



Organizing Retreats & Handouts



**Basic and Advanced Leadership
Training Conference
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Diocese of Phoenix Preparing Your Retreat:

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Organizing for Retreats

Retreats, like no other activity, provide us, as Directors and Coordinators of Youth Evangelization and our youth ministry teams, the opportunity to engage our youth in the most important of all conversations. Retreats serve as an excellent vehicle to get teens away from the many distractions of their day in order for them to help focus and develop their relationship with Jesus Christ, and come to a deeper understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Over the course of my experience in the evangelization of youth, I have seen more conversion take place as a result of teens encountering our Lord on retreats than almost any other activity provided. Retreats offer our teens a variety of profound, and shared spiritual encounters of the living Jesus Christ. Through receiving reconciliation, the Eucharist, participating in various forms of daily prayer, hearing the Word of God preached, and being challenged and formed to deepen their relationship with Christ, many for the first time, come to make life-long decisions to follow Jesus. Retreats also give you, as Youth Leaders, and your team, a concentrated opportunity for leading the teens you have worked with throughout the year into a relationship with Christ. Also, your team members, as well as the teens themselves, are also able to experience His love through the relationships that can be found in the parish community which are formed as a result of these retreats. Retreats help bring our teens into an encounter with the living Christ – therefore – they are a must in the work of youth evangelization! Pope John Paul II says it this way:

Young people are a great force in society and for evangelization. On their encounter with the living Christ depends the hope and expectation of a future of greater communion and solidarity for the Church and society in America (EA #47.)

What is a retreat?

A retreat at a time when your youth group goes away for a weekend, usually a Friday night till late Sunday afternoon and has many opportunities for fun, outdoor activities, times for transformational experiences that lead into an encounter with Christ, and formation teachings given either by your youth group team or a guest speaker that challenges them as they evaluate their own relationship with Jesus and His Church.

Every parish retreat and youth group is unique. The plans that may have worked at last fall's retreat may not work for this year's spring retreat. Every group at every retreat must be handled differently, however we can make basic plans by asking ourselves several key questions:

What is our goal? What would we like to see accomplished as a result of this retreat? Who are we trying to address? Are they church going teens or are they un-churched teens? What types of fun will they enjoy? These and a dozen other questions will help us clarify our goals.

The goal of the retreat must fit in with the overall plan for our youth evangelization efforts. As a yearly schedule is produced, we must see retreats as fitting into other activities and programs. For example, when I was at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, our youth group held three retreats each year: the fall retreat was designed to help welcome newcomers and also had a very pre-evangelistic and evangelistic emphasis. I used it as an evangelistic tool that helped our teens invite their friends to hear the basic Gospel message; the spring retreat became a discipleship retreat that specialized in forming those who were serious about their relationship with Jesus Christ and focused on discipleship, apologetics and leadership training. In the summer I took our teens to the Steubenville West conference as another evangelization type retreat. Also, during the summer I took advantage of offered discipleship weeks, and mission trips.

Set realistic goals for the retreat and do not expect a retreat to be the miraculous cure for problems within your group. In some respects, a positive retreat is a result of, not the cause of, ongoing youth group health.

Youth retreats can accomplish several goals:

- A. Reaching out to the un-churched.
- B. Building youth group identity and community
- C. Catholic discipleship / leadership training
- D. Rest and relaxation
- E. Making great positive memories
- F. Opportunities for teens to ask those tough questions about God
- G. Modeling of the Christian life
- H. Preparing future leaders

Much of the success of retreats depends on how well organized your plan is way before the retreat begins. There is a great deal of preparation that needs to be well thought out, organized and prayed through such as the purpose of the retreat, its theme, those who will be working with you on the team, reserving the retreat center or camp site, transporting teens safely, preparing the retreat schedule and much more. This section of Youth Evangelization will give you a step by step process in helping you to organize the varied aspects of preparing for a successful retreat experience for your youth.

Prayer

Prayer has got to be top on the priority list in the first step to planning your retreat. It will be through your prayer that you will seek the mind of Christ and hear his voice by the power of the Holy Spirit, through out your planning process.

Among the forms of sharing, first place goes to spiritual cooperation through prayer....Prayer should accompany the journey of missionaries so that the proclamation of the word will be effective through God's grace (RM. #78).

This is important because any success in spreading the Gospel message during a retreat requires faith, and faith comes only as a free gift from God. So we are truly only

instruments of the Holy Spirit's work, working in and through us. Pope John Paul II goes on: "The mission of the Church, like that of Jesus, is God's work, or as Luke often puts it, the work of the Spirit" (24). "Mission, then, is based not on human abilities but on the power of the risen Lord"(23).

Before any of the most important decisions Jesus had to make, he prayed. He prayed before he choose his twelve apostles (Luke 12:6); before promising his body and blood as food and drink (Jn. 6:15), He prayed before choosing Peter to build his Church (Matt 6: 18); and He prayed in agony before he was to die in the Garden (Matt 26:36). These examples tell us that transformation and conversion is a work of God and therefore can be accomplished only by the graces we receive in prayer. As Jesus prayed so must we!

Taking Jesus example, practically means we must pray before we select those to be on our retreat team, for his wisdom in selecting a theme, defining what we would like to accomplish, a theme song, topics for sessions, talks, guidance in choosing the right people to give the talks, what spiritual exercises we should use, small groupings, the games and icebreakers to be used and most of all pray that God will send His Holy Spirit to begin touching the hearts of those He will call to be on that retreat and that all on will instruments of God's grace and love. Scheduling times of prayer for this retreat should continue throughout the whole retreat experience from the beginning of the planning to the end, keeping in mind to continue in prayer for all participants as God prompts.

Where to have your retreat?

If you have not yet planned a retreat before it is good to know that there are many retreat centers through out Arizona from which to choose from (**See Retreat Centers – Handout #1**).

There are nine retreat centers in the Diocese of Phoenix that are Catholic owned and operated. These are: Living Water Retreat Center - Cornville, AZ., LIFE TEEN Tepeyac in Prescott, AZ., St. Joseph's Youth Camp – Flagstaff, AZ., owned by the Knights of Columbus, The Casa, Franciscan Renewal Center - Scottsdale, House of Joseph Retreat & Conference Center – Yarnell, Catholic Community Retreat Center – Flagstaff, Mount Claret Center – Phoenix, The Hillman Center – Phoenix, Our Lady of Solitude Contemplative House of Prayer – Black Canyon City. This point is important in that all have chapels and everything you need in order to have Catholic prayer services, Liturgies and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The following are suggestions to keep in mind as you choose a retreat center for your next retreat:

How many participants do you expect on your retreat?

Understanding the numbers can help you in determining the type of place you need, how many busses to order, beds, breakout places, how much room for presentations, is the chapel large enough for all to be in?

At this facility – will there be other groups there at the same time your group is there?

Knowing this is a must in your scheduling. You may have to share spaces at alternate

times, such as meal times. If so, how will this impact grace, clean up and any kind of decorations you may want to put up to celebrate a special meal such as a Lord's Day, birthday, or even a coffee shop, etc? You may want to find out who this group is and see if they will be alright with you being there.

Know where all their various facilities are and if you are free to use them as you need.

There are some facilities that may need to be pre-arranged like a chapel, ropes course, fire pit, pool or special rooms for adoration and/or prayer. Make sure to find out if there are any additional fees in arranging special facilities. Are these facilities within the retreat center big enough for all your participants to use at the same time?

