

2015

Retreat GUIDE

Year-round retreats with you in mind



Where's the best place to hold your retreat?

Things to consider as you choose your location

Kay Nysse | Tahquitz

IS YOUR GROUP ADULTS, KIDS, COUPLES, SINGLES, OR FAMILIES; OR A MIXTURE OF ALL OF THE ABOVE?

Check out what type of housing is available at the facility you are con-

tracting. Would your group be better suited to sleeping in dorms, individual rooms, or cabins? A big question can be, "Do I have to walk outside to find the bathrooms or showers?" or even, "Are there flush toilets?" Is the terrain rugged or can it be walked in high heels? Will the older members of your



group enjoy getting around there as much as the not-so-older ones? Remember, most retreats are not about endurance tests.

they will find the peace to listen for God's still, small voice? If you are able to, visit the retreat sites that you are

investigating. You'll have a much better idea of whether or not they will suit the needs of your group and a much clearer picture of the directions needed to navigate there. Driving distance can be an important factor in your decision. Everyone will have differing opinions on just how far away is far enough.

Above all else, cover your plans and your retreat in prayer. God will accomplish exactly what he desires with your retreat, whether or not everything goes according to your plans.

Psalm 23:3 says, "He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

Come and let Him restore your soul.

WOULD OUR GROUP BE HAPPIEST WITH A RUSTIC, SEMI-RUSTIC, COMFORTABLE, OR A LUXURIOUSLY PAMPERED SETTING?

Retreat facilities offer a wide variety of amenities. Ahead of time, be sure to check out whether or not your choice offers an emphasis on rugged outdoorsy type activities, includes its own in-house spa and exercise room, or is somewhere in between.

Is a pool important to the enjoyment and relaxation of your bunch? How close is the shopping adventure if that might be an interest for free time? What does the area offer in sights and recreational opportunities?

Some retreat attendees have jumped out of their cars upon arriving, tennis gear or golf clubs in hand, only to find that the facility does not have tennis courts or even a miniature golf course, contrary to what someone's second cousin's wife's brother thought he heard about the retreat five years ago.

It's sad to disappoint your group before things even get started. It makes the truly spiritual experiences at a retreat more difficult to come by.

FOOD!

What is your group's expectation with regard to meals? Unfortunately, we are food-oriented creatures, and this item can make or break a retreat experience. Is your group generally happy with "home camp cooking" or are they seeking more of a gourmet, cuisine type of fare? Most facilities have sample menus that your leaders can look over beforehand.

LAST AND CERTAINLY NOT LEAST -- RETREAT.

The word implies getting away, coming to a place apart from the normal, busy, everyday goings on to seek spiritual refreshment. Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God..."

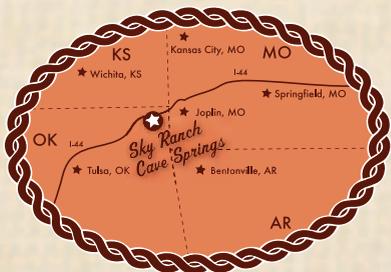
Does the facility that you are considering do that for you, and will it give your people that needed respite so that

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HOW TO HOST A CHURCH OR PLANNING RETREAT



ALYSSA CONRARDY
Co-founder and President of Prosper Strategies

viewpoint

For many organizations it is always good to hold an annual planning retreat. While I'm not big on New Year's resolutions, I am a fan of pausing to reflect on the year that has passed and set goals for the year ahead. I've done retreats like this in the past, both independently and with others, and have picked up a few tips for making them both fun and productive. If you're able to find time to squeeze in your own half-day retreat (or longer), here are some ideas to try.

ESTABLISH A PURPOSE

Don't host a planning retreat just for the sake of it.

Define a singular driving purpose for your time, and then make sure everything you plan to work on is in alignment with that purpose. For example, I have established that the purpose for our retreat is figuring out how we'll reach a certain revenue goal while maintaining our culture, our quality and our focus on the types of clients we want to work with.

SET A LOOSE AGENDA

An agenda might feel odd for a planning retreat, which most view as a time for creative, outside-the-box thinking, but trust me: if you're hosting your planning retreat last-minute like we are, you won't have time to fall off-task. An agenda can help you stay focused and productive.

Just make sure that it's not too rigid or limiting. You still need to leave time for your creative juices to flow.

GET OUT OF THE OFFICE

It's unlikely that you'll do your best big-picture thinking in the same place that you do your routine day-to-day work. Pick another location for your retreat so that the team has a chance of pace.

A hotel, retreat center, bed and breakfast or camp ground could work equally well, depending on your needs.

SET THE RULE THAT THERE ARE NO RULES

A planning retreat is a time to bring all ideas to the table, regardless of their feasibility or practicality. Set the rule upfront that your planning retreat has no rules.

Participants should be comfortable to bring up any idea they'd like, no matter how crazy it may seem. This is how many of the most influential initiatives get hatched.



