

The
Ultimate



Retreat
Planning
Workbook

Adapted from "What I've Learned About Youth Retreats"
By Rev. Daniel Schumm

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So You're Thinking About a Youth Retreat?

Not everyone would relish the idea of taking a bunch of energetic and rambunctious teenagers on an overnight or weekend outing. In fact, some would say that those who do are absolutely "crazy!"

Well, to some extent, such an assessment is accurate, but not in the cynical sense in which it is intended. It takes special and unique individuals to lead teen-aged youth on a Christian overnight or weekend retreat. Indeed, it takes individuals who are absolutely "crazy" about wanting to see teen-aged youth grow in their relationship and walk with our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you find yourself having read thus far and are yet interested in reading further, then it may very well be that you are one of those individuals who is "crazy" about the spiritual well-being of certain teenage youth whom you know.

In the event that you have not yet experienced a youth retreat first-hand, be assured that it can be a very useful tool in furthering the relationship that teenage youth have with their Lord Jesus, as well as with peers and other adults. And whether you are a rookie or a veteran of youth retreats, it is hoped that what is shared here may not only further develop you as a youth leader, but that it may especially serve to further nurture teenage youth in their Christian faith.

Using This Resource

In reading what follows and working through the planning questions, keep in mind that these thoughts and insights are neither an exhaustive nor a definitive pattern for doing youth retreats. Do not feel compelled that you must do everything suggested or exactly as suggested. Some of the ideas will work for you. Others may not. Other things may need to be included. Creativity, adaptation and flexibility should be applied to what is shared here. Allow these insights to become a springboard by which the Holy Spirit launches you into further ministry.

Why Retreat?

In a military sense, to retreat means to "withdraw from battle." Although sometimes it is done in recognition of an insurmountable enemy, at other times it is done so that the troops can regroup, obtain rest and refreshment for their bodies, renew their strength, reorient themselves concerning the enemy, and be restored in their courage through the words and presence of their leader. Only then are they ready to go back and face—if not defeat—the enemy.

In a similar, but spiritual sense, Christians do well to retreat from time-to-time. Not because the enemies with which we daily do battle are insurmountable—for Christ Jesus has already gained the victory for us over sin, death and the devil through His death and resurrection. Rather, the value in a Christian retreat is so that we can regroup, rest, refresh and be restored in our courage through the words and presence of our Leader, Christ Jesus. As a result of "retreating," we are then ready to go back with Him by our side and live victoriously in the midst of our daily battles against the devil and the world.

Planning and Preparation

An effective retreat requires advanced planning and earnest preparation. Matters of primary interest include: setting a date and choosing a site, coming up with a theme and developing a program, selecting music, putting everything together in a workable schedule, deciding the menu for each of the meals, determining what to do for recreation and how to spend free time, how to get to the site, how much it will cost and how to go about raising the necessary funds in order to go. As the plans for the retreat begin to take shape, there will certainly arise other matters requiring additional planning and preparation.

Retreat Planning Committee

The demands and expectations of a retreat are more than what one person can reasonably handle. Wise is the retreat planner who surrounds himself or herself with capable youth and adults who not only plan to attend the retreat but are also willing to assist in carrying out the duties and tasks necessary to make the retreat come together.

A group of six (youth and adults) should be all you need to plan the retreat. Look for individuals who exhibit one or several of the following characteristics: spiritually mature, organized, creative, optimistic, youth-minded and/or fun-loving.

Make a list of people you could invite to be part of the planning committee. When the committee is set, add their names to the Retreat Planning Worksheet (appendix A).

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.
Proverbs 15:22

Retreat Planning

A good rule of thumb is to allow *at least* one month of planning for each day of the retreat, and an additional three months for adequate publicity and the formalizing of all plans. Thus, for a three-day weekend retreat, you need to start preparing at least six months in advance. Keep in mind that some retreat locations and guest speakers may require advanced booking beyond this time frame. When it comes to planning a retreat, make time your friend or it can quickly become your enemy. Look over the suggested Retreat Planning Worksheet (appendix A) to get an idea as to some of the preparations that need to be undertaken.

Retreat Purpose

The bulk of the initial retreat planning meeting(s) should focus on answering this question: *Why are we doing this particular retreat?* In an attempt to answer this question, a few other questions should also be asked: *Who will be coming? What are their ages? What do they like doing? What are their needs? What are some of the real issues which they are facing? What do we want to see happen in their lives?*

As you begin to answer these questions, you will find yourself better prepared to discuss and determine the following main components: a Retreat Goal, Bible Verse, Theme, Song and possibly a Logo. These components will become the skeleton upon which you will then build your retreat.

Spend a few minutes brainstorming. Consider these questions: Why are we doing this particular retreat? Who will be coming? What are their ages? What do they like doing? What are their needs? What are some of the real issues which they are facing? What do we want to see happen in their lives?

Retreat Goal: In one sentence, state what you would like to see as the outcome of the retreat. Use words that are positive, uplifting and edifying (avoid using "not" and its variables). Do not set a goal that is legalistic or which amounts to nothing more than moralizing. Remember that the purpose of God's Law is not to coerce us into obedience, but to help us appreciate our need for the Savior. It is the Good News of Jesus Christ that truly motivates us to live a life that is pleasing to God. Therefore, a retreat goal should be Gospel-oriented.

Retreat Goal: _____

Once established, the goal is then to be used primarily by the Planning Committee as they develop each facet of the retreat. Everything undertaken during the retreat should somehow assist the participants in reaching the Retreat Goal.

Retreat Bible Verse: Choose a verse or passage that clearly represents and communicates the goal and theme of the retreat. Be sure that you are using the passage in the context in which it was intended. If you use a passage that entails several verses, try to zero in on one verse so that it can be more readily remembered. As with the Retreat Goal, try to select a verse that is Gospel-motivated, positive and uplifting.

Brainstorm possible Bible verses.

Retreat Bible Verse: _____

Retreat Theme: In roughly five words or less, come up with an attractive catch-phrase which sums up or characterizes the intent and purpose of the retreat. The Theme becomes the name of the retreat and should be used in promoting it.

Brainstorm possible themes:

Retreat Theme: _____

In conjunction with the theme, it is worthwhile to also establish a Retreat Song. A hymn or a song can help to further communicate the goal, theme and Biblical focus of the retreat in a concise and memorable way. In some instances, you may even find that a hymn or song title would serve well as your retreat theme. The verses might also be helpful in outlining the retreat program, sessions and devotions.

Brainstorm possible songs:

Retreat Song: _____

Retreat Logo: If you have someone who is gifted with creative and artistic abilities, a retreat logo can help to visually communicate the purpose and message of the retreat. It can be used on posters and newsletter announcements, in social media, as part of any printed material for use during the retreat and maybe even a retreat T-shirt (which can serve not only as a meaningful memento of the retreat, but also as a wonderful witness tool).

What visual elements would you like incorporated into a logo? Are there certain colors you would like to have included?

Retreat Logo Designer: _____

Deadline for Logo: _____

Retreat Date(s) and Site

One of the other matters requiring immediate attention by the Retreat Planning Committee is discussing and determining the retreat date(s) and site.