Theme / Topics

It is a good idea to give retreats names so as to have each retreat reflect its own identity. The name is drawn from the theme, which sets the foundation for the direction of the retreat. The choices available for selecting a theme are only limited by the imagination of you and your team. Many have used song titles, book titles, movie titles, quotes, current events, play on words or catch phrases that are common of the day, and of course scripture passages. With this in mind, it is important that you do not feel hindered by the theme and lyrics of song to accomplish the goal of the retreat.

In selecting a theme and name for your retreat know what you and our Lord want to accomplish on this particular retreat. For example, if you believe through prayer your teens need a better understanding of the Eucharist, ask yourself what would be a catchy title that would capture the imagination of the youth you want to attend. Here are two retreat titles I have used in the past for this topic: **Better than Gold** (this was before the Olympic Games one year), **Extreme Presence** (when everything was extreme). Another idea in selecting a theme is to read and pray about the daily liturgical reading schedule for all the days of the retreat. Look at liturgical calendar for ideas.

Preparing a Retreat Schedule

The retreat schedule template (**Handout #2**) can be used in coordinating retreats. Feel free to use this as a template in preparing for your up-and-coming retreat.

Important things to keep in mind as we plan our retreat schedule:

- It is important to look at the overall flow of the retreat. Look at such things as where we put reconciliation in relation to the Mass and those sessions that will help prepare our teens for full participation in the Mass.
- It is important to account for every minute of our retreat, but at the same time, we must allow the Holy Spirit to do His work and not be a slave to the schedule. Let us use the scheduled as a tool for what God wants to do at this retreat.
- Is important to know how long each talk will take in the context of each of the sessions. (You set the parameters)
- It is important to look at the facility and to account for the time it would take to move teens from one facility to another; such as the time it takes teens to leave

- their cabins to go to the retreat meeting place or to leave their cabins to go to the cafeteria, etc.
- It is important when doing activities such as messy games to anticipate how long the participants will need to take a shower before they need to be at their next activity or session. **(See Handout #2 as example of a retreat template).**

Icebreakers

Purpose of Ice Breakers & Community Builders

Everything we do on a retreat has to have a purpose. Icebreakers, community builders and games are all very important elements of a retreat. There are all sorts of books and resources that can help give you ideas in the implementation of icebreakers, community builders and games, however, all of those books are only as helpful as you know how to use them in a retreat setting. The best reason to use one of these icebreakers or community builders is to fill a specific need.

What is the difference between icebreakers, community builders, and games? Are they not just fun and games? The answer is, yes and no. The difference is what you use and how you use it. Icebreakers are meant to do exactly as the name implies – break the ice. It does not matter how close your group is to each other, you will still need to do some icebreakers. After a long bus ride to the retreat center, with teens that are limited to talking to a just few people sitting near them, icebreakers start the whole group on equal footing. They also help bring out the introverts in a safe, large group setting. And icebreakers are also helpful to those teens that are new to the community and enable them to meet people in a playful environment. The objective of icebreakers is to help instill a feeling of ease and comfort in the retreat and group setting.

The big difference in icebreakers is between large group and small-group icebreakers. The large group icebreaker should be fun, upbeat, and get the kids up and moving to meet people. And small-group icebreakers should be fun as well, but restricted to games or activities that the group can do together. The line between the two is very fine, but they both worked for the same goal of building trust and a sense of security with the people they will be sharing with over the course of the retreat. The difference between the two is intensity of the games or activities. **(See Handout # 3 – Resources)**

Preparing Sessions: Talks and Testimonies

As Director of Youth Ministry at the parish, you are responsible for the team, so you are the one who will assign the talks to team members, unless you do them yourself. The most important factors in preparing a retreat talk are three key elements. These are **scope, focus, and target.** After we look at preparation and how to write a presentation, we will look at these very important elements.

The first thing to do in preparing a talk is to **pray** to God for inspiration. We can trust in the Holy Spirit, and His guidance in giving to us what we need to select the appropriate concepts and words to convey His message. We must allow God to do work within us in

the preparation of the talk. The next thing to do is to begin to **outline** three or four points that must be communicated.

From the outline, **start writing your talk**, word for word. Once it is written, **read it out loud** three or four times, making changes and corrections as you go along, until it feels right. Then, **begin to time yourself**. After revisions, **practice your final draft** two or three times so you can be sure you know the material. Then, begin to reverse the process. From the final draft **write a new outline**, and then **transfer the sections of your outline into notes** that will serve you as you give your talk on the retreat. Some people use note-cards that help people be focused and to keep on track. It is important to know in giving an effective talk it will take a great commitment and a lot of work. Also **practice giving your talk over and over again** so that you learn it and know how to emphasize certain points when they need to be emphasized. This helps with the flow in the presentation.

Scope, Focus, and Target - Keys in helping to put clarity to the content of the talk.

The first step in determining the content of presentation is to set limits on the scope of the talk. A presentation on the relationships, for example, is too broad. The scope should be limited to one or two types of relationships. Limitations are determined by asking a few key questions:

- What is the average age of those on the retreat?
- What are the needs of the group?
- What are the expectations of the group?
- What is the history of the group?
- What is the size of the group?

Some of these questions maybe hard to answer if you have never worked with this group of teens before. If so, the two most important questions you can ask in helping to set the scope for the talk is to cover the group's needs and expectations.

Focus

By setting the focus of the presentation we are choosing the central theme. If we limit the scope of the relation talk, for example, to "Relationships between best friends", our focus then can be on the qualities found in a best friend. The focus must be brief and clear to keep the imaginations of the teens from going off in different directions. If we allow the focus to be too broad, the talk can become aimless and boring. Keep the content in focus. Any examples and personal sharing of friendships by the presenters should also stay within the focus of the presentation.

Target

Clarifying the target of the presentation is the most difficult, yet important aspect of preparing a talk. If the presenter can target the main message of the talk and then expresses in a phrase that is repeated in a few different ways during the retreat

presentation, then hopefully all the teens get the same message from the talk. The goal is to hit the bull's-eye several times during a presentation to get the target point across.

Creating Small Groups

Small groups play an important part in the process of the retreat. When planned and implemented properly, the experience of community that is created in small groups can carry over far after the retreat is over and to the entire weekly Youth Group gatherings.

The importance of this is IMMENSE! If our young people can experience a sense of belonging in small groups on a retreat, then youth will want to continue to belong to the community at large, and therefore will stay active in YOUR PARISH youth ministry program after the retreat experience is over.

Two important variables to consider in creating small groups are size and mix. Creating a small group should never be done by chance or at last minute. Names should not be randomly drawn from a hat.

Your team should play an active role in breaking the young people into small groups. This is important because in many cases they have known many of the teens for years. They have insights into the relationships and current situations that the youth minister could never know. Many of the adults on your team may have knowledge that is also helpful in this process. Variables to keep in mind when defining small groups:

- Determine if you want to have boys and girls in separate groupings.
- If you decide to mix of boys and girls keep a balance in the group.
- Divide older 11th and 12th grade students among all the groups. This helps with having experienced retreat since with younger teens. Their age and experience helps set the tone in the group, and can be an unspoken prompt to the younger teens to behave in a more mature fashion. Participants also gain much from the sharing of younger and older members, in learning how the Lord works in their everyday life.
- Do not put best friends together in the same group. This also goes for boyfriends and girlfriends.
- Separate siblings. Additionally, if you have a parent of a teen on the team, do not put the parent and child in the same group. The child will speak more freely in a group that does not include his or her parent.
- Key personalities! Try to keep a balance in the groups between introverts and extroverts. Your team will appreciate this!

NOTE: You may have someone you perceive that may have a problem in small groups, whether due to behavioral problems or due to a unique situation in that teen's life; recent death in the family, etc. If so, make sure you put that person in a group with

adult team leader with retreat experience and who you think has the best perception and sensitivity to work with that person.

