



**A Church Coordinator's Guide  
to  
Midwest Leadership Training for Christ  
(MWLTC)**

2019-2020 Edition

The MWLTC Board of Directors prepared this guide for the benefit of Church Coordinators. Please direct any questions or suggestions regarding this document to [webmaster\(at\)mwltc.org](mailto:webmaster(at)mwltc.org). More information about MWLTC can be found on our website, <http://www.mwltc.net/>.

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## Preface

We're excited that you are interested in playing a part in nurturing, encouraging, and training young men and women to be leaders for Christ and a blessing to the people around them. Without God's grace and dedicated volunteers at the local congregation, this ministry would not be possible.

**Leadership Training for Christ** is just one way to do that. We happen to be pretty fond of it, but we might be "biased". As you become more familiar with LTC and this guide, you may begin to get the impression that LTC is just about deadlines, responsibilities, and forms. To be effective, we do think we need to be organized, orderly, and timely. However, if those things overshadow our true purpose, then we have failed to communicate effectively.

Let there be no doubt – our prayer is that LTC be an effective tool for families and churches to:

- Inspire and encourage young people to explore and hone their God-given gifts and talents
- Use those gifts and talents to be a blessing to their family, their church, and the community around them

## Introduction & Purpose of This Guide

An effective Church Coordinator can make the difference between a successful LTC experience and a frustrating one that ends in burnout. We want to do everything we can do to help Church Coordinators be effective.

This *Church Coordinator's Guide* is part of that effort. This guide's purpose is to:

- Provide Church Coordinators with a description of their responsibilities
- Share some best practices from other LTC's and other congregations
- Offer tools and aids for getting started on MWLTC

All of us are volunteers, donating our time to serve each other and His kids. We want to be as effective at doing that as possible. We hope you'll join us as we strive together to be as effective as we can be.

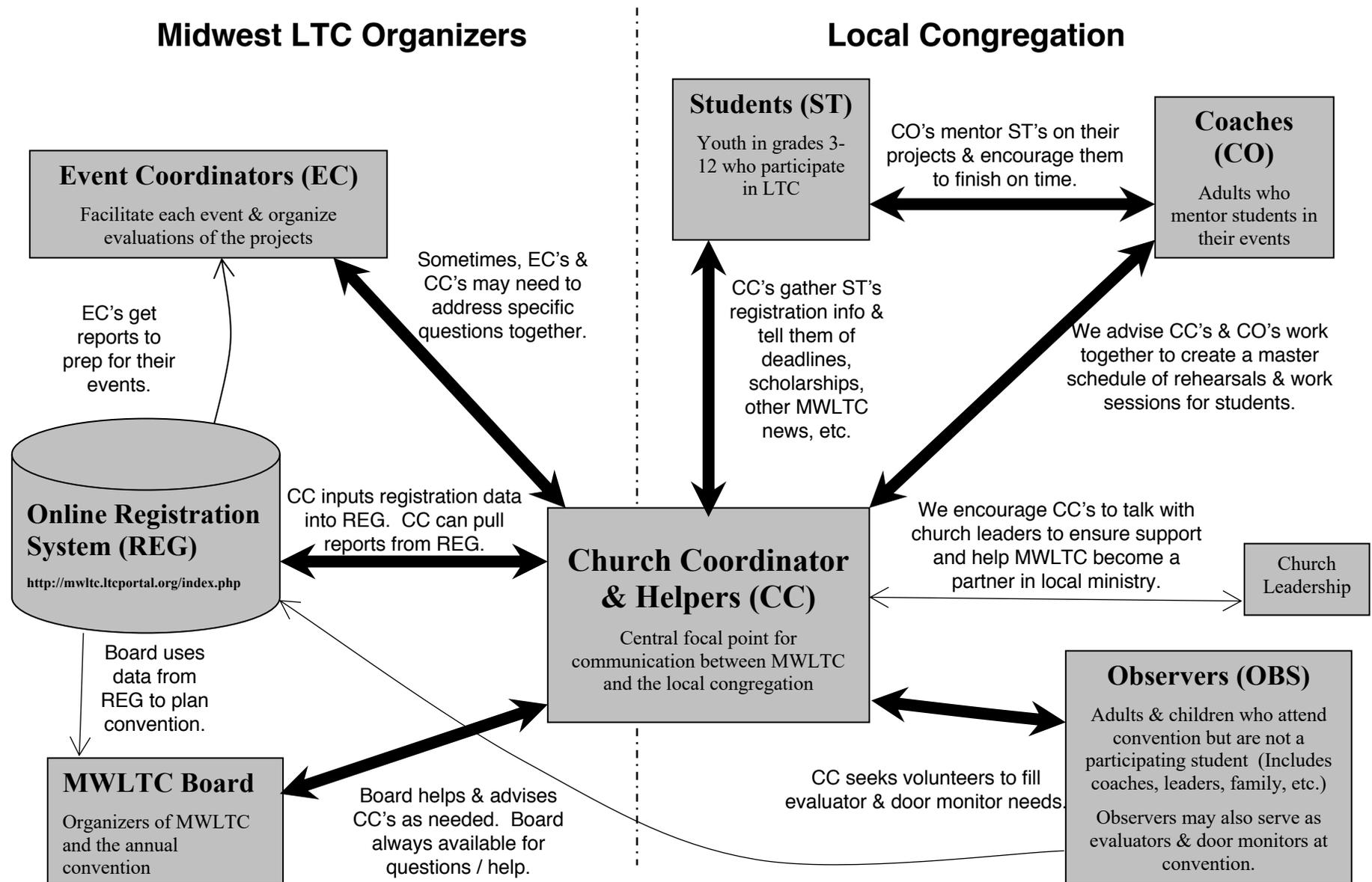
*NOTE: We assume that you are somewhat familiar with LTC, in general. If that is not the case, we invite you to study our web site for a more general overview of this ministry.*

