Events Policies

Torah 2027

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What's New This Year?

- As of the 2027 conference season, Higher Things will no longer offer day passes (Higher Things for a Day).
- Registration now closes June 1, 2027. No additional registrations will be allowed after this date.
- All adults (ages 21 and older) will complete a background check regardless of whether they stay on campus during the conference.
- Two room suites sharing a bathroom MAY NOT have adults on one side and youth on the other, unless it is only one family on each side. Youth MAY NOT share a suited bathroom with Young Adults or Adults. Young Adults and Adults may share a suited bathroom. Age group definitions are provided in the Events Policies.
- Background checks, additional nights, private rooms, roommate requests, and t-shirt sizes are all due May 1, 2027 for existing registrations.
    - New registrants (after May 1) have until June 1 to complete all necessary documentation.
- Higher Things Adventures are now offered on Monday-Tuesday at all conference locations.
- Off Campus Housing will be available at Concordia University Wisconsin.

Registration

1. **Age Definitions**
   All individuals attending a Higher Things event must be registered, including infants and toddlers. Neither Higher Things nor the event site is responsible for providing any additional bedding, pillows, mattresses, cribs, etc. Registration types and fees are as follows:

INFANT: Ages 0-1 at the time of the conference. The registration cost is $150 (the cost of a private room), and the child MUST room with a parent (not necessarily of the same sex). This is a flat fee throughout the registration season (no early bird rate or late fee).

TODDLER: Ages 2-4 at the time of the conference. The registration cost is $300 (the cost of a private room and meals), and the child MUST room with a parent (not necessarily of the same sex). This is a flat fee throughout the registration season (no early bird rate or late fee).

CHILD: Ages 5-10 at the time of the conference. The registration cost is equivalent to the early bird registration rate. This is a flat fee throughout the whole registration season and will remain at the early bird rate for that year. The child MUST room with a parent of the same sex.

YOUTH: Ages 11-17 at the time of the conference. One full registration fee must be paid for every youth age 11 and over at the time of the conference. A youth may not attend alone and must be registered with a group leader/chaperone.

YOUNG ADULT: Ages 18-20 at the time of the conference. The cost of registration is full price. As they are legal adults, those in the young adult age group do not require a chaperone.

CHAPERONE/ADULT: Adults 21+ years old at the time of the conference and approved by the group's pastor to serve in that role. The cost of registration is full price. No adult may attend a Higher Things conference without accompanying youth.

2. Adults who interact with HT Events

a. Group Manager
Groups are registered online by a group manager. This individual serves as the liaison with Higher Things before the conference and receives email correspondence from the events staff. This individual is expected to communicate all registration information to the Group Leader (if a different individual) before attending the conference.

b. Group Leaders
Each group must also identify a group leader from their registered chaperones/adults who will serve as the liaison with Higher Things ON SITE and receive email correspondence from the events staff. The same person can fill both the role of Group Manager and Group Leader, or they can be different people.

c. Chaperones
Higher Things does not provide chaperones for the youth attending conferences. All groups must provide adequate adult supervision of their own youth. To ensure proper supervision, each group must have at least one male chaperone for up to seven male youth (ages 11-17 at the time of the conference) and at least one female chaperone for up to seven female youth (ages 11-17 at the time of the conference).

Chaperones of the appropriate ratios (7:1) must stay with the participants in the residence halls and be present on campus as long as the youth under their supervision are on campus throughout the conference. Chaperones should not be invited away from their duties to another facility off-site during a Higher Things event that precludes their ability to supervise the youth under their care.

Chaperones are expected to enforce residence hall rules and regulations, as well as assist their group with check-in/check-out procedures. This includes refraining from drinking alcohol, smoking and vaping, partaking in recreational drugs, and following other campus rules and regulations.

Chaperones must be prepared to assist their youth and organize the orderly evacuation of their participants if an emergency should arise. It is recommended that each chaperone be assigned a list of particular youth for whom they are responsible for safely evacuating in the case of an emergency. They should immediately report medical emergencies, building maintenance concerns, missing youth, or any other safety concerns to Higher Things staff.

Higher Things is not responsible for the direct supervision of the youth and/or children attending a Higher Things conference. Groups must provide adequate supervision of the minors in their charge.

The ratio of adults to youth (1:7 of the appropriate sex) at the conference may not exceed 1:1. Groups nearing the 1:1 adult to youth ratio may be asked to reduce the number of adults attending to allow more youth to attend. If a group needs assistance finding chaperones for the number of youth they're bringing, Higher Things can provide a list of group leaders from their area who may be contacted to ask if they would be willing to help. Please contact the conference registrar (registrar@higherthings.org) for assistance.