The ratio of team members

Depending on where your group is meeting will depend on how many core members you have in each group. ***The diocesan guideline for ratio between adult core members per teen is two adult team members up to 10 teens for the first 10, and one to 10 after that.*** This means if your adults are meeting in a secluded or isolated place such as a cabin you must have at least two adults in your small group whether your group is one teen or 10 teens. If however your small group is meeting in the hall with other small groups, though it is still wise to have two adult leaders per group, the other adults in the hall would suffice to stay in compliance with the Safe Environment policies of the Diocese of Phoenix. Another reason for having two adult group leaders is if one team member gets sick during the retreat, there is another member to facilitate the group. With that said, as a rule of thumb I would never have a group larger than nine people, including two adult team members.

Leading small group discussions

Small group discussions are among the most important aspects of any retreat. After your teens have heard the teachings on the particular topics it is now time to process what they had just heard and begin to apply this information to everyday life. This time spent in small groups allows the participants to express their reflections, apply this to their life and discover how others respond to the same topics.

The small group facilitator should be trained well for this very important task. It is important that the teens are comfortable and feel that they are in a safe environment in sharing their reflections. We want the teens to feel free to be themselves and to share their feelings without being challenged. They need to be in an environment based on trust, freedom, affirmation and acceptance with out the fear of being judged.

The facilitator's role is to provide this type of environment for this level of sharing to occur. The facilitator creates this atmosphere by sharing from the heart, and then not by judging, evaluating, interrupting, or criticizing the teens sharing. The facilitator should also be a model for the group in attitude posture, mannerisms, and in words. They should be encouraging and affirming as they listen attentively. This may all seem obvious, but this does not necessarily come naturally to everyone. The following are some ways that can help the facilitator achieve this level of small group sharing. Listed below are a few of the do's and don'ts for small group facilitators. Make sure your facilitators know these well and go over them before the retreat begins.

Do 's

Do begin and end with prayer

Do have everyone introduced to each other

Do understand the topic of discussion and be familiar with the small group questions

Do stick to the topic

Do accept people for who they are
Do smile; nod your head, etc.
Do look at the person sharing in the eye
Do begin the sharing by you sharing yourself
Do trust in the Holy Spirit to lead you
Do make people feel excepted
Do thank the teens for sharing with the rest of the group
Do give everyone a chance to share

Don'ts

Do not stray from the topic
Do not judge
Do not be critical
Do not let your attention wander
Do not lecture
Do not count on self – but on the Holy Spirit
Do not interrupt
Do not shuffle too much or let you recipients get up and stretch
Do not let any one talk too much and take time away from the others
Do not leave anyone out
Preparing a Presentation

How Will We Attract Teens To Attend?

Creative flyers, retreat brochures, and handouts are all good recruiting or advertising tools. Church bulletins, mailers, e-mail and web sites can remind families and posters can remind students to plan ahead.

But the best way to get teens to attend retreats is personal contact. Phone calls made from your parish office phone that are personal invitations can really encourage students to come. Personal recruiting like this should be delegated to your evangelization teams using the parish phones and to responsible teen leaders so that newcomers will be well cared for on the retreat. If I invite 15 new teens to the retreat and they all come, they will expect me to make them feel welcome and comfortable. It is unlikely that I can do this well. We do not want to have teens have a bad retreat experience because we were not attentive to their needs. It is far better for me to get 14 others to help me invite people. This way the new people who come have one guaranteed person who can be their personal host on the weekend.

As you will plan recruitment, be aware that some teens and parents are notoriously bad planners: they register at the last minute, sometimes even as the bus is preparing to leave. This makes coordinating all the logistics for the retreat very difficult. Offering financial discounts for early registration or penalties for late registration and setting in attendance limit may help avoid last-minute registrations. We have considered rejecting last-minute registrations, but it sometimes has put us in the position of rejecting the students who most need to go on the retreat.

Transportation

Planning properly for the transportation to and from the retreat is vital if you want to avoid all kinds of problems.

Before deciding on whether or not to charter a bus or have parents or volunteers transport the teens to the retreat site, refer to the Diocese of Phoenix Transportation Policy and talk the options over with your pastor. (Refer to Handout #4 for the Diocese of Phoenix Transportation Policy).

If your parish can afford this you and your parish is, liability wise, much better off in chartering a bus than having parents or volunteer adults drive teens to and from the retreat.

Bus Transportation

If you are taking a bus, start as soon as you can to shop for quotes. Try to do this at least six months out from the retreat date. There is great wisdom in getting at least three quotes to give you an idea how to budget transportation costs for this retreat. The following are bus companies that come highly recommended, but be sure to compare prices:

Laidlaw Bus Lines,	602-484-7646
Southwest Charter Lines,	480-890-9872
Arrow Bus Lines (Coach USA/Gray Line Charter)	602-437-3484
All Aboard America	480-962-6202
Roadrunner Bus Lines	602-272-2770
Paradise Valley Bus lines,	602-256-0101

Have the following already decided before you make that call to the bus companies: Know the size of the bus you want to rent. Try your best to estimate the number of teens who will be going on this retreat and only pay for that many seats. There are 55, and 45 passenger seats. Know how many seats you need.

Questions to ask the bus company:

- Will the bus driver allow you to help with loading and unloading of the luggage?
- What will the company do if the bus breaks down?
- Will the company bill you, or will you need to pay the driver with a check?
- Does the company allow you to bring food on the bus?

Private Vehicles

If you choose to use private vehicles using parents vans or other adult drivers ask the following questions:

- Are the drivers at least 25 years old?
- Do you have insurance? **(Refer to insurance policy - See handout #4).**
- How many seat-belts are working in the vehicle? This will tell you how many you can have in that vehicle!
- Can they drive both ways?

Have all drivers meet at the church, even if they are picking up all their passengers at another location, like a school. Always let drivers know up front what is expected of them regarding timing and responsibilities. Provide the drivers with directions to and from the retreat center, medical release forms for each passenger, and phone numbers of a contact at the parish and at the retreat center in case of an emergency. Also, have them fill-out and give to you a **Drivers Information Sheet (See handout #5)**.

To avoid any last-minute surprises, call your bus company and or adult drivers two (2) days before you plan to leave for the retreat to confirm all arrangements.

How will we pay for it all?

Assuming the retreat will pay for itself, what are the costs? In calculating the per person costs, consider the cost of the following:

- A. Renting the facility
- B. Food and its preparation
- C. Transportation
- D. The speaker consider travel food lodging and Stipend
- E. Core or Leadership Team members if they are giving up a weekend to minister, we like to cover their costs or part of it; if we do this, the student fee must absorb it, promotional brochures printing mailings etc.
- F. Retreat entertainment supplies for skits rentals for movies etc.
- G. Scholarships if we want to sponsor students who can not afford to go. We must build in our reserves
- H. Insurance – check to see if the church has to take out special insurance

Obviously if all these items are factored into the retreat costs, teams would never be able to afford the retreat. The best alternative is to factor some of the retreat budget into a regular budget.

The Retreat in Action

Teens arrive at the Church

Before your teens are due to show up, have a greeting team arrive at the church about thirty minutes before. This gives them time to load their stuff on the bus and get set up for the teens to arrive. The greeter's job is to welcome the teens with a friendly greeting, be attentive to parent's questions and to help the teens get settled by directing them where to put their luggage and where to bring their last-minute permission slips and payments.

