

How to Plan a Brotherhood Retreat

WHAT IS A BROTHERHOOD RETREAT?

A brotherhood retreat is a time for reflection, to work out differences, set goals for the new year, and to enjoy each other's company. It's a time for everyone to step away from the stresses of school, other commitments, and personal concerns to focus on the chapter and what the chapter needs.

WHERE SHOULD IT BE HELD?

Ideally, your brotherhood retreat should be away from the chapter facility. It can be on campus or somewhere in the local community. It should be away from the chapter facility to limit distractions and so members won't feel compelled to focus on something else during the retreat, catch up on coursework, or escape and take a nap.



IDEALLY A REREAT SHOULD:

- Identify and get problems out in the open.
- Promote communication among all members.
- Establish chapter goals and objectives for the term or year.
- Establish some positive solutions for problems which have been identified.
- Identify and relate the philosophy of the organization.
- Match committee commitment with programs proposed.
- Result in a collection of suggested events/activities which meet the needs of the members.
- Suit the needs of your chapter/colony

Your brotherhood retreat should not look the same every year. Think about the components of your retreat and re-examine the purpose every year.

COMPONENTS OF A BROTHERHOOD RETREAT

Specific Learning Outcomes

What do you want the members to learn from this? Do you want to focus specifically on a topic such as recruitment or goal setting or just build brotherhood? Think about what you want the members to remember (and do) after the retreat and start your planning from there.

Sense of Purpose

Don't just tell the members to write a date on their calendar and then expect them to be excited to attend the retreat! Let the members know what you have planned for them. They'll come to the program better prepared and you'll have a more productive program because of it.

Bonding

No matter what the retreat focus is, one of the most important activities to do is to remind the members why they joined. Create time for them to become re-acquainted with each other and to develop a renewed sense of commitment to the organization.

Sense of Accomplishment

Whether the purpose of the retreat is goal setting or not, give the members a short list of goals for the retreat. What do you want to have happen by the end of the retreat? How can the members help accomplish those goals?

Pace It Out

Don't forget about breaks! No one can work for four hours straight without a break. Meal times are terrific opportunities for everyone to pitch in and help. Those who enjoy cooking can take a lead. Working together in a fun environment will stimulate their volunteerism.

Follow Up

What's supposed to happen after the retreat? Will the goals you developed be talked about again or forgotten as soon as the retreat is over? Do committee chairs and members know their assigned duties or follow-up needed as they leave?

STEPS FOR PLANNING THE REREAT



Step 6: Gather Materials

Make a detailed list of what's needed on-site!

Step 5: Schedule of Events

Once you have the logistics figured out, create an agenda. Remind members to bring specific materials, if needed!

Step 4: Choose a Place

Depending on the mood you're trying to create, look at a lodge, church, campus meeting space, or a special location specific to your campus.

Step 3: Determine Length & Time of the Retreat

Now that you know the activities, how long will this take? When will the retreat be - Saturday afternoon, Friday night? Be sensitive to heavy course-load times!

Step 2: Decide on Activities

No matter what the purpose of the retreat is, take time for some structured brotherhood development activities. Activities which emphasize the mission of the organization or refer to your ritual and founding values are always strong components to a retreat.

Step 1: Determine Attendance

Depending on your goals for the retreat, who should be there? Is the purpose of the retreat brotherhood development and, therefore, all members should attend? Is this a time just for new members or new initiates to become acquainted with each other and the organization?