For the safety of the youth and to protect the reputation of everyone involved, including that of Higher Things, alcohol (except for the sacramental wine of the Divine Service) and/or recreational drugs will not be provided to or consumed by adults at Higher Things conferences.

3. **Groups**

All registrants attending a Higher Things conference must be registered as part of a group. A group consists of one or more youth with one or more chaperone(s) of the appropriate sex(es). All youth and adults should know each other enough that any adult in the group can act as a chaperone for any youth in the group.

4. **Background Checks**

All adults (registrants age 21+) registered to attend a Higher Things conference must pass a national criminal and sexual predator background check (to be paid for by the registrant) by May 1 of the conference calendar year. Sites may require additional measures to protect the safety of youth at events on their campuses (online child safety training seminars, background checks for registrants 18 and over, etc.). Background checks must be conducted after the completion of the previous year's conference cycle (i.e., since last August). You are encouraged to provide your church with a copy of your check, even if they do not require it.

Higher Things will email all adults attending each conference instructions for completing and turning in background checks, any additional site requirements, and how to confirm that these have been completed. Higher Things will accept national criminal and sexual predator background checks conducted through Protect My Ministry, Sentry Link, Trusted Employees, Ministry Safe, or another company that provides comparable national checks. Communicate with the registrar (registrar@higherthings.org) for more information. Higher Things staff retains the right not to accept a previously completed background check.

In the event that the results of the background check show a "hit", the Higher Things Executive Directors will review the individual's report. Due to the nature of the mission of Higher Things and our work with youth, anyone with a sex offender or child abuse offense will not be allowed to attend the conference. Any other reported offenses will be evaluated confidentially by the Executive Directors, and, if necessary, elevated to the Higher Things Board of Directors for evaluation. If the registrant will not be able to attend the conference due to the offense, they will be notified directly and registration will be refunded.

5. **Unregistered Attendees**
   For the safety of the youth attending the conference, no one (youth, young adult, or adult) may attend a Higher Things conference or portion(s) of a Higher Things conference without registering.

6. **Unnamed Registrations**
   All registrations in a group must be complete at the time of registration. Empty "spaces" may not be reserved for a conference by paying additional deposits or fees without a complete registration to which those deposits/fees may be applied.

7. **Housing and Meals**
   Higher Things conferences are all-inclusive events. Registered groups and/or individuals are not required to stay on campus at the conference site. Nor are groups and/or individuals required to eat meals provided during the conference (Tuesday supper through Friday lunch). However, Higher Things will not discount the registration fee if groups or individuals choose not to use the housing or meals provided with the conference registration. Please read the Housing Policies for additional details.
   Occasionally, due to facility limitations at specific sites, Higher Things will open a limited number of off-site housing registrations. For a discounted price, registrants will receive access to all conference programming, meals, and conference materials, but will be responsible for arranging their own lodging for the duration of the conference. Typically, Higher Things has strict housing policies regarding gender and age in relation to housing. These housing policies do not apply to those registered to stay off campus. If a group chooses the off campus, the group will be responsible for establishing room assignments and chaperoning accordingly (the 1:7 ratio still applies while your group is on campus during the day).

8. **Transportation**
   Groups attending a Higher Things conference are responsible for their own transportation to and from the conference site, including ground transportation to/from airports and bus or train stations. Higher Things does not provide housing for unregistered bus drivers and cannot guarantee on-site overnight parking for

buses or campers. Additional fees for parking passes, meters, tickets, etc., are the groups' responsibility, and the fees will vary depending on the site.

9. Additional Days

On-campus housing is available for groups to stay in their conference-assigned rooms for one additional night before and/or after the conference dates (i.e., Monday and/or Friday night). You must arrive between 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm on Monday and depart by 10:00 am on Saturday.

The required ratio of chaperones (7:1) must be on site for all additional days on campus, including situations involving combined groups sharing chaperones. If your group is being linked with another to share chaperones, those chaperones must also supervise the youth on any additional days on campus, or the youth may not stay on campus for those days. Higher Things does not provide supervision for any unaccompanied youth before, during, or after conferences. Meals on campus are not provided before Tuesday supper or after Friday lunch.

