



Christian Retreats Network

Your Partner in Effective Off-site Ministry

AFTER CAMP

- Nurturing what students learned at summer camp.
- Guiding students who felt the call to ministry.
- Gain valuable feedback now while it's fresh.
- Hit record! So you'll have promo next year.

OFF-SEASON *is for the adults!*

Treat your team or grow your ministry with time away.

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WHO WE ARE

Christian Retreats Network has over ten years of experience hosting affordable, all-inclusive retreat packages that consistently exceed expectations.

All of our network properties strive to be an environment where faith can grow and lives can be transformed.

OUR ROOTS

Our headquarters are located at Lake Williamson Christian Center in Carlinville, Illinois, and we're here because it's where everything started!

Lake Williamson is a 65-year veteran in the field of Christian retreats. They host over 30,000 guests yearly on their 450-acre property and are well known for their signature all-inclusive retreat pricing that includes: lodging, meeting, dining, and recreation.

HOW IT STARTED

In 2007, Lake Williamson began to receive requests from other retreat properties to mentor their staff. The word spread and more properties began to reach out.

Lake Williamson partnered with two properties in Michigan to form Midwest Christian Retreats. As more properties from states outside the Midwest joined, the team chose to rename the company to **Christian Retreats Network**.

WHO WE ARE NOW

Today, we're the same fantastic team but with added flexibility, knowledge, services, and value. Even better, all seven of our network properties offer the same amazing all-inclusive retreat packages—lodging, dining, meeting, and recreation all bundled at one price!

Locations in: Illinois, Michigan, Kansas, Nebraska, Virginia, and West Virginia



/lake.williamson
/eca.team.building
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/lost.valley.retreat
/potomacparkretreat
/pinecreekretreat
/offsiteministry
/wheatstateretreat
/crossingretreatcenter



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LOOKING BACK

The network is an excellent example of the powerhouse that is **collaboration**. By combining forces, we are able to share resources and expertise to develop industry leading best practices..

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The heart of our ministry is to provide spaces where people can get away from their day-to-day and spend time with God. Our goal is to continue to provide guests with:

- a comforting environment where faith can be deepened,
- a place for fellowship where relationships flourish,
- wholesome food that is delicious and nourishing,
- fun activities that make lasting memories,
- and affordable rates that don't break the bank!

HOW WE OPERATE

Today our headquarters remains at Lake Williamson Christian Center in Carlinville, Illinois. Staff members who work at headquarters include retreat planners, management, marketing, and sales.

Each property has an on-site Conference Services Coordinator and Guest Services team. These staff members work at their respective properties.

For more information about Christian Retreats Network, please call our headquarters at 877-833-2272 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. CST.



Christian Retreats Network

877-833-2272

christianretreatsnetwork.org
info@christianretreatsnetwork.org



The Crossing Retreat Center, in Lexington, Nebraska, blends rural charm with modern comfort to create an inviting Christian retreat destination. Guests enjoy flexible meeting spaces, state-of-the-art A/V technology, and the support of a friendly, attentive team. Clean, contemporary interiors in soothing tones of gray, white, and black offer a calm and tasteful setting for any retreat. At The Crossing, everything is designed to help your group refocus, recharge, and renew your faith in God.

ALL INCLUSIVE RETREAT PACKAGES

All-inclusive retreat packages are designed to make event planning seamless and successful. All packages include lodging, dining, meeting space, and recreation activities bundled at one per-person price.

- **Lodging** – Choose from motel or dorm-style lodging
- **Meeting** – Private meeting space with A/V equipment
- **Dining** – Three high-quality meals served daily in the dining room
- **Recreation** – Both indoor and outdoor activities for all ages to keep your group busy any time of year!

NO COST ACTIVITIES

All-inclusive basic recreation will keep your group busy and entertained during free time, making planning and creating a schedule easy!

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Indoor pool | • Mini golf |
| • Gymnasium | • Sand volleyball |
| • 4-way Volleyball | • Archery tag |
| • Carpetball | • Gaga ball |
| • Nintendo Switch | • 9-square |
| • Disc golf | • Recreation fields |





UPGRADE THE FUN

Add some high-speed fun to your schedule with our go-kart track! Or, try out the inflatable slide. It can be used wet or dry, making it the perfect spot to cool off during summer or add excitement to spring and fall events.

For year-round adventure, head indoors to our brand new climbing wall, featuring three climbing lanes with varying difficulty levels for beginners through experienced climbers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Year-round overnight accommodations for up to 500 guests
- Auditorium with seating for up to 500 guests
- Christian environment and seasoned team



LEXINGTON, NEBRASKA

- 45-minute drive from Kearney, NE
- 2.5 hour drive from Lincoln, NE
- 50-minute from from Kearney Airport
- 2.5 hour drive from Lincoln Airport



CONTACT INFORMATION

833-345-8272
crossingretreat.org
info@crossingretreat.org



CHURCH CAMP

is where I learned...



“Camps are CRITICAL in the life of the Church; especially right now. You can do more with the kids in 5 days of camp than you can accomplish in an entire year of Church school.”

— Fr. Thomas Hopko

Church camp is what so many students call the highlight of their summer. It's that one week away from home that is still the hub of conversation when school starts again. From flying off the blob into the lake to worship services, late-night conversations and pizza parties, there is an endless stream of fun.

