

CHRIS & CARRIE KALLAL'S

STEALTHS



50

IDEAS FOR

RETREAT

AWESOMENESS



THE KALLAL'S



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Carrie has been working at Camps longer than Chris! Starting as a CIT at Camp Manitoumi in 2000, then moving onto Girl's Leader, Dining Room Hostess, Counselor, Craft Person, Camp Store Director, Canteen Manager, Bookkeeper, Food Service Director, Assistant Director, and now Guest Services Director at SBYCamp! In her free time, she loves to craft, test out new recipes, and talk camp!

When they find time, Chris and Carrie love to search online for the newest, unique ideas to implement into their Camp as well as visiting multiple camps over the years to "steal" ideas from them!

The Kallals love camp so much that they spend a lot of their free time teaching others about camp! They have taught camping classes at different conferences around the world and written a ton of books about the various aspects of camp life. As well, Chris co-hosts a podcast, Scamp Life - The Programming Side, where he talks all things Camp Programming.

They have a total of 4 children, Rowan, Emmalina, Autumn, and Aurora, as well as a couple dogs, cat, some hissing cockroaches, bearded dragon, leopard gecko, frog, turtle, and a pet skunk, named Stinkerbell!

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Introduction

Retreats Are Built, Not Scheduled

Most retreats do not fail because of bad teaching, weak speakers, or poor intentions. They struggle because of friction. Friction shows up in small ways. Guests arrive unsure where to go. They are tired but rushed. They hesitate to ask for help. They wonder what comes next. None of these things feel catastrophic, but together they quietly drain energy, trust, and openness.

Great retreats are not defined by big moments alone. They are shaped by hundreds of small decisions that consistently say, *You are welcome. You are safe. You matter.*

This book is not about adding more programming. It is about **removing barriers**. It is about designing experiences that anticipate needs before guests feel them, create calm instead of confusion, and offer hospitality that feels thoughtful rather than forced. It is written for camps and retreat centers that want to move beyond "good enough" and toward

intentional excellence.

You will notice a few important things as you read. First, this book is not meant to be done all at once. Not every idea fits every retreat, group, or season. Excellence is not built in a weekend. It is built through steady improvement over time.

Second, many of these ideas are simple. That is intentional. The goal is not to impress guests, but to care for them well. Simple done consistently almost always outperforms elaborate done occasionally.

Third, this is not a checklist to complete. It is a mindset to adopt. You are not meant to implement everything. You are meant to **notice more**, plan more thoughtfully, and lead more calmly.

If you use this book to spark conversations with your team, evaluate your systems, or try just one new idea at your next retreat, it will have done its job.

Retreats are sacred opportunities. They deserve intentional design.

ARRIVAL AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS

CAMPFESSION

I ONCE HEARD MY ASSISTANT
GIVING DIRECTIONS TO A FIRST
TIME GROUP, USING
LANDMARKS THAT ARE NOW
GONE

I. Group Name and Welcome Sign at Entrance

*Therefore welcome one another as Christ has
welcomed you, for the glory of God.
Romans 15:7*

- Use the group's full, official name, spelled correctly. This communicates care and professionalism before a single word is spoken.
- Place the sign where vehicles or guests first stop, such as the entrance drive, main walkway, or check-in area.
- Plan for photos. Many groups will want to take a picture with the sign, so make sure it is well-lit, sturdy, and not blocking traffic.
- Use a reusable letter-change sign or whiteboard so this becomes a standard practice, not a last-minute project.
- Add a subtle personal touch, such as the retreat theme, date, or a simple "We're Glad You're Here."

Why This Matters

The moment a group arrives, they are looking for confirmation that they are expected and that they belong. A welcome sign with their name removes uncertainty, lowers anxiety, and immediately communicates intentional hospitality.

Before a guest speaks to a staff member, the sign has already spoken for you.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. If I were arriving tired or unsure, would this sign immediately reassure me?
2. Is welcome signage part of our standard arrival checklist, or something we remember only sometimes?
3. Who is responsible for creating and placing the sign, and when is it done?
4. What message do we send when a group arrives and their name is missing?



