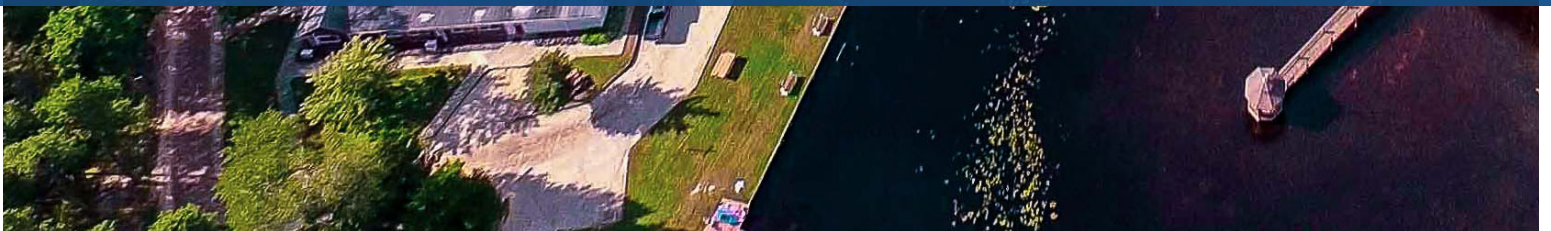




Complete Guide To

# RETREAT PLANNING

601 Route 530  
Whiting, New Jersey, 08759  
Phone: (732) 210-6965





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Planning a retreat can be hard work. You may be asking questions like, *“which retreat center should I pick? How many people are coming? What lodging options do these venues have?”* and *“Will there be enough activities for the kids?”*

Have no fear, we’ve taken it upon ourselves to compile a compelling resource in an easy-to-read format to make your retreat planning experience easier.

America’s Keswick has been serving guest groups and conference guests since 1924, and we’ve seen thousands of lives changed through the sharing of God’s Word and the Victorious Christian Life message that we teach on these grounds. The purpose of America’s Keswick is to model and teach Biblical living in Christ Jesus, to provide an environment in which Biblical life transformation takes place, and to foster active personal involvement in the local church.

Within these pages, you will find selections about activity ideas, packing lists, fundraising, audience engagement, and much more. As a multi-generational and cross-cultural ministry, we have a great understanding of a multitude of different types of retreats including women’s, men’s, marriage, family, and youth retreats. We are here to help, and we hope this ebook is a great resource for you.

Pack your swimsuits, grab your bible, and get ready for a great retreat – there’s no time like the present to start planning.

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## CHAPTER 1

# Great Activity Ideas For Your Next Youth Group Retreat

If you are worried that your youth group won't have enough to do on a retreat, don't fret! Youth group retreats provide opportunities to engage in all sorts of fun and collaborative activities that will create lasting memories. Let's take a look at a few ideas of things to do during your next youth group retreat at America's Keswick.



“

*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:11*

## INDOOR ACTIVITIES

Stay inside and your youth group will be able to cool off in our heated indoor swimming pool. Your youth group will also enjoy access to a Jacuzzi and sauna. We even have a children's pool in case anyone in your youth group is especially young or if you bring a toddler along.

America's Keswick also provides racquetball and wallyball courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, shuffleboard, bounce house, tennis, ping-pong, archery tag, or so on. It doesn't matter how hot or cold it is outside.

Your youth group can take advantage of our climate-controlled indoor facilities to have a blast and forge meaningful bonds that stand the test of time.

## HAVE FUN OUTSIDE

If your youth group wants to enjoy the greater outdoors, America's Keswick has just about everything they could desire. Your youth group can enjoy paddle boating, canoeing or kayaking on the glorious Upper Lake. This beautiful space also has a beach and plenty of water for swimming. Your group can fish in either of our lovely scenic lakes. Additional outdoor activities include shuffleboard, horseshoes, basketball, sand volleyball, and frisbee golf.

## GROUP CAMPFIRE

Head on out to the beach-front area for a nighttime campfire. All you have to do is let a Guest Services representative know your youth group is interested in this activity. As long as the weather cooperates, your youth group will enjoy a memorable campfire where they can tell stories, sing songs, make s'mores, play campfire games and simply enjoy one another's company.

## SCAVENGER HUNT

Split up your youth group into two teams. Provide each group with a list of the items they must find. The list should contain items they can find at America's Keswick without too much of a struggle. The first team to collect each of the items wins. For added laughs, your youth group can also do our Digital Scavenger Hunt, which can be found on our website!