Retreat Date(s): When choosing the date(s), first begin discussing which season of the year would be most preferable for the retreat. Each season has its own advantages and disadvantages when it comes to doing a retreat. Consider which season would serve your retreat needs best. For example, a winter retreat may narrow your options for outdoor activity, yet it can also be quite conducive to building close bonds and establishing new relationships given the increased level of containment and opportunities for closeness.

Once you have an idea of which time of the year you would like to hold the retreat, begin to consider the specific dates. Look over the school activity and sporting calendars. Consider vacation and work schedules. You will probably not be able to choose a date that works for everyone, but you want to choose one that poses the fewest possible conflicts for most everyone.

Retreat Date: _____

Retreat Site: Coupled with determining the retreat date(s) is determining the site. Keep in mind that sometimes the date(s) of the retreat may have to be adjusted depending upon what the schedule at the retreat site will allow. Planning well in advance should give you greater flexibility in choosing a site that works with your preferred date(s).

Retreats can happen at a variety of places such as a retreat center, outdoor camp site in either tents or cabins, or even a hotel. With a little bit of creative planning, almost any site imaginable could be used as an adequate retreat location. It all depends on your group's goals, size, flexibility, financial resources, needs for meeting rooms, housing, meals, recreational opportunities and willingness to travel.

At the same time, although almost any site could serve as an adequate retreat location, it is possible that some may be more suitable for your group than others. For example, a retreat center that waits on you hand-and-foot may sound great, but maybe a bunch of cabins in the woods is what your group really needs in order to open up and grow.

If your local options are limited, consider holding a retreat at a hotel, motel, or even a resort. The operators of such facilities are often more than willing to cater to youth groups, especially during their slow months. With a little research and negotiating, it can be quite affordable.

For the more adventuresome groups, consider a retreat on an island, houseboat or in conjunction with a Servant Event, rafting, skiing, canoeing, backpacking or horseback riding. Such retreats will require thorough planning.

If you are not sure what retreat sites may be available for your use, check with other leaders in area, congregations, your District office, the National Lutheran Outdoors Ministry Association (NLOMA)*, the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of the USA, National and State Parks, congregational members, the Yellow Pages, the Internet. (*A complete list of NLOMA camps can be found in the Lutheran Annual or through their website - www.nloma.org.)

If you are not familiar with the retreat site, the Retreat Planning Committee should visit it ahead of time. In visiting, take note of what is available both indoors and outdoors: kitchen, sleeping area(s), meeting room(s), other necessary space, equipment (audio/video, sporting, and recreational), and opportunities for on-site recreation as well as in the immediate locale.

What are you looking for in a retreat location? What is absolutely necessary and what would simply be nice to have?

Make a list of possible retreat sites. Assign a team member to contact sites for more information. When the site is determined, add it to the Retreat Planning Worksheet (appendix A).

Retreat Site: _____

Retreat Schedule

Determining when everything will take place during the retreat begins with scheduling for the needs of the body: eating and sleeping.

Meal Schedule: If you are preparing your own meals, you will need to take into account the time demands, necessary to prepare and then clean up afterwards.

If the retreat site will be preparing and serving your meals, you will need to check with them for a workable meal schedule.

Sleep Schedule: All too often, little emphasis is given to the need for rest during a retreat and participants can easily wind up getting very little sleep. As a result, irritability and injury levels may rise while attention spans and respect may diminish. Don't let lack of sleep have a lasting negative impact on the overall outcome and memory of the retreat.

If you take the "wait and see" approach to scheduling sleep into your retreat, odds are you will spend most of the night waiting to see it. Suffice it to say that, in order to accomplish the overall goal and purpose of the retreat, adequate sleep is a necessary element. Do not take any chances. It might not be easy or popular with the youth, but try to plan for it!

Program Schedule: Once you have scheduled the needs of the body into the retreat, you will find that you have a chunk of time in the morning, a larger chunk of time in the afternoon, and then the whole evening. This is where you put all the other stuff (e.g. sessions, recreation, prayer time, naps, free time, devotions, servant events, singing, craft, worship, etc.). At first, establish a rough schedule. As your program takes on a more definite shape during the planning stages, you can then adjust your schedule more closely.

Model for a Weekend Retreat

Friday

5:00 p.m. Departure
7:30 p.m. Arrival/Settle-in
8:15 p.m. Orientation
8:30 p.m. Community Building/ Session 1
9:45 p.m. Free Time
11:30 p.m. Devotion

Saturday

8:15 a.m. Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Devotion
9:30 a.m. Session 2
11:00 a.m. Retreat Craft
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Free Time
5:00 p.m. Supper
6:00 p.m. Session 3
8:00 p.m. Organized Recreation
11:30 p.m. Devotion
12:00 a.m. Sleep

Sunday

8:15 a.m. Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Worship
10:15 a.m. Private Meditation
10:45 a.m. Evaluation
11:00 a.m. Clean/Pack Up
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Closing Devotion
1:30 p.m. Departure
4:00 p.m. Arrive Home

Model for a One-Day Retreat

9:00 a.m. Arrive
10:00 a.m. Community Building
11:00 a.m. Session 1
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Session 2
2:00 p.m. Recreation
4:30 p.m. Session 3
5:30 p.m. Supper
6:30 p.m. Fun and Games
8:00 p.m. Closing Devotion

Use this page to brainstorm a potential schedule.

Retreat Sessions

The Retreat Sessions are the heart and soul of the retreat. This is the time for in-depth Bible Study, topical discussion and/or insights and direction offered by capable speakers, leaders, or presenters (whether they be guest speakers or known individuals from within the congregation or community).

Plan for the sessions to be roughly 1-1 1/2 hour(s) in length. Anything less does not allow for the participants to go into much spiritual depth. Anything more tends to be beyond the reasonable attention span of the average individual.

The exact number of sessions really depends upon how much time you will need to attain the purpose and goal of your retreat. Some retreats may work best having three 1 1/2 hour sessions while others would do well to have four 1-hour sessions. Be careful that you do not overdo it with the number and length of sessions. Retreats tend to be an intense time of growth and learning and participants need opportunities for everything to sink in. Allow for some kind of freedom (whether structured or not) to follow each session. Furthermore, strive for some kind of balance between the amount of time spent in sessions and the amount of time spent in recreation. Too little or too much one way or the other can be counter-productive in your efforts to reach the purpose and goal of your retreat.

Using A Guest Speaker

If you are going to use a guest speaker (or speakers) for some or all of your retreat, it is vital that you begin planning well in advance. As with scheduling a retreat site, sometimes the date(s) of the retreat may have to be adjusted based upon the availability of the speaker. Planning well in advance will give you greater flexibility in booking speakers that work with your preferred date(s).

Using a guest speaker has its advantages in that much or all of your programming needs are determined and/or taken care of by the speaker. Some are "retreat veterans," having a pre-established theme and presentation. As such, they can assist you in arranging your retreat schedule. The more familiar you are with their topic and presentation, the better able you will be to develop the rest of your retreat.

Other guest speakers, although capable, may not be as readily prepared. This is all the more reason to plan and contact your speaker(s) well in advance. Such individuals are going to be most interested in knowing what exactly is being expected of them. You will need to do all that you can to provide as much insight, information and direction as possible pertaining to the purpose and goal of the retreat and the particular theme or subject which you are asking them to address.