2. "Start Here" Sign Clearly Visible

God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

1 Corinthians 14:33

- Place the sign at the natural pause point, where cars stop or guests naturally look for direction, not after they've already wandered.
- Use clear, simple language. "Start Here" works better than "Check-in" or "Office," especially for first-time guests.
- Pair the sign with a human. A friendly staff member standing nearby reinforces clarity and warmth.
- Make it visually distinct using color, shape, or height so it stands out from regular signage.
- Reinforce it digitally by matching the wording on arrival emails, maps, or printed schedules.

Why This Matters

Arrival is often the most disorienting moment of a retreat. Guests are carrying bags, reading maps, watching kids, and trying not to feel lost. A

clear "Start Here" sign reduces confusion, prevents bottlenecks, and immediately creates a sense of calm and order.

When people know where to go first, everything else feels easier.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. If I were arriving for the first time, would it be obvious where I should go first?
2. Do guests ever ask the same "Where do we go?" questions repeatedly?
3. Is our signage visible from a distance and readable at a glance?
4. How often do staff end up redirecting guests because the first step was unclear?



3. Arrival Music Playing

Praise the Lord with the lyre; make music to him with the harp of ten strings.

Psalm 33:2

- Choose music that fits the theme of the retreat.
 - Rend Collective, Veggie Tales, Sunday School songs for younger kids
 - Forrest Frank, Allison Eide, Lecrae, KB for Teens
 - Instrumental, Anne Wilson, Mandessa for Ladies
 - Sons of Thunder, Brandon Lake, Phil Wickham for Men
- Play music in outdoor and indoor arrival zones, especially near parking and check-in areas.
- Create a welcome playlist and share it later with the group as a simple follow-up touch.
- Keep volume intentional, loud enough to notice but never loud enough to compete with conversation.

Why This Matters

Silence at arrival can feel awkward and heavy. Music subtly fills space, lowers anxiety, and sets emotional tone before anyone says a word. It signals that something intentional is happening here.

Music helps guests shift from "travel mode" to "retreat mode."

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. What emotion does our arrival environment currently create?
2. Is the music adding calm or creating distraction?
3. Do we turn music on intentionally or as an afterthought?
4. Would this music help me relax after a long drive?

4. Check-In Packet for the Group Leader

*The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance.
Proverbs 21:5*

- Include schedules, contact info, maps, and expectations in one packet.
- Add a personal thank-you note acknowledging their leadership.
- Highlight key times or responsibilities so nothing is missed.
- Use tabs or color coding for quick reference.
- Offer a digital version as backup.

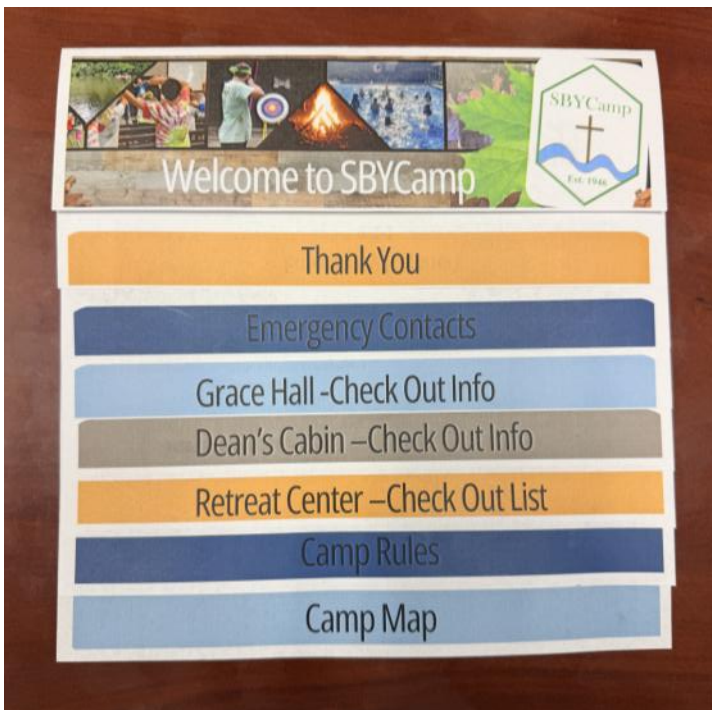
Why This Matters

Leaders carry responsibility. Giving them clear, organized information builds trust and partnership immediately.

Well-equipped leaders feel supported.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does the leader feel supported or overwhelmed?
2. Is the packet clear and easy to use?
3. Are leaders asking questions already answered in the packet?
4. How could this better anticipate their needs?