But somewhere in the middle of all that fun, something else happens: **kids learn.**

They learn new skills. They learn about themselves and each other. They learn to step outside their comfort zones. And, most importantly, they learn more about God and what it means to follow Him.

Ask a group of students to finish the sentence, “Church camp is where I learned...” and you may be surprised by just how many different answers you hear.

“...how to canoe.” “...how to shoot a bow and arrow.” “...how to paint.” “...how to play gaga ball.”

Camp gives kids opportunities to learn skills and try experiences that can be hard to find anywhere else.

A camper may arrive having never held a bow, climbed a tower or paddled a canoe. By the end of the week, they may have discovered something they love or something they never knew they were good at.

Climbing towers, zip lines, waterfront activities and countless camp specific games give students the chance to try something new in an encouraging environment. And where else can you learn the perfect chocolate-to-marshmallow ratio for a s'more?

Trying new things is about more than filling the schedule with fun. Every new experience is also an opportunity for students to learn something about themselves: I can do hard things. I can be brave. I can try again. I can do something I was afraid to do.

“...how to lead.” “...how to listen.” “...how to make friends.” “...about teamwork.”

Some of the most important things learned at camp aren't necessarily printed on the schedule.

Leadership, communication and teamwork can be intentionally developed through team-building activities, but those skills continue to grow throughout the entire week.

Campers learn to live alongside other people. They learn to compromise, respect someone else's space, keep track of their belongings and work through disagreements. They meet people they may never have approached at school. They learn when to lead and when to listen.

For many campers, a week at camp is also one of their first experiences away from Mom and Dad. In a safe and supportive environment, they get the opportunity to become a little more independent and a little more confident in themselves.

Those lessons may not come with certificates at the end of the week, but they often go home with campers just the same.

“...about God.” “...how to pray.” “...to live by faith.” “...to read the Bible.” “...to trust God.”

Most importantly, camp is a place where students learn about God.

Worship services, Bible studies, cabin devotions, conversations with leaders and even quiet moments throughout the week all work together to help students understand what it means to live a Christian life.

For some, camp becomes the place where they make a decision to follow Christ. For others, it may be where they are baptized, feel a call to ministry or experience God in a new way.

But not every life changing camp moment happens at the altar.

Sometimes a student simply learns how to pray on their own. They open their Bible because they want to read it. They ask a question they've been afraid to ask. They discover Christian friendships. They realize that their relationship with God belongs to them not just their parents, pastor or youth leader.

And that may be one of the greatest things students take home from camp: **a faith that is becoming their own.**



OVERVIEW

Wheat State Retreat Center is a year-round retreat center for groups seeking rest, renewal, and connection with God. Located just outside Augusta, KS, and surrounded by prairie grasslands and mature trees, Wheat State offers guest groups a peaceful environment to reflect and grow individually and together. The retreat center's central location and dedicated staff make it easy for your group to step away from the noise and draw closer to what matters most.

Plan your next retreat, camp, or conference at Wheat State to get away from everything and get alone with God!

ALL-INCLUSIVE RETREAT PACKAGES

All-inclusive retreat packages are designed to make event planning seamless and successful. All packages include lodging, dining, meeting space, and recreation activities bundled at one per-person price.

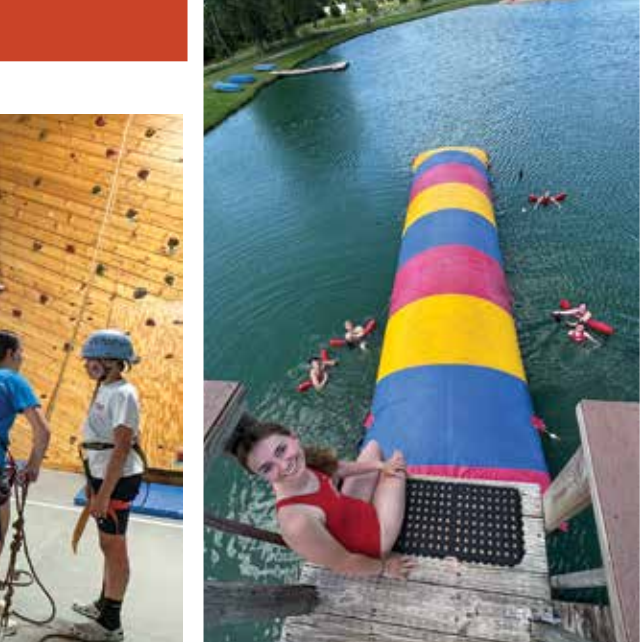
- **Lodging** – Various dorm configurations for your group size
- **Meeting** – Private meeting space with A/V equipment
- **Dining** – Three high-quality meals served daily in the dining room
- **Recreation** – Both indoor and outdoor activities for all ages to keep your group busy any time of year!

NO COST ACTIVITIES

Built-in recreation will keep your group busy and entertained during free time, making planning easier!