Keep in mind that using a guest speaker will typically take a sizable chunk out of your retreat budget. Not only will you need to take into account a speaking fee, but also any transportation expenses as well as costs for retreat materials provided by the speaker.

Guest speakers and leaders could be Pastors, Youth Workers, Directors of Christian Education (DCE), Christian Day School Teachers, Lutheran College Singing Teams, Camp Directors, respected church leaders, reputable Christian leaders in the community. These same individuals are also a wonderful resource for obtaining names of potential guest speakers. Use your imagination, brainstorm with others, and pray for direction. Look for individuals of Christian integrity to whom youth look up to. Ask for assistance from your District office and other area congregations.

Brainstorm names of potential guest speakers. If using a guest speaker, assign a team member to be the contact person for the guest speaker.

Guest Speaker(s): _____

Doing Your Own Sessions

Taking the "do-it-yourself" approach to developing the sessions for your retreat can be quite an undertaking, but it can also result in one of the most rewarding retreats you and your youth will ever experience. It is the difference between buying a suit or a dress "off-the-rack" versus buying one that is "tailor-made." Writing your own retreat allows you to more readily adapt the retreat to the specific needs of your youth. Most guest speakers can only address the needs of youth in general. You can address the needs of your youth specifically.

Know that you do not have to rely simply upon yourself or upon your committee to do all of the creative work required for developing each session. Rare are the individuals who can write their own retreats totally from scratch.

Thankfully, there are a growing number of youth ministry resources available through your district office, the LCMS Office of National Mission - Youth Ministry, Concordia Publishing House, as well as other sources of Christian youth ministry resources. By acquainting yourself with a wide variety of resources, you can easily compile and adapt a Bible study here and a devotion there into a retreat that is tailor-made for your group. You can find a list of resources on the "Retreat Resources" page at the end of this workbook.

Developing Your Own Sessions

Whether you choose to write your retreat from scratch or by drawing from a variety of resources, start by breaking the theme of your retreat into a 3-4 part outline. Each part becomes the theme for each session. Each session should build upon the other and ultimately lead to fulfilling the overall goal and purpose of the retreat.

The first session should set the tone for the retreat. It should introduce the overall theme and purpose of the retreat in a positive and upbeat manner. Although it should provide spiritual depth, insight and direction in and of itself, it should primarily serve to prepare the participants for what is to come. It is the "appetizer" for the "main course."

Consider using other forms of media (audio and/or video) during the initial session to introduce the retreat theme. There are many good Christian movies and videos available, each of which can serve as a suitable springboard for deeper spiritual discussion as well as helping you set the stage for your retreat.

The middle session(s) should be the "meat" of the retreat. This is where you want some solid Bible study taking place. The more of this that can be done in small groups (roughly 4-6 people), the better. It might be helpful to close this time by gathering as a large group to share, highlight and reinforce what has been learned. Word One Bible Studies from youthESource.com serve as a good resource and model for this part of the retreat. (See the Word One Leader Guide in particular.)

The final session should help the participants apply or reinforce what they have learned. This is a wonderful time for "active learning" through total group or small group involvement and activity. This is where the participants learn to "live out" the theme and the purpose of the retreat through hypothetical situations, "active learning" games, on-the-job training, dramatization, etc. This should be coupled with additional Bible study to reaffirm what is being learned.

It is helpful to have a community builder as a lead-in and introduction to each session. This helps the participants to make a transition and to reacquaint themselves with one another.

Consider your retreat theme. How you can you break it out into three or four sessions? Brainstorm the focus for each session.

Use this page for further development of your retreat sessions. Consider the major take-aways you want from each session and some creative ways you can reinforce these points in your teaching.

Session Environment

Consider the location and seating dynamics for each session. Using all of your senses, be discerning of potential distractions (e.g., sights, sounds, smells, bugs, etc.). Choose a site that has minimal distractions, or at least do what you can to minimize those that may be present. Discuss the pros and cons of different seating styles and determine which will serve the needs of your group best: Sitting close together or spread out? Having the presenter up front facing the group or with everyone sitting in a circle? As a large group or in small groups? Indoors or outdoors? In a small room or in a large room? In chairs or on the floor/ground or at tables?

It is recommended that you have some kind of a balance between small group and large group sessions. On the one hand, it is easier to communicate a significant theme or message during a large group session. On the other hand, greater discussion and interaction will take place among the participants if you break them up into smaller groups.

For example, you may want to start the session off as a large group. After introducing or presenting the topic, have everyone break up into smaller groups, choose a leader and discuss what was presented or any other additional learning interests. Towards the close of the session, bring everyone back together as a large group so as to review, discuss and/or apply what has been learned.

What seating arrangement will you need? Are there any materials you need to create the right learning environment?

Establishing a Worship Center

Using a little creativity and imagination, try to come up with some unique way to make a cross or to make the shape of the cross. The intent and purpose of this cross is to establish a visual focus which serves as a worship center and spiritual focus during the retreat.

You want to do it in a way that helps to support, reinforce and further communicate the theme of the retreat. If at all possible, strive to make it from something that, in one way, shape or form, specifically identifies or individually symbolizes each participant. Again, be as creative as possible.

Size is not important, although you want to take into account where it will be located during the retreat. This cross can be made prior to the retreat or as part of the opening session.

The intent and purpose of this cross is to establish a visual focus which serves as a worship center and spiritual focus during the retreat. During the retreat, strive to have the sessions, devotions and especially the worship service, with this cross in your presence.

Determine who will be responsible for making or acquiring the cross. What other items will be needed to create a worship center?

Devotions

Devotions should be 15-20 minutes in length. They should be held at the beginning and end of each day and at the closing of the retreat. They should also serve to support and reinforce the overall theme and purpose of the retreat. In conducting devotions, the following basic elements should be included:

1. General Singing: Singing is a good way to make a transition and help the hearers to focus.
2. Invocation/Prayer: Calling on God to be present in the minds and hearts of the hearers.
3. Scripture: The source of our learning and edifying.
4. Message: Clarifying and applying the Word.
5. Prayer: Communicating petitions, thanks and praise.
6. Song: Praise.

In developing your devotional messages, consider using "object lessons" or sermon-type illustrations that quickly grab and hold the participants' attention. If at all possible, try to have at least one "camp-fire" devotion with lots of singing.

If you have a Retreat Theme Song, open the devotion by singing or playing a recording of it.

Brainstorm Scripture and message themes for your devotion times.

Music

Music is the special added touch that can cement a retreat together. It can provide background noise that keeps us on task; a call to devotion, session, or worship; an encourager that keeps us awake and alert on the road; a group builder that ties us together with special memories; and most important, a wonderful way to show praise to God.

It is indeed a blessing if your singing can be accompanied by an instrument. Due to its portability and general appeal among youth, the guitar has long been a primary instrument in leading retreat singing. If you have access to a keyboard, it is another viable instrument for use during retreats (if you do not have access to electricity, make sure you take plenty of extra batteries). Some retreat sites have a piano available (although you cannot always count on it being fully operational or in tune). It would indeed be a great blessing if you could enlist the instrumental talent of at least one individual for your retreat.