## A TO Z

This is a fun game that everyone in your youth group will enjoy. Split your group up into two teams. Have them search for an item that corresponds to each of the alphabet's letters. This is the perfect outdoor game yet it is also possible to play it indoors. Once a team finds the corresponding item, have the group leader approve/disapprove it. A to Z will become especially difficult as the youth group moves toward the alphabet's final letters.

## LOW-IMPACT ACTIVITIES

Your youth group will enjoy access to a wide range of activities at America's Keswick. Some are high-impact while others are more relaxed. If your group is fatigued or simply wants to take it easy, they can enjoy hiking on our nature trails. Your group can take a peaceful stroll around Upper Lake. Have them bring some reading materials, find a nice space by the water to settle down and enjoy a good book.

## ACTIVITIES NEAR AMERICA'S KESWICK

Your youth group can access all sorts of fun and exciting venues near America's Keswick. Take a short trip on over to the aquarium, Six Flags, restaurants, the theater, beaches or the state park. Don't worry about having to find these destinations. Our team will provide you with detailed directions upon request.

## CHAPTER 2

# The Ultimate Retreat Packing List

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Though retreat destinations certainly have plenty of amenities, they may not have absolutely everything you personally need or want during your stay. When in doubt, pack more rather than less. You never know what sort of situation will arise. Having a few extra supplies just might prove to be helpful. Let's take a look at the best advice for retreat packing.

### RETREAT PACKING STARTS WITH THE BASICS

Retreat essentials include clothes, deodorant, a hat to block out the sun's rays, sunglasses, a bathing suit, a pillow, sneakers, and toiletries. Be sure to bring extra garments just in case it rains or if you get sweaty and want to change your attire. This way, you won't have to spend time doing laundry when you could be focusing on your retreat activities.

### PACK SOMETHING FUN

Be sure to pack a book and/or some music to listen to. Though there will be plenty to do during your retreat, there will be some downtime. You will feel the need to unwind. A good book or your favorite songs will certainly help.





## BRING PEN AND PAPER

Bring along a notebook and something to write with. This way, you can document all the details of your retreat. You can also use the pen and paper to keep a diary, draw some pictures to recap the day's activities, create reminder notes, etc.

## SELECT ELECTRONICS WITH CARE WHEN RETREAT PACKING

Though just about everyone will undoubtedly pack their smartphone for a retreat, other electronics might not prove helpful. Items like laptops, tablets, and handheld gaming systems will inevitably prove to be unnecessary distractions. Leave these electronic toys at home so you can square your focus on reconnecting with the Lord, nature and your fellow retreat-goers rather than perusing social media and the internet's other distractions. Be sure to bring along your smartphone's charger so it stays functional throughout the entirety of your retreat.

## SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF WHEN RETREAT PACKING

Oftentimes, the seemingly minor things make a big difference in the quality of the retreat. Take a moment to think of all the small stuff you use on a daily basis that will help your retreat go that much smoother. Be sure to pack the following:

- ✓ Shampoo & Conditioner
- ✓ Soap
- ✓ Underwear & Socks
- ✓ Pajamas
- ✓ Feminine hygiene products
- ✓ Hairbrush & Hair supplies
- ✓ Hand mirror
- ✓ Hair dryer
- ✓ Makeup
- ✓ Lotion
- ✓ Smartphone charger
- ✓ Toothpaste
- ✓ Toothbrush
- ✓ First Aid Kit

If you take vitamins or prescription medications, bring them with you. Don't forget to head to the bank or ATM to get some cash for emergencies. Bring along a small bag within your backpack or suitcase so you can pack a couple sundries when embarking on outdoor expeditions during your retreat.



## PREPARE FOR THE OUTDOORS

You will likely spend a considerable portion of your retreat outdoors.

This means you will need sunblock, sunglasses, a hat, a rain jacket, a water bottle, chapstick, and insect repellent.

If you plan on camping at any point during the retreat, be sure to bring along a tent, a flashlight, and a sleeping bag. Also, a trash bag might come in handy when cleaning up trash or taking dirty clothing home.

## MIND YOUR FOOTWEAR

A single pair of sneakers probably won't suffice for your retreat. Pack a pair of sandals or flip-flops to wear when you are by the water. It will also help to have a pair of hiking sneakers/boots so you can take on challenging terrain hikes and other outdoor adventures.

## COMFORT GEAR

Though your retreat lodging will be quite comfortable, it will help to bring along something comforting. You will be away from home for a few days so you might feel slightly unsettled. Something as simple as your slippers, favorite blanket, or even a coffee mug will make you feel that much more at ease.



