

9 Tips for Planning an Effective Retreat

1) Clearly define your purpose and objectives. Be sure you communicate these in your promotional material.

2) Visit the site before your retreat. Advance planning will eliminate last minute confusion. Most camps are happy to give you a tour of the facilities. Be sure to take your list of questions and take notes for your orientation/training session with you leaders.

3) Be sure to promote the retreat. *IMPORTANT: Make sure you start well in advance of the retreat date – at least two months.* If you wait until two weeks before the retreat to begin promoting it you will be disappointed with the turn-out.

Here are a few ideas:

- ✓ a poster with the pertinent information
- ✓ announce the retreat in your church bulletin
- ✓ get 2 or 3 people who are really excited about the retreat to “talk it up”
- ✓ prepare a brochure to be distributed at church functions

4) *IMPORTANT: Collect a non-refundable deposit.* People will be less likely to bail on you at the last minute if they have already paid some money down. Also collecting payment in full before the retreat will free you up from that detail during the retreat. Make sure all registrants are familiar with your cancellation policy.

5) Provide an orientation/training session for your leaders. Make sure you are familiar with the camp’s registration policy and that you and your leaders and campers are familiar with the camp’s guidelines.

6) Distribute a schedule in advance. This will create excitement which will further help promote your event. Be sure you have a good balance of meetings, recreation and structured free time (sample enclosed).

7) If possible arrive at the site before the campers so you can take care of check-in details and get your meeting room set up.

8) Prepare an evaluation (sample enclosed) to be filled out by your registrants at the end of the retreat. This will help in your planning for your next retreat. Also make sure you thank your helpers/leaders with a thank you card or perhaps a small gift or honorarium.

9) Follow up on any spiritual decisions made during the retreat.