You also want someone who is good at teaching and leading others in song. Determine who this individual will be well in advance so that adequate practice and preparation can be made.

Many different types of music selections are available. Hymns tie us to our spiritual heritage. Camp songs are great group builders. Instrumental praise music can serve as a tension reliever or background during a work project. Contemporary Christian musicians are flooding the market with great songs to pull youth closer together and to praise God.

Who will lead music at the retreat? Are there any songs that MUST be included?

Worship Service

The worship service should be one of the spiritual high points—if not *the* spiritual high point—of the retreat. This is an area that requires a lot of thought and work. Unless you have someone or a committee that is experienced and gifted in formulating a youth worship service, you would do well to take advantage of as many available resources as possible when it comes to developing your worship service.

Start by establishing the skeleton of your worship service. The liturgies used in your present worship services serve as good models in doing this. The traditional forms of liturgy tend to follow this pattern:

Opening hymn (a hymn of invocation that praises God for His mercy)

Invocation (the triune God blesses us as He places on us His saving name which was first given at our Baptism)

Confession of Sins (acknowledging our sinfulness and our need for God's forgiveness and help)

Absolution (God's pronouncement of forgiveness through Jesus' death and resurrection)

Introit (a reading from the Psalms which summarizes the theme of the day and begins the Service of the Word; it concludes with the Gloria Patri, which serves as a doxology to the Holy Trinity)

Prayer of the Day (sums up the theme of the service)

Scripture Readings (the Old Testament Lesson recalls God's acts of mercy to His people of old; the Epistle Lesson provides direction for the New Testament people of God; the Gospel Reading proclaims the words and actions of Jesus which bring us life)

Hymn of the Day (summarizes the theme of the service)

Sermon (a portion of God's Word is proclaimed, explained, expounded and applied to daily living)

Confession of Faith (a statement of belief concerning who God is and what He has done and continues to do in our lives...e.g. the Apostles Creed or a portion of Luther's explanation of the creed from the Small Catechism)

Offering (a visible response of self-sacrifice for all that God has done for us; For a retreat, you might come up with some creative way to express this)

Prayers (verbally expressing thanksgiving to the Lord and words of concern for the needs of others and ourselves)

Preface (words that prepare our hearts to receive the Lord's body and blood)

Lord's Prayer

Words of Institution (joining the forgiving power of God's Word with the elements of bread and wine through which we are given the body and blood of Christ)

Thanksgiving (giving thanks to the Lord for all that He has done for us)

Benediction (pronouncing God's blessing which acclaims us as His people and enables us to go forth and live as such)

Using the theme of the retreat as your basis, begin to build each element of the liturgy. Look to the appointed Scripture. Compile, edit and adapt from what is useful. Be creative. Involve as many of the senses as possible. Use symbols. Utilize the Retreat Cross. Formulate your own litanies or responsive prayers from a list of Bible verses that highlight or emphasize your Retreat Theme.

If you desire to celebrate the Lord's Supper, you should first seek the approval of your Pastor and the Board of Elders.

Brainstorm some creative ways to enhance the retreat worship experience.

Post-Worship Meditation

Prepare a brief, 15-20 minute Bible study that each of the participants can complete on their own. Immediately following the worship service, instruct them to spend some personal *private* time with the Lord.

As part of this Bible study, use Bible passages and questions that help them to reexamine and apply the main lesson(s) learned on this retreat. Then have them write out their own personal prayer using the following statements:

Lord, through this retreat You have taught me...

In this retreat, I am especially thankful to You for...

Lord, from this day forward, help me by Your Spirit to...

Then provide space for them to write down three of the more memorable and/or humorous things that took place on the retreat and, three of the most significant things which they learned on this retreat.

Closing Devotion

Prior to the closing devotion, have everyone take turns (as they feel comfortable) completing the following statements:

1. It was really humorous when...
2. I never knew... .
3. I will never forget...
4. What impressed me most was...
5. A moment when I sensed God's closeness was...
6. As a result of this retreat, I want to ...

If you have a Retreat Theme Song, close the retreat by playing a recording of it or sing it and then close with prayer.

Retreat Supplies

During the process of developing the retreat program, establish a checklist of everything which you are going to need for each session, devotion, etc. This becomes especially useful in the last-minute rush that inevitably takes place just before you leave. It is also helpful during the retreat when it comes to getting each session ready.

Retreat Material

If you intend to print any material for use during the retreat, it is helpful to put it all together in a single booklet or folder. As part of this material, consider including such information as: Retreat Schedule, Map of the Retreat Site, Bible Studies, Session material, Devotional material, Worship Service, Retreat Craft instructions. Mix in some clip art and maybe some cartoons.

If you have song sheets, provide them to the participants separately or in the end section of the Retreat Material.

Copyright Reprint Permission

You must get reprint permission from the copyright holder before using any copyrighted material which you intend to use in any of your retreat material (Bible studies, song lyrics, cartoons, graphics, etc.).

A royalty fee may be expected in some instances which needs to be figured in to the overall retreat budget. In many instances, you will be permitted to reprint at no cost.

The issue of whether or not to pursue copyright permission is not a matter of whether or not you will get caught (although the legal penalties can be substantial). Rather, this is a matter of the Seventh Commandment, Christian integrity, being honest and readily supporting those who earn their living by making such valuable material available.

Retreat Craft

Hands-on arts and crafts is a wonderful way to further reinforce the theme and purpose of the retreat. It adds additional variety to the retreat and creates opportunities for participants to teach, help and work with one another. It also provides the participants with a keepsake from the retreat that can serve as a positive reminder of the retreat long after it is over.

In trying to come up with a Retreat Craft, be looking for something that will further support and reinforce the theme and purpose of the retreat. Talk with those who enjoy arts and crafts as a hobby, or Day/Sunday/VBS School teachers and superintendents. Share with them your theme and purpose. They may have arts and craft catalogues which you can look through and get ideas.

Whatever you decide upon for a craft, be careful that it is not too complex or time-involved. Allow for creativity! Look for something which can be accomplished with relative ease in roughly an hour or less.

Have someone make a prototype ahead of time so that you have an idea as to what it all entails and then have it available as a model and visual aid. When obtaining craft supplies and materials, make absolutely sure that you have more than enough for everyone. Count on irreversible mistakes, wasted material and those who may want to make more than one.

Brainstorm some craft ideas, or names of people who can organize a craft.

Community Building

There is probably no better way to break down walls, warm people up and quickly get a group sharing than to play games. Even if all the participants already know one another—and especially if they do not—it is important that you use community building activities to get participants interacting with one another. Not only should community builders begin your retreat, you might also want to use a short community builder when you break into small groups for discussions.

Community building ideas can be found on youthESource.com. There are also numerous community building books available in or through most Christian bookstores or online.

Brainstorm some community building ideas you may use.

Unstructured Free Time

Participants need some time during the retreat where they get to determine what they would like to do. Given the freedom and the right facilities and surroundings, youth will find positive things with which to occupy themselves.

Know your group when it comes to planning your free time. With some, long periods of unstructured free time is an invitation for trouble.

Know your retreat site when it comes to planning your free time. Some are limited in what they have to offer. Youth could run out of things to occupy their time. Be ready to compensate for this with other things to do.