Logistics / Paperwork

Have a table set up to collect all last-minute paperwork and retreat payments. A file should be already prepared for this team that contains a folder for each student containing their medical release forms, final payments, love letters from parents, etc. These team members should watch for parents of any students whose file is not complete and, if needed to call parents to remind them to bring any missing paperwork. **(See Handout #6 for various diocesan approved medical release forms)**

This logistics team should keep track of who has arrived and who has not. If teens are missing and are late by 10 to 15 minutes after the bus is scheduled to leave, a logistic member should begin making the calls. Also, a logistic team member should be responsible to see that all paperwork is on the bus for the retreat. If there are individual drivers taking students to the retreat, then a retreat member must be responsible that a copy of the medical release form is sent along with that driver for each student, and another copy is kept in the primary file.

Luggage Helpers

It is a good idea to have a couple people responsible to help teens put their luggage and sleeping bags onto the bus. This helps ensure all luggage gets on the bus and that the teen does not have to call their parents to deliver their luggage or sleeping bag later that night. These luggage helpers can also see to it that all retreat supplies gets on the bus. This includes cases of water, soda, markers, paper, retreat props, and music instruments, etc.

Bus Captain

Just prior to boarding the bus, the bus captain will gather the teens and into a circle and lead them in a prayer for safe journey. After that, the bus captain is responsible for everything that happens on the bus. This person makes sure that there is a medical release form for each teen on the bus and takes a final headcount to match it against a list to be sure no one is left behind. If the bus makes any stops along the way for food, gas, or bathroom breaks, the bus captain is again responsible for this important account.

The bus captain reminds team members to not all to sit together, but to sit in various areas throughout the bus. This helps any potentially overexcited kids from getting too rambunctious. Just before arrival at the retreat center the bus captain should circulate a couple of large trash bags through the bus, to collect any trash.

The bus captain has a copy of a detailed map for the bus driver and a check to pay the driver if that was the contracted arrangement. Remember - the retreat starts on the bus. Keeping this in mind, ask your team members on the bus to make themselves available to the teens. Have them walk up and down the aisles introducing themselves, and to engage the one who seem to be alone in conversation. Ask others about their school, family, expectations for the weekend, etc. In other words, take this time to do what it takes to make all the teens feel welcomed and loved. Their presence in the aisles also helps to keep the noise level down and reduce the chance of a food fight.

The bus captain has similar responsibilities on the way home from the retreat, such as taking a headcount before leaving. It would be a real disaster if the bus got back to the church and you found out that you let the kid at the retreat center because he or she was in the bathroom when the bus left. The bus captain's last duty on the way to and from the retreat is to inspect the bus to see that nothing is left behind.

Arrival at the Retreat Center

The Advance Team should have the retreat center ready for the teen's arrival. It is always nice if the Advance Team is holding a welcome banner when the bus arrives. As the luggage helpers assist in unloading the bus, the advance team helps direct teens to their dorms or cabins and then to the conference room. The conference room is already set up for the arrival of the teens, and snacks and drinks are out, the music ministry is all set up and ready. It is a good idea to give teens a little time after arrival for snacks and to get acquainted with their new surroundings. This free time also lets them run off a little of that energy that was stored up on the bus ride.

Introduction & Orientation

During the welcoming address, introduce yourself as a Retreat Director and explain your role for the weekend. It is very helpful to establish this role for the teens that have never been on a retreat before.

What is a Retreat?

It is a good idea to explain the purpose of the retreat at the beginning. This is for the benefit of the first timers, as well as a refresher for those who have been on retreats in the past. It also gives the Youth Leader an opportunity to ask those who have been on a retreat before, not to play the comparison game. Ask them in to free their minds to be open to the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak them in new and unexpected ways.

Expectations & Cooperation

It is good to be upfront with the teens on what your expectations of them are for the weekend. Talk about your expectations in following the rules, cooperating with the schedules, and respecting others when they are talking.

Rules

It is very important to set clear in firm guidelines for the teens on retreats. Give only the rules they need at the time. Give the parameters of the retreat center itself, what is allowed and what is not, and what areas can be used and what areas can not.

Give the rules for small groups sharing before the first small group sharing session, give the rules for dorm behavior just before they go to bed and give the rules for meals and cleanup of the dining hall just before the meal.

Do not downplay the need for rules and regulations, but do not give them more than they need a time. If you try to explain all the rules at one time they get turned off, but if you give two or three directions as needed, it makes you, as the director, look less like a dictator and more like a guardian.

Team Introductions

Even if the teens are familiar with some of the team members, always take the time to introduce each member of the team. If you have any short, fun, personal stories you think would be appropriate to share about the team members, I encourage you to share them as a way to enhance the introduction and be creative.

Theme and Theme Song

A good, clear explanation of the theme of the retreat is necessary to help set the tone for the retreat. Part of the introduction can include the process you and the team went through to pick the topic and why you chose it. If you have a song to go with the theme, the choice to play it before and after the introduction (or both) is up to you. The most important thing is that the song is selected to enhance the theme of the retreat, and not just because your musicians know how to play it or because it is popular at the time.

Opening Prayer

As with all prayer services, the opening prayer should have a clear purpose and be well-planned. The opening prayer marks the spiritual beginning of the retreat. It should include the Lord's blessing for the team, teens, activities, and the presenters of the talks. The prayer should give thanks for God's hand in selecting the teens and the team for this unique weekend. It could also include the parish community and family members back home who are praying for the success of this retreat experience. If you have a spiritual or theme environment, the prayer can be focused around the environment. If you are using a candle to symbolize the presence of Christ at the retreat, this is a good time to light the Christ candle. The prayer should invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit to move mightily upon the weekend.

Large Group Icebreakers

Two or three icebreakers, at this point, give teens a chance to move around and have some fun after sitting awhile. Icebreakers also give the adult team members a chance to get acquainted with the group and to let go of any fears they might have. The activities should have been prepared well in advance by those assigned to the task, and they will have assembled the materials that will be needed. Those assigned to the icebreakers will lead the activities.

Small Group Activities

There are all kinds of ways to break the teens on retreat into small groups. And sometimes breaking teens in the small groups depends on the retreat facility that you are in. Nevertheless, be creative and make it a game or activity, as long as they have a little fun and end up with the group to which they have been assigned.

Once they are in small groups, community builders become very important. Community builders should be chosen to reveal as much information about teens as possible without being threatening. If done properly, these activities start to break down the walls to where sharing becomes comfortable and community begins to develop.

Presentations

The first session sets the tone for the weekend. This should communicate to teens that the schedule is balanced between fun activities and powerful presentations. It is good to give them something solid to think about before they go to bed.

Reflection time

At the end of each talk, it is a good idea to allow a few minutes for silent reflection. This gives the teens some time to personalized and reflect on what they have heard, before they go into small group discussion. This can be accompanied with a song or music chosen by the speaker to reinforce the message of the talk, or by soft instrumental music conducive to meditation and reflection.

Small Group Sharing

After every talk there should be a time to break into your assigned small groups for discussion. To facilitate this discussion, the presenter of the talk gives each group a written list of reflective questions, prepared in advance, about the subject of the talk. The small group facilitator leads the group in this sharing. It is not as important to get through all the questions as it is to encourage all the group members to share. They do not have to follow the progression of the questions as they are written. They may decide that by the level of sharing during the first question they should move to the third question next, instead of the second. As director, empower the facilitators to do what they think is best for their group. The only things you should insist upon is that they stay on topic, don't let the discussion wander, and encourage everyone to share.

Night Prayers

Night prayer puts a closure on that day. Depending on the size of the retreat, night prayer can be done with all teens on retreat gathered together or at the end of the small group discussion prior to lights out. This should be a quiet, calming prayer time, possibly accompanied by a soft song or calming music. It helps bring the evening to a peaceful end, and it helps bring the group down before bedtime.