REFLECT AND RELEASE

With limited time for your retreat, it might be tempting to jump head first into discussing your goals for 2016, but slow down. Your retreat will be a much more positive and rewarding experience if you first take time to reflect back on 2015. Did you set goals at the beginning of the year that you've now met or exceeded?

Be sure to recognize that accomplishment. Did your organization add significant business or grow its staff in 2015? Celebrate how you've grown. It's easy to forget how far our

HAVE FUN AND TAKE BREAKS

A retreat should not be all work and no play. Make sure you take breaks between sessions.

Snacks, physical activity and brain teasers are all great ways to keep your mind sharp through the whole retreat.

SET CLEAR ACTION ITEMS AND MEASUREMENT PLANS

One of the biggest downfalls that organizations face is turning all the talk and pie-in-the-sky plans they cover in their retreats into real action



organizations or churches can come in the span of a year unless we deliberately pause to acknowledge it.

FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS

In order to make your retreat a productive endeavor, it's important to keep your focus limited to a few key items. Don't overwhelm your retreat team with too many things to cover. For example, I focus on the following items only:

- Growth
 - Talent
 - Account management
- Nothing more, nothing less.

in the New Year.

Don't let this happen to you. Reserve at least the last hour of your retreat to set action items for your team, key performance indicators through which you'll determine whether your goals are being accomplished and measurement plans to keep everyone on track.

As Co-Founder and President of Prosper Strategies, Alyssa Conrardy guides the firm's efforts to help mission-driven organizations build communities and create change.

Local, regional facilities provide wide variety of options for every retreat need



LAKE DONIPHAN

Lake Doniphan Conference & Retreat Center is situated on 300 wooded, rolling acres surrounding two scenic lakes, just outside of Excelsior Springs, Missouri. We're only a short traffic free drive from downtown Kansas City or the Kansas City International Airport. Whether it's a camp, reunion, retreat, group, family, individual, men, women, adult or youth events... Lake Doniphan is a beautiful place to be year round! We also welcome corporate entities looking for more affordable off-site business conferences or retreats.

Guests appreciate Lake Doniphan's peaceful setting for its calming effect and the chance to stop and breathe deeply, letting go of the normal stress factors in their lives. There is something healing and restoring about the woods and the lakes that infiltrates even the busiest of people, if given a chance. Too many of us forget this, unless we deliberately schedule time apart such as for a personal or group retreat.

Founded in 1944 as a Christian youth camp, groups visiting Lake Doniphan include people of many faiths regularly hosting Jewish, Buddhist, Sufi and Kria Yoga groups. This welcoming spirit is based on a mission to provide a place of refuge and reconciliation for people from all walks of life and all faith traditions. We want to enable all our guests to find renewal and inner peace of body, mind and spirit, as they deepen personal relationships with their Creator and others in their lives. We don't limit this opportunity to just some, but welcome all who are seeking.

Groups may reserve the entire conference center if they wish, but because of the layout of the Lake Doniphan grounds, groups do not need to interact, other than to smile if they walk past each other. There are three lodges so groups can be housed in separate buildings. One guest recently commented, "It is wonderful to see the respect with which groups treat each other, regardless of their distinctly different beliefs or purpose to be here. Everyone here has always been respectful and honored other's times for worship, meditative walks around the lake, or even an enthusiastic pick-up game of basketball." We believe it is because for so many of our guests, Lake Doniphan has become sacred ground.

Lake Doniphan also hosts family reunions and secular groups just looking to get away, or to focus on a shared hobby such as scrapbooking, quilting, singing, or even karate. With an over-night capacity of 300, you'll appreciate our all-inclusive rates which include lodg-

ing, meals, meeting space, use of the grounds and many activities. To reach Jim Wheaton, Executive Director, and see if you or your group might benefit from a retreat at Lake Doniphan call (816) 630-1523 or visit their website at www.lakedoniphan.com. Guests and past events are featured on their Facebook page at Facebook/Lake Doniphan. Visit us soon!



SHEPHERD'S STAFF CONFERENCE/RETREAT CENTER

Birthing in 1983, God planted a vision on our hearts to create a non-profit Christian education center. Our desire was to serve as extension staff for the Shepherds of rural churches. Situated in Rexford Kansas, 20 miles North of I 20 on Highway 83, it has developed into a full service Center for church and ladies retreats, men's groups and kids camps.

Our first facility was the Main Center which accommodates 32 overnight guests, meeting rooms and a dining room serving "home style" meals to up to one hundred people. It wasn't long before we acquired the closed grocery store and created the Ranch House with its own food service and twenty six bunks in two dorms. Youth groups, campers and pheasant/deer hunters enjoy the fun provided there. Next we renovated the old hotel building into the Lonesome Dove Boardin' House which now has fourteen unique private bedrooms reflecting the history of the region. God then gave us the Victorian Philip Houston House, now on the Kansas Historic Registry. We were also gifted the vacant Legion Hall which now serves up to 150 folks with stage and full audio visual equipment. Call or email: 785-687-2565; office@shepherdstaff.org; shepherdstaff.org



SKY RANCH CAVE SPRINGS

Sky Ranch Cave Springs is located in the breathtaking surroundings of Northeastern Oklahoma, in the four-state area. This 1480 acre, non-denominational facility holds all the adventure of camping, as well as all of the comforts of home. Sky Ranch understands

■ Please see RETREATS next page



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"I didn't know if I'd be able to forgive this guy and I asked God for help..."

