



Restarting Your Lutheran Girl Pioneer Caravan in the Midst of COVID-19



This is only intended as suggested guidelines to restarting your caravan.

Please contact your Church Council or Lutheran Day School Board of Education for specific protocols for your individual church or school.

You can also contact your local and state health authorities for their recommendations specific to your area.

For up-to-date information about the coronavirus, please visit the CDC at www.cdc.gov.

Restarting your caravan after the shut downs this past spring can be nerve-racking. How do we protect girls and leaders? What is required of us as leaders within our caravans? How do we put our plans into action? We hope this brief paper will help you with those questions and more!

First off, thank you. Thank you for taking on the challenge of leading our girls during this unprecedented time in our history. Thank you for caring enough about the health and well-being of all our girls to do what is best for them, even if it means a little inconvenience is involved. Thank you for helping our girls stay Loyal to Christ, even while we are living a little differently right now.

The following suggested guidelines are just that— things to think about and implement as you see fit for your particular situation. Restarting your caravan will take place when your church or school leadership tells you it is safe to do. Please contact those in charge at your local church or school for direction.

Jesus tells us repeatedly that we have nothing to fear. He also tells us not to tempt God. So, as Bible-believing Christians, we walk that tight-rope, knowing our balance isn't ours, it's all Jesus. When you get the go-ahead to re-start your caravan, remember that incredible truth: God loves us so much, that while we were still sinners, he let Jesus take our place so that we don't have to fear this world, the devil, or death. Our hope is firmly planted in this. We will clean better, practice better hygiene and we will continue to trust that God knows what he's doing.

Please contact your pastor or your church council or school board with any questions you may have regarding restarting your caravan. You can also call the National Office at 608-781-5232.

God Bless You and God Bless Our Lutheran Girl Pioneers!

Starting your Caravan in the Fall 2020

While we all want to go back to normal as soon as possible, for some of us, Fall 2020 is going to look very different than years past. If your church is worshiping as they always have been then starting your Pioneers year is going to be very similar to any other year. But, if there are still restrictions either in your state or county, you may be struggling with what you're going to do. You may be thinking that maybe you just won't have Pioneers this year. Maybe your anxiety is high and you don't have a clue where to start.

Let me say this: no matter where you are and what the "rules" are where you are, Jesus is still in control. He still hears you when you pray and He never leaves your side.

I am going to go through several scenarios and give you some ideas of things you can do to make this year a successful Pioneers year, even if you aren't meeting in a traditional way.

God's blessings on your planning and your year! Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns!

Scenario #1 There are no rules or regulations from your local health department regarding meeting together. Schools are open and functioning in a normal way. Your Sunday School is meeting regularly and worship is happening without restrictions.

Be sure to check with your pastor, council chairmen, or the chairman in charge of Pioneers to see if there are any extra precautions you should be taking in terms of cleaning and activities and outings you are planning. Follow their recommendations.

Using the LGP Program Planner, plan your year as you normally would, taking into account that you may have to change your plans if your area's or church's regulations change.

Several things to think about and consider putting into place:

1. Place hand sanitizing stations around your meeting area and encourage their use.
2. Encourage the girls not to share food or drinks.
3. Encourage the girls to stay home from meetings if they are ill, have been in ill recently, or have had contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive in the past 14 days. Do not punish girls who miss meetings because of illness.
4. Encourage good hygiene- hand washing often, don't touch face, etc.
5. Be sure each girl has her own supplies- Girl's Handbook, pen, pencil. The less we "share" items, the less we touch other's germs (good policy for other illnesses, like tummy bugs and the flu, too)!

Scenario #2 The local health department says that large groups are discouraged and may have a number of how many people should be together in one place. School is back in session, somewhat. They may meeting on an alternating day schedule and classes may not be mingling. Sunday School may be meeting, but maybe not. Worship is happening but with regulations like enforced social distancing and may require masks.

Be sure to check with your pastor, council chairmen, or the chairman in charge of Pioneers to see if there are any church policies you should be following in terms of cleaning and activities and outings you are planning. Follow their recommendations.