Bedtime

It is important to explain the expectations and behaviors at bedtime, if this is not done, teens can and will be up at all hours of the night. After night prayers, the group is usually settle down and it is then that the opportunity to speak to them about expectations and rules for bedtime. It is important talk about the sacrifices needed to live and sleep in community. Explain about the need for some people to get seven or eight hours of sleep at night. Explain about some people being night people and some people being morning people, and then no matter what your personal style is, we all must respect the needs of the community, not self.

As important as it is for the good of the community to get the lights out and the teens quiet at a decent hour, is equally important that no one gets up at 4 a.m. to start the showers and blow dryers, waking the rest of the people in the cabin. Instruct the group that except for going to the bathroom, they must remain quiet in their bed until 6:00 am at the earliest. (You decide the time)

Team Meetings

It is a good idea to have two or three short meetings with the retreat team throughout the weekend. The team is your eyes and ears in small groups and can best gauge the

temperature of the weekend better than you can by yourself. Ask the team if there is anything you need to know about their small group or any particular person who may need special attention. Ask your team if there is anything they feel the retreat needs so far. I believe that the team is responsible for the teens, and I am responsible for the team. With this in mind, ask if there is anything they need or you can do for them. Review the schedule of events for the next day or for the rest of the day, and close in prayer. After the team meeting it is your responsibility to follow up on any suggestions or needs that have been brought to your attention.

Meals, Free Time, and Breaks

Plenty of time should be given at meal time to relax or play after the meal. This is usually about 30 minute's max., except after lunch on Saturday. The extra free time after lunch is as good for the team as it is for the teens. Saturday is a very long day, and the teens need to run, play, and get all that energy out. They also like to take this time to explore the retreat grounds and relax. At the same time, the adults who were up late the night before need time to rest.

It is also important to schedule plenty of short breaks throughout the retreat. You will see from the schedule template that breaks are planned at natural transition points; usually after a small group sharing or before a session. Experience tells us that no matter how much free time or breaks are given, teens are teens, and according to them it is never enough. If you have a balance in your youth ministry program between social and spiritual events, most of the teens will be able to deal with the free time offered in the schedule.

Planning Liturgies

If you plan to include a Mass during a retreat, the first thing you need to do is to secure the commitment for a priest. Your first choice might be your parish priest. If so, let him know the dates of the retreat as soon as you have contracted for the weekend. Because the demands of the parish priests are very high on weekends, you will want to get on his calendar as soon as you can. Most parish priests know the advantage of youth retreats and will do what they can to keep some time free if you give them plenty of time up front to plan.

If your parish priest is unable to make the weekend, start shopping around early. You might try asking other youth ministers of priests they know who may be available, or check with a priest in parishes in close proximity to the retreat center.

It would be ideal if you could have a priest with you all weekend to be available for the reconciliation or spiritual direction, and to join the youth in the retreat experience. When you ask a priest to join you on the retreat do not just ask if he can come and say Mass. Ask how much time he can give to the weekend. Can he be available to sit in on a few of the talks and be a participant in small groups? Will he be available to hear confessions? When, and for how long? Can he stay for a meal or two? It has always been important that our teens experience that our priests are more than just

sacramental objects, and that they also get to know the priest in another context. It is good to want them to learn about the man who chose the Sacrament Holy Orders, and why he chose this as his vocation and what it is like to live and love life as a priest.

Besides the priest who will preside at Mass, your team should include a liturgist. This person needs to know the flow of the Mass well, and understand the elements of the Mass. Altar servers or adult parishioners that have experience in planning liturgies are two sources for this position.

There are two primary ground rules for the liturgist to remember in planning a successful liturgy. First, if it is a weekend retreat and the Mass is on Sunday or fulfills the obligation for Sunday, the readings should be the readings from the Lectionary for that Sunday. If it is not a Mass for a Sunday obligation, then the liturgist is free to select readings that fit with the theme of the retreat. Long before the retreat weekend the liturgist should meet with the priest about the readings and the other plans for the liturgy, so there are no surprises for either the priest or the liturgist on the weekend.

Second, the liturgist should arrange with the priests in advance for the provision of the essentials needed for Mass, including investments, the sacramentary, Lectionary, chalice, hosts, wine, etc. If he requires you to bring these, then plan in advance. This will avoid the awkward situation where both think the other has prepared for the Mass. It is advisable to contact the priest again a week before the retreat, just to reconfirm all the details.

In planning a liturgy, the liturgist should include the following four elements in the planning:

- 1. The Written Word**
- 2. Music**
- 3. Location**
- 4. Environment, lighting, and props**

Each of the above is extremely important in planning a meaningful retreat liturgy. Teens helping with the liturgy should be given adequate instructions and plenty of preparation time before the celebration of the Mass takes place. Those selected to read, for example, should be given plenty of time to practice proclaiming the Word and to seek help with pronunciation and unfamiliar names, etc.

Once the final Eucharistic celebration is planned, a copy of the planning sheet should be given to the celebrant before the weekend so he is not surprised about anything unexpected. He, in turn, can plan his parts of the Mass and his homily according to the theme you have planned, and the liturgy will flow smoothly. **(See handout #7 for a sample liturgy worksheet)**

Affirmation Circles

The affirmation circle is always thrown near the end of the retreat to allow plenty of time for the group members and team to get to know and appreciate the uniqueness of

each person in the group. The talk before affirmations sets the stage for the affirmations. The talk may be a little different from one retreat to another, but understanding that it is important that teens be affirmed by their peers, when appropriate, it is always good to include affirmation circles in a weekend retreat.

Affirmation circles should take about an hour and a half for a group of nine people. The purpose of the affirmation circle is to allow each of the small group members to be affirmed by the rest of their small group.

In today's culture, it is a much more common experience to put someone down than to build them up. Nothing is more effective in building someone up than having a group of your peers tell you how great you are by affirming you, your gifts and talents, and just the person you are. There are two keys to the success of this exercise. The first key is having the group leaders make mental notes of the good qualities of the group members throughout the weekend in preparation for affirming them later. The second is having good group dynamics in small groups sharing during the weekend so the group members really get to know one another through their sharing.

Here is how the affirmation circle works. The director gives a brief talk on building up the body of Christ by building and affirming each other. Then the small groups are sent off with these instructions: The purpose of the affirmation circle is to affirm the positive gifts, talents, and qualities we have seen or experienced in other group members. You would want to affirm things like compassion, humor, kindness, love, forgiveness, understanding, creativity, personal strength, and spiritual strength, and expand on these qualities by giving examples from the weekend.

Then the small groups, led by their team leaders are set off to isolated locations throughout the retreat center where they can be undisturbed and undistracted. One group may choose the chapel, another outside, another inside where they feel comfortable. The small group member will be seated in a circle with one volunteer in the middle of the circle facing a team member. Looking into the eyes of the person sitting in the middle the team member affirms the person in the middle by telling them all the good that they see in them. It's important that the team member be prepared for this exercise, as they will set the depth, sincerity, and tone of the process for the whole group. After the team member is finished, the person in the middle turns to the next person in the circle and that person looks into the eyes and affirms them. The person in the middle continues the process until everyone in the circle has affirmed them. Once back to the starting team member all the people in that circle lay hands on the person in the middle and pray for him or her.

Then someone else comes to the middle facing the team member who starts the process all over again. This continues until everyone, including a team member, has had their time in the middle. This exercise can get a little weepy to have plenty of tissues available.

Closing Exercises

At the end of the retreat it is good to have a closing talk that puts closure on the weekend for all the teens on the retreat. The closing session can include a special prayer service for commissioning of individuals, or anything you believe will help them take the messages they have just received and to implement them into their lives. Many times the retreat will end by giving T-shirts as a gift for each participant as a remembrance of the retreat weekend. Crosses and or candles can also be given as a symbol of THE CALL they all have to be the light of Christ to the world. The closing talk often re-states the main points made during the retreat and includes some of the spontaneous moments and moments when the Holy Spirit touched the group.