## The Big Picture – A Diagram

For some, it is helpful to see the "big picture". The next page shows all the major groups of people involved in LTC from a Church Coordinator's perspective. The rest of this guide describes the people and relationships in that figure (and some that we couldn't fit into the diagram).

**Do NOT be overwhelmed by the "Big Picture"**. If you're an experienced Church Coordinator, there should be little that is new in the diagram. If you're relatively new at this, the rest of this guide will help you make sense of it all and manage it well.

Figure 1: The Big Picture of MWLTC



## ***People at the Local Congregation***

### **Church Coordinator & Helpers**

The Church Coordinator is the bridge between the MWLTC organizers and the local congregation. Said another way, when someone from MWLTC needs to contact a congregation, they turn to the Church Coordinator. When someone at the local congregation is searching for information or has a question about MWLTC, they will often turn to the Church Coordinator first. **Communication is of paramount importance in both directions – toward MWLTC and toward the congregation.**

In larger churches, we strongly recommend that a Church Coordinator assemble a team of people to help with the tasks. Smaller churches may do well with one person serving as Church Coordinator. The definition of large and small depends on many factors. One rule of thumb might be to consider a smaller congregation to have fewer than 10-15 participating students.

If you choose to spread the workload among a team of people, some congregations have been very effective when using a 2- or 3-person model for getting the Church Coordinator's work done:

- One Person for Online Registration & Email Communication with MWLTC. Must be comfortable using computers and performing basic data entry tasks. Attention to detail is very important. Attentiveness to email is also very important. In some situations, a detailed person such as this can be very helpful to make sure that the "Church Coordinator" team gets everything covered.
- One person to be the "Face of MWLTC" to the Local Congregation. This might be the person that recruits coaches & mentors for students. He/she might occasionally stand in front of the congregation announcing news regarding MWLTC or the annual convention. A confident, friendly, and outgoing personality can be very helpful in this area. This person should also be comfortable giving guidance and direction (and occasionally gentle correction) to other adults.
- At the annual MWLTC Convention, someone from the local congregation must serve as the contact in case any of the MWLTC staff have issues or questions for the congregation. We've seen this role covered effectively by the "Data Entry" person or the "Face of LTC" person – or even a third person. It is very helpful for this person to be knowledgeable of the registration data (or have ready access to it) and for them to be well-respected by members (adult, students) of their own congregation.