## CHAPTER 3

# 5 Ways to Raise Money For a Church Retreat

Church retreats don't pay for themselves - it's typically up to the organizers to come up with ways to fund the entire operation.

Planning is hard work, and so is determining how to finance a church retreat and everything it includes, such as:

- ✓ Food and Beverages
- ✓ Lodging
- ✓ Materials
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Miscellaneous costs

So how do you raise money or finance a church retreat? These five tips will get you started.

## 5 WAYS TO RAISE MONEY FOR A CHURCH RETREAT

Before you begin planning *how* to get the money you need to host your best church retreat yet, you need to figure out how much you need. Once you have a solid figure, you can begin strategizing. Here are five great ideas to help finance your church retreat.

1. Host a ticketed dinner
2. Hold a work-a-thon
3. Hold craft nights or offer classes
4. Run a church-wide yard sale
5. Have a silent auction with donated goods & services

You can also ask for donations and sell tickets to the event to help raise funds, or you can brainstorm other creative ideas.

The bottom line is that you'll want to depend on donated time and items to bring in the cash for your big event.

## 1. HOST A TICKETED DINNER

Themed dinner events are a great way to raise money for a church retreat. Spaghetti dinners, fish fries, and potlucks are some of the most common types, but you can put your own twist on them, too - like a date night with childcare in the Bible study room, dinner theatre, or holiday-themed evenings.

## 2. HOLD A WORK-A-THON

Work-a-Thons are a fun way to do good in the community and raise funds for your retreat. Participants can collect pledges in return for donating time helping people in the community, such as cutting the grass or painting for elderly church members, doing housework for disabled people, or performing repairs in the church building.

## 3. HOLD CRAFT NIGHTS OR OFFER CLASSES

Throwing a craft night or offering art classes can be a great fundraiser. If you have talented members in your congregation, you can ask them to volunteer their time - but you can also hire locals to teach, often at a flat rate, and envelop that cost into ticket costs for the event. Painting classes, knitting nights, and specialty crafts are spectacular ways to bring in money to help pay for your church retreat.

## 4. RUN A CHURCH-WIDE YARD SALE

You can ask your entire congregation to donate items for a church-wide yard sale and use the proceeds to fund your retreat. The added bonus: You can use the yard sale to meet new people and introduce them to your organization.

## 5. HAVE A SILENT AUCTION

Asking church members and community members who own businesses to donate time or services for a silent auction can bring in a significant amount of money to use toward your church retreat. You can even combine a hosted dinner with a silent auction to raise more.



### Are you planning a church retreat?

For more than 80 years, America's Keswick has provided beautiful retreat spaces for church groups from all over the country. We'd love to answer your questions and give you a tour of our family-friendly facility, so please contact us today to learn more.

## CHAPTER 4

# How To Engage An Audience During Your Christian Retreat

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Delivering a speech in front of an audience is one thing, but engaging that audience is a completely different challenge. It is not enough to simply recite a rehearsed speech. You must present information and experiences in a manner that captures the audience's attention. This is easier said than done.

### CREATE A RETREAT CONVERSATION OR EVENT THAT ENGAGES YOUR AUDIENCE

A retreat in which participants enjoy various activities will certainly prove beneficial, yet the experience has potential to be so much more. Your challenge is to create a conversation or event during the retreat that not only keeps your audience alert but holds their interest from start to finish.

Attention spans have never been shorter. This is attributable to the fact that we are living in an on-demand society in which just about any product or service can be obtained in seconds with a few keystrokes and clicks. If you do not organize your retreat in a manner that interests your audience right off the bat, their minds will inevitably wander.





## HOW TO ENGAGE RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

If you are fearful or nervous about leading a retreat and making one or several speeches in front of the retreat participants, your audience will be able to tell you are uncomfortable.

The key is to overcome your fear so you can present information in a manner that activates participants' minds. It may sound cliché, but practice makes perfect.

Focus on providing high-quality information rather than an abundance of information. The average person is absolutely inundated with information from the moment he or she wakes until going to bed at night. Consider the experiences or information you would like to present and whittle it down to what matters the most.

Do not rush through your presentation. Take your time, breathe deep and be present in the moment. Your focus should be on engaging the retreat participants and keeping conversation and activity on track.

