

Parish Leader Guide – Love Begins Here 2025

Welcome to Love Begins Here 2025!

We are so excited to welcome missionaries and parishes back to the mission field for Love Begins Here 2025! We cannot wait to welcome you and your teens to the mission field. Whether this will be your first summer of Love Begins Here or you are returning, thank you for your investment in your young people and trusting us with your group.

This brief guide is designed for parish leaders bringing a group on LBH in 2025. Please make sure to read it thoroughly and note the deadlines and policies explained herein. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us! We'll see you soon.

Meg

Glossary of LBH Terms

You may see reference to the following terms in this guide or on the mission field. Here's more information on what each term means:

- **Teen Missionary:** A youth (grades 6-12) who is attending LBH.
- **Adult Missionary:** An adult leader/chaperone attending LBH. See more in the *LBH Missionaries* section. (Note: to avoid confusion, we're moving away from the term "Lead Missionary")
- **Core Team Missionary:** A staff member of LBH. We will have 8-9 staff members (usually young adults) who help implement and guide LBH throughout the week.
- **Parish Group:** A group coming to LBH from the same parish, along with their adult leaders. E.g. Louisa brings 6 teens from St. Elizabeth on a week of LBH. This is the "St. Elizabeth" parish group.
- **Parish Group Leader:** The main contact for a parish group, responsible for registration, promotion, and coordination of a parish group. Typically, the parish leader is the "head" adult missionary for a parish group as well (if you are reading this, you are likely the parish leader!).
- **Host Parish/Home-Base:** The parish where we live in community on a week of LBH. E.g. Holy Trinity is the host parish for Middle School Week 1 – during that week, the church and school are "home base".
- **Car Group:** Each week, youth are mixed up into a particular car group. This is the "small group" they are in for the week, and will do many activities together, mainly their mission work during the day and any travelling that needs to happen during the LBH. A car group will be a mix of youth of different ages, genders, and parish groups. *Note: we create car groups on the first night of LBH. If there is a teen who needs to be in a particular car group, we are more than happy to accommodate*
- **Mission Manifesto:** This is the *WHY* of Love Begins Here, a constant reflection point for our missionaries throughout the week. It explains why, how, and what we do. See the *Mission Manifesto* section for more.
- **Collatio:** Latin for "coming/bringing together." This is the time, each evening, where all the missionaries come together for large group processing, a spiritual talk by a Core Team Missionary, and prayer time. This time helps our missionaries connect the service they do during the day with their relationship with Christ and His Church.
- **Parish Time:** Most nights include time for parish groups to come together and debrief their day. Because youth will be in different car groups throughout the day, this is a chance for a parish group to check-in and bond with each other.

Who Are the LBH Missionaries?

LBH Missionaries are joyful, servant-hearted, and desire to bring the love of Jesus Christ to their neighbors!

High School Missionaries (\$175/week)

- 9th-12th grade students during the 2024-2025 school year*
 - ***Note: rising 9th graders (those that just graduated 8th grade) will not be allowed to attend the high school week.**
- Their mission trips begin on Sunday night and end on Friday 12:00pm

Middle School Missionaries (\$150/week)

- 6th-8th grade students during the 2024-2025 school year
- Their mission trips begin on *Monday and end on Thursday at 12:00pm.
 - * Middle School 3 runs from Tuesday to Friday

Adult Missionaries

LBH welcomes adults 21 and older to serve as adult missionaries who help our youth make the most of their experience. We are especially interested in partnering with adults who are passionate about their Catholic faith, working with teens, and service work. **Parish Group Leaders must ensure that all adult missionaries are in line with Archdiocesan Safe Environment policies and follow our driver policy.**

There is no cost to attend for adult missionaries. We expect all adult missionaries to have gas in their reliable, clean vehicle to provide transportation during the week (your parish may choose to rent vehicles as well). Each adult missionary should also expect to spend about \$25 on taking their car group out for ice cream during the week. We encourage parishes to have a plan to reimburse their adult missionaries for these expenses.

To help inform prospective adult missionaries, see the job description on the following page.

