

# ***LEADER READERS***

## *Retreat planning*

### **STEPS TO PLANNING AN EFFECTIVE RETREAT**

#### **Step 1 – Know what you want out of the retreat!**

This is a critical first step. What do you want your participants to walk away with once the retreat is over? Make a list of everything you want accomplished.

Examples of goals - The group:

- Feels like a team
- Understands our mission
- Understands the expectations of themselves & the leader
- Possesses all dates for upcoming events

#### **Step 2 – Logistics**

Now you know what you want to accomplish. Next, where and when are you going to hold the retreat? And for how many? Make sure you reserve space (for the right date) and determine the duration of the event. Do you need food/snacks? Can the location of the retreat allow you to bring in your own food? How much is this going to cost? Can you afford breakfast, lunch and/or dinner? Make your invitation list and see how many participants you have. Make sure your participants know as far in advance as possible that the retreat is set.

#### **Step 3 – Plan! Plan! Plan!**

Now that you've set a date, know the time limits of the retreat and what you want to accomplish, it's time to develop a strategy on how to accomplish the goals you established in Step 1. This is where you've got to think! The more you think and allocate time to this step, the more effective your retreat is going to be.

**Leader Readers are a service of the Center for Student Development (CSD), created to support student organization success at Texas Woman's University. For more information, please contact the CSD at (940) 898-3626 or visit us on the first floor of the Student Center, 116.**

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Examples of strategies:

- The group feels like a team – provide team builders before getting started, allow for input from each member during event
- The group has an understanding of our mission – provide copies of mission statement, develop a new mission statement for this group, allow for discussion.
- The group understands the expectations – provide written copy of expectations. Make sure they are clear. Go over each one and allow for discussion. Be open to adding more and clarifying yourself.
- The group has dates – provide a calendar of dates and who needs to be there.

## **Step 4 – Finalize**

Double check location reservations, food reservations, make copies of handouts, confirm participants/speakers. This is the time, that if you have time, you can add the finishing touches – decorations, freebies, fun! All of this will enhance your retreat, but this should be considered last. The first 3 steps are your core and they should be your focus.

Your retreat is as good as the time you put into it! This is not something you can throw together and expect grand results. With good planning, a retreat can be the best thing your group experiences in building a team, reinforcing your mission, getting folks back on track, or reflecting back on past events. Whatever your purpose for the retreat is, it is a dynamic tool. If it's used well, it is time well spent by you and your members. Nothing is more appreciated than feeling your time is valued.

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