

Checklist for Planning a Retreat

As you work through this checklist, add dates to your calendar to accomplish the steps based on the timeline for your retreat.

1. Come to God in prayer.

Prayer items to consider ...

- Wisdom and creativity in planning
- God's Spirit to work in women's hearts and in all the details
- Joy and lasting growth for every woman at the retreat
- God's guidance in forming your team

2. Determine the venue and dates.

Consider budget restraints for venues and the best month and weekend in light of your church or group calendar. Balance the need to get away with the convenience of not going too far, as well as the pros and cons of one-day and weekend-long retreats.

3. Recruit a team.

Look for 1-12 women to join you in the retreat planning adventure, depending on the size of your group. Invite women with different strengths and gifts to balance one another out. Keep in mind the importance of women who will serve in unity and humility.

As a team, discuss the goals of the retreat, and commit to pray during the planning process, individually and together. Emphasize unity as the team works together. Entrust these women with specific roles and responsibilities and encourage their creativity. Check in with each other through emails or group chats, as well as in-person meetings.

4. Identify theme and speakers.

Remain in prayer as you choose the theme and speaker(s) for the retreat. The theme may be determined by a speaker or developed by the retreat team as they consider the needs of the women in their ministry. Consider asking women within your community to be Bible teachers and speakers at the retreat.

5. Set an agenda.

Setting an agenda for the retreat helps ensure you and your team meet the goals you have for the retreat. Keep a balance between structured and unstructured time, essential and optional activities. Include times for small-group connection and prayer. Recruit an emcee who can help the group feel comfortable as well as keep an eye on the time so events run smoothly.

6. Begin promotion.

Get the word out about the retreat on an adequate timeline. Large churches begin promoting retreats several months in advance with a “save the date” notice and early-bird discounts. Use a variety of media to reach different ages and types of intake. These may include short videos, social media posts, paper and digital flyers, shared stories at group gatherings, and physical reminders such as bookmarks and T-shirts.

7. Select fun activities.

Retreat agendas usually provide free time and optional activities. Include a variety of ways for women to connect with one another and/or enjoy the outdoors. Coordinate a hike, a game night or a craft creation. The venue for the retreat and its surrounding area may offer unique opportunities for women to have fun.

8. Invite and involve women.

Women like to be personally invited to retreats, so encourage women to ask one another. Lodging accommodations may help, prodding women to find one or more roommates. And since many women feel more comfortable at an event when they have a role to play, ask women to help in varied roles: leading music, helping at registration, taking care of the speaker, or teaching other women how to play a game or make a craft.

9. Show up to serve.

When the retreat weekend finally arrives, encourage your team to show up willing to serve and connect with other women. Retreat leaders need to have different expectations of the retreat than attendees. Leaders can look for opportunities to meet women they don't know and offer to pray for those who need encouragement.

10. Finish with follow up.

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At the end of the retreat, ask for feedback through a short evaluation. Within the next week, follow up digitally with attendees to catch more women whose input you may have missed. Ask how you can continue to encourage women in their spiritual lives as a result of what they learned at the retreat.

Another important follow up after the retreat is to show gratitude to those who served alongside you. Treat them to dinner or dessert and hear their highlights and lessons learned. Thank God for the work he has done through the retreat. Ask your team to help in following up with women from the retreat, such as by meeting a woman for coffee or leading a new women's group.

Planning a women's retreat is a multi-step process. [Sacred Story Retreats](#) can help streamline many of these steps by providing a speaker and a story-writing theme and agenda for women. These stories help women reflect on God's faithfulness in their lives and encourage one another.

Whatever direction your next retreat takes, trust God to work through you and your team. Anticipate and celebrate how God will use your retreat to draw women to Himself.