10. Registration Fee Schedule

Registration rates are determined by the date a group's registration fees are paid in full. Payment of the required $150 nonrefundable deposit **DOES NOT lock in an individual's registration rate.**

- Early bird registration is open from November 1 to January 31
- Regular registration is open from February 1 to April 30
- Late registration is open from May 1 until June 1

Checks mailed to Higher Things are processed according to the postmark date on the envelope, not the date a check is written. Groups should consider weekends and holidays when the post office is closed before sending any checks. Groups should not pay for certified mail as it takes longer for us to receive the checks and process the payment.

Online credit card or e-check payments must be completed by midnight, Central Time, of any given deadline. Unpaid balances and new registrations on or after May 1 will be charged a late fee of $50/person.

11. Non-refundable Deposits

A non-refundable deposit is required for all conference registrations. This deposit guarantees an individual is registered for the conference, or registered on to the waitlist if is applicable. Payment of non-refundable deposits does not lock in a group's registration rate.

Non-refundable deposits are only refunded for a cancellation if there is a waitlist for that conference at the time of the cancellation. A deposit may not be transferred out of the space that it saves. In other words, a deposit MAY NOT be transferred toward a group's remaining balance if a cancellation occurs and there is no substitution to fill the space.

Non-refundable deposit policies do not apply to infant, toddler, and child registrations, as those are flat fees.

12. Final Payment Deadline

All balances (regardless of the conference a group is attending) must be paid in full on or before April 30th. Groups paid in full previously who add additional attendees will not be charged a higher rate for all group members; only those new registrations will be charged. Groups paying all or portions of their balance after

this date (regardless of the date their group registered and/or paid deposits) will be considered late and charged a late fee of $50/person.

The online registration system will state that the final payment is due after the conference season is completed. *This is not the case; it is a product of the system's retention of your credit card information.* You must be paid in full by April 30 or incur a late fee of $50 per person. All payments are due absolutely no later than the start of the conference.

13. **Late Registrations**
    Individuals and/or groups registering for a conference on or after May 1 will be charged the regular registration rate, plus a late fee of $50/person.

14. **Substitutions**
    If a group has a cancellation, they may substitute one registrant with another person, provided certain criteria are met. Prior to May 1st, substitutions can be made via the registration portal. A substitution prior to May 1st is allowed for any swaps (male for female, youth for adult, etc.) for no additional charge.
    After May 1, the registrar MUST be notified to facilitate a substitution and the substitution is only possible if the new attendee is in the same age group and of the same sex of the attendee being replaced. Substitutions made on or after May 1 incur a $50 substitution fee.

15. **Cancellations**
    Refunds will not be issued for conference registration cancellations made on or after May 1. Groups with unpaid cancellations that occur on or after May 1 (including no-shows at conference check-in) are responsible for the outstanding registration fee, plus the $50/person late fee.
    You must communicate with the conference registrar (registrar@higherthings.org) regarding any cancellations.

16. **Transferring Between Conferences**
    Before May 1, a group may transfer from one conference location to another or off of a waitlist to another site without incurring additional fees. Groups transferring from a waitlist to another conference location should also take note of the waitlist procedure below.

17. **Waitlist**
    Occasionally, Higher Things receives registrations above a site's capacity. When this happens, the events staff will create and maintain a waitlist.

    An individual is entered onto the waitlist by paying the $150 non-refundable deposit with their registration. If the deposit is not paid, the individual is not considered on the waitlist.

    The order of the waitlist is determined by the date (and time, if applicable) the group or individual registered to be on the waitlist with the payment of their non-refundable deposit. Registrants are admitted into the

conference, either as a group or as an individual, as space becomes available. Groups are only admitted when enough room is made for all group members. A smaller group or individual further down the waitlist will not be moved up to fill open spaces.

On June 1st, the waitlist prioritization will change to fill all available spaces. The first group or individual on the list will be given the following options:

1. Claim the open spaces for a portion of their group;
2. Transfer to another conference location (including a virtual conference if available); or
3. Receive a full refund of all monies paid towards registration.
4. If an act of God cancels the conference at that conference site, regardless of the date, the conference site cancellation policy will take effect.

When an individual or group is placed on the waitlist, the registration rate is locked in according to the date their deposit was paid. This lock-in rate only applies to those on the waitlist. When moved off the waitlist, the registration must be paid in full at the locked-in rate within 30 days of coming off the waitlist and receiving a regular registration to the conference. After 30 days, the current registration rate will apply.

If a group or individual on the waitlist chooses to transfer to another conference location, their registration fees must be paid in full at the locked-in rate within 30 days of the transfer. After 30 days, the current registration rate will apply. If admitted to a conference after June 1 (either by transfer or as a whole or partial group), registration fees must be paid in full according to the locked-in rate by conference check-in.