## VIEW THE AUDIENCE AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

A retreat is about participation, establishing bonds and growing. Do not deliver a lengthy monologue to Christian retreat participants. Engage participants in a legitimate dialogue and encourage participation in retreat events. Your audience will be much more likely to become engaged and stay engaged

Do everything you can to encourage participation during a Christian retreat. Ask questions of your group, field comments, provide retreat-goers with group activities and keep them thoroughly engaged from the moment the retreat starts all the way to the end.

“

*For I will satisfy  
the weary soul, and  
every languishing  
soul I will replenish.*

*Jeremiah 31:25*

## IT'S BETTER TO SHOW THAN IT IS TO TELL

Retreat participants prefer to be shown things and experience them on their own rather than be told about them. Strive to involve your Christian retreat participants with meaningful experiences as opposed to speeches delivered in the form of a lengthy monologue.

Keep in mind that some people are poor listeners. Engage several different senses and Christian retreat participants will actively learn and feel legitimately engaged.

An engaging multi-sensory experience will prove more valuable than listening to a lengthy speech. If you are intent on giving a speech, share information through an intriguing story that others can identify with. Delivering information in such an artful manner keeps the audience interested.

## CHAPTER 5

# 5 Ways Church Retreats Are Rewarding For Families

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Are you looking for a way to bring your family closer together? Consider participating in a church retreat. This is an opportunity to enjoy shared time and activities away from the screens, homework, work, and other responsibilities. An overnight retreat provides your family with a legitimate bonding opportunity that has the potential to pay dividends that will last a lifetime.

### 1. RETREATS HELP YOU FOCUS ON YOUR FAMILY

Embark on a retreat with your loved ones and you will be freed from the confines of daily life. You won't worry about work, commuting, cooking, cleaning and so on. Your focus will be on your family, sharing experiences, growing closer to God and enjoying life.

All of that stress will melt away as you redirect your energy toward strengthening family bonds. Your family will emerge from the retreat with a newfound sense of identity and mission.

### 2. ENJOY QUALITY TIME WITH ONE ANOTHER

Think of all those instances in which the demands of work, school or other obligations caused you to cut-short interactions with family members. Perhaps the entire family has not enjoyed a meal, or conversation, together in days or even weeks. There is simply too much to do and not enough time to get it all done.

Everyone will benefit from putting away the electronic devices, getting away from work and spending meaningful time together. A retreat provides the perfect setting to enjoy a wide array of family-friendly activities. This is the quality time your family needs to feel closer to one another.



### 3. RETREATS GET YOUR FAMILY AWAY FROM THE SCREENS

The smartphone screen, computer screen and TV screen intrude on family time now more than ever. It seems like everyone is glued to the screen, whether it is for homework, video games, Netflix marathons or something else.

Though your family can bring their smartphones to the retreat, the other screens should be left behind so the retreat can focus on group activities away from the screen. This is the shared time your family needs to fortify your bonds, be proactive and get closer to God as well as your loved ones.

### 4. CHURCH RETREATS PROVIDE A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Family members who have lived with one another for years sometimes fall into the trap of under-appreciating their siblings, parents or other relatives. A retreat will reinforce your appreciation for one another as it lets you appreciate your family's love in a new setting and experience them outside of routine.

Take away the hustle and bustle of everyday life and you really will gain a renewed appreciation for your caring and loving family. Complete a retreat and your entire family will feel that much closer to one another and God. Everyone will return to everyday life feeling refreshed, renewed and thankful for the support and care of their loved ones.

### 5. RETREATS CAN GIVE YOUR FAMILY THE CHANCE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IN A POSITIVE MANNER

If there are any conflicts between family members, or problems communicating, a retreat just might be the solution you have been looking for. Family members who disagree with one another stand a good chance of finding common ground during a Christian retreat.

The change of setting makes it that much more likely for the disagreement to be dealt with in a positive manner. The individuals involved in the conflict won't feel nearly as stressed out when they are enjoying the tranquility and beauty of an overnight retreat.



## CHAPTER 6

# 8 Considerations When Choosing Between Retreat Centers

If you are looking for a retreat center, you should know no two places are the same. Some retreat centers are centered on outdoor activities while others focus on indoor activities. Others have lavish accommodations while some are bare bones.

Furthermore, the surrounding environment also matters. Do your research before selecting a retreat center and you will have all the information you need to make a truly well-informed decision.

**Here are the 8 things you should consider when choosing a retreat center:**



### LOCATION

A retreat center located in a beautiful locale with easy access to nature's beauty will prove quite fulfilling for you and your group. Furthermore, if the location is within a reasonable drive of your usual meeting place or living/working spaces, it will make the retreat that much more accessible and enjoyable.