- Blacklight dodgeball
- Blacklight pickleball
- Pickleball
- Indoor gym space
- Giant billiards
- 4-way ping pong
- Lounge for games
- Gaga ball
- 9 Square
- Sand volleyball
- Basketball court
- Disc golf
- Hiking trails
- Recreation fields





UPGRADE THE FUN

The beachfront offers guests a place to relax and enjoy God's beautiful creation. Groups can cool off with a swim in the lake, enjoy a peaceful paddle boat ride, soar sky-high from the famous BLOB or zip across the water on the zip line.

Beyond the water, groups can battle it out at Wheat State's one-of-a-kind paintball course or take on the outdoor rock-climbing tower!

HIGHLIGHTS

- Year-round overnight accommodations for up to 400 guests
- Auditorium with seating for up to 750
- Christian environment and team



AUGUSTA, KANSAS

- 30-minute drive from Wichita, KS
- 2.75-hour drive from Kansas City, MO
- 30-minute drive from Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport



CONTACT INFORMATION

833-943-2878
wheatstateretreat.org
info@wheatstateretreat.org

Capture It While It's Fresh



When the buses pull away and another camp season comes to an end, ministry leaders naturally begin looking ahead. There are follow-up conversations to have, lessons to reinforce and eventually another camp to plan.

But before you move on too quickly, there is one more opportunity sitting right in front of you: **Ask your students what they learned. And record their answers.**

Right now, camp is fresh in their minds. They still remember the nervous feeling before stepping off the zip line. They're still laughing about what happened in the cabin. They remember the worship song that hit differently on Wednesday night. They can still tell you what their counselor said or what they prayed about at the altar.

Those memories are powerful and they can also become some of your best material for promoting camp next year.

At your first youth service or gathering after camp, pull out a phone and ask each student to finish one simple sentence: **"Church camp is where I learned..."**

Don't worry about perfectly scripted answers. In fact, the unscripted ones may be better.

One student might say, "Church camp is where I learned how to shoot a bow."

Another might say, "Church camp is where I learned that I can make friends."

And another may say, "Church camp is where I learned how to really pray."

Together, those little clips tell the story of camp better than almost any promotional graphic can!

You can also ask a few additional questions:

- What was your favorite part of camp?
- What is your favorite memory from the week?
- What did God teach you at camp?
- What would you tell someone who has never been to camp?
- Why do you want to come back next year?

For students who experienced something significant spiritually, consider recording longer testimonies as well. Give them the opportunity to share what God did in their lives in their own words. **Then save it all.**

When registration opens next year, you won't have to try to recreate the excitement of camp months after the fact. You'll already have photos, videos, quotes and testimonies captured when that excitement was genuine and fresh.

A 15-second video can become a social media post. A student's quote can become a registration graphic. Several "Church camp is where I learned..." clips can become a promotional video. A testimony can be shared with parents, your congregation or potential campers.

And there is another benefit: **students become the ones inviting other students to camp.**

Instead of adults simply telling them, "Camp will be good for you," prospective campers get to hear someone their own age say, *"This is what camp meant to me."*

That is a powerful invitation.

So while you're celebrating another incredible summer and everything your students experienced, take a few minutes to capture it. Ask the questions. Record the stories. Save the memories. Because next year, when another student is deciding whether to sign up, the best person to tell them why camp matters may be the student who just came home from it.

Don't worry about perfectly scripted answers. In fact, the unscripted ones may be better.



Lake Williamson
RESTORE • RENEW • RECONNECT

OVERVIEW

Lake Williamson Christian Center has been serving Christian groups with excellence for over 65 years. Located in Carlinville, Illinois, the retreat center spans 435 peaceful acres of wooded areas, open fields, and its namesake lake on the south side of the property. It's an ideal venue for groups who wish to unplug from everyday distractions but still want a strong Wi-Fi connection and high-quality A/V technology. At Lake Williamson, guests will find the perfect balance of retreat and connection. The dedicated and experienced team joyfully honors God by offering Christ-like hospitality and creating a space where guests can restore, renew, and reconnect with Him.

ALL INCLUSIVE RETREAT PACKAGES:

All-inclusive retreat packages are designed to make event planning seamless and successful. All packages include lodging, dining, meeting space, and recreation activities bundled at one per-person price.

- **Lodging** – Choose from motel or dorm-style lodging
- **Meeting** – Private meeting space with A/V equipment
- **Dining** – Three high-quality meals served daily in the dining room
- **Recreation** – Both indoor and outdoor activities for all ages to keep your group busy any time of year!

NO COST ACTIVITIES

All this fun (and more!) is included in your retreat at no extra charge. We have plenty of indoor and outdoor activities to keep your group entertained day and night.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Multiple gymnasiums | • 9 Square |
| • Indoor 9 Square | • Gaga ball |
| • Blacklight mini golf | • Sand volleyball |
| • Blacklight sports | • Obstacle course |
| • Fitness center | • Archery |
| • Wallyball | • Disc golf |
| • Game room | • Ladder golf |
| • Ping pong | • Human foosball |
| • Billiards | • Bocce ball |
| | • Hayrides and bonfires |
| | • Hiking trails |





UPGRADE THE FUN

Schedule an afternoon at the outdoor pool, the beach, or BOTH! The large outdoor pool features a 10-foot-deep diving area perfect for cannonballs and competitions. At the beach, guests can race down the plunge slide, get launched from the famous blob, enjoy a peaceful ride in a paddleboat, and more!