Closing Mass at the Church

Having a closing Mass at the parish when the bus returns is a great way to close the retreat, especially if the parish already has a Sunday evening liturgy schedule. With a good support group in the parish, the church can be decorated with special banners to welcome the teens back.

A highlight of this liturgy comes from the support of the pastor. After the Gospel, the presider speaks a few words to the teens and invites them to come forward and share a little bit about their weekend. (If this cannot be done at the closing Mass, find time to do this at the very end of the retreat by hosting an open microphone)

Teens seem to be a little hesitant at first, so prime the pump a little before hand and asked a few of the teens who are more outgoing to be ready to share a little bit about the retreat if the Father extends the invitation. Once one goes up and shares through their tears and laughter a story or a more defining moment of the retreat, the floodgates are opened and many find they have something to share. The comments can be priceless, especially to the parents and families. The benefits of allowing the community to witness the joy and growth that result from the youth retreat is a great benefit to the parish, to the families, and to the youth ministry program as a whole.

If you have already scheduled a mass to close the retreats at the parish, get someone to handle the logistics for you. Ask the following questions: do you want reserved seating for the retreat participants and the team? Do you want the teens to be a special part of the entrance procession? Will they do the readings? Will they say the prayers of the faithful? Will there be special music? (Theme song) All these things can and should be handled by volunteers who are not on the retreat itself.

Sometimes it can fun that your retreat ends in the parish hall with a family potluck dinner. Instead of teens sharing in the Mass, here is an alternative in which the teens can share the retreat experiences. Find someone to help plan the dinner, make the calls, set up the hall, and, most importantly do the cleanup. Again, all these things can and should be handled by volunteers who are not on the retreat itself.

Administration Notes:

1. Assign someone to take registrations when retreat participants arrive.
2. Assign someone to help bus driver pack the bus.
3. Assign a team to take charge of Ice Breakers.
4. Assign a team to help plan the spiritual exercises, especially the liturgy.
5. Assign someone to plan the liturgy, do set up and handle all supplies.
6. Assign someone to be the emcee for the entire retreat.
7. Have a plan for small groups: female / male groups or mixed, how many in a group, etc.
8. Have a plan B for activities planned outdoors incase weather is bad.
9. Have Retreat supplies ready
10. Have stipend checks for all those who will be paid for their service i.e. musicians, priests, sound and light technician.
11. Pray daily for the Holy Spirit to be at work!

Role of the Family

The parents and family are the primary educators of faith for their children. Our role as youth leaders is to support what should be taking place in the home. With this in mind, it is good to request that parents support what you, as a youth leader, is doing by encouraging their teens to take full advantage of the opportunity available to them.

At times I have asked parents to be more supportive of their teens in encouraging them to participate in the up-in-coming retreat in the days leading up to the retreat. This helps the youth on the weekend to know that their parents are behind them. It also makes it a little easier when the teen comes home after a good retreat experience, knowing he is coming home to a loving a peaceful environment.

At times, I have requested that the parents and family write a supportive, loving letter for their teen on retreat. This letter is given to teens as a surprise at the end of a spiritual exercise. I feel so strongly about these letters of parents to their teens, that they are required to have these letters in my office three days before the retreat. It is not unusual to have a high school senior young man so profoundly touched by his parents letter that he tells me in tears that this was the first time his dad or his mother has ever let them know that they loved him. **(See handout #8, Letter to Parents)**

Encourage parents to attend the closing liturgy or celebration at the church after the retreat. The parents go to their teen's football games and dramas this is just as, if not a more important! Ask the entire family to attend as well. When younger children see high school teens excited about her faith and openly expressed her love for God, it sets the stage of anticipation for when they get to high school and are able to go on retreat. It also sends the message that being a Christian is a cool thing that all can be proud of. As a result, the communication channels begin to open between the parents and their teen as they begin to talk about their own faith journey with their own children.

Role of the Parish Community

Four weeks before the retreat, I would recommend placing announcements in the bulletin asking the parish to pray for the success of the upcoming retreat. Before you leave for the retreat, submit a prayer to be added to the prayers of the faithful at Mass, which brings the entire parish community to pray for the retreat during the weekend. Also, invite the entire parish to join you for our closing Mass after the retreat. Let them know that the Mass might be a little longer than usual, but for those who choose to come, it will bless them to see the youth on fire in their faith!

Retreats: The Work of The Holy Spirit

The retreat experience is a rich opportunity to build a sense of community in our youth groups. In the midst of the hectic schedules of our lives, we say to our young people the same words that Jesus said to his 12 “Come away by yourselves and rest a while.” In the midst of that rest, we will be able to see the Holy Spirit at work and be a witness of lives changing. As we provide our young people with the opportunities to contemplate their personal commitment to Jesus Christ, we will be able to see them respond by the power of the Holy Spirit at work.

Prayer in Union with Jesus

Lord Jesus, grant me the grace to empty myself and be filled with Your love, peace, patience, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and understanding. Let every beat of my heart and every breath that I breathe be for You. Let every word that I speak be reflective of You. Let every glance I give be a mirror of You. Let every hand I touch feel Your gentle care. Let every step I take be on Your path toward Your Light. Let every word of praise I may receive be directed to You in humble thanksgiving. Let every angry word said to me or against me be returned with words of love and mercy not anger and revenge. Let every desire I have be for You. Let my will conform to Yours. Touch every cell of my body, Lord, and make me the person, the servant, You want me to be. Amen.

Retreat Centers

**American Baptist Camp – Tonto Rim,
Payson**

Phone: 888-377-7077, 602-254-7075
Web Site: www.tontorimcamp.com

**Camp Aloma Bible Camp & Retreat
Center**

Prescott, Phone: 928-788-1690
Web Site: cmpaloma@primenet.com

Camp Anytown - Prescott

Phone: 623-934-6044
Web Site: www.anytowncamp.org

Camp Charles Pearlstein - Scottsdale

Phone: 928-778-0091
Web Site:
www.campcharlespearlstein.com

Camp Pinerock - Prescott

Phone: 623-465-5938 / 928-445-8357
Web Site: www.camppinerock.org

Camp Shadow Pines - Heber

Phone: 602-952-1312 / 928-535-4131
Web Site:

Camp Yavapines - Prescott

Phone: 928-445-2162
Web Site: www.campyavapines.org

Catholic Community Retreat Center

Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed
Sacrament - Flagstaff
Becky Castillo, House Manager (928)
773-1084, Web Site:
www.sanfranciscocodeasisparish.org

Chapel Rock – Prescott

Phone: 602-256-6021
Web Site: www.chapelrock.net

Emmanuel Pines – Prescott

Phone: 928-445-1509
Web Site: www.emmanuelpines.com

**House of Joseph Retreat
& Conference Center – Yarnell**

Phone: 928-778-5229
Web Site: www.stjoseph-shrine.org

LIFE TEEN Tepeyac - Prescott

928.778.5397
Web Site: camptepeyac@lifeteen.com

Living Springs Camp - Sedona

Phone: 928-282-6871
Web Site:

**Living Water Worship & Teaching
Center Cornville**

Phone: 928-634-4421
Web Site:
www.livingwaterretreatcenter.com

Lost Canyon Retreat Center

Migus Springs Camp – Prescott
Phone: PHONE:(928) 445-3778
Web Site: www.mingussprings.org

Mount Claret Center - Phoenix

Director: Rev. Don Kline
Phone: 602-840-5066
Web Site:

The Hillman Center

Phone: 928-778-0091

**Our Lady of Solitude Contemplative
House of Prayer**

1 St. Joseph Road, PO Box 1140
Black Canyon City, AZ 85324-1140
(623) 374-9204 (also fax number)

Picture Rock Retreat Center – Tucson

Phone: 928-744-3400

Web Site: www.desertrenewal.org

Pine Summit Bible Camp

Phone: 520-778-2861

Web Site: www.pinesummitcamp.com

Prescott Pines Baptist Camp

Phone: 928-445-5225

Web Site: www.prescottpines.org

St. Joseph's Youth Camp –

Knights of Columbus - Flagstaff

Phone: 480-449-0848

Site Number: 928-354-2406

Web Site: www.mysummercamps.com

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Renewal Center

Phone: 602-840-0437

Web Site: www.ststephens.org

The Casa, Franciscan Renewal Center

Scottsdale, Phone: 602-948-7560 ext.