**TIP: Should the Youth Minister Serve as the Church Coordinator?** Over the years, we've seen several youth ministers serve as the church coordinator. A few have been very effective. In most situations, we think there is a more effective way. It is very helpful for youth ministers to be involved and aware, and let another adult in the congregation take the lead role as church coordinator.

**TIP: Train a Backup.** We have found that the most effective Church Coordinators have someone to work alongside them throughout the year. If the Church Coordinator cannot finish the year or continue into the next year, the backup person can step right in.

**TIP:** If you are a new Church Coordinator and would like some guidance from an experienced Church Coordinator, let us know. We can help pair you with a mentor.

**TIP:** If your congregation has many people that are comfortable communicating electronically, perhaps a blog or email mailing list would be a good way to keep your congregation informed about LTC.

### **Church Leadership**

The church leadership will vary among congregations. Some congregations have recognized elders; some do not. Some congregations have a ministry and office staff; some do not. Church Coordinators will have to make a judgment call on how to proceed with this point.

For maximum effectiveness, we strongly recommend Church Coordinators find one or more members of the church's leadership team to get personally involved in LTC somehow. When the leadership team of a congregation is involved in LTC and believes that it can be useful for the mission of the church, the Church Coordinator's work becomes much easier.

We have a few suggestions on how to do this.

- **Make It Personal.**  
Go to each of your church leaders personally and ask them to become involved somehow.
- **Be Specific.**  
Go with a specific suggestion in mind. Perhaps one of your leaders can coach or mentor students. Or commit to evaluating an event at convention.
- **Show Examples of How MWLTC Can Be Helpful.**  
Describe an example of how MWLTC can be used to support the church's ministries, instead of something completely separate just for youth. LTC has been known to help bring youth and adults together in a way that would not happen without something like LTC. Use those opportunities for the benefit of the church family.

## Coaches

Coaches mentor students in their events. Coaches play an advisory role, and are NOT to do the project work for the students. Coaches are usually adults, though high school students that are participating in Leadership Challenge are required to mentor younger students in an event (see Leadership Challenge rules for more details). In some cases, parents serve as coaches for their children.

Students have the primary responsibility for making sure that they meet all the requirements in the rules for each event. An adult's wisdom and experience can be very helpful though in creating a schedule of milestones and deadlines.

We have a few recommendations to help find coaches:

- **Look for the Natural Fit.**  
An avid scrapbooker may like to mentor a team of students participating in the Scrapbook event. A good song leader may be very effective at working with students in the Song Leading event. Many other examples apply for other events as well.
- **Make It Personal.**  
There are few things more effective than a personal request. Be specific when you approach a possible coach. Have a copy of the rules for the event you'd like for them to coach. Help them understand what a coach does. Encourage them to give it a chance. Perhaps pair them with another adult to coach the students.
- **Not All Students or Events Need a Coach.**  
Some students may be very responsible, mature, and naturally talented for a certain event. In some situations, parents will guide their own children one-on-one without needing a separate coach.

**TIP:** Use the "LTC Volunteer Interest Form" at the back of this guide to survey adults in your congregation for how they would like to be involved.

**TIP:** It may be helpful to put together a master schedule of work sessions and rehearsals. This will help avoid conflicts. If you choose to use Bible Class time for LTC-related work for the students, consider discussing this with the people in your children's education program.

## Students

Any student in grades 3-12 (with a paid registration fee) may participate in as many MWLTC events as they like.