Prefer to stay indoors? The indoor pool is open year-round. It features both shallow and deep areas, a baby pool for little ones, and a relaxing hot tub for adults.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Year-round overnight accommodations for up to 1,350 guests
- Over 20 meeting spaces accommodating 25-1500 guests
- Christian environment and seasoned team



*Continued
on page 14-17*

CARLINVILLE, ILLINOIS



- 50-minute drive from Springfield, IL
- 1 hour drive from St. Louis, MO
- 1.25-hour drive from St. Louis Lambert International Airport
- 1 hour drive from Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport



CONTACT INFORMATION

800-500-5922
lakewilliamson.org
info@lakewilliamson.org



Lake Williamson



SUMMER CAMPS





YEAR ROUND RETREATS





Eagle Crest Adventures offers a variety of quality program options for groups of all ages and abilities. Their professionally facilitated programs are designed to help groups improve communication, build trust, and develop leadership skills.

- High ropes
- Zipline
- Axe throwing
- Group initiatives
- Climbing gym
- Outdoor education
- Escape rooms



CONTACT INFORMATION

800.500.5922
lakewilliamson.org/eagle-crest
info@lakewilliamson.org



TEAM BUILDING *vs.* TEAM BONDING

I love pizza. I adore pizza. I crave pizza! As you can imagine, when it's time for pizza, I call up my local Mexican restaurant and order up a deep-dish supreme pizza with extra cheese. Then I sit back and wait for the delivery driver to arrive.

Wait. What? Of course not! When I want pizza, I call the pizza place. When I want Mexican, I call the Mexican joint.

Frequently, groups declare they want a team "building" experience, but what they end up ordering from Eagle Crest is not necessarily team building. So, allow me to take few moments of your time to explain the difference between team building and team bonding.

Team building refers to a pre-designed program that focuses on essential skills such as communication, conflict resolution, leadership development, problem solving, etc. When a group leader schedules a team building program, they are generally looking for measurable outcomes. They want their professional team to improve on interoffice communication. They want their student leaders to discover that leading is not simply barking orders. They want their youth group to work past cliques and conflicts.

Team bonding refers to a shared experience that the group participates in to create common memories and bring them closer together. When the group leader schedules a team bonding program, they are generally looking for an event that will inspire the group to feel closer to one another. They want their professional group to have fun together. They want their classroom to be more inclusive. They want their youth group to feel more comfortable around each other.

As you look at both of those explanations you will notice overlap. That is to be expected, as both types of programs are designed to help groups grow together. The distinction largely comes down to intent.

The intent of a team building program is to establish a functioning team or help an established team improve its performance. The intent of a team bonding program is to create a shared encounter within a group of individuals who may or may not work together as a team.





pages 22-23 | Faholo.org



pages 24-25 | LostValleyRetreat.org



THE CROSSING
RETREAT CENTER

pages 4-5 | CrossingRetreat.org



PINE CREEK
RETREAT CENTER

pages 32-33 | PineCreekRetreat.org



Lake Williamson

pages 12-17 | LakeWilliamson.org



Potomac Park
RETREAT AND
CONFERENCE
CENTER

pages 30-31 | PotomacParkRetreat.org



get away from everything ... get alone with God

pages 8-9 | WheatStateRetreat.org



Christian Retreats Network

Your Partner in Effective Off-site Ministry

FIND YOUR Destination



877-833-2272 | christianretreatsnetwork.org
info@christianretreatsnetwork.org

AFTER CAMP:

Reflect, Recharge, & Reconnect

*"Before moving on
to the next event
on the ministry
calendar consider
bringing your
leadership team
together one more
time: not for the
students, but for
yourselves."*

The last camper has gone home. The supplies have been packed away, the photos have been posted, and students are heading back to school. After weeks, or even months, of planning and preparation, another summer of camp is officially in the books.

For youth pastors and leaders, it can be tempting to close the book on camp too. But before moving on to the next event on the ministry calendar consider bringing your leadership team together one more time: not for the students, but for yourselves.

A fall leadership retreat can serve two important purposes:

1. A chance to debrief while camp is still fresh
2. A chance to rest and celebrate the people who worked so hard to make it happen



DEBRIEF WHILE IT'S FRESH

By the time planning begins for next summer, many of the little details from this year's camp will already be difficult to remember. What worked incredibly well? What sounded good during planning but didn't quite work in practice? Which activities did students love?

Where did the schedule feel rushed? What would you absolutely do again and what should never make a return appearance?



RECHARGE AFTER A BUSY SUMMER

Camp ministry can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be exhausting. Youth leaders spend the summer pouring into students, solving problems, keeping schedules moving, and doing whatever needs to be done. A fall retreat is an opportunity to intentionally pour back into the people who spent the summer serving everyone else.

Sit around a bonfire. Make s'mores. Drink hot chocolate. Add adventure recreation like an escape room or axe throwing. Try the activities the students wouldn't stop talking about. Laugh together without worrying about where everyone needs to be in ten minutes.



CELEBRATE BEFORE YOU START AGAIN

Ministry calendars have a way of moving quickly. Camp ends, school begins, fall programming starts, and suddenly everyone is already looking toward the next big thing. Before that happens, create space to acknowledge what God did through your team this summer.