162 Web Site: www.thecasa.org

United Christian Youth Camp - Prescott

Phone: Toll Free: 877-945-0391, 928-445-0391,

Web Site: www.ucyc.com

Whispering Pines Camp – Prescott

Phone: 928-445-1478

Web Site

YMCA Sky-Y & Chauncey Ranch – Prescott

Phone: 928-445-1385

Web Site: azcamps@primenet.com

Outside Arizona

Eastern Nevada

Camp Lee Canyon

Clark County Parks & Recreation

Phone: 702-455-8200

New Mexico

Santa Fe Mountain Center

Phone: 505-983-6158

Web Site: www.sf-mc.com

Handout #2

Parish Name
Date of Retreat
“Theme of Retreat”

Friday

4:00	Teens Arrive at Parish Registration Period
4:30	Pizza Dinner
5:15	Bus Departs
8:00 pm	Arrive at Retreat Site Get settled in Cabins Snacks
9:00	Session One: Host: Music Some Contemporary leading to Praise & Worship <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explanation of Theme of Retreat, Introductions / Rules• Music – Retreat Theme Song• Skit or Ice breaker Activity• Testimonies: 5 min. each• Talk:20 min. max• Small Groups 20 mins.• Large group rap up of small groups• Spiritual Exercise• Challenge Exhortation / close with prayer• Praise and Worship Music• Hail Mary• Announcements:
11:00	Free Time / Snacks
12:00	Lights Out!

Saturday

7:30 am	Wake Up
8:00	Breakfast / Free Time or Orientation of Camp with groups leaders
9:00	Spiritual Exercise (Rosary, Liturgy of Hours, Adoration)
9:30	Session 2 Host: Music: Theme Song Skit or Activity: Testimonies:

	<p>Talk (20 mins.) Small groups Large group rap: Challenge/ Prayer: Announcements:</p>
10:15	Break
10:30	<p>Session 3: Host: Music: Theme Song Skit or Activity: Testimonies: Talk (20 mins.) Small groups Large group rap: Challenge/ Prayer: Announcements:</p>
12:00 Noon	Lunch
12:45 pm	<p>Session 3: Organized Activities / Messy Games Coordinated by:</p>
2:45	<p>Session 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music: Theme Song • Host: To recap and introduce • Skit: - • Testimony • Talk • Small Groups: • Large Group: • Challenge / Prayer <p><i>This session should lead into Stations of the Cross</i></p>
4:00	<p>Stations of the Cross / Examination of Conscience Coordinated by: <i>Leads into</i></p>
5:15	Confessions
6:15	Lord's Day Dinner
7:30	Mass (See Liturgy Planning)
8:30	Break

Handout #3

Resources for icebreakers, community builders, and games:

Creative Activities for Small Youth Groups: Creative Resources for Youth Ministry. Rice, Wayne and Yaconelli, Mike. Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Press Christian Brothers Publications, 1991.

Creative Crowd-Breakers, Mixers, & Games: Creative Resources for Youth Ministry. Rice, Wayne and Yaconelli, Mike. Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Press Christian Brothers Publications, 1991.

Crowd Breakers and Mixers; The Ideas Library. Youth Specialties. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Gigantic Book of Games for Youth Ministry, The, volumes 1 and 2. McLaughlin, Dennis R. and Anthony, Michelle, editors. Group Publishing, Loveland, Colorado

Group Builder Games and Activities for Youth Ministry. Group Publishing, Loveland, Colorado, 2000.

Help: Community-Building Ideas for Ministry with Young Teens. Kielbasa, Marilyn. Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Christian Brothers Publications, 2001.

Help: Retreat Ideas for Ministry with Young Teens. Kielbasa, Marilyn. . Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Christian Brothers Publications, 2001.

Ice Breakers and Heart-Warmers by Steve Sheely 101 ways to kick off and end meetings

Ideas: Games, Games II and Games III. Youth Specialties. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002.

One-Day Retreats for Junior High Youth. Braden-Whartenby, Geri & Connelly, Joan Finn. Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Christian Brothers Publications, 1997.

One-Day Retreats for Senior High Youth. Braden-Whartenby, Geri & Connelly, Joan Finn. Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Christian Brothers Publications, 1997.

On the Edge Games for youth ministry, by Karl Rohnke.

Play It! by Wayne Rice and Mike Yaconelli.

Time Out! Sawyer, Kieran, S.S.N.D. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1998.

www.youthspecialties.com

Handout #4

Transportation of Teens To and From Events

General Guidelines that apply to privately owned and rental vehicles used to transport minors.

- ♦ All vehicles must have the proper and current registration and proof of insurance, according to the policy.
- ♦ All vehicles must have seatbelts for every passenger.

Using Privately Owned Vehicles to Transport Youth

- ♦ The driver of a privately owned vehicle must be the owner of the vehicle.
- ♦ Before transporting teens in a private vehicle, driver should obtain a permission to ride slip from each minor rider while teens are transported.
- ♦ When driving vehicles or vans owned by an individual parish and insured through the Diocese, it is the responsibility of the borrower to request the maintenance record of said vehicle and to have a safety review of that vehicle checking brakes, tires, and fluid levels prior to transporting youth.
- ♦ Towing: Trailers may be towed behind vehicles if they are properly connected to the vehicle. Towing vehicles may have passengers.

Rental Vehicles

- ♦ Rental contracts should have the driver's name on the contract for the vehicle they are designated to drive.
- ♦ Contracts should be signed by the person designated by the church to sign the contract.
- ♦ Recommendation: When picking up the vehicle, have a mechanically knowledgeable person go with you to check out the rental vehicle for any possible problems. Ask to see the maintenance record of the vehicle you plan to rent.

Drivers

- ♦ All drivers transporting youth shall be 25 years of age or older.
- ♦ Drivers can be 21-25 if they are employed by the church or diocese.
- ♦ Drivers shall possess and provide proof of appropriate insurance coverage as stated under insurance guidelines.
- ♦ Drivers shall have a proper and current valid driver's license with no moving violations during the past five years. Drivers should sign off on this item.
- ♦ Drivers must insure at all times, that every passenger has a seatbelt that is in use when ever the vehicle is moving.
- ♦ Driver is responsible to see that the number of passengers never outnumbers the seats and seat belts provided for the vehicle.
- ♦ Maximum drive time without a break for each driver is two hours.
- ♦ Drivers should check over the vehicle at each stop, looking at tires, gas, and under the hood for any possible problems.

- ♦ The responsible church leader should have a Driver's form on each driver who transports young people. (Samples enclosed) See Appendix #

Insurance Requirements

When driving your own vehicle to transport minors, each driver is required to have personal automobile insurance with the following coverage: **\$100,000/300,000 Liability.**

When traveling out of state or country, you need a Certificate of Coverage to show that you are covered under Catholic Mutual and the Diocese of Phoenix. This can be obtained through Catholic Mutual Insurance 1-800-228-6108.