Students with special needs are especially welcome to participate in MWLTC. Depending on their needs, some additional communication may be necessary and appropriate with the event coordinators or the MWLTC Board. In some cases, event rules may be adapted to accommodate a student's unique needs. If you have any questions, please contact us in advance.

The student registration fee is used to offset expenses associated with plaques, medals, convention facility costs, etc. In regard to student registration fees, we recommend the following:

- **Send a Single Check to MWLTC.**  
It is acceptable to send multiple checks. However, sending a single check makes life easier for everyone. Some churches will cover the student registration fees out of the church budget. However, many churches have each student or their family pay this fee out-of-pocket. We have no guidance on that matter – do what seems suitable for your congregation.
- **Keep Good Records of Who Has Paid.**  
We strongly recommend that the church coordinator maintain a record of which students have paid and which have not.
- **No Student Should Be Prevented from Participating for Lack of Funds.**  
Some congregations use an adopt-a-student method of covering the registration fee for students who cannot cover the cost. Some use a type of incentive-based system so students can earn a “free ride” to cover their registration fee. (Example incentives might include participating in a certain number of events or using LTC to get engaged in a church’s local ministry work.)

**TIP:** Use the “Student Registration Form” at the back of this guide to gather students’ registration information and events in which they wish to participate.

**TIP:** Periodically confirm each student’s intentions to participate in the events for which they have registered. One effective way to do this is by posting the student registration report (from the online registration system) on a bulletin board.

**TIP:** Consider writing a letter to parents (or to the entire congregation) about MWLTC to give them an idea of what it is. Take a look at the “Introduction Letter to Parents” at the back of this guide.

### Special Opportunities for Students

Several Christian colleges and universities support MWLTC by offering **college scholarships** to participating students. Students may submit an application for consideration for scholarships. Tens of thousands of dollars are awarded at the annual convention. See the web site for more details and to complete the three forms.

### Observers

An observer is *anyone* who comes to the annual MWLTC convention who is not a participating student. This includes adults and non-participating children.

Observers may come to the annual convention at no extra cost (beyond the travel, food and hotel costs that they might incur). Observers may come to simply observe the fruit of the students’ labors, provide moral support, and cheer their students on. Though adults may not think they’ll contribute much by simply attending, the students (and coaches) are greatly encouraged when members of their home congregation take the time to come watch. And many people who come intending to provide moral support find themselves encouraged as well.

Above and beyond that, observers are asked to consider serving as evaluators for the students’ work and as door monitors to help ensure students are not interrupted during performance events. Expertise is not required for either of these special roles (evaluator or door monitor) – only a willing heart. Some experience is helpful, though. The Church Coordinator must do that. (We ask for your cooperation to fill all the evaluator and door monitor responsibilities before convention if possible.)

- Ask for volunteers to evaluate or monitor doors until you are able to fill the requested openings (as shown in the registration system). Evaluators need NOT be trained or experienced in a certain field to serve.
- **Make It Personal.**  
There are few things more effective than a personal request. You don’t know what they’ll say until you ask.

- Have them visit the website to fill out the volunteer information or set up your own sign-up at your local congregation. If you choose to set up your own sign-up, please fill in the volunteer form with their information. (Name, phone, event, etc...)

**TIP:** Have a copy of the tentative MWLTC Convention schedule with you when you ask for volunteers to evaluate a specific event. A person's travel plans may not allow them to evaluate the event that needs to be covered. (For example, a person arriving late Friday evening is not able to evaluate an event taking place earlier in the day.)

## ***People Organizing MWLTC***

### **MWLTC Board**

Midwest LTC is a non-profit organization and is led by a President and an Executive Board of Directors. This group of volunteers leads and sets direction for MWLTC, as well as makes business-related decisions for the organization.