The retreat should be located in an area that provides direct and quick access to amenities, scenic spaces and other nearby opportunities for your retreat group to enjoy. Above all, the location should be safe. If your group does not feel perfectly safe at the retreat, they will hesitate to let their guard down and truly enjoy this potentially life-changing experience.





## ACCOMMODATIONS

You and your group deserve comfortable rooms, bedding, and good food. You may also need access to one or several large meeting spaces. This experience should have the feel and comfort of home. Look for a retreat center with comfy lodging and accommodations and you will enjoy the experience that much more. Furthermore, the retreat center's accommodations should be based on your group's unique activities and needs. This is the customized treatment every retreat group deserves.



## THINGS TO DO

Creative retreat center personnel are always looking for new and fun things for retreat participants to enjoy. Your retreat center should have multiple options for group activities and outings. There should be indoor and outdoor activities to choose from so there will always be something to do even when the weather does not cooperate.



## BUDGET

Your retreat center experience should not bust your budget. If you suspect the retreat center in question is not worth the expense, check out the reviews and get an idea as to whether they are worth their keep. Request that the retreat center works within the limitations of your budget. If there is some flexibility in terms of price and offerings to suit your unique budget, the retreat center should shoot to the top of your ranks.



## GUEST NEEDS

Find out how far the retreat center staff is willing to go to accommodate your group's unique needs and requests. If there is a strong focus on customer service and tending to each person's nuanced needs, it will make the retreat experience that much more satisfying.



## STAFF & RESOURCES

Retreats are a customer service-oriented business. The retreat center staff and resources should be professional, cordial and willing to go the extra mile for your group. You should not have to wait an extended period of time for your requests to be fulfilled. There should be ample staff available at all times to tend to your group's needs.



## MEALS

The retreat center should have a wide variety of foods and beverages that suit diets of all types. This includes vegan and vegetarian diets as well as gluten-free diets. If anyone in your group has special dietary needs, contact the retreat center ahead of time to ensure the proper nutrition will be available.



## HANDICAP CAPABILITIES

Last but not least is handicap access. Leading retreat centers have wheelchair ramps and other facilities for handicapped individuals. This way, if anyone in your group is handicapped, mobility challenged or suffers an injury, entering and exiting retreat center facilities will prove easy.

## CHAPTER 7

# How To Choose The Perfect Retreat Center Based On Your Goals

The retreat center you choose for your next big event has to meet your goals – but how do you find one that matches your needs?

**The first step:** Clearly define your goals for the retreat. Once that's done, begin your search for a retreat center that meets your needs.

### CHOOSING A RETREAT CENTER BASED ON YOUR GOALS

The retreat center you choose is vital to the event's success, and you need to know that different facilities provide different experiences for your guests. There will be variations in lodging, activities, dining, and meeting facilities, so your goals for your retreat will inform your decision on which retreat center to choose.

For many Christian retreats, the overarching goals look something like this:

- ✓ To further the church's mission and fulfill God's plan for the church
- ✓ To provide relevant, holistic education to church members
- ✓ To encourage participants to remain committed and focus on the big picture
- ✓ To empower members on their own journeys through faith

# 7

## How To Choose The Perfect Retreat Center Based On Your Goals

You may also have more specific goals, such as to promote marital harmony, develop relationships or encourage families with young children to learn and grow together.

Break up your goals for the retreat this way:



To achieve your retreat goals, you need a facility that meets your group’s needs and provides the right dining, recreation, and lodging – those are the basics.





## FAMILY RETREAT GOALS

The retreat center you choose for a family retreat needs to have ample meeting space that's compatible with kids – and that can handle kids' needs when they're not participating in preplanned activities, such as outdoor recreation and a gymnasium.

When children are able to burn off steam as well as combine play with learning, it's easier to reach overarching and targeted retreat goals.



## MARRIAGE RETREAT GOALS

A good church marriage retreat allows couples to not only connect with God but to each other.

In this case, sometimes choosing a retreat location that's near local amenities – dining, shopping, and attractions – can help enable couples to deepen their connections to each other.



## EDUCATIONAL RETREAT GOALS

Meeting rooms and conference rooms are essential to any educational church retreat. Whether you're hosting a dozen people or several hundred, you need facilities that provide for your multimedia needs, comfortable accommodations and ADA access.

Look for retreat centers that offer smart TVs, display screens, auditorium stages and stereo speakers in rooms sizable enough to fit all your guests.