Share favorite camp memories. Tell the stories that still make everyone laugh. Celebrate the wins. Talk about the moments when you saw students grow. Thank the volunteers who stepped up when things got difficult. Pray together for the students who went home changed and for the ministry year ahead.

There will be plenty of time to make lists, build schedules, and start planning next year's camp. A fall retreat can certainly give you a head start on all of that.

But it can also be something simpler: a chance to look back at what God has done, appreciate the people who made it possible, and take a little time to rest before doing it all again.



OVERVIEW

Faholo Conference Center, located in Grass Lake, Michigan, is a warm and welcoming retreat surrounded by peaceful landscapes and mature trees. Guests enjoy the healthy balance of quiet reflection, spiritual renewal, and exciting recreation. Designed to facilitate total renewal through Christ-like hospitality, Faholo is a place where groups can deepen their faith, connect with nature, and create lasting memories together. With spacious meeting areas, peaceful surroundings, and a wide variety of activities, it's the ideal destination to step away from the everyday and draw closer to God.

ALL INCLUSIVE RETREAT PACKAGES

All-inclusive retreat packages are designed to make event planning seamless and successful. All packages include lodging, dining, meeting space, and recreation activities bundled at one per-person price.

- **Lodging** – Choose from motel or dorm-style lodging
- **Meeting** – Private meeting space with A/V equipment
- **Dining** – Three high-quality meals served daily in the dining room
- **Recreation** – Both indoor and outdoor activities for all ages to keep your group busy any time of year!

NO COST ACTIVITIES

There's no shortage of fun at Faholo! All retreat packages include the following (and more) at no extra cost.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| • Gymnasium | • Basketball |
| • Pickleball | • 4-way volleyball |
| • Fitness room | • Disc golf |
| • Game tables | • Horseshoes |
| • Board games | • Cornhole |
| | • Giant lawn games |
| | • Recreation fields |
| | • Fishing |





UPGRADE THE FUN

Add a little something extra to your schedule! Premium Recreation activities are a great way to energize your group, create core memories, and add a little pizzazz to your itinerary.

- Indoor and outdoor pools
- Beachfront
- Indoor rock climbing wall
- Ropes Course - High Level
- Ropes Course - Low Level
- Wagon ride and bonfires
- Go Karts

HIGHLIGHTS

- Year-round overnight accommodations for up to 500 guests
- Auditorium with seating for up to 600 guests
- Christian environment and seasoned leadership team



GRASS LAKE, MICHIGAN

- 30-minute drive from Ann Arbor, MI
- 45-minute drive from Lansing, MI
- 45-minute drive from Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport
- 1.15 hour drive from Gerald R Ford International Airport



CONTACT INFORMATION

888-532-4656
faholo.org
info@faholo.org



OVERVIEW

Lost Valley Retreat Center is a three-season retreat center located in northern Michigan's Lower Peninsula, just outside Gaylord, Michigan. Tucked away in a quiet, wooded setting with lakefront access, Lost Valley invites groups to unplug, reconnect, and soak in the beauty of God's creation. Every aspect of the retreat center reflects a cheerful heart and Christ's love, creating a welcoming space for rest and renewal. With its unique blend of peace and adventure, Lost Valley is the perfect backdrop for your next retreat, camp, or conference.

ALL INCLUSIVE RETREAT PACKAGES

All-inclusive retreat packages are designed to make event planning seamless and stress-free. All packages include lodging, dining, meeting space, and recreation activities bundled at one per-person price.

- **Lodging** – Various dorm configurations for your group size
- **Meeting** – Private meeting space with A/V equipment
- **Dining** – Three high-quality meals served daily in the dining room
- **Recreation** – Both indoor and outdoor activities for all ages to keep your group busy any time of year!

NO COST ACTIVITIES

The outdoors take center stage at Lost Valley with plenty of activities to keep your group active and having fun.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| • Gymnasium | • Recreation fields |
| • Outdoor basketball court | • Hayrides |
| • Sand volleyball | • Bonfire sites |
| • Disc golf | • Hiking trails |





UPGRADE THE FUN

Fresh air and fun go hand in hand at Lost Valley! Consider scheduling some rest and relaxation at Pettifor Lake Beach, where your group can unwind and enjoy God's creation. Guests can choose to spend the afternoon swimming in the lake, building sandcastles on the shore, or taking a peaceful canoe ride. Looking for something more challenging? Amp up the excitement with the go-karts, high ropes course, or climbing tower.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Open seasonally from May through mid-October
- Overnight accommodations for up to 250 guests
- Spacious Tabernacle with seating for up to 250 guests
- Christian environment and team



**GAYLORD,
MICHIGAN**

- 1.25 hour drive from Traverse City, MI
- 2.5-hour drive from Lansing, MI
- 1 hour drive from Cherry Capital Airport



CONTACT INFORMATION

888.532.4656
lostvalleyretreat.org
info@lostvalleyretreat.org

HEARING GOD'S CALL IN A BUSY WORLD

Our lives are often filled with nonstop activity and responsibility, making it difficult to pause long enough to think about the future, let alone hear the Lord's direction for it. One of the great blessings of attending a camp or retreat is the opportunity to slow down and truly listen. Many students who enroll at Called College share that their journey began with a moment at camp or at a conference at Lake Williamson, where

they felt the Lord calling them not only to repentance and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but also into vocational ministry.

