregation and serve in and through that congregation for the entire year. Depending upon the congregation's needs

How do teams travel?

Regional teams travel in a 15-passenger van and pull a trailer which contains all their sound equipment, sales merchandise, personal luggage, etc. Community based team travel will be arranged in cooperation with the host church and may include the option of using their own cars.

How many people are on each team?

The average size of a team is between 5-7 people in the case of a traveling team and 4-8 in the case of a community based team.

What is the average age of team members?

Most people who join a team are in their college years, though some people join us right out of high school and some people join us months or years after they graduate from college. Every year we get a good mix! Our team members have spanned the ages between 18 and 35. National band members must at least be high school graduates, and international team members must be 21 years or older.

What if I'm not musically inclined?

Yes, we still have a spot for you! Each electric team has their own sound technician, and if you don't have experience running sound, we'll teach you! All of our national bands are electric, as are our international teams to Australia and Denmark. Each year we also teach team members to play such instruments as the bass guitar.

It sounds like I'll be living and working 24/7 with my teammates... is this true?

Team ministry certainly brings its challenges; for most team members, learning to live in community is the area of team life that continue to stretch them throughout the entire year. At the start of the team commitment, team members participate in an intensive training, which includes learning skills in effective communication within the team environment. We challenge you to be up for the challenge – what an opportunity to learn, impact, grow, and SERVE!

What is a typical day like?

For the regional traveling team a typical morning goes something like this: wake up in your host home, eat breakfast with your host family, pack a lunch, meet your teammates at the church and spend a few hours doing team activities (devotions, meetings, job time, rehearsal, etc.), pack and load your equipment, then begin the trip to your next booking. Your daily drive time will average about two hours.

When you arrive at your next booking you will meet and greet your contact, set up your equipment, eat dinner (perhaps a potluck with the entire congregation or pizza with the youth), then share a program including contemporary Christian music, skits, puppets and a faith-sharing. After the program you will go home with a host family, hang out for the evening, go to sleep, then get up the next morning and start the cycle again!

Teams are usually in a different place six days of the week, with the exception of retreat/event weekends. The summer schedule is different because teams help with VBS programs which last a full week. Team members typically have Mondays off, but this can change for international team members during their overseas tours.

The community based team day will be very similar to the daily schedule of the youth worker on staff at the typical church anywhere.

OTHER QUESTIONS

A year of Ministry Team... sounds like I'm taking a year off.

Team ministry is by no means a "break." Ministry team will completely impact your life, and you will develop skills that can't be taught in the classroom! It will enhance your education, your career, your relationships, and most importantly, your faith.

Do I have to raise money to join a ministry team?

Team Ministry is a volunteer missionary experience. We do not require you to pay any money out of your own pocket. We do, however, require fundraising to cover half the expense of sending a team member on the road for a year. Youth Encounter covers the other half with donations, grants, etc.

The Development Department works with you toward a sponsorship goal of \$10,000 if you're serving on a National team or \$12,000 if you're serving on an International team. Here's how it works: you submit the names and addresses of at least 60 potential sponsors; then the Development Department contacts these people and asks them to consider supporting you prayerfully and/or financially. Your potential sponsors will receive a letter with details about Team Ministry, a picture of you, and a personal note from you describing why you are doing ministry team. They will also receive a follow-up phone call a few months into your tour. In addition our Development Department will also help you to achieve your goal by suggesting other methods and sources of financial support in your community. Though we encourage you to reach your goal as soon as possible, you may continue to work on sponsorship throughout the entire year.

What expenses should I expect during the year?

Other personal expenses include: a pre-team physical, travel to and from Minneapolis at the beginning and end of the year, health insurance premiums, vacation expenses, and other miscellaneous costs such as phone calls, clothes, etc. Note that Youth Encounter, your host congregation, and the people you meet during your tour (if on a traveling team) will provide for your basic needs such as housing, transportation, meals, and basic toiletry items. Youth Encounter also covers the first \$1,000 of any medical expenses you incur while on a team and helps offset your personal expenses by providing a monthly stipend ranging from \$25 to \$150, depending on the amount of sponsorship funds raised.

It is important to note that Team Ministry is a volunteer missionary experience. It is our hope that you will not have to spend any money to participate. You will not make any money for one year either. You will spend a year living in complete care of God and of God's people.

What if I have school loans?

College loans can be deferred during the year that you serve with us. Though we cannot guarantee that a deferment will be granted, we have a high success rate for deferrals because we are a non-profit organization and because team members are volunteers and do not get paid. We will provide you with the application to request a deferment. We don't want money to keep you from this experience and will therefore work with individual circumstances as they arise.

If I serve on a Ministry team now I'm afraid I wouldn't finish school.

Perhaps this is a concern you share with your family. Our statistics tell us that 86% of Ministry team members who have not completed their higher education when they participate in Ministry team will go on to do so afterwards (often with a clearer sense of what God might be calling them to do in the future).

How will I keep in touch with my family and friends?

Again, this is probably a concern you share with your loved ones. We have many options for our Ministry team members to stay in touch. Each team has their own voice mail and will have the ability to use e-mail. Each team sends newsletters to family, friends, and sponsors and will receive a mail packet once a week. You can read about life on team by visit our Team Journals at www.youthencounter.org/teams.

What do you look for in an applicant?

We focus on a person's personality to determine if he/she is a fit for our style of ministry. We need people who are suited to live in the changing environment of team life.

Music comes secondary to us. Of the entire year of ministry, you will spend only 10% of your time in music and program ministry. The other 90% of the year is spent building relationships with your teammates and with youth and their families. The focus of your team's ministry is the relationships you build with people as you travel and serve as Christian role models.

Team is physically demanding (moving equipment two or more times per day), emotionally demanding (being vulnerable and sharing in intense community) and spiritually demanding (sharing the Gospel by word and deed daily). It takes a special person to do this ministry.

How long is the application process?

There are two steps to the application process. First, applicants fill out and submit a copy of our paper application which we can mail to you or which you can download and print from our website. Once submitted, we will review your application and decide if we would like you to continue in the process. If so, we contact you and ask you to complete some secondary application materials including an interview, an audition tape/CD, a health form and three references. International team applicants have an additional set of essay questions to complete as well. Once we receive all of these materials we review your completed file and make a final decision. The application process does take a few weeks, but the ultimate length is largely up to you. The quicker you get stuff turned in, the quicker we can make decisions!

Is there a deadline?

We do not have an official application deadline. However, because we fill spots as applications are received, the sooner you apply the better.

Can I apply to a specific team?

Yes...and no. International Team applicants can apply to a specific team, but National Team applicants are not able to pick the region in which they will serve. You are welcome to state your regional preference but we cannot guarantee you a spot on a particular team. It is important for us to put teams together by personality and skills. We want teams to be made up of members who can cater to the needs of all the different types of people they will meet.

When will I know my team placement?

We usually do not finalize placements on our national teams until early August. We will provide you with the names and contact information of your new teammates as soon as we make our placement decisions.

Is there someone I can talk to about ministry team?

You have several options available to you here. You can call the Youth Encounter office and one of many staff members who have served on team would be willing to talk with you. Otherwise, we can put you in touch with any number of alumni/parents of alumni who would be willing to share their Ministry team experiences with you. To find out who might be in your area give us a call at 1-800-65-YOUTH.