## CHOOSING A RETREAT CENTER

There are a lot of things to consider when choosing where to host your retreat – and America's Keswick may be the perfect fit. As long as you keep your primary goals in mind, your retreat is sure to be a success. Contact us today to speak to a retreat expert about how our facility could cater to your primary goals.

## CHAPTER 8

# Goals To Focus On When Attending A Married Couples Retreat

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A marriage retreat is a perfect way to rekindle your love. However, simply showing up without a plan and seeing how things go might not prove as beneficial as you expect. The best approach is to establish some goals to work toward during your married couples retreat. Put in a little bit of preparatory work and you will get the most out of your retreat experience.

### ENJOY THE UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT DURING YOUR MARRIED COUPLES RETREAT

Heading off to any old destination for your married couples retreat will not suffice. It is not enough to simply book a room at a nice hotel or take a trip to an exotic location in an attempt to improve your relationship. Opt for a married couples retreat, at a center like America's Keswick, and you will enjoy life away from the distractions posed by technology, work, home, and childrearing.

You will gain a ton from your married couples retreat if you are willing to unplug, spend quality time with your spouse and enjoy events specifically designed to bolster your bond.

The bottom line is, couples who avoid distractions during their retreat find the experience does make a meaningful difference in their lives in both the short-term and the long-term.



## THIS IS THE TIME FOR THOSE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

Write down or memorize exactly what you would like to discuss with your spouse during the married couples retreat.

The best course of action is to open up discussion for a true dialogue. Listen closely to your partner, and be mindful of your own tone and delivery. Take some time to reflect on what he or she says and continue to communicate as the retreat progresses.

One of the most valued parts of our married couples retreats is the provided space for couples to interact without distraction. Our comfortable space allows attendees to comfortably engage in those uncomfortable conversations.

Once you broach these topics, you can make headway towards a long-term solution and catalyze the healing process.

If you are concerned about discussing such topics away from home, do not worry! We provide a welcoming, natural setting that will make you and your significant other feel perfectly comfortable.

America's Keswick is the peaceful and relaxed setting you need to confront difficult conversations without an interference of any sort. You won't have to worry about taking care of the kids, answering work-related emails, checking your phone or anything else.

The focus will be squarely on improving your relationship and communication.



“

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

*Ephesians 4:2*



## REBUILD A FOUNDATION

The purpose of your married couples retreat is to work on your relationship and emerge with takeaways that ultimately strengthen your bond for years to come.

This is your opportunity to reestablish a foundation that proves sturdy when conflicts, disagreements, and drama arise. Such problems are guaranteed to occur in due time, and when they do you'll be prepared to draw upon your retreat experience.

## EXPERIENCE PERSONAL GROWTH

Couples retreats are not all about making progress as a family. View the retreat as an opportunity for self-improvement, as well. Consider how you can grow, become more open, and communicate more honestly, to ultimately enhance the relationship.

Keep in mind change always starts with yourself. If you personally focus on listening, communicating, forgiving, and healing during your married couples retreat, you are sure to experience personal growth that will help your relationship evolve.

## STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONSHIP

Most importantly, the strongest and most successful bonds are built on understanding and love. Do not give up if you experience problems with your significant other. Open up, be willing to listen and healing will come naturally.



## CHAPTER 9

# How To Plan A Better Women's Retreat

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If you are pondering ideas for a women's retreat, you might feel a bit overwhelmed. You're probably considering a number of different ideas. Your group might be inundating you with their own unique suggestions.

The challenge lies in selecting the best destination and activities for your particular group. Let's take a look at a few women's retreat suggestions that will help your group obtain as much enjoyment as possible from the potentially life-changing experience.

### KEY IN ON THE SUBTLETIES

Regardless of the specific activities you select for your women's retreat, the purpose of the event is to foster collaboration and community.

The overarching themes of the retreat are to come together, improve the human condition and enjoy a spiritually stimulating atmosphere. These themes should be at the forefront of your thoughts as you decide on the location and activities of your women's retreat.

The last thing you want is for your group to be isolated into small units in which they do not collaborate with one another and build bonds. Plan carefully and you will ensure that your group emerges from this experience stronger and closer than it was beforehand.

### THE RETREAT SHOULD LEAVE AN INDELIBLE IMPRINT IN PARTICIPANTS' MINDS

The quality of retreat experiences add up to a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Key is providing your group with high-quality experiences and they will be inclined to reflect on those shared activities and moments as time progresses.