Christian conference and retreat centers provide an environment where students can connect with God through creation, play, worship, and dedicated services, free from the distractions that often drown out the still, small voice of the Lord.





WHEN A STUDENT EXPRESSES A CALL TO MINISTRY

So what are parents and pastors to do when they have a student returns home from one of these events and shares that they feel called into ministry?

1. LISTEN TO YOUR STUDENT

The first and most important step is simply to listen. Don't just hear their words, listen to their heart. Ask questions. Be curious. Through conversation, you'll begin to hear recurring themes and help bring clarity to what they're feeling.

Your student may not have all the answers, and that's okay. The goal isn't to solve everything at once, but to help them process. For some families, this can feel unsettling especially if vocational ministry wasn't part of the long-term plan or feels unfamiliar. That's why it's essential to respond instead of react. Reacting lets fear and confusion lead the conversation. Responding allows authenticity, openness, and trust to guide your next steps.

2. LISTENING FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE

The next step is to make intentional space to listen to the Holy Spirit. Set aside time, both individually and together, to pray about the future. Spend time in Scripture. Psalm 119:105 reminds us, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." God often reveals our next steps through His Word.

This is also an opportunity to teach students how to discern the Lord's voice. Anything the Holy Spirit speaks will always align with Scripture. Helping them recognize this alignment is a vital part of their spiritual formation.

3. WALKING IN UNITY AND SEEKING WISE COUNSEL

Another important step is to move in unity. Encourage your student to talk with others who are currently in ministry. Ask them how they recognized their calling and what their journey looked like. Their stories often bring reassurance, insight, and confirmation.

Pastors, give students opportunities to serve NOW. Allow them to step into small responsibilities, spend time discipling them, and help them grow in their gifts. These early opportunities lay a foundation for future ministry.

This is where Called College steps in. Our mission is to train young men and women for vocational ministry by providing an excellent academic program and practical, hands-on training. Located on the campus of Lake Williamson, Called College allows us to continue walking alongside the same students whose spiritual journeys often begin here.

A FINAL WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

As you walk with your student and prepare for the future God has already set before them, I am praying this scripture over you:

Proverbs 3:5–6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight."

Article contributed by Called College
www.CalledCollege.org



IMAGINE FEELING TOTALLY READY

LET THE ADULTS

Have Some Fun!



Summer ministry often puts the focus on kids and students. There are camps, Vacation Bible Schools, mission trips, youth events, and seemingly endless activities filling the calendar. But once students head back to school and the pace of summer begins to slow, fall offers an opportunity to shift some of that attention to the adults in your church.

And maybe it's time to let them have some fun too!

An adult retreat doesn't have to mean asking people to give up an entire week. For busy adults juggling work, family, church, and everything in between, even one or two nights away can provide valuable time to step outside the normal routine, connect with others, and focus on their faith.

The key is making that time intentional.

Start With the "Why"

Before filling a schedule with sessions and activities, decide what you want people to take home with them.

Create space for people to grow deeper in their faith? Give people who are constantly serving an opportunity to rest? Or simply help members of your congregation get to know one another beyond Sunday mornings?

Once you know the purpose, allow it to guide the rest of the retreat. Sessions, activities, meals, recreation, and even downtime can all contribute to the same goal.

At the same time, resist the temptation to simply recreate a normal church service somewhere else. A retreat is valuable precisely because it takes people outside their normal environment and routine. That might mean a Bible study around a campfire, prayer beside a lake, or simply an unhurried meal around a table.

Sometimes a change in setting, opens the door for conversations and connections that don't happen anywhere else.

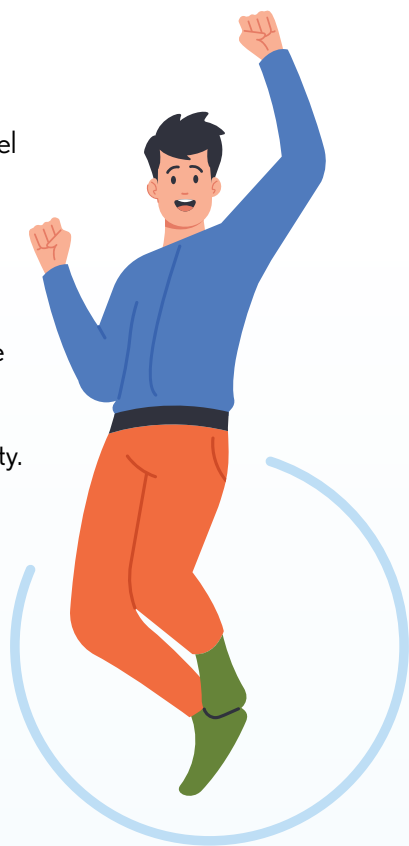
Don't Schedule Every Minute

One of the easiest mistakes to make when planning a retreat is trying to make every moment productive.

Breakfast. Session. Activity. Lunch. Session. Small group. Dinner. Worship. Activity.

Before long, the retreat starts to feel suspiciously like another busy day. Leave some white space in the schedule. Let people linger over coffee after breakfast. Give them an afternoon hour with nowhere they are required to be. Leave time after a session for a conversation to continue instead of immediately rushing everyone to the next activity.