5. Welcome & Name Signs on Doors

*I have called you by name, you are mine.
Isaiah 43:1*

- Use large, readable name signs on lodging and meeting spaces. (Magnetic Ones from Amazon)
- Match font and style to the retreat tone.
- Double-check spelling before arrival.
- Include the retreat theme if appropriate.
- Remove old signage completely before posting new ones.

Why This Matters

Seeing your name on a door creates instant belonging. It transforms a generic space into your space.

Personalization communicates value.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would this space feel personal to a first-time guest?
2. Are names easy to see from a distance?
3. Do signs feel intentional or temporary?
4. How quickly do guests feel oriented?



6. Staff Waving Welcome Signs at Group Arrival

Rejoice with those who rejoice.

Romans 12:15

- Use large, playful signs that are easy to read from a distance and clearly welcoming.
- Position staff where vehicles naturally slow down or park, making the greeting unavoidable but not overwhelming.
- Encourage staff to smile, wave, and make eye contact, not just hold signs.
- Rotate staff roles so energy stays high and no one burns out.
- Match enthusiasm to the group type, warm and joyful for church retreats, friendly and professional for corporate groups.

Why This Matters

A smiling face and an obvious welcome set a joyful tone immediately. Staff waving signs signal excitement, hospitality, and readiness before guests ever step out of their vehicles.

Energy is contagious.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does our arrival feel joyful or purely functional?
2. Are staff comfortable expressing visible enthusiasm?
3. Would this greeting make me feel excited or awkward?
4. How do guests typically respond to our arrival energy?



7. Welcome Note on Beds or Pillows

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.

Romans 15:5

- Place the note where it cannot be missed, such as on the pillow or folded on the bed.
- Keep the message short and warm, avoiding long instructions or policies.
- Use consistent wording so every guest receives the same experience.
- Tie the note to the retreat theme when appropriate.
- Include a simple line inviting guests to rest, reinforcing the purpose of the retreat.

Why This Matters

The guest room is where people finally exhale. A simple welcome note turns an unfamiliar space into a personal one and communicates care without requiring interaction.

Quiet hospitality is often the most powerful.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does this note make the room feel personal or generic?
2. Would I pause to read this as a guest?
3. Does the message match the tone of the retreat?
4. Are we consistent in placing these in every room?
5. How do we mass produce these?

CAMPFESSION

WE HAD "ARRIVAL MUSIC"
PLAYING WITH FUN SONGS AND
HAD THE VERY CONSERVATIVE
LEADER ASK US TO "TURN OFF
THAT FILTH"

CAMPFESSION

WE WELCOMED A GROUP BY
NAME, HAD SIGNAGE
EVERYWHERE, AND USED THEIR
NAME MULTIPLE TIMES BEFORE
THE LEADER FINALLY TOLD US
THEY WERE NOT THAT CHURCH.
APPARENTLY, THAT GROUP
COMES NEXT WEEK.

LODGING AND SPACE SETUP

CAMPFESSION

THE DIRECTOR CONFIDENTLY TOLD
A GROUP THERE WERE 70 ROOMS
WHEN IT'S ACTUALLY 70 BEDS IN
20 ROOMS. THE GROUP WAS NOT
HAPPY AT ARRIVAL

8. In-Room Signage for Maintenance or Housekeeping Needs

*Serve one another humbly in love
Galatians 5:13*

- Post a simple, clearly worded sign near the bed or door with one phone number or text line to contact.
- Use friendly, welcoming language like "We're happy to help" instead of formal or stiff instructions.
- Include examples such as temperature issues, extra towels, or broken lights so guests know it is appropriate to reach out.
- Make the sign visually calm and readable, not cluttered or overly branded.
- Test the contact method regularly to ensure calls or texts are answered promptly.

Why This Matters

When something breaks or feels uncomfortable, guests hesitate to ask for help. Clear in-room signage removes awkwardness and empowers guests to speak up quickly before small issues become big frustrations.

Clarity communicates care.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do guests know exactly how to ask for help once they are in their room?
2. Are small issues being reported quickly or discovered too late?
3. Is the contact information clear, accurate, and easy to use?
4. Would I feel comfortable using this sign as a guest?
5. How easy is it? QR code or a long website?