In addition to the Executive Board, MWLTC benefits from the commitment and service of an Advisory Board. This group of dedicated volunteers scattered around the Midwest region help plan, organize, and run the annual convention. This includes areas like convention setup & logistics, data entry, scholarships, praise & worship, safety & risk, coordinating evaluators & door monitors, LTC Central desk, scheduling, vendors, etc.

(Though not a part of the MWLTC Board, there are many, many other dedicated individuals that help put on the annual convention. Their servant hearts are indispensable to this ministry.)

### **Event Coordinators**

Event Coordinators are responsible for running their respective events for all of MWLTC. (Do not confuse this with a coach's role at a local congregation.) This responsibility includes running their event in an orderly manner and consistent with the published event rules. They are also involved in the year-to-year adjustments made to the event rules and evaluation criteria.

Any event-specific questions you have should be directed to the "Contact" page on the website.

### **The Online Registration System**

The web-based registration system is the primary way that the Church Coordinator provides information about what their congregation is doing with MWLTC. The MWLTC Board uses the data to plan and organize the annual convention. Event Coordinators use the data to prepare for their events.

The registration system is designed for a single Church Coordinator account for each congregation and a single Event Coordinator account for each event.

## **Getting Your Congregation Started with MWLTC**

Perhaps you are familiar with LTC in general and want to get started at your congregation. Or maybe you are the new Church Coordinator at a congregation that has been involved in LTC in the past. Or maybe you're an experienced Church Coordinator who is searching for ways to be more effective. We have some ideas that you might find helpful.

The set of steps below is one way to get started. You may want to tailor this list to fit your particular situation.

- 1 Pray.
- 2 Talk to your church leadership (ministry staff & elders) about LTC. (Review the section on church leaders for ideas.)
- 3 Choose a Church Coordinator or assemble a small team to share the load.
- 4 If you are a new Church Coordinator, consider whether you would like a mentor to guide you along the process.

- 5 Create a regular place and format for LTC announcements. Maybe the church bulletin or a bulletin board. Some church coordinators post the latest student registration report on a bulletin board for students/parents to review and update, as appropriate.
- 6 Delegate.
- 7 Start talking about LTC to your congregation. We recommend that you look at the sample letter to parents at the back of this guide to introduce MWLTC to them. (Contact us if you need more help.)
- 8 Encourage students and coaches.
- 9 Plan an LTC kickoff event for the congregation. This can be a good way to introduce new people to the different events and give them an idea of what is typical for a project or performance.
- 10 Hand out student forms and volunteer interest forms (see samples at the back of this guide) to help gather information for registration.
- 11 Recruit coaches.
- 12 Remind students about scholarship opportunities for the current year.
- 13 Collect student registration fees.
- 14 Input registration information online.
- 15 Create an LTC schedule of practices & deadlines for your congregation.
- 16 Review the list of church coordinator responsibilities for each event (see back of this guide).
- 17 Pray.
- 18 Maintain regular communication with people that are involved in this effort. You might consider publishing a regular brief newsletter that outlines LTC progress and what lies ahead.
- 19 Recruit evaluators & door monitors (people who are planning to come to convention).
- 20 Remind your congregation about hotel reservations. Visit [www.mwltc.net](http://www.mwltc.net) for more info on this.
- 21 Pray.
- 22 Delegate.
- 23 Get & stay organized throughout this process. It may be helpful for you to keep a folder or notebook for yourself with a copy of all event rules, registration lists, this guide, and other MWLTC material as needed.
- 24 Never lose sight of the fact that this is a ministry . . . not just a bunch of dates, forms, and deadlines.

**TIP:** Remember that LTC is just a tool for training youth for servant leadership. For consistency, it is important to abide by the published event rules. In addition to those rules, some congregations add requirements to the existing rules to tailor the event for their own situation. For example, a Church Coordinator may choose to require students participating in Bible Reading to publicly read scripture during a congregation assembly.

## Overcoming Obstacles

There are some obstacles that are common to many congregations. Here are some ideas on how to overcome them – or at least reduce their effect.