Give them space to worship and grow, but also to rest. Let them laugh. Let them play. Let them stay up too late talking or sit around the table long after the meal is over. Those moments aren't distractions from the purpose of a retreat; often, they're an important part of it.



Find the Right Time

Timing can make a big difference when planning an adult retreat. Early fall and early spring can provide natural windows between some of the busiest seasons on the church calendar. September and October offer a chance to reconnect after summer before the holidays arrive, while March and April can provide a much-needed break after a long winter and before summer ministry ramps up again.

Give Adults Permission to Retreat

Church adults spend a lot of time doing: working, parenting, volunteering, serving, planning, and caring for others. A retreat creates an opportunity to set some of that aside, even briefly, and simply be together.

After all, retreats aren't just for kids. Sometimes the adults could use a little time away, and a little fun too.



OVERVIEW

Potomac Park Retreat and Conference Center is located in Falling Waters, West Virginia, near the Washington D.C./Baltimore area. Guest Groups will find a flexible and casual setting that can be easily transformed to fit their theme, brand, and vision. The on-site team is committed to providing excellent customer service and Christ-like hospitality.

Potomac Park was designed to be a destination to encounter God, and prides itself on offering Christian groups a peaceful and welcoming venue year-round. The spacious grounds and modern amenities provide groups with everything they need to plan a top-notch retreat, camp, or conference.

ALL INCLUSIVE RETREAT PACKAGES

All-inclusive retreat packages are designed to make event planning seamless and successful. All packages include lodging, dining, meeting space, and recreation activities bundled at one per-person price.

- **Lodging** – Choose from motel or dorm-style lodging
- **Meeting** – Private meeting space with A/V equipment
- **Dining** – Three high-quality meals served daily in the dining room
- **Recreation** – Both indoor and outdoor activities for all ages to keep your group busy any time of year!

NO COST ACTIVITIES

All this fun (and more!) is included in your retreat at no extra charge. We have plenty of indoor and outdoor activities to keep your group entertained.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Indoor gymnasium | • Hiking trails |
| • Fitness Center | • Hayrides & bonfires |
| • Game Room | • Snow sledding hill |
| • Disc Golf | • Playgrounds |
| • Sand Volleyball | • Horseshoes |
| • Gaga Ball | • Cornhole |
| • Pickleball | • Mini Golf Course |
| • Recreation fields | • Slippery Slopes dry tubing slope |





UPGRADE THE FUN

Beat the heat at the outdoor pool open seasonally from May through September. The Olympic-sized pool can accommodate up to 200 guests and is supervised by American Red Cross-certified life-guards for your safety.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Year-round overnight accommodation for up to 400 guests
- Auditorium with seating for up to 700
- Christian environment



FALLING WATERS, WEST VIRGINIA

- 1.5 hour drive northeast of the Baltimore and D.C. region
- 1.5 hours from the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport
- 1.5 hours from the Baltimore Washington International Airports



CONTACT INFORMATION

855.929.7722
potomacparkretreat.org
info@potomacparkretreat.org



OVERVIEW

Pine Creek Retreat Center is located in Gore, Virginia, and spans across 85 acres in the breathtaking Blue Ridge Mountains.

Surrounded by towering evergreens, the retreat center is just a short drive from the Washington D.C./Baltimore region, making it an ideal venue for metropolitan groups seeking to unwind and reconnect with God in a setting close to nature.

Pine Creek provides Christian groups with a peaceful setting for retreats, camps, and conferences. The spacious grounds, modern facilities, and stunning mountain views provide groups with everything they need to host a meaningful, powerful, and well-organized event.

ALL-INCLUSIVE RETREAT PACKAGES

All-inclusive retreat packages are designed to make event planning seamless and successful. All packages include lodging, dining, meeting space, and recreation activities bundled at one per-person price.

- **Lodging** – Choose from motel or dorm-style lodging
- **Meeting** – Private meeting space with A/V equipment
- **Dining** – Three high-quality meals served daily in the dining room
- **Recreation** - Both indoor and outdoor activities for all ages to keep your group busy any time of year!

NO COST ACTIVITIES

All this fun (and more!) is included in your retreat—at no extra charge. We have indoor and outdoor activities to keep your group entertained.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| • Indoor gymnasium | • Horseshoes |
| • Basketball | • Cornhole |
| • Bonfires | • Walking/hiking trails |
| • Sand volleyball | • Sledding hills |
| • Pickleball | • Recreation fields |
| • 9-square | • Disc golf |
| • Gaga ball | • Pond with water activities |





UPGRADE THE FUN

Add a little something extra to your schedule for a small added fee! Take a swim in the outdoor pool, tackle the rock climbing wall, or enjoy the newest attraction, Timber Rush, an exhilarating dry tubing slope that's fun for all ages.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Year-round overnight accommodation for up to 340 guests
- Auditorium with seating for up to 350
- Christian environment



GORE, VIRGINIA

- 2-hour drive northeast of the Baltimore and D.C. region
- 1.5 hours from the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Engaging Every Generation:

Tips for Planning a Multigenerational Event

Baby Boomers. Gen X. Millennials. Gen Z. What do these five generations have in common? They are all active in ministry. Now, what sets them apart? Plenty of things, but in regard to ministry, they each bring a unique:

- ***perspective***
- ***communication style***
- ***set of expectations***

When planning any event, planners have to think about their target audience. Identifying the target audience helps align future decisions, such as what social media platforms to use or what design to use on graphics.