9. "What to Expect" Card in Rooms

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

Proverbs 16:3

- List only the essentials, such as meal times, quiet hours, and emergency info.
- Use bullet points and headings instead of paragraphs.
- Place the card on a desk or nightstand, not hidden in a drawer.
- Use friendly, invitational language rather than rules-based wording.
- This card will stay in the room over groups, but may need updated regularly so information stays accurate.

Why This Matters

Uncertainty creates anxiety. A simple "What to Expect" card gives guests clarity about schedules, quiet hours, meals, and basic logistics so they can relax.

Clear expectations reduce stress.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Are guests asking questions already answered on this card?
2. Is the information truly helpful or just filler?
3. Does the tone feel welcoming or instructional?
4. Would this reduce confusion if I were new?

10. Comfortable and Welcoming Spaces Available

*The Lord bless you and keep you
Numbers 6:24*

- Use lamps instead of overhead lights in meeting spaces and lounges whenever possible.
- Choose warm bulbs, not bright white or daylight tones.
- Arrange chairs in circles or small groupings instead of straight lines
- Paint walls with warm cozy feeling paint
- Create Cozy corners for 2-4 people to gather.

Why This Matters

Harsh overhead lighting can make spaces feel institutional and uninviting. Warm, softer lighting immediately changes the emotional tone of a room and helps guests relax. Circles and clusters invite conversation.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does this space feel calming or clinical?
2. Would I want to sit here for an extended time?
3. Are lights adjustable for different moods or sessions?
4. Are there multiple seating options for different personalities?
5. Does our furniture placement match the retreat goals?



II. Earplugs or Sound Machines Available for Guests

*In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord,
make me dwell in safety.*

Psalm 4:8

- Place earplugs in a visible basket in lodging areas or bathrooms.
- Include a simple note explaining they are available for light sleepers.
- Avoid making it awkward by offering them proactively, not upon complaint.
- Have sound machines in rooms for family or younger kid retreats

Why This Matters

Guests sleep differently. Snoring, hallway noise, or unfamiliar sounds can disrupt rest. Offering earplugs or sound machines quietly acknowledges this reality and shows proactive care.

Small comforts make a big difference.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Are guests mentioning sleep issues during retreats?
2. Would this option help prevent frustration?
3. Are earplugs easy to find without asking?
4. Does this communicate care for different needs?



12. Clear Hallway Lighting at Night

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

- Use night lights or low-level lamps instead of overhead lights.
- Place lights at key intersections, stairways, and bathroom paths.
- Check visibility from a guest's perspective, not just staff familiarity.
- Ensure lighting is consistent, not patchy or random.
- Test lights nightly to catch outages quickly.

Why This Matters

Dark hallways can feel unsafe or confusing, especially at night. Gentle lighting provides safety without disrupting rest.

Safety supports peace of mind.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would I feel comfortable walking these halls at night?
2. Is lighting bright enough to be safe but soft enough for rest?
3. Are there dark or confusing areas guests might avoid?
4. Do we regularly check lighting functionality?



13. Blankets Available in Common Areas

Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Colossians 3:12

- Place blankets in visible baskets, not locked away.
- Choose neutral, cozy fabrics that feel inviting.
- Have them match and compliment the décor/ paint of the space
- Have extras available for cool evenings or outdoor spaces.
- Wash and refresh after each group so they stay clean and welcoming.
- Treat them as hospitality items, not special requests.
- Have extras to sell in camp store as a souvenir

Why This Matters

Blankets communicate warmth, comfort, and permission to slow down. They turn shared spaces into places people want to linger.

Comfort invites presence.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does this space invite people to settle in?
2. Would I use these blankets as a guest?
3. Are they easy to find and return?
4. Do they enhance the overall atmosphere?



14. One-Page "How to Use This" Guides

*If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask God.
James 1:5*

- Create short, one-page guides for lighting, sound systems, HVAC, or projectors.
- Use simple language and diagrams, not technical instructions.
- Place guides near the equipment, not in binders.
- Include a help contact in case issues persist.
- Review guides annually to keep them accurate.

