

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Do you like dancing, singing, and worshipping God in new and fun ways? Do you have the skills to mentor to younger students? Are you good at listening to others' problems? Even if you aren't sure how to answer these questions, your Pastor or Youth Director has seen these skills and gifts in you. Because they think you are a great role model and have amazing leadership potential, you have the opportunity to become a WHEATY!

Now you are probably wondering what in the world a WHEATY is... A WHEATY is a high school student chosen to attend the Middle School Gathering as a peer minister to the Middle School youth. You are going to be trained in how to ask questions and be a peer minister. This training is only for one hour, but you will be practicing your newly developed skills during the two days of the gathering. Don't worry about the training or specifics now, just know that along with modeling Christian behavior at the gathering sessions (such as singing and dancing to Tangled Blue!) you will be able to walk along with someone who is feeling left out, listen to someone going through a hard time, or simply "WHEATing" someone sitting off by themselves.

This is a great opportunity to be a leader, to learn new skills, to help others, and it looks great on your college application. Ask your Pastor or Youth Director for more details on the Gathering and when your deadline is for signing up.

If you have questions that your Pastor or Youth Director cannot answer, please let me know, Kristina Johnson [lyo@cord.edu](mailto:lyo@cord.edu).

Sincerely,

Kristina Johnson

NWMN Synod LYO Advisor and Gathering Coordinator

# WHEATYs F.A.Qs:

## What are WHEATYs?

WHEATYs are Senior High youth who are trained to minister to their peers. They are chosen because they are already a positive role model in their congregation. WHEATYs will have undergone a WHEATY training-of-sorts to learn how to ask questions, walk with and be a mentor to the middle school participants.

## Who can be a WHEATY?

Any High School (grade 9-12) student who is a member of a Lutheran congregation. Youth who are already ministering among their peers or have leadership potential just waiting to be tapped would make a great WHEATY. Youth counselors and Pastors encourage and invite that young person who you know has great WHEATY characteristics (*see WHEATYs invitation letter document*). They need to have no prior training. We will give them an hour-long training session at the Gathering. If they have already been trained in peer ministry or have been a WHEATY before, that would be even better.

## Why do we have WHEATYs?

Their presence will affirm and encourage Christian community and behavior at the Gathering. The original goals for WHEATYs were:

- 1) To foster more interaction and peer ministering between youth at the Senior High and Middle school levels;
- 2) To be the go-to people for the LYO board and adult advisors when in need;
- 3) To walk along with someone who is feeling left out, listening to someone going through a hard time, or simply “WHEATing” someone sitting off by themselves.

## Why are they called WHEATYs?

WHEAT is an acronym for a series of questions to start conversation developed by The Youth & Family Institute (Lyle Griner and Barbara Varenhorst). The acronym is a part of the training the WHEATYs undergo in order to learn how to start conversation with peers. In short, WHEATYs will learn how to WHEAT their peers: to start conversation and develop friendships.

W= Where?

H= Hobbies?

E= Events?

A= Acquaintances?

T= Travel?

\*An interesting side note: The name is spelled grammatically incorrect “WHEATYs” because “Wheaties” is a trademarked cereal brand.

## What are the WHEATYs roles and duties at the Gathering?

~To attend and participate in all gathering events

~To demonstrate an involved and enthusiastic attitude, for example, singing and dancing when appropriate, but also modeling attentive listening behavior during speakers.

~To walk along with someone who is feeling left out, listen to someone going through a hard time, or simply “WHEATing” someone sitting off by themselves.

~To be with their congregation during devotion time at night, with their youth or adults during nightlife, and to be available for conversation with their youth at any time.

~To be willing to help out the LYO board or their adult advisors with tasks, such as being volunteers to help direct youth, run a breakout session, or attend to the needs of the group/youth if the adult advisor is occupied.

*(See WHEATYs covenant document for a full list of the WHEATYs' commitment)*

### **How many WHEATYs can each congregation have?**

Every group can have at least 2 WHEATYs. Then, you can have extra WHEATYs at this ratio: 5 participants to 1 WHEATY, so at 15 Middle Schoolers, there can be 3 WHEATYs and so on. However, the number of WHEATYs cannot outnumber the number of adults.

### **How do WHEATYs register and what is the cost?**

WHEATYs are to be registered with their congregation. The cost for WHEATYs is the same as a gathering participant: \$75 (before November 4, \$90 after). WHEATYs will be housed with their congregations also.

Questions still unanswered? Contact Kris at [lyo@cord.edu](mailto:lyo@cord.edu) or Katie Nelson at [klnelson@cord.edu](mailto:klnelson@cord.edu) or 218-299-4561.

# WHEATY's Covenant

## **As a WHEATY, I promise:**

~To attend and participate in all gathering events.

~To demonstrate an involved and enthusiastic attitude. For example, singing and dancing when appropriate, but also modeling attentive listening behavior during speakers.

~To walk along with someone who is feeling left out, listen to someone going through a hard time, or simply "WHEAT" someone sitting off by themselves.

~To be with my congregation during devotion time at night, with my youth or adults during nightlife, and to be available for conversation with my youth at any time.

~To be willing to help out the LYO board or my adult advisors with tasks, such being volunteers to help direct youth, run a breakout session, or attend to the needs of the group/youth if the adult advisor is occupied.

~To stay on site unless my adult advisor has requested otherwise.

~To NOT be alone in a room with a youth of the opposite sex, specifically not for long periods of time and/or during hours of sleeping.

~To notify an adult advisor or gathering leader (LYO board member/advisor), or an Alerus Center employee if applicable, of an emergency or a problem out of my control or training. (Such as, if a youth has a problem that I am not trained to deal with, cannot deal with, or choose not to deal with, inform an adult or refer the youth to someone who can help.)

~To NOT use drugs, alcohol, or smoke in any shape or form.

~To NOT show unnecessary public displays of affection, between myself and another WHEATY, youth, or other participant.

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, promise to abide by this covenant for the whole time I am acting as a WHEATY, including to and from the gathering, in order to be a good role model of Christian behavior and attitude.**

**I will also remember to carry this covenant home with me.**