These experiences serve as the foundation for an unforgettable retreat. The end goal is to have participants leave the retreat convinced that they could not have possibly enjoyed a better experience.

## PICK A THEME

Most retreats have a theme that serves as a common thread to bind experiences and participants across the duration of the experience.

Let participants know the theme ahead of time so they have something to look forward to. Don't forget to carve out some time for members to reflect or engage in prayer.

Time should also be allotted for group communication to discuss retreat experiences and possibility for improvement. The ultimate result of establishing a direction/theme for your retreat is a spiritually stimulating experience that benefits every participant.



### Comfort and Fun!

Your women's retreat should feature enjoyable activities and high-quality accommodations. Schedule your retreat at America's Keswick and you will have no shortage of fun activities to choose from.

We offer paddleboating, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, fishing, racquetball, ping-pong, shuffleboard, indoor tennis, nature trails for hiking, and much more.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERACTIVE EVENTS

Your women's retreat is an opportunity for your group to interact with one another and fortify relationships. It is no secret that women value relationships and human interaction. In fact, women use about a thousand more words per day than men in an effort to communicate as clearly as possible.

Provide your group with interactive experiences so they can establish a rock-solid rapport with one another that stands the test of time. Such interactive activities will make the retreat that much more enjoyable and memorable as it provided members with the opportunity to work with one another to accomplish something rather than functioning in an independent manner.

Consider starting and ending the retreat in a circle where your group engages in dialogue. The circle shape allows for face-to-face interactions that spur rapport, comfort and clear communication. Have each member share her thoughts, retreat goals, retreat stories and anything else of relevance.

## CHAPTER 10

# Tips & Advice For Planning Your Next Men's Retreat

If you are thinking about a men's retreat, there is plenty to consider from the venue to the shared activities, a possible theme and beyond. Don't let this information overwhelm you. View each retreat-related decision as an opportunity to bring your group closer together.

## CONSIDER THE PURPOSE OF THE RETREAT

Take a moment to think about the retreat's objective. Perhaps your goal is to bring your group closer together. Maybe you would like particular members to form bonds with one another. Some use a men's retreat to relieve stress. If you have a particular purpose in mind, select your theme and make it known to the group.

You should be able to summarize the retreat purpose in the form of a theme in a single sentence or even a couple words. An example is: Building Bonds Through Nature and Shared Activities.

A clearly defined theme will inspire excitement and great anticipation amongst your group for the upcoming retreat. It will also give them a clear idea as to what will happen and how they should prepare when planning a men's retreat.



## HAVE A BACKUP PLAN IN CASE BAD WEATHER STRIKES

It is best to schedule a retreat at a facility that provides an array of indoor and outdoor activities. This way, if the weather does not cooperate, your group will have plenty of options for activities and events. America's Keswick has plenty of activities for your men's retreat. If it rains or if the temperature dips, your group can enjoy the indoor heated swimming pool, sauna, Jacuzzi, racquetball courts, wallyball courts or visit a nearby attraction.

## THE RETREAT WELL IN ADVANCE

Do not wait until the last minute to book your men's retreat. Give your group ample time to coordinate their schedules and mentally prepare for this unique experience. Make sure you do not overlap the group retreat schedule with major events like church festivities, the Super Bowl, prom etc. Opt for a period of time in which the majority of your members are completely free of major obligations. Consider planning your retreat upwards of a full year ahead. This way, you'll secure reservations for the accommodations and facility at the top of your list.

## ACCOMMODATIONS MATTER

Your group deserves elite accommodations for their retreat. This is a time to relax, enjoy one another's company and take it easy. Your group will certainly spend plenty of time enjoying activities yet will also spend some time hanging out, kicking back, sleeping and unwinding. America's Keswick has lovely accommodations that your men's group will find quite comfortable. Our rooms include free WiFi, private baths, air conditioning, mini kitchens, king size beds, fresh linens and towels and an amazing view of the stunning lower lake.