Planning the free time with options such as hiking, sledding, canoeing, softball, volleyball, hiking, a servant event, swimming, etc. may be more desirable.

Organized Recreation

Plan for some organized free time sometime during the day, such as after an early evening session. Come up with some games that are fun, group-oriented, burn up energy and promote interaction. Avoid those games which promote aggression and competitiveness. Strive for non-competitive games that build up the esteem and unity of the group.

An alternate or additional way to spend this time is to encourage participants to put on their own acts of entertainment. It may include such things as a lip sync, vaudeville-type acts, karaoke (singing to canned music), talent show, etc. This is purely for entertainment and simply to have a good time.

What kinds of organized recreation will you have at your retreat?

Meal Time

There are several ways to handle food on a retreat. You can do all of the cooking yourself. You can go somewhere that does it all for you. Or you can ask other adults (e.g., parents, scoutmaster) to come and cook for you.

If your group does not have to cook, it allows for more retreat time. In addition, you will be less likely to get food poisoning!

On the other hand, fond memories can be made as retreat participants work together setting tables, cooking food, serving it and cleaning up.

If you decide to do it all yourself, keep things simple. Eat three meals per day and do not allow anyone to skip meals (e.g., sleeping in past breakfast). Try and plan healthy! (The youth will supply junk food on their own!) And be sure to ask in advance about food allergies and plan accordingly.

Sample Menus

1. Scrambled Eggs, Bacon and Toast, Milk, Orange Juice
2. Pancakes, Sausage, Milk, Orange Juice
3. Cereal, Milk, Orange Juice
4. Cold Cuts, Crackers, Lettuce, Tomato, Cheese, Cookies, Lemonade, Milk, Iced Tea
5. Peanut Butter & Jelly, Fresh Fruit, Carrot and Celery Sticks, Brownies, Lemonade, Milk, Iced Tea
6. Spaghetti, Garlic Bread, Salad, Ice Cream, Milk, Soda, Tea
7. Sloppy Joes, Baked Beans, Carrot and Celery Sticks, Milk, Soda, Tea
8. Hamburgers, Baked Potato, Salad, Lettuce, Tomato, Chips, Milk, Soda, Tea

If you will be doing meals yourself, brainstorm some options, and designate someone to be in charge.

Snacks

Encourage participants to each bring a snack that is suitable for sharing. Establish an area that is your "snack pantry."

Budgeting

Making and sticking to a retreat budget helps to keep expenses in the proper perspective, with the most important aspects of the retreat getting the biggest dollar amounts. It also helps to make realistic choices about priorities.

Using the "Retreat Budget Planning Worksheet" as a guide and adapting it to your needs (see appendix B), begin budget planning by figuring in whatever funds you may already have set aside or are at least known to be available for your use (Youth Budget, Donations, etc.). That will give you a ballpark figure as to your initial financial base. As you are able, begin to fill in whatever other funds may become available as well as what your known expenses are going to be (i.e., room costs, speaker fees, etc.). You will probably have to do some adjusting along the way.

Some groups like to strive towards covering all expenses for everyone while others require a Registration Fee. Regardless of your approach, if the anticipated expenses exceed what you have in available or anticipated funds, you will have to consider eliminating various things from the Retreat.

You may want to start by simply guesstimating how much you think each participant would be willing to pay for this retreat and then include that in your Retreat Funds. You will then have to figure how many youth participants you would need in order for all expenses to be covered.

It is recommended that the costs for adult chaperones/ counselors be covered by the retreat budget.

Funding

Strive to get the "Cost per Youth" to be as low as possible. For some individuals, even a minimal cost could be an insurmountable barrier; consider a scholarship program.

In your efforts to raise funds, focus on "doing" rather than upon the "getting." Half the fun of going on a retreat is the spiritual journey you take just to get there. When "money" becomes the focus of the journey, the road not only seems long and hard, but selfishness and pride tend to raise their ugly heads.

On the other hand, when "ministry" is stressed along with leaving the outcome to the Lord's goodness, the journey itself takes on a wonderful, God-pleasing dynamic all its own.

Furthermore, fundraisers which are primarily seen as opportunities for ministry promote a healthy spirit of self-sacrifice and service within the youth. They also tend to encourage godly generosity in those whom the youth serve. *Doing ministry* should always be sought and emphasized above *making money*.

As an alternative form of fundraising, compile a list of some of the physical supplies which you will be needing on the retreat (Food Supplies/Craft Supplies, etc.). Put up a sign-up sheet well in advance, specifically noting each of these items and allow individuals to donate them. Determine a date and location where all supplies need to be delivered. If properly approached, some local retail vendors may be more than happy to assist you in some of the bulk items.

You can find fundraiser ideas at www.youthESource.com

Pre-Retreat Orientation

No sooner than a month and not less than a week before the retreat, schedule for a Pre-Retreat Orientation in which all registrants and parent(s) are expected to be present. During this meeting you should go over Vital Retreat Information which tells the participants what they need to do to get ready for the retreat. You should also provide each registrant with an Authorization for Treatment of Minor form (see appendix C) which they are to turn in prior to going on the retreat. During this time, you could also incorporate the establishing of a Retreat Covenant or Code of Conduct.

It is important that you discuss with everyone ahead of time what a Christian retreat is and what it is not. Many have never been on a retreat before, and typically envision it to be nothing more than a weekend of unrestrained play time (through the day as well as the night). Fun and Christian socialization are indeed important facets of any Christian retreat, but they are not the only things, nor are they the main things.

You should explain that the primary purpose for going on a Christian retreat is to allow everyone the opportunity:

1. to grow in their understanding and appreciation of Jesus;
2. to grow in their understanding and appreciation of one another and others;
3. to grow in their understanding and appreciation of their own self as a Christian.

To these ends, participants need to understand that they come to the retreat with the anticipation and desire of growing spiritually.

Scheduling a Pre-Retreat Orientation (maybe with pizza) will allow you the opportunity to deal with these matters.

Vital Retreat Information

As part of the Pre-Retreat Orientation, you should provide the registrants with the following information:

Retreat Dates and Location: What are the dates and location of the retreat?

Eligible Participants: What is the age requirement (e.g., confirmed high school youth, recent high school graduates, etc.). Will you permit member youth to bring a friend? If so, how many, what age, and will there be any special requirements of those who want to bring a friend of the opposite sex whom they are dating?

Cost: How much is this retreat going to cost each youth? Is there a registration deposit required ahead of time? When are all fees due?

What Will Be Provided: What is the means of transportation? Which meals will be provided and covered during the retreat? What snacks and drinks will be provided? Will you be providing a retreat T-shirt?

What to Bring: Consider the following list (feel free to adapt or add): A completed and signed Authorization for Treatment of Minor form (stress that they cannot go without it), a Bible, a snack item for sharing with other participants, outdoor clothing appropriate for current weather conditions, warm clothes/jacket (in case of foul or rainy weather), long pants, shirts, sweatshirt, underwear, T-shirts, socks, hat, extra pair of shoes and socks, work gloves, bug spray, sun block, toiletries (soap, shampoo, towel, washcloth, hairbrush, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush, hair dryer, contact lens supplies, shaving gear, tampons/pads, etc.), flashlight, modest pajamas, sleeping bag (or bedding), pillow, medications. Optional: camera, alarm clock, slippers, games, blanket, binkey, teddy bear, anti-shark repellent.

