

2026 WELS Youth Rally: Getting Started



So, you're thinking about attending the WELS Youth Rally next summer? EXCELLENT! But then the questions start:

- *What happens at a youth rally?*
- *Is it worth the effort as a teen or adult to try to gather a group?*
- *Will this work in our church?*
- *How do I get a group together?*

The first two questions go together: What happens at a youth rally? And, is it worth the effort?

WELS International Youth Rally attendees come from huge churches in big cities and small churches in farming communities; from Alaska to Texas. And everywhere in between. No matter where you come FROM, when you come together at a youth rally, you're home! Home with your family of believers. That's a big family! You get to say the Lord's Prayer and sing praises to our Savior with thousands of people. That WILL give you goosebumps.

A youth rally is designed for teens. Workshops hit timely teen topics. Performances and recreation are planned with teens in mind. There's time to discuss issues, time to eat, time to play, and time to just chill!

Some have said that the youth rally changed their lives. I won't go as far as to say that it WILL DEFINITELY change yours or the lives of your church's teens. But it may: one may be motivated to pursue the ministry; another may meet a new lifelong friend; another may confide in a workshop leader about a struggle with temptation. Front and center at the youth rally is the gospel of Jesus Christ. God will use the youth rally as another experience that shapes the lives of teens.

I think we just answered the next question: **Will this work at our church?** Absolutely! It can and will work.

A group for Youth Leaders: [facebook.com/groups/welsyouthrally](https://www.facebook.com/groups/welsyouthrally)

HOW!? How do I get a group together?

If you're reading this you're obviously interested in your church's youth! Now, how to share that excitement with the congregation. Let's lay a little groundwork here.

Talk with teens and parents who may be interested in the youth rally. Talk with your pastor. Talk with older members. Share how important it is to encourage and equip your teens in their faith life NOW.

Show the 2024 WELS International Youth Rally [recap video](https://vimeo.com/showcase/11890832?video=981524853) after church. (The video can be found at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/11890832?video=981524853>.)

Request support, spiritual and financial, from your church and its members. Often older members are excited to be able to help their church's youth. Let them know how! You could ask someone to sponsor a rallygoer or hire a youth for yard work. Maybe your group can do a car wash or prepare a Lenten supper or Easter breakfast with donations going to support your youth rally trip.

GATHER: Once you've started creating buzz about the youth rally, gather potential rallygoers, parents, and youth leaders for a quick meeting.

COMMIT: Ask potential rallygoers to commit by a specific deadline date and get their name, email address and phone number so it's easier to communicate with them.

ORGANIZE and START: You'll need to choose a CYL (contact youth leader). This person can go online in early March and start the group's registration. The CYL will create a group portal to fully register as an individual, preregister your group, and pay a per person deposit. You're off and running!

FINISH: Other youth leaders and youth will need to finish their registrations and make final payment. It will all be laid out in the registration booklet (in congregations and at welsyouthrally.net in January). Plus, the registration site will walk you through each step.

It may help to know, there are three types of rallygoers:

Y: Youth are teens finishing up eighth grade through graduating high school seniors and anywhere in between!

YL: Youth Leaders are age 20 or over with a passion for encouraging youth in their faith and a commitment to supervising the youth entrusted to them.

And each group needs a **CYL: Contact Youth Leader** who is the main point of contact between the church's group and the youth rally staff.

Note: Adult/youth ratio must be 1 adult to 6 youth of the same gender during the rally.

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It may seem daunting, but it's really not too bad! The biggest step is the first one: just getting started! Once you commit to going everything else will fall into place. Really! And we're here to help!

- Bowling Green State University Conference Services is running registration. Technical questions can be addressed to them when registration opens.
- Any and all questions can also be addressed to rally coordinator, Michelle Gartner, WELS event manager. She will work to find answers to your questions: youthrally@wels.net.
- There will be a BUNCH of great information in the registration booklet. Look for it at your church and at welsyouthrally.net in January. Connect with us on social media @welsyouthrally.

Bowling Green State University is a great site: the campus is beautiful, food is plentiful, and their conference staff is experienced and hard-working. It will be a great experience for Y, YL, and CYL!

Registration runs March 9–May 29
\$450 early-bird rate with full payment until April 30
\$475 May 1–29

Join us as a family of believers at the 2026 WELS International Youth Rally!

WELS International Youth Rally

Frequently Asked Questions

What ages can attend the youth rally?

The rally is intended for teens finishing up eighth grade through graduating high school seniors, a 5-year span. Some youth groups have younger and older kids involved. Please consider those cases individually. Contact the youth rally coordinator with questions: youthrally@wels.net.

How much is it? Do CYL, YL, and Y pay the same rate?

The registration fee for all rally attendees will be \$450 for early bird registration (until April 30) and \$475 from May 1–29. This covers lodging from Tuesday night through Friday morning, seven meals, snacks, and all rally activities.

Can I bring non-WELS friends?

While the rally is more of a nurturing event and less of an outreach event, if you have non-WELS teens who are interested, talk to your pastor and the teen's parents. Would the teen benefit spiritually from attending? If yes, please bring them!

How do we get there?

Each group is responsible for its own transportation to and from the rally. Connect with other youth leaders (facebook.com/groups/welsyouthrally) to share your transportation needs or opportunities. If you are organizing busing and would like to offer it to the group, please pass along information to youthrally@wels.net.

What if I need a ride from the airport?

We are working on this.

Are there off-site excursions this year?

While we won't have any excursions at this year's rally, we will have unique recreational workshops to fill that space!

I have someone who is out of high school, but not 20. Can this person attend?

Talk to your CYL and pastor to decide if this person should attend as a Y or if he/she can take the responsibility of a YL.

What about piggybacking?

Piggybacking (having a Y from another congregation join your group) is allowed. If at all possible, it's best to have YL and Y from the same congregation. However, we do realize that in some cases this is prohibitive for Y from smaller congregations. If your group has a "piggybacker," simply register the Y with your church group. Please get to know each other. You will be responsible for this Y.

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