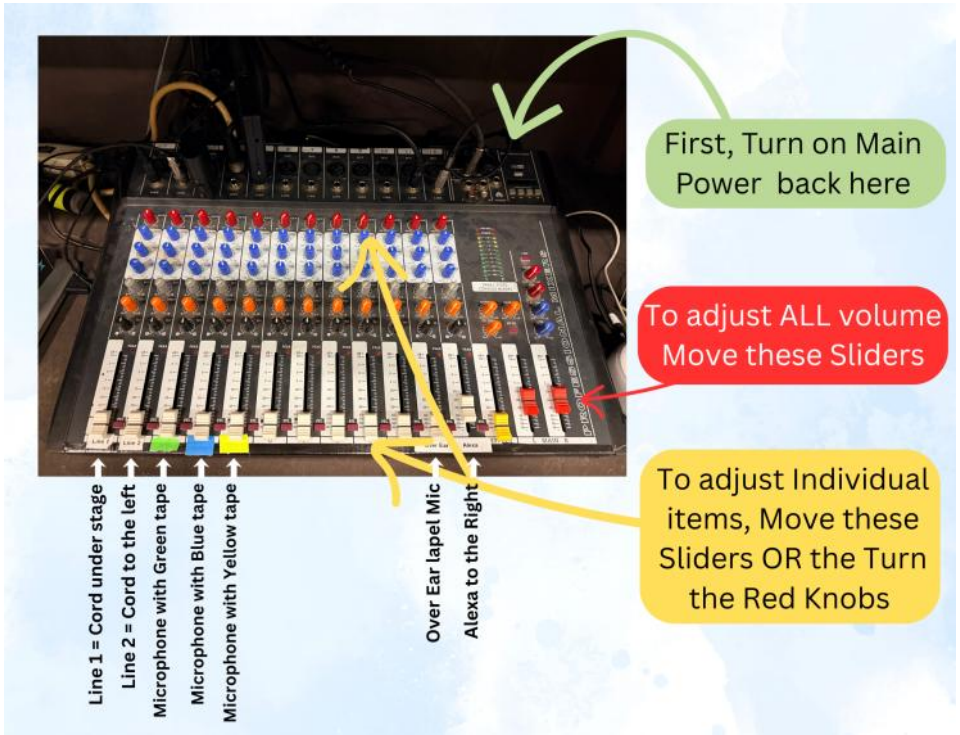
Why This Matters

Every camp has quirks. Simple guides prevent frustration and reduce repeated questions.

Clarity reduces unnecessary interruptions.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. What do guests frequently struggle to use?
2. Are we explaining the same things repeatedly?
3. Would this guide reduce frustration?
4. Is the guide actually easy to follow?



15. Bathroom Hospitality Baskets

Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away.

Matthew 5:42

- Stock basics like tissues, air freshener, toothbrushes (wrapped), toothpaste, deodorant, pads, and tampons
- Place baskets neatly and visibly, not hidden.
- Check and restock daily during retreats.
- Keep personal items neutral and unscented when possible.
- Maintain cleanliness so baskets feel intentional, not cluttered.

Why This Matters

Forgotten items happen. Hospitality baskets quietly meet needs without embarrassment.

Preparedness communicates thoughtfulness.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. What items do guests most commonly request?
2. Are baskets easy to spot and use?
3. Do they stay clean and stocked?
4. Would this help guests feel cared for?



16. End-of-the-Day Scent

Let my prayer be incense set before you.

Psalm 141:2

- Choose one mild scent such as lavender, cedarwood, or chamomile. Stay away from fruity scents or strong cinnamons.
- Introduce it only in the evening, never during the day.
- Keep it very subtle, barely noticeable.
- Use the same scent consistently throughout the retreat.
- Avoid strong, seasonal, or food-related scents.

Why This Matters

Scent is a powerful emotional cue. A gentle, consistent evening scent subtly signals that the day is slowing down and rest is coming.

Ritual creates rhythm.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does this scent support calm or distract?
2. Is it subtle enough for sensitive guests?
3. Are we consistent in when and where it is used?
4. Does it help signal a natural wind-down?

CAMPFESSION

WE GAVE THE GROUP THE
WRONG ENTRANCE CODE TO THE
BUILDING. WE WERE AWAY AND
HAD NO PHONE RECEPTION.

CAMPFESSION

A GROUP WAS VERY UPSET
ABOUT HOW SMALL OUR
TOWELS ARE IN OUR
BATHROOMS. WE TOLD THEM
WE DON'T PROVIDE TOWELS
AND DISCOVERED THEY WERE
USING OUR BATHMATS.

FOOD AND DINING EXPERIENCE

CAMPFESSION

OUR COOK MADE A SAUCE USING
CLOVES INSTEAD OF GARLIC
CLOVES. WE NOW CALL IT THE
CHRISTMAS SAUCE.