What Not To Bring: Do not bring cigarettes, alcohol or any other harmful stimulants. Do not bring any weapons. Do not bring large sums of money (if there is a need for which participants will need money, state clearly the reason and the amount of the expense.). You may also want to consider whether or not to permit personal forms of entertainment (e.g., phones, iPods, etc.). Personal entertainment can run counter to a group spirit which is sought during a retreat.

Departure and Return: On what date, at what time and from where will you be departing for the retreat? At what time would you like everyone to arrive for the sake of loading? On what date, at what time and where will you be returning after the retreat? If it is close to a meal time, do they need to be responsible for their own meals?

Transportation: What is the means of transportation and who will be driving? Is there transportation available to and from participants' homes in the event that they do not have any? If so, with whom do they need to make arrangements?

Where We Can Be Reached: Is there a telephone at the retreat site?

Adult Participants: Who are the adult participants and what are their telephone numbers?

Retreat Covenant/Code of Conduct

Whenever a group of people join together for a retreat, there needs to be a few rules. Without certain safeguards, some participants could come away from the retreat as if it were a spiritual detour in their lives rather than a spiritual milestone. You want to create an environment that is physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually safe.

Covenanting, or promising to abide by a group code of conduct, helps to create this safe environment. It short circuits problems, establishes a spirit of trust, communicates the goals of the retreat and sets up guidelines for treating each other with Christian love and respect.

This is not a process which should be approached lightly or in haste. Adequate time should be taken, prior to the retreat, giving all the participants an opportunity for input.

Use the following questions to help establish your Retreat Covenant:

1. We covenant together to treat each other with love and respect. For example:
2. We promise to respect the purpose of this retreat by fully participating in it, including:
3. We promise to show respect for the following property used during the retreat by:
 - Vehicles
 - Facilities/Buildings
 - Rooms
 - Equipment
 - Grounds
4. Concerning the following retreat rules, we promise:
 - Designated sleep or quiet time
 - Illegal substances
 - Areas restricted to the opposite sex
5. In spite of the best intentions, sometimes we still fail. In addition to showing love and concern, we will deal with such problems by:
6. Repeated disregard for the covenant shall be dealt with by:

Once established, the covenant should be printed out. It might be helpful to post it in a highly visible location at the retreat site. During the retreat, it might also be helpful (and sometimes necessary) to review the covenant.

What covenant items must be considered to fit your group?

Transportation

Getting there is always a big part of retreat planning. If you have a church van or bus, you have a great advantage in this area. If not, options include enlisting adult volunteers, renting a van from a local company, chartering a bus, using public transportation, or (if the retreat site is close) having youth ride their bicycles.

Keep in mind that you will need enough vehicles to transport all of the participants to the retreat site, as well as all of the necessary belongings, provisions and equipment. It is quite easy to figure how much space you will need to transport your participants. At the same time, it is even easier to underestimate your need for transporting food supplies, sleeping bags, luggage, recreational equipment, retreat material, etc. Be as thorough as you can be in planning your transportation needs.

Do not push the safety factor when it comes to transportation! Avoid the cramming and over-burdening of vehicles with passengers and provisions. Provide *more than enough* space for the safe and comfortable transportation of everyone and everything.

Know and obey all state and local traffic laws. Base your travel time on the legal speed limit and abide by it religiously. On long trips, allow time for the drivers to take a break and for checking the vehicles for any maintenance. If using multiple vehicles, travel together. Make sure each vehicle has a cell phone. Plan the travel route ahead of time and provide copies of it to each driver along with a telephone number at the retreat site.

However you get there, you need to consider these questions:

1. What does your church insurance cover? Get in touch with the agent who handles your church's insurance policy. Be sure to let the agent know how you plan to get to the retreat. Is there any age limit for drivers? Are all participants covered while traveling and at the retreat site? It is possible that you may need to include in your budget the purchase of a special one-time-only coverage (a rider) for your event. In the event that a vehicle's interior or exterior is damaged due to passenger carelessness and it is not covered by insurance, who will be responsible for compensation or repairs?
2. Does your congregation have a travel policy already in place? How do you reserve the church van or bus? Are there any age restrictions for drivers? How do you go about reimbursing volunteer drivers for vehicle mileage?
3. Does the vehicle require a special driver's license? A typical driver's license may not be sufficient for driving a larger passenger van or bus. You may need to enlist the services of someone who already has the appropriate driver's license.
4. Is the transportation being used reliable? What happens in case of break downs or delays? Is there emergency equipment on board (e.g., emergency flares, jumper cables, fire extinguisher, spare tire, jack, etc.) Is it operational? Does someone know how to use it?
5. What are your criteria in choosing drivers? A good policy is that drivers should be at least 21 years of age. Does the driver have emergency supplies, current insurance coverage and a valid driver's license? Is the driver ready to travel a long distance with a vehicle filled with a bunch of teenagers?
6. Which rental or charter company should we use? Check within your congregation for a travel agent. They can help with phone numbers and contact people. Another place to check is with members who are senior citizens. They usually have gone on a bus trip or two, and might have contacts for you. Local car dealerships often rent vans. Check with them for special rates for church groups. Some schools rent out their school buses. Always book as soon as possible!
7. Are there any restrictions in the use of the vehicle? Acquaint yourself with the laws of your state. Some states outlaw transporting passengers in a vehicle which does not have seats (e.g., pickup trucks, panel vans). Others require that each passenger must be using a seat belt. You also should ask the vehicle owners/drivers whether they have any restrictions concerning the care and use of their vehicles (e.g. limiting snacks, number of passengers, amount of luggage).

What are your transportation plans? What arrangements need to be made?

Retreat Supply Box

There are some needs that almost all retreats have in common. Furthermore, even with the best planning and preparation, there always seems to be something that gets overlooked or is not there when you need it. Assembling such reoccurring and anticipated needs into one box can be a real time-saver and, sometimes, a real retreat-saver.

Using a tackle box or a coach's box, collect the following items: white glue, glue sticks, Super-Glue, 8 1/2 x 11" paper, scribble pads, 3" x 5" and 5" x 7" cards, yarn, string, embroidery thread, balloons, colored markers, permanent markers/pens, pencils, scotch tape, masking tape, duct tape, hot glue gun, extra hot glue sticks, pencil sharpener, beads in small Zip-lock bags, leather strips, extra camera film/video tape, scissors, hole punch, stapler with extra staples, paper clips, self-sticking name tags/labels, ruler, compass (for drawing circles), assorted stickers in zip-lock bags, an assortment of "discussion starter" worksheets, box of chalk, glitter, colored cloth paint, rubber bands, envelopes, safety pins and straight pins (each in their own film canisters), thumb-tacks, colored construction paper, postcard stamps, envelope stamps, pipe cleaners, round and flat toothpicks, matches, extra zip-lock bags, two trash bags, contact rewetting solution, saline, sewing needle and thread. (Feel free to add and adapt to this inventory as you see fit.)