Adult Missionary Recruitment Tips & Thoughts

- **Know how many adult missionaries you need.** You will need seatbelts in a vehicle for each teen missionary in your Parish Group.
 - Example: Nick is bringing 12 teens to LBH. He could divide these teens into 2 mini-vans (6 spots for teens), 3 sedans (4 spots for teens). He will either need 2 or 3 adult missionaries for his group, depending on the vehicles he uses for his week.
- **Recruit based on the Job Description!** Think of adults in your parish that model a life of discipleship and will help model for your teens. And don't sell the role short! It's incredibly fun, rewarding, and inspiring, though the days are long and the commitment is large. We do not want surprised or unprepared adult missionaries!
- Don't stop recruiting adult missionaries if your weeks are covered. Having extra adults at the ready is important if one of your adults falls ill or suddenly cannot join you. Depending on your week, we may need extra adults on hand to help other parishes or for teens who come without a parish group.
 - If you have more adult interest than is needed for the number of teens you are bringing, please chat with us before committing to bring them along. If space allows, these "extra" adults may be able to join at a cost of \$100 each. (If extra adults are needed, they come at no cost).
- After inviting your catechists and friends, think outside of your usual go-to volunteers. In other dioceses, we've had older cousins of missionaries, moms and dads, and even grandparents of missionaries join us!

Position Title: Adult Missionary**Reports To: Core Team****Description**

A Love Begins Here adult missionary accompanies LBH missionaries in service and prayer on mission trips. They are responsible for caring for the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of teen missionaries at all times. Although the day-to-day tasks of this position may sometimes seem secular and routine, the entire purpose of this position is to assist in the mission of the Catholic Church and Love Begins Here Milwaukee to proclaim Christ and make disciples through the sacramental life of the Church. Effective participation in this mission depends at least as much upon example and witness as on the specific tasks performed. Thus, it is imperative that the adult missionary exercises good judgment in their pursuit of these religious objectives and that their words, actions, and attitude reflect the mission of the Catholic Church and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Requirements

The mission of Love Begins Here is to have a dual impact on the missionaries and communities we serve by practicing faith, hope, and charity in our daily lives of prayer, service, and community building. In order for an adult missionary to fulfill this mission and accompany missionaries in prayer and service, this person is expected to joyfully seek to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ through active participation in the Catholic Church, including by publicly professing and following the teachings of the Catholic Church as proclaimed by the magisterium. A adult missionary should be at least 21 years old, have passed insurance screening to drive missionaries in vehicles (and receive approval of Catholic Mutual Group to drive if under 23), and be up to date on all Archdiocesan Safe Environment certification standards. Adult missionaries must also be present for the entire week of Love Begins Here, including overnight.

Principle Activities

- Actively participate in LBH programming at all times they are on the mission field.
- Monitor the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of missionaries and encourage their growth.
- Provide a safe environment for all missionaries, with special attention paid to safety in the car and at the work site, abiding by all laws throughout your time on LBH.
- Attend daily, early morning adult missionary meetings.
- Along with other adult missionary, oversee the wake-up and bedtime routine for teen missionaries.
- Accompany teens through morning routine: eating breakfast, packing lunches, and preparing for the day.
- Coordinate the supplies being taken to and from the LBH trailer for their car group.
- Enthusiastically follow the instructions and group checklists on the work orders during the work day.
- Provide supervision for missionaries during pool and shower times.
- During meals, service, car trips, and group times, engage teen missionaries in conversation and games.
- Lead (or co-lead) nightly parish time.

In general, adult missionaries are held to higher standards than typical “chaperones” so as to best form the next generation of servant-hearted teen missionaries.

LBH 2025 Registration

Parish Registration opens Wednesday, October 25!

- [Use the Parish Registration form to reserve spots for LBH 2025!](#) There are no deposits required, but we ask parishes to be realistic about the number of spots they request. We want our weeks to be as full as possible!
- Group spots registrations will close November 8 and parishes will learn the number of spots available to them by Wednesday, November 13. After this date, open spots will be available on a first come, first serve basis.
- **Please DO NOT guarantee your students spots as you may not get all of the spots you request.**

Teen Registration opens Wednesday, January 8, 2025.

- All registration will be completed online through the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.
- Each parish group leader will receive a unique link for their parish's registration to share with families.
 - Parish group leaders will receive a confirmation email when a teen registers for their parish.
- Parish group leaders will also receive a link to an online spreadsheet to track registration information for all their teens. This sheet will be updated on a regular basis (about every 2 weeks) throughout the Spring).
- Adult missionary registration will be completed through a separate registration link; parish leaders will be updated via their spreadsheet with adult missionary registrations.

