

Retreat Resources

Youth Retreat Planning Checklist:

Six months before...

- prepare budget/secure permission from powers that be
- recruit adult volunteers
- set up planning committee of youth and adults
- select a theme or purpose for the retreat
- choose a site for the retreat
- schedule dates and times for the retreat
- organize registration – price, deposit, max/min number of participants, registration forms
- plan and begin publicity

Four months before...

- involve as many youth as possible in various planning task groups
- brainstorm ideas for Sessions, Games, Activities, Devotions, Worship
- contact all leaders for sessions and games, etc.
- continue publicity
- review and list behavioral expectations and consequences
- determine transportation needs; secure insurance

Two months before...

- recruit drivers
- organize refreshments and meals (is retreat facility providing or are you?) who will organize, shop, cook, clean-up, etc.
- double check on registrations
- provide list of things to bring
- prepare schedule
- distribute and collect permission forms, medical release forms
- plan a parents meeting to inform them of details, answer questions

Immediately before...

- contact all leaders to make sure prepared
- contact retreat site
- contact drivers
- collect all supplies and food
- prepare a first aid kit

During the retreat...

- pay fees to camp site
- post and follow schedule
- plan regular discussions with leaders to review
- guide devotions and prayer
- ask participants and leaders to evaluate the retreat
- be sure to clean up the site

After the retreat...

- reimburse drivers for gas
- meet with task force to go over evaluations

- plan appropriate follow-up programming for needs discovered at retreat
- list recommendations for next retreat
- send thank-yous to all who helped

Typical Weekend Camp Schedule:

Friday:

7:00 p.m.	Arrive at Site/Unpack and settle in
8:30 p.m.	Ground Rules/Ice-breakers/Theme Introduction
9:30 p.m.	Sessions or Special Activity
10:30 p.m.	Snack and get ready for bed
11:00 p.m.	Lights Out!

Saturday:

7:00 a.m.	Arise and Shine
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:30 a.m.	Sessions
11:30 a.m.	Break time
Noon	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Free Time
4:00 p.m.	Electives or Group Activity
5:30 p.m.	Dinner
6:30 p.m.	Sessions
8:30 p.m.	Evening Activity
10:30 p.m.	Snacks and get ready for bed
11:00 p.m.	Lights Out!

Sunday:

7:00 a.m.	Arise and Shine
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:30 a.m.	Cabin Clean-up and pack
10:30 a.m.	Worship
Noon	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Head Home!

Tips Gathered From Experienced Retreat Leaders

- Personal contact via word of mouth is the BEST promotion!
- Choose at least three people to invite people individually.
- When deciding price, give scholarships instead of lowering price.
- Consider asking for a deposit or prepayment, this promotes a sense of “buy-in” and also helps prevent people saying they will come, but then backing out at the last minute.
- Budget for a positive balance (i.e., charge \$5 extra to cover unexpected expenses).
- Usually 24-48 hours is typical for length of retreat, but it can be more or less.
- Be sure to allow for flexibility, spontaneity. Be open to the Spirit!
- Over-plan (plan for more than you'll actually include in any one event) so there are no lapses, but allow for flexibility.
- Allow time for worship, supervised unstructured time, input, reflection, and reaction.
- Individual sessions should be 90 minutes maximum.

- Always plan optional strategies in case of a change of circumstances (i.e., weather factors, activity flop).
- Choose a site that is not too far away and not too close it's good to have a sense of being apart from your usual setting.
- The site should match your objectives for gathering.
- Be able to specify what kind of space you need (spaces for gathering the whole group together, as well as breakout spaces for small group activities, for example).
- Consider the number of people desirable for your particular objectives. Bigger is not necessarily better.
- Touch base with your planning committee at least once during the retreat to review schedule and process, and make any adjustments required.
- If appropriate, offer classes or groups for follow-up after the retreat.
- In planning, consider the multiple intelligences (learning styles) of your participants.

Other Resources:

The Retreat Leader's Manual

A Complete Guide to Organizing Meaningful Christian Retreats

By Nancy Ferguson, Kevin Witt

In an age when vacationers on pleasure cruises can expect to be on tightly planned and pressure-packed schedules, a restful renewal seems alien. "I will give you rest," Jesus said (Matt. 11:28). The Bible places a strong emphasis on Sabbath time. Experiencing solitude, play and life at a slower rhythm are precious pathways that allow God to nurture our souls. Retreats have the special focus that offer personal growth as participants are guided to look at life and the world with God in mind. Forty percent of church members and pastors polled report having a significant spiritual experience through a church retreat or camp experience. Yet, pastors are hard-pressed to tackle the details required to plan these "times away."

Ferguson and Witt have written a practical guide covering the nuts and bolts of planning the budget, picking a site and organizing Bible studies — all to make the experience meaningful for all ages. Going beyond the usual collections of suggested activities and formats, *The Retreat Leader's Manual* provides a solid base for faith formation in retreats. Ferguson and Witt offer a thoughtful exploration of the need and biblical precedent for spiritual retreats.

"Spiritual retreats tap into a universal human desire," write the authors. "They serve as an oasis for the soul.... The unabashed aim of faith-based retreats is helping persons seek God with their whole heart." As one reviewer says, "If your congregation doesn't already go on retreat, this book will help you realize what you're missing. And if you already know the value of regular retreats, *The Retreat Leader's Manual* will help make your next retreat better than ever!"

Book

http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/description.asp?item_id=358083 to order.

Retreats for Renewal

5 Models for Intergenerational Weekends

By Nancy Ferguson

We run through our days — going from appointment to appointment, responsibility to responsibility, activity to activity. Harried and hurried, we disconnect with family, friends and God. From the moment of creation, God's intention was that we would stop on a regular basis for rest and renewal. Disconnect is also present in our churches as members are segmented by age, marital status or interests. There are few chances for finding common ground, exploring shared stories and passing on the faith across the generations. God also made us to

yearn for relationships and community. Hosting a weekend intergenerational retreat encourages Sabbath time and deepens relationships within the whole congregation. It will offer a chance for all people of all ages to praise God, find a shared story, learn about one another and discover the things that bind us together in Christ. *Retreats for Renewal* presents five models of retreats and an overview for planning one. Everything is explained to help coordinate a two- or three-day event, including song suggestions biblical background, resources for welcome, crafts and nature activities, a complete list of supplies, sample worship services, small group session details.

"By carving out a Sabbath time, all participants will be able to pause in the midst of their busy lives to rest and to pay attention to their relationships with God and with one another," writes Ferguson. "A sense of being part of a community of God's people will emerge and will continue to affect the lives of all who retreated. The faith of each person and of the community as a whole will be enriched." Find great ideas to help your congregation connect.

Book

http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore/description.asp?item_id=492603 to order.