17. Beverage Station Visible All Day

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

John 7:37

- Place the beverage station where guests naturally pass, not tucked into the kitchen or staff-only zones.
- Make it visually obvious with signage, lighting, or table placement so guests do not wonder if it is for them.
- Offer more than water, such as iced tea, lemonade, or infused water with fruit.
- Restock proactively, especially between sessions and after meals, so it never looks forgotten.
- Create a "quiet morning" beverage setup separate from high-traffic areas for early risers who want solitude.
- Use consistent cups and signage so it feels intentional, not leftover.

Why This Matters

Guests often will not stop staff to ask for water, but dehydration affects mood, energy, and attention. A visible, self-serve beverage station removes barriers and quietly communicates ongoing care.

Availability communicates hospitality without interruption.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Can guests easily find drinks without asking?
2. Does the station stay full and clean throughout the day?
3. Would I feel comfortable using this multiple times?
4. What does the station look like late in the afternoon?



18. Table Conversation Prompts Available

*Let your conversation be always full of grace.
Colossians 4:6*

- Place a small card or tent or napkin holders on each table with one or two thoughtful questions.
- Rotate prompts by meal, lighter at breakfast, deeper at dinner.
- Design prompts that are optional, not mandatory, so guests feel free to engage or ignore.
- Tie prompts to the retreat theme when appropriate.
- Avoid overly personal or controversial questions, especially for mixed or first-time groups.
- Collect favorite responses (with permission) to share later or in follow-up communication.

Why This Matters

Meals can drift into awkward silence or surface-level chatter. Conversation prompts gently invite connection without forcing vulnerability.

Tables can become ministry spaces.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do meals feel relational or transactional?
2. Are prompts appropriate for this group?
3. Do guests naturally engage with them?
4. What kind of conversations are we hoping to encourage?



19. Late-Night Snack Surprise

They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

Acts 2:46

- Deliver snacks unexpectedly, such as during evening free time or placed outside rooms.
- Keep it simple, popcorn, cookies, granola bars, or s'mores kits work well. Even Pizzas to cabins!
- Tie the snack to the season or theme, without making it complicated.
- Include a short note, even just "We're glad you're here."
- Be mindful of allergies and dietary needs, offering a clearly labeled alternative.
- Avoid making it too late, so it feels like a treat, not a disruption to rest.

Why This Matters

Late-night snacks create delight and shared memory. They signal generosity and care when guests least expect it.

Surprises often become the story people remember.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would this feel like a gift or an inconvenience?
2. Is the timing thoughtful for this group?
3. Are dietary needs clearly considered?
4. What emotion do we want guests to feel in this moment?



20. Dessert Station or Sampling Experience

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

Psalm 119:103

- Offer small portions of multiple desserts instead of one large item. Guests enjoy choice without overindulgence.
- Create a clearly defined dessert area separate from the main meal line to slow the pace and encourage conversation.
- Label desserts with simple signs, including allergen notes when needed.
- Let guests build their own, such as a cookie bar, ice cream toppings station, or brownie sampler.
- Time the dessert intentionally, not immediately after the meal, so it feels like a moment, not an afterthought.

Why This Matters

Dessert does not have to be bigger to be better. A dessert experience feels intentional, celebratory, and memorable without adding excess.

Variety creates delight.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does dessert feel rushed or intentional?
2. Would this feel fun without feeling excessive?
3. Are guests lingering and enjoying the moment?
4. What memory do we want attached to this meal?



21. Final Meal Includes a Thank-You Note

Give thanks in all circumstances.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

- Place a handwritten or printed note at each table, thanking guests for being part of the retreat.
- Keep the message short and sincere, avoiding announcements or instructions.
- Acknowledge leaders specifically, thanking them for their role.
- Tie the note to the retreat theme with one reflective line.
- Encourage guests to take the note with them, extending the experience beyond camp.
- Pair the note with a calm final meal atmosphere, not rushed cleanup.

Why This Matters

The final meal anchors the closing emotion of the retreat. A simple thank-you note reinforces gratitude and reinforces that guests were valued, not processed.

Endings shape memory.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does the final meal feel like closure or just another meal?
2. Would this note feel genuine to a guest?
3. Are we thanking guests for who they are, not just what they did?
4. What emotion are guests leaving the table with?