18. Conference Site Cancellation

If a conference site cancels due to an act of God, a government mandate, or a medical pandemic, the group may transfer to another conference site with no financial repercussions.

If a site cancellation takes place, Higher Things will provide its registrants with a virtual conference. An individual's non-refundable deposit automatically becomes their registration fee for a virtual conference, and that individual is then considered registered for the virtual conference. If they are on a waitlist for the conference that is canceled, they will be automatically transferred to the virtual conference (all registrants for the virtual conference must have a unique email address associated with their registration). The following options will be offered for all registration monies less the non-refundable deposits:

1. The group may donate or defer the remaining balance, fully or partially.
2. The balance will be transferred dollar for dollar (not person for person or rate level for rate level)
    a. The monies must be used for the following year's conference season registration.
    b. The group's conference attendance must be decided by December 1st of the year before the conference takes place. The remaining balance may be refunded.
    c. The group may receive a refund of the remaining balance, fully or partially.
3. The group may also decide to use a combination of the above options.

19. Images

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Housing Policies

To protect the youth attendees, young adults, chaperones, and the Higher Things organization, the following policies will be observed and govern how Higher Things assigns housing to conference registrants.

1. **Sex-Specific Units**
   Participants will be housed in sex-specific units. A unit may be defined by Higher Things as a single room, a suite of rooms, a wing, a floor, or a building, depending upon the facilities available.

   Spouses will not be housed together. Each adult/chaperone will be housed in sex-distinctive units near the youth in his/her charge.

2. **Age-Specific Rooms**
   Young adults (ages 18-20) and adults/chaperones (21+) will not be assigned housing in the same room with any minors unless there is an immediate familial relationship between the youth and adult, AND both persons are of the same sex. An immediate familial relationship is defined as a parent or legal guardian and his/her child(ren), or siblings.

   When apartment-style facilities are utilized, adults/chaperones may be assigned to the same unit as their group's youth (of the same sex), but adults will not be assigned to share sleeping quarters with youth unless there is an immediate familial relationship (as defined above).

   At conference sites where suite-style rooms are utilized for attendees, two room suites that share a bathroom MAY NOT have adults on one side and youth on the other, unless it is only one family on each side. Youth MAY NOT share a suited bathroom with Young Adults or Adults. Young Adults and Adults may share a suited bathroom.

3. **Room and Roommate Assignments**
   All double-capacity rooms must be fully occupied.

   Conference attendees should expect to be housed with at least one roommate unless they request a private room by May 1, and appropriate fees are paid. Those requesting private rooms will be charged an additional $50/room/night.

   The number of single-sex participants in a group may not correspond precisely to the capacities of the rooms available, so it may be necessary for Higher Things to assign attendees from a different group to share a room. Roommates will always be from the same sex and age categories.

   Every effort will be made to house conference attendees with their preferred roommates. However, these preferences cannot be guaranteed. Roommate preferences must be entered into each registration by May 1. Roommates are assigned according to the specific guidelines of this housing policy. Therefore, Higher Things

cannot permit rearranging roommates on site by individuals or groups without coordinating directly with the housing coordinator for that conference.

4. **Additional Charges**
   Charges incurred by Higher Things due to the conduct of an individual registrant or group at a conference will be billed to the group represented by said individual or group.

   Such expenses may include, but are not limited to: replacement of lost keys, replacement of lost meal cards, vandalism, other damages (missing linens, stained mattresses, etc.), and fees involved with setting off a fire/emergency alarm, etc. Events staff will contact group leaders regarding these additional charges upon receipt of notification from the campus following the conference.

5. **Quiet Hours/Visitation Hours**
   Common areas are available in all residence halls for fellowship, conversation, and recreation. No one should be in the sleeping quarters of the opposite sex at any time. Quiet and visitation hours as posted by the residence hall and/or Higher Things must be enforced by the chaperones staying in that resident hall.

6. **Child Protection Policies**
   Higher Things accepts no responsibility for the enforcement of individual congregational child protection policies. It is the responsibility of the group leader to know and enforce his/her specific congregational child protection policies if there are additional restrictions not addressed by the Higher Things housing policy.

   All adults/chaperones registered to attend a Higher Things Conference must also pass a national criminal and sexual predator background check by May 1 of the conference calendar year regardless of whether they stay on campus during the conference or not. See the Event Policies for additional information regarding background checks.