First-Aid Kit

A First-Aid Kit is essential for any youth function. It should at least contain the basics: band-aids, ace bandages, peroxide, and first-aid ointments. For a retreat, you might also want to include any or all of the following: gauze bandages, "Sure Clean" for wound cleaning, surgical tape, Q-tips, alcohol swabs, betadine swabs, gauze wraps, small, medium, and large self-adhesive gauze pads, cold & sinus and cold & flu medications, Tylenol, Advil, Tums, Maalox, small scissors, CPR breathing kit, rubber gloves, bandages of all shapes and sizes including butterfly, finger-tip, and large-area adhesive bandages, a small flashlight and an extra set of batteries, tweezers, Pepto-Bismol, eye-patches, mouth guard for seizures, tampons and pads, rubbing alcohol, finger-splints (tongue depressors), hydrogen peroxide, smelling salts, liquid medical adhesive, aloe-vera for burns of all kinds, Solarcane for poison ivy and sunburns, hand-wipes, meat tenderizer for bee stings, saline solution for sensitive eyes, zinc oxide for chaffing, lip balm, Vaseline, bug spray/cream, Saran Wrap and tin foil (good for covering large scrape areas).

You may want to check with a nurse for other additions. Include an inventory list of everything you have in your First-Aid Kit. Always be prompt in replenishing used or outdated items. Validate your inventory prior to going on the retreat.

Retreat Orientation

Soon after you have settled in at the retreat site, go over the "Retreat Covenant /Code of Conduct." Summarize your expectations with the following two basic rules of conduct: .

Rule #1: Have Fun!

Now this should be no problem for the average retreat participant. But one person's idea of having fun could be contrary to another person's idea of having fun. Therefore, in order to assure that everyone has fun, a great deal of attention should be directed towards Rule #2.

Rule #2: Respect ("The 3 Ps")

Under Rule #2, there are three areas where respect needs to be applied:

People
Property
Purpose

Respect needs to be shown to all people who are on the retreat. Participants should be encouraged to be considerate of one another. For each individual participant, a retreat has the potential to be either a spiritual mountaintop experience or "the pits." The direction a retreat takes is often times determined by how the participants treat one another. Belittling one another should not be tolerated by the group and there should be a general agreement by all that they will support and protect one another from physical and verbal abuse. It should also be agreed that adult leaders will be respected when addressing behavioral concerns.

Respect needs to be shown to all property used during the retreat. Each participant should abide by all local/in house rules. Vehicles, facilities and equipment should be taken care of so that others in the future can also enjoy their use.

Respect needs to be shown towards the purpose of the retreat. A retreat is primarily intended for spiritual growth. As such, sleep is a necessary ingredient. So is participation and involvement by everyone. A retreat is intended for "group-oriented" activities, not "clique-oriented" or "couple-oriented."

Take this time to also go over any of the local rules and regulations of the retreat site. You should also introduce other aspects of the retreat.

Suzie and Waldo

A delightful way of encouraging interaction among fellow retreat participants is by introducing two other friends to the retreat environment known as "Suzie" and "Waldo." They are nothing more than two spring-type clothespins. Suzie should be painted bright pink and have a large fuzzball with eyes and a pretty little bow glued to it. Waldo should be painted with red and white stripes, glasses and have a little cap.

During the retreat, participants are challenged to clip Suzie and Waldo to someone else's clothing (that they are presently wearing) without them knowing it. If they are discovered, they must take it back and try to pass it off on someone else. Other participants cannot tattler or somehow give away that someone else is about to get or already has Suzie or Waldo. Such tattlers automatically get Suzie or Waldo. Neither Suzie nor Waldo are gender specific (they can be clipped to anyone).

At certain predetermined (but undisclosed) times during the day, a call should be put out for Suzie and Waldo (spiritual decorum requires that it not be done during sessions, devotions or worship). The individuals who have them must come forward and perform some silly stunt. For example, they may be asked to sing the theme song to "Barney," or sing and do the motions to "I'm A Little Teapot" or "The Eensy Weensy Spider." Once the stunt is performed, the retreat resumes and the challenge to clip Suzie and Waldo on someone else continues until the next call.

Thought needs to be given ahead of time to what the silly stunts will be. Be creative and involve a few others in coming up with stunts! Ideas should be written down on individual pieces of paper, folded and placed in a bowl. Those having Suzie or Waldo can then randomly draw from the bowl as to what stunt they will have to perform. Include a few with "Free Pass" written on them, or "Choose a Scape Goat" (someone else must come up to draw and do the stunt). (Be careful not to single out one person at a time.)

You may also want to offer all the participants an opportunity to give suggestions as to what some of the stunts might be. Have pieces of paper available for them to use and a place where they can put them (e.g., a container with a slot in the top).

Keep in mind that the goal of Suzie and Waldo is to encourage a fun way of interacting with one another and positively drawing participants out of themselves. Avoid any stunts that would significantly embarrass participants or ask them to do something contrary to Christian principles. With less mature participants, you may want to screen the ideas ahead of time.

During the Retreat

During the retreat, it is important to keep in mind that the schedule is a tool to help you accomplish the goal of the retreat. *The schedule is your servant. Be careful that it does not become your master.* Some aspects of the retreat may take more time than planned, others may take less. Furthermore, you can never fully anticipate all of the digressions and interruptions that may arise during a retreat. Allow for flexibility and always be ready to modify and adapt.

Adults should be participants in all aspects of the retreat, not merely observers sitting on the sidelines. This is a wonderful opportunity to establish ties and bonds with youth that many times can extend beyond the retreat. As participants, however, be careful not to control or dominate the discussion during sessions and devotions. Give the youth adequate opportunities to lead and speak. Do not be afraid of long, silent pauses. You can learn a lot about your youth simply by being a good listener.

While maintaining respect for everyone's need for sleep and rest during the retreat, be sensitive to other spiritual dynamics which may be taking place in the lives of the participants as bedtime draws near. As things begin to settle down around sleep time, you may have a few who seem to have something on their minds or are wanting to discuss the retreat experience even further. In some instances, what they want to talk about

is quite personal and deeply spiritual in nature. There seems to be something about late-night calmness that opens great doors of opportunities for deep, heartfelt reflection and communication in small group and one-to-one situations. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's use of such moments.

Post-Retreat Clean-Up

Make a good impression! Leave the site in as good of condition as when you arrived, or preferably, in better condition than when you arrived. Not only is this simply being responsible, it is also a good witness. Furthermore, proper care of the facility makes the site owners/operators more receptive to having you return for any future retreats.

Who will be responsible for making sure clean-up happens?

Evaluation

With every retreat, there will be those things that work and those things which do not. Do not be afraid to learn from your experiences.

Prepare an evaluation ahead of time that can be handed out towards the close of the retreat (e.g., soon following the worship service). Using the schedule as a guideline, allow the participants to rate (on a 1 to 5 or an A to F continuum) each specific aspect of the retreat (departure/arrival times, meals, sessions, devotions, worship, recreation, etc.). Feel free to add whatever other aspects not covered by the schedule which you feel needs to be evaluated. You should also ask:

- What is your overall rating of this retreat?
- To what extent did this retreat affect your relationship with Jesus?

Allow also several open-ended questions with space for writing, such as:

- What do you think we should do the exact same way at the next retreat?
- What do you think should change, rework, include or exclude in order to make the next retreat better?

