

Tips on Planning a Retreat

1. Determine the purpose for your Retreat. Is it for teaching, planning, building relationships, learning new skills, evangelism, spiritual growth, etc.?
2. Select or recruit qualified volunteers for a Retreat Committee and delegate responsibilities. Chair-person, Promotions, Treasurer, Registrar, Program, Music, Clean Up.
3. Book your Retreat well in advance. Beware of date conflicts in your group that may already exist and after booking a date, make sure your group knows not to schedule important events such as weddings, which may cause conflicts. Many weekends are booked a year in advance, so get an application and deposit in as early as possible.
4. Set goals to accomplish your purpose. Make them realistic, measurable, attainable, clear and concise.
5. Plan a program to meet the goals. Visit the site with your committee if you have not been there before. As you plan, be sure to consider your goals, the site, facilities, season, etc. Consider your theme, speaker(s), recreation, music and activities.
6. Establish your budget. Camp cost + speaker + travel + advertising + transportation + other costs.
7. Determine the price per person. Be aware of the sliding fee scale which is based on the number of participants.
8. Plan an aggressive promotion campaign. Use posters, mailings, e-mailings, social networks, word of mouth, church bulletins, web sites, blogs. Start at least three months in advance and earlier if possible (see #3). People won't come if they don't hear.
9. Plan your Retreat schedule. Keep in mind the suggested meal times on the contract. These can be somewhat flexible but **check with the camp staff before making changes**. Be sure to allow at least an hour from the beginning of each meal before starting group activities. This will allow time for after meal clean up. Be aware of camp curfews. Please call our office if you would like assistance in program planning.
10. Have participants pre-register with a substantial deposit. You might consider collecting the total fees up front. Deposits should be non-refundable except for medical reasons. You may also want to do some fund raising events to lower each person's fee, or to provide camperships for those who cannot afford to come. Pre-registration fees should at least cover your down payment.
11. Other critical details: Delegate responsibilities for transportation, equipment (AV projector, TV, dvd player, etc.), coffee breaks, special meals, recreation, music, and special music.

Youth Groups

If you haven't already, develop a written policy on discipline and youth responsibility. Get parental input and make sure youth, parents and youth workers are aware of the policy.

If you have medical forms for your youth, be sure to take them along on the retreat. If you do not have forms, get some. Be sure they include such things as parent's names and numbers where they can be reached, medical number, allergies, medications currently being taken and any other helpful information.