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*As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*

*Proverbs 27:17*

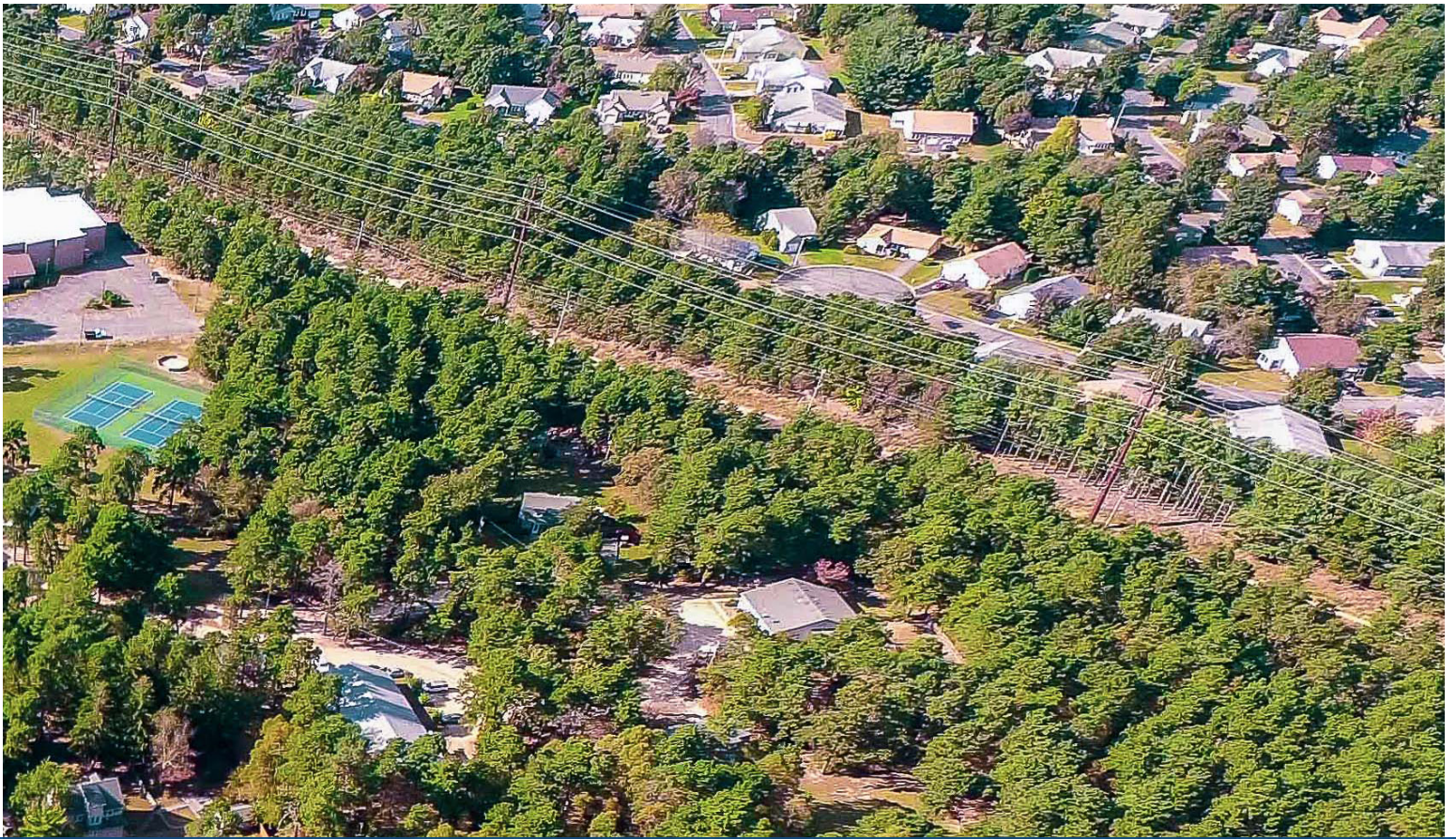
## CREATE A CHECKLIST WHEN PLANNING A MEN'S RETREAT

Take the time to build a checklist so you don't forget anything important. Let group members provide input in the creation of the checklist so each member plays a part in shaping the retreat. The checklist should include everything from activities to meals, contingency plans, registration, finances, scheduling, retreat goals, leaders and transportation.

## CONSIDER CHECKING OUT THE FACILITY IN-PERSON

Planning a men's retreat is much easier when you check out the facility at the top of your list in-person. Take a tour of the facility. Check out the accommodations. Ask questions to ensure all of your concerns are addressed before you commit to the facility for your men's retreat. Be sure to bring along a camera to snap photos or record footage of the facility. These photos and/or videos will excite your group about their upcoming retreat.

Are you considering a men's retreat in the New Jersey area? America's Keswick has been hosting overnight group retreats for over 80 years. Check out our men's retreat page to learn more about options for your group.



601 Route 530  
Whiting, New Jersey, 08759  
Phone: (732) 210-6965

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