### **No Youth Interest But Adult Support**

You need to look at why the youth are not interested. Is it because they are too intimidated? Get one of the adults to try and solicit interest. Remember most of us do not take on new challenges unless we know we can succeed. This is a case where adult encouragement may help.

**Youth Interest But Not Adult Support**

Look at why the adults are not interested. Is it because they feel inadequate for the task? Encouragement and some adult guidance on milestones and due dates is often what is needed most.

**Rehearsal & Work Session Schedule Conflicts**

We recommend working with coaches and the leaders of the education program at your congregation to work out a schedule agreeable to everyone. A large master calendar on a bulletin board can be very helpful with this. Another way to do this is to encourage parents to work with their own children.

**Youth and Coaches Are Overwhelmed (especially people that are new to LTC)**

If a person becomes overwhelmed with LTC (especially a new person), recommend that they start out with just one or two events. They can consider this to be a learning experience about what LTC is all about.

**Church Coordinator Burnout**

Delegate, delegate, delegate. Assemble a team to help you. Contact us if you need more ideas.

**Church Leadership Is Not Interested**

Try to help leaders dream about how MWLTC could help train today's students into tomorrow's ministry workers within the congregation. Perhaps you can brainstorm ways to use LTC to meet your church's needs and fulfill its mission. Personally invite some of your leaders to the annual convention. Some churches have found that their leaders catch the excitement once they've attended a convention. In some instances, we have found success when elders and ministers from one congregation talk to those of another congregation. If you think we can be helpful, let us know.

**Team-Based Events Seem to Become a Popularity Contest**

Some events are team-based, which can cause social divisions among students. Have a respected adult (perhaps the youth minister) discuss the importance of encouraging one another and ministering to each other's need for acceptance and love. (This is not an easy message.) We advise that coaches for team-based events be strong encouragers that can effectively deal with this type of issue.

**Parents (Or Students) Treat MWLTC as a Competition**

Sometimes a desire to see a student do well crosses a line and turns into a desire to see a student do better than all others. This is definitely not the spirit of what LTC is about. LTC is about encouragement and evaluation against a published standard. The victory is in students trying and putting forth their best. Pride and envy are enemies to this. We've always said that this is about leadership training, and leadership is an action, not a position.

**Students or Coaches Who Don't Follow Through on Their Commitments**

LTC is about leadership training. It is also about encouragement. We recommend that you try to occasionally "check the pulse" of students and coaches. A word of encouragement can go a long way to help avoid these kinds of problems. This is a situation where the person serving as the "Face of LTC" to your congregation may be effective.

## What to Expect at the Annual Convention

### *How to Prepare*

As convention weekend nears, you will be receiving helpful material to distribute to your congregation as they prepare for convention.

A few things that need to be done well before convention are:

- Remind everyone who plans to go to convention to make their hotel arrangements.
- Be diligent about inputting and correcting student, team, and observer registration data. Don't forget to provide names for the evaluators and door monitor volunteers.
- Be sure that the student fees are turned in.

## ***At Convention***

### **Hotel Check-In**

You should expect a typical hotel check-in experience.

### **LTC Central Check-In**

Shortly after you arrive to the convention site, the church coordinator will check in for their entire congregation and participants in LIBERTY HALL.

### **Evaluator & Door Monitor Check-in**

Observers who have volunteered to evaluate or monitor doors need to stop by this desk to confirm that they are indeed present and available to evaluate or monitor doors. This is also when and where door monitors will sign up for a specific time slot. This desk will be staffed throughout the convention to help ensure that all the slots get filled.

### **Schedules**

In the last few weeks before convention, some event schedules will be posted on the website. At convention a finalized master schedule will be posted near LTC Central. Typically, detailed schedules for each event are also available and posted in front of the appropriate rooms.

