



# MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR RETREAT

a worksheet for student leaders

# Make the Most of Your Retreat

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## Understand the Importance

A retreat, whether it's Fall, Winter, or Spring can be catalytic for students growing in loving God and loving others. It is the place many students go from referring to a ministry as "that ministry" to "my ministry." It's not because anything magical happens, but because it incorporates so many different aspects of a ministry's vision AND does it alongside a community of other people who are also bought into that vision. It's the place where students plug into community and can be catapulted forward in their relationship with Christ. All that to say: **IT IS IMPORTANT!** Here are a few thoughts and questions to help you, as a student leader, prepare to have maximum impact before, during, and after your upcoming retreat.

## Before

### Pray

The most important thing you can do for the retreat is pray. Pray for your heart, the speaker, the community, everyone attending, the worship, safe travel, and new friendships. Even if you're not going, you can still contribute by praying for the retreat.

*Make a list of specific prayer requests on your mind about this retreat. (Who needs to come? Who is the speaker and how can you pray for them? etc.)*

### Invite

Few people will go if they have not been personally invited. Telling someone you would love to get more time to get to know them during the retreat could be the difference in someone going. If they responded with anything other than "yes," it is not rude to ask what obstacles might prevent them from going. Obstacles like cost or work can often be overcome if they just have a conversation about why it is a hurdle.

*Write down at least 2-5 people you need to personally invite as soon as possible. (It's okay, pull out your phone and do it now)*

*I need to invite:*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Pack Properly

Make sure you take care of your own needs so you can help others with theirs. If you're sick or not sleeping well because you forgot key things, you won't be of any use to anyone else. Check the weather, check the packing list, check the schedule, and pack accordingly. If you're planning to participate in rec, pack some workout clothes. Bring a few extra things others might forget, like a hoodie, headlamp, or water bottle. Don't overpack, though, and make sure everything fits in the car.

*What items might people forget to bring? What do you need to make sure to bring?*

## During

### Be Attentive to Others

During the retreat, it's important to keep an eye out for people who may feel left out and could use a smiling friend. While it's great to catch up with friends, there are also many people who are hoping to make new ones. So, be on the lookout for those who could use some extra attention and draw them into the community. Make it easy for everyone to feel welcome! Play the role of host, instead of a guest.

*What are specific things that might tempt you to ignore others? (i.e. phone, comfort, being attached to a best friend/significant other)*

*What needs to happen for you to prepare to be attentive to others before leaving for the retreat? (conversation with significant other and friends about expectations, set do not disturb on your phone, etc)*

### Make a New Friend

The retreat is a great opportunity to meet new people and step out of your comfort zone. Take advantage of the built-in opportunities to connect with others on a level deeper than just their major and interest. Ask good questions and listen! Try not to spend the whole time with your usual friend group.

*Which 1-2 new students do you want to get more time with at the retreat?*

*How will you get that time with them? (ie. Ask to read the Bible with them, go to a workshop with them, ask them to join your rec team, plan a meal together, etc.)*

## Be Fully Present

Unless your class or work absolutely requires it, take the weekend to unplug. Leave the distractions back at campus. Being glued to your phone will cause you to miss out on meaningful opportunities around you and keep you from making new friends. Whatever you can push pause on for two days, push pause on it completely.

*What takes up most of your attention or distracts you most during your normal daily rhythms?*

*What can you do before or during the retreat to eliminate the temptation toward those distractions?*

## Rest

Make a plan for rest before, during, and after the trip. Rest *before the trip* will help clear your mind to make the most of the weekend from the start. Rest *during the trip* to give you the sustained energy to make the most to the very end. Rest *after the trip* will help you make the most of coming back to campus and actually applying what God taught you over the weekend. Do all your homework before leaving and don't make plans immediately after you return so you can get the rest you need. Don't allow your rest to become self-serving, but rest so that you might serve more fully.

*How will you rest?*

- *Before -*
- *During -*
- *After -*

## After

## Follow Up

Go into the weekend with follow-up in mind and be ready to follow up with whatever opportunities God gives you. Plan some time the week after the retreat to do some follow-up. Did someone commit their life to Christ? Great! You already made space in your schedule to follow up with them. Follow-up is just as important as going to the retreat, otherwise, all you did was get more information but fail to become wise with it. Use these questions when you get back to help with follow-up:

*Who made decisions for Christ that I personally need to meet with this week?*

*Was there someone I connected with that I need to have a follow-up lunch/coffee with?*

## Recruit

If you had a blast at the retreat, share your experience with others who couldn't make it! Consider writing a quick testimony about what you saw God do and how it impacted you, and share it with a staff member. Tell others about it in your small groups, at church, or in your other organizations on campus. It's a great way to encourage others to attend in the future and broaden their communities! Use the questions when you return to help you recruit for next year.

*What's a quick 1-2 sentence summary to describe the retreat?*

*What is one God story I can share with someone?*

*Who are 3-5 people in my network who weren't there who I should share with about the retreat and invite to come next year?*

## Pray Again

After the retreat, don't forget to keep praying. Pray for the new friendships that were made, for the things you learned to stick with you, for the community to be impacted, and for your focus to be on things that are eternal. Use the questions when you return to develop a prayer list from the retreat:

*What did I hear from Jesus over the weekend? How will I walk in obedience? Ask for strength.*

*Were there any decisions for Christ over the retreat? New believers, those getting serious about their faith, or missionaries called out, who I need to pray for?*

*Who are the new people who came who I need to pray to get more connected to Jesus and his people?*

### Set Some Personal Goals

*Having thought about all of these ways to make the most of your retreat, it is time to set 1-2 overarching goals for yourself. Use these questions to help you make your goals. What are you asking God to do? Who are you asking to come? How do you need to focus and prepare?*

Goal #1:

Goal #2:

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