— Gentry Eddings



DEANS

FORGIVE

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stopped at a light. Their two-year-old son Dobbs died at the scene.

Hadley, a pre-school teacher, was eight months pregnant at the time. Their son, Reed, was born by emergency C-section but died three days later.

In the days following the accident, the Eddings said that they had already forgiven the driver of the truck, 28-year-old Matthew Deans. "We have, in our hearts, forgiven the man who did this. It was not the easiest thing to do, but in some ways it was because we know - Hadley and I - that Jesus Christ has forgiven us our debt... So in some ways, it was very easy to forgive a man who made an accident," Gentry said at their children's funeral.

He asked those present to also forgive Deans, and "anyone in your life who you hold anything against".

The grieving father shared sweet memories of Dobbs, telling the congregation of how the little boy loved to dance and clap, and spoke of the couple's time with Reed after he was delivered.

He told the congregation that he and Hadley had taught Dobbs words from the 46th Psalm: "Be still, and know that I am God."

He recalled that on the day before the accident, as was preparing to preside over his sister's beachside wedding and "things were a little hectic", "It was then that Dobbs's sweet voice spoke up with a timely reminder. He said, 'Be still. And know that I am God.'"

Speaking to WRAL-TV, the Eddings repeated this sentiment, saying that Deans must already be devastated enough. "I do get mad but I don't know who to be mad at. I am just mad that this happened," Hadley said.

"All I can think of is that I have driven distracted before."

"I remember being there in the hospital in the first 24 hours, I didn't even know the driver's name then," Gentry added. "I was trying to figure out all my own emotions. I didn't know if I'd be able to forgive this guy and I asked God for help. I said, 'God, you know how.'"

The couple shared about the last few minutes with their newborn.

"We were able to spend precious moments with him, holding him in our arms before he went to be with his brother in heaven," Gentry said.

In his sermon, the couple's pastor, Dave Chadwick, referenced the story found in John 11, in which Jesus wept at the death of his close friend Lazarus. "Jesus hated death," he said. "He hated what it had done to ransack his father's once-perfect world."

The pastor then offered words of encouragement, emphasizing that the couple can find comfort in the promise of heaven.

"I believe, Gentry and Hadley, with all my heart, that you'll see your boys again," their pastor said.

"I believe... that Reed and Dobbs Eddings have never been more alive than they are right now."

Hadley said the family is still grieving, and can't pretend to be perfect in the midst of tragedy. "We cry a lot. I don't want people to think we're great, you know 'God is good, we're great we're happy.' That's not what it's like, you know? 'God is good and we know that but we are sad, we're mad, we're scared, we're frustrated. There's a million emotions just all at once sometimes.'"

Asked about how they cope with having survived the devastating incident, Hadley added: "The only thing I can think of is that if God left us here, he must just not be finished with us."

RETREATS

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that purposeful and intentional planning is vital to providing an experience that is peaceful, meaningful, and beneficial to all guests. With years of retreat experience to draw from, the staff at Sky Ranch Cave Springs recognizes that a successful retreat begins the moment a potential guest makes an inquiry. With unparalleled attention to every detail, the heart of Sky Ranch is to provide excellent service, outstanding facilities, and unique opportunities for group members and leaders to connect, grow, and benefit from their time together.

Sky Ranch has the capacity to host groups of various sizes, from small family reunions to larger corporate or church retreats. A couple of different lodging options provide modern, comfortable sleeping accommodations for up to 400 guests. A variety of meeting spaces provides seating and gathering opportunities, complete with stages, a full AV inventory, and indoor/outdoor options. A new outdoor amphitheater provides a beautiful backdrop for an intimate time of worship for youth or church retreat groups or a fun twist on movie night!

While lodging and meeting spaces are crucial to retreat success, Sky Ranch knows that feeding group members well is equally important to an enjoyable event! A flexible menu plan and a fully stocked salad bar are just a few of the perks offered by the dining facility.

Open year round, Sky Ranch Cave Springs offers an excellent variety of activities - from energetic and challenging to more low impact

options - providing entertainment, fun, and relaxation for all types of groups. Horses, paintball, swimming, volleyball, basketball, disc golf, skeet shooting, and a 2,300-foot tandem zipline are just some of the incredible activities included in a Sky Ranch retreat.

The foundation of all Sky Ranch camps is to bring kids, parents and groups together and closer to God. Sky Ranch Cave Springs is com-

mitted to providing an environment where relationships are nurtured and strengthened - a place where guests and leaders can spend time investing in the group, rather than worrying with the details of the retreat. With the facilities, recreational options and amenities available, Sky Ranch Cave Springs is the perfect location for youth, ladies', men's, and family groups.

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