When planning a multigenerational event, planners have to adjust to appeal

to a wide range of ages. This task requires purposeful planning and a creative approach.

Whether you are planning a retreat, conference, or church fellowship night, here are some practical strategies to help you prepare for a multi-generational audience.

Pre-Planning: Involve Multi-Generational Representatives on Your Planning Committee

One of the best ways to plan a multigenerational event is to plan alongside a multigenerational committee! Having a diverse planning committee will ensure your event meets

the needs of each generation. Each member will provide value to the team by providing insights into what resonates with their generation.

By including members from each age group, your team can tackle planning with an inclusive approach. An added benefit: members can act as ambassadors and help generate enthusiasm and interest within their social circles and personal networks.

Planning Tip #1: Offer a Variety of Entertainment and Communication Styles

Entertainment preferences and communication styles can vary widely across generations, so aim to include a mix of activities and presentation

formats. Blending these preferences will ensure that everyone feels considered and engaged. While it may not be possible to please everyone, a balanced schedule shows intentional and thoughtful planning.

Speakers & Worship: Choose a mix of speakers from various generations. This ensures that multiple perspectives are shared and heard. Similarly, when planning worship, blend contemporary and traditional styles to cater to a range of musical preferences.

Workshops & Discussions: Plan for a blend of interactive sessions with traditional lectures to cater to different age groups. Millennials and Gen Z tend to prefer small groups and breakout sessions, while Baby Boomers and Gen X often favor theatre-style presentations. Meet in the middle and compromise to engage everyone.

Games & Social Activities: Mix it up! Consider board games, trivia, interactive activities, videos, and classic outdoor games to cater to different interests. Schedule low-stress social opportunities that encourage multi-generational mingling.

Tech & Accessibility: Make sure event information is available digitally and in print. It's so important to make information widely available. Some guests will prefer paper, while others are more likely to take a screenshot of the itinerary on their phone.

Planning Tip #2: Mix Up Seating Arrangements to Encourage Cross-Generational Conversations

A ministry event is an excellent opportunity to cultivate meaningful cross-generational relationships. We grow in fellowship, and there is a great deal of spiritual benefit from breaking bread with new friends. However, guests naturally gravitate toward other guests they know, so planners have to get creative to get conversations flowing!

Assigned Seating: Create a randomized seating chart using Excel or Google Sheets. Start by choosing a seating style and the number of chairs per table. For example, the style is round tables with eight chairs each. Then, enter guest names and ages in the sheet. Sort the list by age, from oldest to youngest, and then divide it into eight equal groups. Lastly, pull one name from each group to create age-balanced tables. Repeat until everyone is seated.

Conversation Starters: Provide conversation starters at each table to help fuel conversation. Purchase Christian Conversation Starter packs online, or check out Etsy.com's instant digital downloadable and printable files for under \$5.

Team-Based Activities: Plan small group activities that require guests to collaborate and work together. Simple activities are best! Something too challenging can be more stressful than fun. Stick with something light-hearted, such as Lego kits or puzzles.

Color Blocking: This tactic works best with small groups of 20 to 30 people. As guests enter the room, allow them to choose their seats, but hand each person a color-coded item. The color of the item will determine their group later on. Once everyone is seated and you're ready to begin, instruct them to look at their item and find others with the same color. Items can be the event schedule printed on different colored paper or a style of name tag. Get creative! But keep it a secret until it's time to switch it up.

Planning Tip #3: Incorporate Service Projects for All Ages

A shared interest is one of the best ways to unite people of different backgrounds. Provide a common ground for guests and incorporate a service project into your event. Christians of all ages will enjoy the opportunity to reinforce the heart of ministry by serving others together.

Hands-On Projects: Organize multigenerational teams for activities such as assembling care packages or writing encouragement letters.

Skill-Sharing Sessions: This is a fun ice-breaker for breakout sessions! Instruct everyone to "teach" the group something unique that they know how to do. Examples might include how to change a bike tire, moves to a popular dance, or ways to organize your iPhone apps.

Community Outreach: Plan a group service outing where attendees work together, such as a park cleanup or assisting at a local shelter.

Post-Planning: Establish Cross-Generational Prayer Partners

This follow-up element may push some guests out of their comfort zone, but it's a great way to extend the influence of your event far beyond the time spent together.

Pair attendees up towards the end of the event. Provide each pair with a worksheet or piece of paper to write down prayer requests, contact information, etc. Instruct prayer partners to check in with each other periodically over the next three months, offering encouragement and continued prayer support.

Planning a multigenerational ministry event can be a challenge, but with intentional, thoughtful, and prayerful design, it can also be a meaningful opportunity to bring all ages together. Every generation has something valuable to offer, and when we honor those differences, we create space for deeper connection and unity in the body of Christ.

If you've been given the opportunity to plan such a multigenerational event, consider it a true privilege. When we embrace the richness of every age and stage, we reflect the heart of God and strengthen His church.



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