

How to Plan A Retreat

Questions to ask before you start planning...

- 1) How early can I schedule the event? Planning ahead will give you a better chance at obtaining your chosen event date and will help your attendees gather funds for the retreat.
- 2) What age group(s) is my focus for the retreat?
- 3) What's my budget, per person?
- 4) What time of year works best with the church/business, school, &/or personal calendar?
- 5) How many attendees do we expect? Do I have enough adult leaders, if working with youth?
- 6) If we choose to handle our own meals, do we have enough adults to select the menu, purchase food, and cook/clean-up the meals?
- 7) Does our group have liability insurance? What type of release forms are required for our insurance, as well as the host site?
- 8) How much money should I collect up front from attendees? Also, what money is required up front from the host site?
- 9) What do I hope to accomplish at the retreat -- team building, spiritual renewal, fun activities, etc.?

The Planning Process

After you've chosen your host site and contracted a date and facility, be sure to publicize ASAP! Spread the word through your newsletter, emails, social networking sites, or personal mailings. It's important to continually remind your potential attendees about the upcoming retreat.

Make sure you're comfortable with the facility; take an on-site tour if possible. Try to take pictures or download photos from the web, so you can get your group excited about the site and be familiar with the layout once you arrive for the retreat.

Is this a repeat retreat, or is it the first time holding the event for your group? When holding a retreat for the first time, your number of attendees may be lower for the first year. Keep this in mind when choosing a facility with a corresponding minimum number.

Set a schedule. Include times for meals, breaks, worship/sessions, group activities, &/or free time. Make sure you allow time for walking to & from activities, as your host facilities may be spread out.

Set deadlines for registration. Consider having an Early Registration Discount to encourage participants to sign up early. Also consider having a non-refundable deposit fee. This will encourage participants to remain committed and will help protect your church/group from paying out-of-pocket fees to the host site (if attendees cancel, or if you don't meet your minimum number).

Be sure to stay in contact with your host site contact...When do you need to turn in the final number of attendees? Does the host site have a cabin/room layout to help guide you with room assignments? If the host site is providing meals &/or activities, what are the scheduled times? When are payments due? Do we need A/V or other equipment? What type of setup do we need (tables, chairs, stage, etc.)? What items/paperwork should I bring to the retreat (bedding, linens, release forms, etc.)?

Lastly, enjoy the retreat with your attendees! Remember, the group leader should also have fun!



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