Collect all evaluations prior to leaving the retreat.

Soon Following The Retreat

Write a "Thank You" note to volunteers, representatives at the retreat site, speakers, leaders, musicians, all those who contributed or donated food and materials and anyone else who assisted in making the retreat possible.

Gather with the Retreat Planning Committee to evaluate and discuss what took place. Use the "Evaluation Forms" turned in by participants to get a picture of the retreat.

Prior to this meeting, it would be helpful if someone compiled the information from the "Evaluation Forms" and note what ranked highest down to what needs some work. Also, arrange the suggestions from the "Evaluation Forms" under two headings: "What Worked" and "What Needs Some Work."

Go over this information and make notes on the significant lessons that were learned. Be certain to appropriately file this information for any future reference.

If someone video-taped portions of the retreat, have everyone gather for a post-retreat party and view the video together.

Brainstorm post-retreat ideas.

Use this page for more notes and brainstorming.

Retreat Resources

Following is a brief listing of resources that might be helpful in developing a youth retreat. You are also encouraged to check the catalogues of Christian publishers, the shelves of local Christian bookstores and the local library.

Games

- youthsource.com/resources/games - from LCMS Youth Ministry
- www.thesource4ym.com/games
- *GroupBuilder Games and Activities for Youth Ministry*, Group Publishing
- *The Ultimate Book of Preteen Games*, Group Publishing
- *Best-Ever Games for Youth Ministry*, Group Publishing
- *On the Spot: No Prep Games for Youth Ministry*, Group Publishing
- *Games, Games 2, & Games 3*, Youth Specialties

Community Building

- youthsource.com/tag/game-community-builder - from LCMS Youth Ministry
- www.thesource4ym.com/teambuilders/

Devotions

- youthsource.com/source-devotions - from LCMS Youth Ministry
- *150 Psalms for Teens* by Eldon Weisheit, Concordia Publishing House
- *Thrive! Devotions for Students*, Concordia Publishing House
- *10-Minute Talks* by Jonathan McKee, Youth Specialties

Session Material

- youthsource.com/category/retreats - from LCMS Youth Ministry
- Word One Bible Studies - youthsource.com/resources/word-one-bible-studies (based upon the current lectionary series, these weekly Bible Studies are written by various church professionals and can be an excellent resource and model for retreat sessions.)
- www.cph.org - Find a number of Bible studies for youth that could be turned into retreat sessions.
- www.group.com - Find Bible studies and curricula that could be used for retreats

Worship

- youthsource.com/category/free-resources/worship-resources - from LCMS Youth Ministry
- Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Concordia Publishing House (complete worship liturgies organized by the three-year lectionary and according to the season of the church year)

Resource Providers/Publishers

LCMS Youth Ministry

www.lcms.org/youth

youthESource.com

Concordia Publishing House

www.cph.org

Group Publishing

www.group.com

Youth Specialties

www.youthspecialties.com

The Source for Youth Ministry

www.thesource4ym.com

Don't forget to contact your district office for additional youth ministry resources.

The LCMS Youth Ministry Office strives to raise awareness regarding services and products from a variety of publishers and organizations. Listing the same does not necessarily indicate an endorsement of the product or organization. The doctrinal content of non-LCMS entities should be evaluated and adapted as necessary.

Retreat Planning Worksheet

Retreat Planning Committee	Name:		Phone:	
	Name:		Phone:	
	Name:		Phone:	
	Name:		Phone:	
	Name:		Phone:	
	Name:		Phone:	
	Name:		Phone:	
Task Force Members	Program			
	Site			
	Meals			
	Recreation			
	Music			
	Travel			
	Craft			
	Publicity			
	Financial			
Retreat Site				Phone:
Retreat Dates	Begins on	At	Ends on	At
Retreat Goal				
Retreat Theme				
Retreat Verse				
Retreat Song				
Meal Times		Breakfast	Lunch:	Supper:
Menus	Day 1	Breakfast	Lunch:	Supper:
	Day 2	Breakfast	Lunch:	Supper:
	Day 3	Breakfast	Lunch:	Supper:
Session 1	Theme:		Length	Leader
Session 2	Theme:		Length	Leader
Session 3	Theme:		Length	Leader
Session 4	Theme:		Length	Leader
Devotion 1	Theme:		Length	Leader
Devotion 2	Theme:		Length	Leader
Devotion 3	Theme:		Length	Leader
Closing Devotion	Theme:		Length	Leader
Worship	Theme:		Length	Leader

Retreat Budget Planning Worksheet

Retreat Funds Available/Anticipated	Total \$ Amount
Youth Budget	
Seed Money from Congregation	
Grant Money	
Special Gifts	
Registration Fee	
Donations (Food, Materials, etc.)	
Total Retreat Funds	

Retreat Expenses	Total \$ Amount
Housing	
Meals	
Snacks	
Transportation	
Equipment Rental	
Media Rental	
Speaker(s)	
Musician(s)	
Fees	
Insurance	
Printing	
Crafts	
Recreation	
T-Shirt	
Publicity	
Decorations	
Miscellaneous	
Total Retreat Expenses	

Determining "Cost Per Youth"

Subtract the Total Retreat Funds (excluding "Registration Fee") from the Total Retreat Expenses. This will give you the Outstanding Costs. Take the Outstanding Costs and divide that by the number of registered/anticipated Total Youth. This will give you the Cost Per Youth for the retreat.

Total Retreat Expenses	
Total Retreat Funds (Subtract)	-
Outstanding Costs (Total)	=
Total Youth (Divide)	/
Cost Per Youth (Total)	=

Determining "Funds Needed"

Simply subtract the Total Retreat Funds from the Total Retreat Expenses. This will give you the Outstanding Costs.

Total Retreat Expenses	
Total Retreat Funds (Subtract)	-
Outstanding Costs (Total)	=

Authorization for Treatment of Minor

Name of Minor: _____ Date: _____

I, _____, being the parent or legal guardian of the above named individual, give my consent for emergency medical and surgical treatment of this minor in a licensed hospital by a licensed physician of this State should his/her condition so require it in my absence. I understand that in such case reasonable attempts would first be made to contact me, time and conditions permitting.

Please read each of the following and check your preference:

As long as the medical or surgical treatment considered necessary in the situation is in accordance with generally accepted standards of medical practice for the particular type of illness or injury involved, I impose no specific limitations or prohibitions regarding treatment.

I impose the following specific limitations or prohibitions regarding treatment:

This authorization is in effect from _____ through _____

in conjunction with _____.

Father's Signature (or legal guardian): _____

Mother's Signature (or legal guardian): _____

Parent(s) Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Please give one or more phone numbers where either of the parents/guardians might be reached during the period of time covered.

Day/Time: _____ Person: _____ Phone: _____

Day/Time: _____ Person: _____ Phone: _____

Day/Time: _____ Person: _____ Phone: _____

Day/Time: _____ Person: _____ Phone: _____

Family Physician: _____ State: _____ Phone: _____

Medical Insurance Carrier: _____ ID#: _____

Member's Name: _____ Benefit Code: _____ Account #: _____

Allergies, if any, including medication.

Chronic or existing diseases or medical problems (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy).

Medicines your child is now taking.