### **Display Events (checking in pieces)**

Projects for display events (e.g. art, photography, scrapbook, etc) must be checked in at the appropriate desk in LIBERTY HALL by Friday evening. This is to ensure that pieces are delivered and received safely, and that there is a record of each piece being received. Pieces that are not checked-in may not get evaluated.

### **Colleges & Scholarships**

Scholarships will be presented during the Saturday evening celebration.

### **Praise Time**

There will be scheduled assemblies that will likely include congregational singing & praise, as well as a brief message from a speaker.

### **Celebration**

Saturday evening features a special assembly led by participants that focuses on celebrating the weekend with singing & praising, honoring the God-given talent of the adults & students, and announcing the following year's LTC theme.

### **Medals & Plaques**

Award results will NOT be posted during convention. The actual medals and plaques are given to church coordinators at the conclusion of the Saturday Evening Celebration. Please take the awards & plaques back to your home congregation and have a celebration.

### **Worship**

LTC weekend concludes with an Sunday worship assembly and a message from scripture on Sunday morning.

## ***After Convention***

We strongly recommend that church coordinators plan some sort of local recognition at the local congregation. Many congregations do this a week or two after convention. One idea is to have a youth-led service using some of the skills and talents that they refined for LTC. Some congregations will use this recognition time to present students with their plaques and medals.

The online registration system will have awards data updated. Awards data reports will be available for at least one month after convention.

## Appendix

The samples and forms in this appendix are provided to you as an aid. You are NOT required to use these – they are presented here only because you may find them useful. Please use and adapt them to the extent that they fit your needs and your congregation's needs.

### ***Introduction Letter to Parents***

Dear Parents,

Hello! We are going to be starting Midwest Leadership Training for Christ (MWLTC) at our congregation. It is a special program for kids in grades 3 through 12. It is a program designed to teach them the value of serving and to encourage them to explore ways that they can use their talents for the Lord.

The way it works is that students prepare for events that they want to participate in during the MWLTC Convention that is held in Indianapolis once a year. Churches from all around the region meet there to participate. The kids are awarded plaques for their efforts, and we must stress that it is NOT competition . . . each student's efforts are evaluated according to a written standard, not in relation to another. There are several different events from which to choose. For example, spoken word, Bible bowl, speech, sign language, group singing, drama, puppets, song leading, etc. There are also events that are pre-convention/challenge events that students prepare and send before convention. Some of these include Bible class teaching, Bible quiz, mentoring challenge, outreach challenge, radio minute message, video Bible drama, service challenge, short film, Christian writing, etc.

MWLTC is more than just a program for youth though. It can be a great way for adults and students to interact together, mentor, and get involved in ministry together. There are plenty of important roles that adults can serve: coach, evaluate projects, or simply serve as an encourager.

In the next week or two, we will be handing out a general interest form that you and your child can review and decide the things that he/she is most interested in. It may seem scary at first, but we will have had plenty of practice and they will be very well prepared when we go to the convention in Indianapolis. We encourage the entire family to come to the convention to see how it goes and to witness the great fruits of your child's labor. More information is to follow that will help you to understand, and you can always ask us if there is anything you need to know.

There is a registration fee of \$40 for each student participating in MWLTC. That fee covers the cost of the plaque that your child will receive after the Convention – and if paid by [insert deadline date], it also guarantees your child an MWLTC t-shirt. There will also be costs of the hotel for that weekend, but it is lower than normal rates, as we get convention rates. We do not have the cost information for that as of yet. However, we want to stress emphatically that we do not want any child to not participate because of financial reasons. If you have trouble covering the registration fee, please contact me. No child should be denied this opportunity for lack of funds. The spiritual benefits that your child will gain are astronomical compared to the cost of the event.

We will be giving you more information in a week or two. We ask that you prayerfully consider this with your child . . . as it takes a commitment to put in the time and effort for this. Also, we strongly encourage you to participate with your child so that you can see the amazing spiritual benefits that he/she will be gaining!

In Christ,

[signed]