Your parish spots for LBH2025 will be reserved until Monday, March 17.

- Your families will be able to register for your parish spots during these nine weeks.
- Once your parish spots are filled, families may still register to your parish waiting list.
- When your parish spots are filled, we will check-in with you to see if you would like to expand your parish spots (you must also be willing to recruit extra adult missionaries to account for extra spots).
- After March 17, we *may* reallocate unused parish spots to parishes with wait lists. This will depend on how many spots you have filled and how long our wait list is.
- Spots will be reallocated on a rolling basis (every 2 weeks or so) after March 17 based on demand for remaining spots. We will inform you via email if any of your spots will be reallocated.

Registration will close on Tuesday, April 15 for LBH2025.

- After this date, registration will be closed for all parishes, regardless of how many spots remain. Adding teen missionaries after this date *may* be possible based on remaining space and bandwidth in our office.
- Note: this is not meant to be rigid or penalize people, but to ensure that we have adequate time to prepare for our summer program. The time we invest in helping our host parishes, scheduling service work, and training our Core Team are all affected by devoting extra time to registration; spending less time on those things directly impacts the effectiveness and quality of Love Begins Here, both for our missionaries and for those we serve. Thank you for your understanding and for prioritizing getting your teens registered by the dates listed above. At the same time, if we have the capacity to facilitate late registrations, we will gladly do so!

Parish Invoices

- Recognizing that every parish budgets for mission trips differently, missionaries do not pay the Archdiocese directly. Instead, for each teen missionary spot filled, we will invoice your parish the appropriate amount (\$175 for a high school week, \$150 for a middle school week; \$100 for extra adult missionaries).
- Your parish will be responsible for collecting fees from your missionaries. This might include an extra cost (for vehicle rental, etc.) or a reduced cost (from fundraising or parish subsidy).
- **A priority of Love Begins Here is its accessibility, not only in location but also in cost. We urge parishes to get creative to keep the cost to attend LBH as low as possible through fundraising or budgeted parish support. It would be ideal for all missionaries to pay as close to your cost as possible (\$175/\$150) or less.**

- Invoices will be sent to your parish after the April 15 registration deadline for all spots. They will be due June 30.
- For those attending LBH in July, invoices will be due July 31.

Other Concerns & Refund Policy

Overnight Policy

We understand that families may feel anxious about their teen sleeping overnight on Love Begins Here. As a general rule, Love Begins Here is an overnight program, which entails all missionaries (including adults) participating for the entire week and overnight, just like if your parish was going out of state. Love Begins Here does consider accommodations for families who have a need for a “sleep at home” arrangement on a case by case basis. This must be discussed with us well in advance of your trip to make possible – please contact us if this is your situation!

Late Arrival/Early Departures

Again, we ask missionaries and families to treat Love Begins Here like an out of state mission trip, even though you may be close to home. Arriving late or leaving early from Love Begins Here is typically not allowed, nor are mid-week pick-ups for things like sports practice, try-outs, etc. We realize this is a sacrifice, but we also believe it is a sacrifice worth making! In our experience, teens who arrive late or leave early have difficulty feeling a part of the community.

Refund Policy for 2025

In general, we never want finances to be an issue for any parish or family, and we certainly do not want it to be a source of anxiety. We will strive to work with any family who requests a refund for this summer, with a few guidelines:

- Full refunds will be given at any point to a family, through the FIRST day a session begins, for a cancellation due to illness, injury, or a family emergency.
- Cancellations for other reasons may be made without penalty through April 15 and will be reflected in your parish’s invoice. After April 15, your parish will be responsible for paying for all registrations on file. Since each parish collects money from families, it is each parish’s decision on how/if to refund individual families.
 - To receive a refund, our offices must know via email that you wish to cancel a registration before 11:59pm on April 15.
 - To be clear, a family choosing to cancel because they decide they just aren’t up for it, learn of a schedule conflict, their kids’ friends drop out, etc. would all NOT be causes for refunds from Love Begins Here if they occur after April 15; your parish will still be invoiced for those spots.
 - Because registration closes on April 15, spots become non-transferrable after this date as well, meaning that finding another teen to take someone’s place may be possible, but will incur an additional registration fee. Depending on our capacity, we can waive this fee and facilitate a transfer.