Using the LGP Program Planner, plan your year as you normally would, with a few exceptions:

- Consider not bringing in guest speakers this year
- Consider not going on outings, or if you do, staying local
 - * Consider not carpooling with people outside your household
- If you have a large caravan, you may have to split your meetings into levels
 - * Sunbeams only meetings, Travelers only meetings, etc.
- As long as the weather permits, consider having your meetings outside
- Tape X's on the floor and at tables where girls can sit/ stand to encourage social distancing
 - * Check with your church or school custodian to find out if you can put tape on the floor/tables and what type you should use
- Have a plan of what to do should someone get ill during or after a meeting
 - * Check with your church or school council as they may have a policy in place already
- Meet with your church or school custodian to find out what procedures you need to follow to sanitize your meeting space
 - * He/she may not want you to do anything or they may want you to sanitize immediately after any meeting. Talking with them will ensure that you are following their protocols.

Several things to think about and consider putting into place:

1. Place hand sanitizing stations around your meeting area and encourage their use.
2. Put up signs and posters that encourage good hygiene.
3. Discourage eating or drinking at meetings. If your girls need to, have them bring their own water bottles from home and snacks should be pre-packaged. Close the bubblers.
4. Encourage the girls to stay home from meetings if they are ill, have been in ill recently, or have had contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive in the past 14 days. Do not punish girls who miss meetings because of illness.
5. Encourage good hygiene- hand washing often, don't touch face, etc.
6. Be sure each girl has her own supplies- Girl's Handbook, pen, pencil. The less we "share" items, the less we touch other's germs (good policy for other illnesses, like

tummy bugs and the flu, too)!

7. If encouraged or required in your area or church, have masks available for girls to use during meetings. Do not leave them at church/school. Have them take them home to dispose of or wash.

If cases of COVID-19 rise in your area, there may be a chance that your church or school tells you that Pioneers can't meet anymore.

Then put into place a Plan B (see Scenario 3).

Scenario #3 Your local health department says that groups shouldn't be meeting together. Schools are meeting virtually at least half of the time, maybe more. Sunday School isn't meeting in person. Worship is severely limited and restrictions are strict.

Be sure to check with your pastor, council chairmen, or the chairman in charge of Pioneers to see if there are any church policies you should be following. Follow their recommendations.

Using the LGP Program Planner, plan your year virtually.

Plan meetings that you can lead during a Facebook Video Messaging, Google Hangouts, or Zoom session.

Prior to each meeting, either deliver or mail all the supplies your girls will need.

Assign work in their handbook for them to do on their own or with a parent's help.

At the meeting, review handbook work together. Keep the meetings short (30-45 minutes).

Meeting ideas: handbook work; crafts; cooking; show and tell (kids love this one!)

Side bar:

Get comfortable using technology. Facebook Video Messaging is so easy to use!

Make sure you are friends with all your girls parents.

Tell all the parents what time the meeting will start and to be logged into Facebook.

Go to messenger.

Go to messages for the first girl. On the right hand upper corner there is a camera. Click it. Once they answer, add the rest of your girls by clicking the person icon on the bottom of your screen.

(If you need or want to practice, and we are Facebook friends, call me!)

As you are planning your year, you may want to plan for all three scenarios. Having a plan in place is good practice— you will be ready no matter what comes your way!

Don't give up meeting together because you can't meet face-to-face. There are so many ways that we can get together without being physically close! You need the connection and your girls need this connection! The encouragement you give to your girls by staying positive in the face of challenges is huge! Remind them, and yourself, that Jesus is in control, no matter our situation. Our God is great, so strong and so mighty! There's nothing our God cannot do! What great comfort we have in that! View this time we are living in as an opportunity not a hardship. With a little extra planning, you can still have a fabulous Pioneer year.

In closing, the best piece of advice I can offer is this: Reach out to your pastor, council chairman, or the councilman in charge of Pioneers. They will be your best bet for up-to-date information regarding starting up in the fall. Listen to them and follow their recommendations. Don't be afraid to let them know your thoughts, or worries, as well.

Girl Pioneers are resourceful and inventive! Let's live up to that as we all navigate this time!

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