Out of country insurance is required before entering into the country. It is recommended to purchase the maximum coverage possible for both the vehicles as well as the passengers. Insurance policy should accompany the vehicle at all times.

Handout #5

Driver Information Sheet

(Required by all who transport minors)

Driver Information

Name _____ Date of Birth _____
Address _____ S.S. # _____
Driver License : State _____ Telephone _____
DL # _____

Vehicle that will be used

Name of Owner _____ Vehicle Model _____
Address of Owner _____ Make _____
_____ Year _____
License Plate _____ Date of Expiration _____

If more than one vehicle is to be used, the aforementioned information must be provided for each vehicle.

Insurance Information

Insurance Company _____
Agent's Name _____
Policy Number _____ Policy Expiration _____
Liability Limits of Policy: _____

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the information give on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that as a driver, I must be 25 years of age or older, possess a valid driver's license, have the proper and current license and vehicle registration and have the required insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle used to transport minors.

Driver's Signature Date

Representative of the Organization / Church Date

Retreat Release Form

I request that **(church)** permit my child to participate in **(event)** at **(place)** in **(city)** on **(date)**. I understand that reasonable precautions will be taken to safeguard the health and well-being of my child, and that I will be notified as soon as possible in the event of an emergency. In case of sickness or accident, I authorize and consent to any x-ray exam, anesthetic, medical, dental or treatment and hospital care to be rendered to my child under the general care and advice of any physician, dentist or surgeon licensed to practice in the State of Arizona or any other state. I further understand and agree to be responsible for any such medical, dental and/or hospital expenses incurred.

I further agree to arrange for or provide transportation to and from the **(event)** including any event in which my child must leave the retreat prior to its conclusion.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Registration and Medical Release Form

Name: _____

Phone _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State AZ. Zip _____

Parish _____ Birth date _____ Grade _____ Gender _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Doctor's Name _____ Dr.'s Phone _____

Insurance Company _____ Policy # _____

ARE THERE ANY KNOWN ALLERGIES TO FOOD OR MEDICATIONS THAT THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUR YOUNG PERSON ON THIS EVENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF? Yes No

If yes, explain:

EMERGENCY CONTACT IN THE EVENT THE PARENT(S) CANNOT BE NOTIFIED:

Name: _____ Phone _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE RELEASE FORM PRINTED ON THE REVERSE SIDE. YOUR REGISTRATION IS NOT COMPLETE OR ACCEPTED UNLESS THIS IS DONE!

Medical Release/General Permission Slip

(Your Church Name Here)

Diocese of Phoenix

Participant: _____ DOB _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Place of Birth (city) _____ (state) _____

Father's Full Name _____ Work Phone _____

Mother's Full Name _____ Work Phone _____

Other Emergency Contact _____ Phone _____

Date of Last Tetanus Shot: _____

Are there any known allergies to food or medications that we should know about?

Any medications currently taking:

List medications your child has permission to self-medicate: _____
(Use another piece of paper if needed)

I hereby authorize a responsible adult to dispense to my child, if needed, only the following that are initialed by a parent or guardian. (Please initial all that apply).

___ Tylenol ___ Ibuprofen ___ Aspirin ___ Imodium AD ___ Pepto Bismol

___ Advil ___ Benedryl ___ Alka Seltzer ___ Topical Antiseptic ___ Cold Medications

I request that my son/daughter participate in the activity _____ sponsored by **(church)**. This activity will take place on **(date), (time), (place)**.

I understand that reasonable precautions will be taken to safeguard the health and well being of my son/daughter and that I will be notified as soon as possible in the event of an emergency. In case of any sickness or accident, I authorize and consent to any x-ray, exam, anesthetic, medical, dental or surgical diagnosis or treatment and hospital care to be rendered to my son/daughter under the general or specific supervision and on the advice of any physician, dentist, or surgeon licensed to practice. I further understand and agree to be responsible for any such medical, dental or hospital expenses incurred. Further, in the event of sickness or accident, I will not hold **(church)** parish, the Diocese of Phoenix, or any youth leader responsible.

Date _____ Parent/Guardian: _____

(When traveling out of state, minors under 18 must have form notarized.)

Handout #7

Liturgy Worksheet

This form should help your retreat liturgist in the planning process and eliminate any gaps in the flow of the liturgy. The items in bold are part of the Mass in which the teens can take an active and creative part in the celebration.

SAMPLE LITURGY

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Introduction and Welcome to the Mass

Opening Song

Greeting

Penitential Rite

Glory to God

Opening Prayer

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Alleluia

Gospel

Homily

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Profession of Faith – Creed

Prayer of the Faithful

Presentation of the Gifts – Procession & Music

Preface

Holy Holy

Eucharistic Prayer

Our Father

Sign of Peace

Lamb of God

Communion – Eucharistic Ministers

Communion Meditation (Silence – Reading – Song)

Closing Prayer

Final Prayer

Final Blessing

Recessional Song

Handout #9

Checklist for Directors

Things to Bring:

- Pens
- Pencils
- Tape
- Scissors
- Colored paper
- Markers and crayons
- Candles
- Matches
- Supplies for environment
- Extra cups
- Kleenex
- Bibles
- Props for skits
- Decorations for dining room
- Camera
- Film
- Video Camera and Tripod
- Name tags
- Words to songs or PowerPoint
- Sound system if needed
- CD/ Tape player for outdoor services
- CD's
- Maps to and fro retreat center
- Questions for talks
- List of rules and regulations
- Prayers
- Rosaries
- Catechism
- Supplies for prayer services
- Supplies for Mass
- List of teens on retreat
- Parent Letters
- Medical Release Forms for each vehicle
- Snacks
- Bell or whistle to gather teens
- Thank- you cards for team and priests
- First –aid kit
- Extra sleeping bags, pillows & blankets
- Stipend Checks for Guest Speakers and Musicians

Handout #10

Basic First-Aid Kit

- Aspirin or Tylenol
- Decongestant for colds & flu – (take before flights to avoid damaging ears)
- Antihistamine (e.g. Benadryl)
- Antiseptic (e.g. Betadine)
- Triple-antibiotic ointment or germicidal soap
- Band – Aids
- 4 Adhesive pads of all sizes – 2 ½ by 3 ½ to 2" x 3"
- Adhesive tape
- Non prescription pain killer
- Cough drops
- Tweezers
- Ice pack
- Scissors
- Matches
- Sanitary pads
- Cotton
- Eye wash
- Thermometer
- Ace Bandages
- Diarrhea medication (e.g. Imodium)
- Rehydration mixture (incase of severe diarrhea) Gatorade powder works well.
- Laxative
- Pepto-Bismol – chewable is less messy
- Cold & sore throat medication
- Anti-itch ointment for stings, bites, sunburn (e.g. calamine lotion)
- Thermometer
- Ace bandage
- Water purification tablets
- Bee sting / snake bite kit

Additional Items:

Handout #11

Chaperons

Absolutes for those Chaperoning minors:

Never be alone with a minor

Never counsel a minor alone – if in a separate room, leave the door open

Always know where your participants are.

Never allow participants to go off anywhere alone.

Housing: If setting requires adult to room with minors, two adults must occupy each room housing teens. No one adult may sleep alone in a room with minors.

All Chaperons must have completed the Called to Protect workshop provided by the Diocese of Phoenix.

All chaperons must be responsible, and have a clean history.

Ratio: Two adults for first 10 teens on any give event, trip or activity and 1 to 10 adults after that.