22. Simple Table Touches

*Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10:31*

- Use one simple centerpiece element, such as greenery, candles, or themed cards.
- Tie table touches to the retreat theme, not seasons or holidays unless intentional.
- Keep items low-profile, so they don't block sightlines or conversation.
- Use reusable or natural elements to keep costs low and sustainability high.
- Ensure consistency across tables, avoiding a mix-and-match look.
- Remove clutter, sometimes less really is more.

Why This Matters

Tables are where people linger, talk, and connect. Small visual touches elevate the space without distraction and communicate care through detail.

Details preach hospitality.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does this table feel welcoming or busy?
2. Would this distract from conversation?
3. Is the setup consistent across the room?



23. Send the Menu Ahead of Time

*Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word
cheers it up.*

Proverbs 12:25

- Send the menu with the final pre-retreat email, not buried in attachments or links.
- Clearly label dietary options, including gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, or allergen-conscious meals.
- Invite feedback or questions, giving guests permission to speak up before arrival.
- Include a short reassuring line, such as "If you have concerns, we're happy to adjust."
- Highlight special meals or experiences, building anticipation instead of just sharing logistics.
- Coordinate closely with the kitchen, ensuring the shared menu matches what will actually be served.

Why This Matters

For guests with dietary needs, food can be a source of anxiety before they even arrive. Sending the menu ahead of time builds trust, allows for preparation, and communicates that care was taken long before the retreat began.

Preparation reduces fear.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would this reduce anxiety for guests with dietary needs?
2. Is the information clear and easy to find?
3. Are we prepared to honor what we send?
4. Does this build trust before guests arrive?

24. Post the Menu Daily While on Site

*Make level paths for your feet
Hebrews 12:13*

- Post the daily menu in high-traffic areas, such as dining entrances or near beverage stations.
- Use large, readable fonts, not small print.
- Clearly mark dietary options or substitutions, not just ingredients.
- Add a short fun description, not just the food name, to create interest.
- Update the menu at the same time each day, creating a predictable rhythm.
- Keep signage clean and current, removing outdated menus promptly.

Why This Matters

Knowing what is coming removes uncertainty and helps guests plan their day. Posting the menu supports accessibility, dietary awareness, and trust in the dining experience.

Clarity supports comfort.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do guests know what meals are coming next?
2. Is the posted menu easy to read at a glance?
3. Are dietary needs clearly communicated?
4. Does this reduce questions and confusion?



25. Coffee Ready Before Guests Arrive

*Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.
Proverbs 9:5*

- Have coffee fully brewed and visible before the first vehicle arrives, not brewing as guests walk in. Empty pots communicate unpreparedness.
- Create a clearly defined coffee zone, separate from check-in chaos, where guests can pause, breathe, and settle.
- Offer simple options, regular, decaf, hot water for tea, and basic creamers. This is about readiness, not a coffee shop menu. Quality Coffee (Starbucks brand) costs about the same as the Cheap stuff!
- Assign one staff member to quietly monitor the station for the first hour, refilling pots, wiping spills, and keeping it inviting.
- Offer syrup flavors as an added bonus!

Why This Matters

For many guests, coffee is not a luxury. It is comfort, familiarity, and emotional grounding after travel. Having coffee ready before the first guest asks communicates anticipation, competence, and care.

Coffee says, "We thought about you before you got here."

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Is coffee ready before guests arrive, or only after they ask?
2. Does the coffee area feel calm and welcoming or rushed and cluttered?
3. Would I feel comfortable lingering here for a few minutes?
4. What does our coffee setup communicate about our preparedness?



CAMPFESSION

THE COOK ACCIDENTLY USED
JELLO PACKETS INSTEAD OF
KOOLAID FOR THE DRINKS. IT
WAS THICK THAT DAY!

CAMPFESSION

OUR STOVES WENT OUT,
SO WE DECIDED TO JUST
ORDER PIZZA. TURNS OUT
THAT THAT HEALTH GROUP
IN THAT WEEKEND DID
NOT LIKE PIZZA AT ALL

PROGRAM FLOW AND SCHEDULING

CAMPFESSION

WE TOLD EVERYONE TO CHECK
THE SCHEDULE BUT FORGOT TO
ACTUALLY POST THE SCHEDULE
ANYWHERE

26. One-Page Schedule Posted in Multiple Locations

*Let all things be done decently and in order.
1 Corinthians 14:40*

- Create a true one-page schedule, not a crowded document that requires close reading.
- Post it in multiple locations, dining hall, lodging areas, meeting spaces, and near beverage stations.
- Use consistent language and icons that match verbal announcements and signage.
- Highlight "anchor moments", meals, sessions, and free time, rather than every minor detail.
- Laminate or frame schedules so they feel permanent and intentional, not temporary.
- Provide a digital version via QR code for guests who prefer their phones.

