



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

2020 Senior Recognition Ideas from ELCA Youth Ministry

Our Seniors everywhere are missing out on experiences due to Covid-19. These students have worked hard for years and will most likely not have a Prom, Graduation, Scholarship and Award nights, final choir concerts, band concerts, sports banquets, senior musicals and other notable events that everyone else had the opportunity to experience.

Graduation is a meaningful time for the parents as well. They've looked forward to this moment in their child's life and participating in all the traditions both at school and church. In fact, parents have been planning their senior's celebration since last fall when they were first accepted into college, a trade school, military, or gap year program.

It's important for the church to recognize the loss, disappointment, and all the other feelings of the students and their parents. While this is an unprecedented time and there are many questions and unknown answers; supporting our young people during these days and encouraging them to stay connected to their faith is critical.

Here's some ideas to show your support. Choose one or more!

- ❖ Make one of your online services a Baccalaureate service inviting students to participate wearing their cap and gowns.
- ❖ Create Videos for each senior using the recording feature on Zoom. Interview the parent and ask them to look back on special moments and blessings throughout the year/s either together or separately. Interview Sunday School teachers, the pastor, and others giving a special message to the senior naming their gifts

and encouraging them to live out their faith wherever they go. Finally interview the senior asking them questions about their dreams and their future plans.

- ❖ In high school, Senior week is huge! Consider having a “Senior Week” and honoring the students each day via social media, dropping a coffee, lunch, or donuts at their house, putting balloons and signs in their yard.
- ❖ Throw a virtual prom. Set a theme, ask the students to dress up with makeup, hair, and a photo shoot in their home and yard. Then create a playlist from the seniors’ favorite songs! Dancing with their computer, phone, pets, and family members are encouraged!
- ❖ Ask parents to submit their favorite sports clips and scholarship information if applicable. Create your own honors and certificates and then create a video giving athletes their awards.
- ❖ Ask each musician to video themselves playing their favorite piece or singing their favorite song they’ve learned and posting it on your website and social media sites.
- ❖ Create a video with short congratulatory words and verses from the congregational member for all the seniors.
- ❖ Consider having a Drive by Celebration at church with balloons, signs, and a laundry basket for each senior. Ask the members to fill the baskets with cards, books, and gifts.
- ❖ Drop off “Care Packages” with celebration supplies, cards, and gifts at the student’s homes.
- ❖ Ask your members to create yard sign posters and place them at the graduate’s homes or on their front door.
- ❖ Put Yard signs up at your church with their names and school listed.

- ❖ Create an autograph book. Ask members to create a “page” for the autograph book. Members drop the pages off at the church. Copies are made of the “page’s” and put together in an autograph book for each senior.
- ❖ Have a yard flag made; “Congratulations Sarah, from your family at Faith Lutheran Church”
- ❖ Feature Seniors on your social media pages with a picture and their future plans.
- ❖ Ring your Church Bells at the time of graduation.
- ❖ Some congregations create blankets and quilts for seniors to carry with them. This year the “wrap them in blankets of love” will take place at their house rather than the church altar. Video each senior receiving their blanket and showcase the video during an upcoming online worship. Or have the seniors come individually to the church altar to receive their blanket and video them “wrapped in their blanket of love.”
- ❖ If you always had a breakfast, luncheon, or banquet. Consider having a meal delivered to their home and meet over zoom together.
- ❖ Create a picture collage with all their official senior pictures
- ❖ Reading a book like Dr. Seuss “The Places You Will Go” or “The Giving Tree” by Shel Silverstein online and dedicating it to the Seniors and sending a copy to your seniors.
- ❖ Theme questions to ask for the seniors or others? Who has influenced you most in your life? What has been your most memorable experience during your school years? What is your favorite passage of Scripture that has helped you live your life? Share your dream for the future of your church? What advice would you give to students?