Why This Matters

Guests should never have to guess what is happening next. A clear, one-page schedule reduces anxiety, prevents interruptions, and allows people to stay present instead of mentally planning ahead.

Clarity protects the retreat experience.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Could a guest find what's next without asking anyone?
2. Is the schedule easy to understand at a glance?
3. Are we overloading guests with information?
4. Does this reduce interruptions during sessions?

27. Visual Timer & 5 Minute Warning Used in Sessions

*Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart
of wisdom
Psalm 90:12*

- Use a large, visible clock or countdown timer that speakers can easily see.
- Place the timer where it is noticeable but not distracting.
- Normalize its use, so it feels supportive, not corrective.
- Pair timers with gentle verbal cues, such as "we have about five minutes left."
- Match tone to context. Softer cues for reflective sessions, clearer cues for activities.
- Explain the system early, so guests understand and appreciate it

Why This Matters

When time is unclear, people disengage. A visible timer removes pressure from speakers and participants by making expectations obvious.

Abrupt endings feel jarring. Five-minute warnings help guests and leaders mentally prepare for transition without feeling rushed.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do sessions regularly run long?
2. Are speakers anxious about time?
3. Does timing feel respectful of guests?
4. Would a visual timer reduce tension?
5. Does this help protect emotional moments?



28. Evening Wind-Down Planned

Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.

Mark 6:31

- Lower lighting and volume intentionally as the evening progresses.
- Offer quiet, optional activities, journaling, prayer spaces, gentle music, or conversation areas.
- Avoid high-energy programming late at night, unless the retreat goal explicitly calls for it.
- Signal the shift clearly, through lighting, scent, music, or announcements.
- Protect silence, especially in lodging areas.

Why This Matters

Retreats that end the day loudly sabotage rest and reflection. A planned wind-down helps guests shift emotionally and physically toward rest.

Rest is not accidental.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does our evening schedule help or hinder rest?
2. Are guests over-stimulated at bedtime?
3. What signals tell guests the day is winding down?
4. Does the night rhythm match the retreat purpose?

29. Schedule Afternoon Rest Time After Lunch

*He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me
beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.*

Psalm 23:2-3

- Block rest time clearly on the schedule, naming it explicitly instead of leaving it vague.
- Give guests permission to rest, nap, walk, read, or simply be still.
- Avoid scheduling optional meetings or activities that compete with rest.
- Protect quiet spaces so rest feels supported, not awkward.
- Model rest as staff, slowing down visibly during this window.
- Pair rest time with hydration and light snacks, supporting physical recovery as well.

Why This Matters

After lunch, energy naturally dips. Ignoring this reality leads to disengagement, irritability, and diminished focus. Scheduling intentional rest honors how people are actually wired.

Rest is not laziness. It is wisdom.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do guests seem tired or unfocused in afternoon sessions?
2. Are we fighting natural rhythms instead of working with them?
3. Does the schedule clearly communicate permission to rest?
4. How would this change the energy of the afternoon?

CAMPFESSION

THE PROGRAM GUY FORGOT
TO PLAN INSTRUCTIONAL
TIME INTO THE HIGH ROPES
COURSE ACTIVITY. THE
CAMPERS GOT ABOUT 10
MINUTES OF ACTUALLY BEING
ON THE COURSE

CAMPFESSION

AFTER PRINTING ALMOST 200
SCHEDULES, WE REALIZED WE
FORGOT LUNCH

FREE TIME AND OPTIONAL PROGRAMMING

CAMPFESSION
WE HAD TONS OF OPTIONAL
ACTIVITIES THAT NO ONE DID,
PROBABLY BECAUSE WE NEVER
TOLD THEM WHAT THEY WERE

30. Free Time Menu Board Posted

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Corinthians 3:17

- Use a large, visible board or a TV in a central location listing all free-time options.
- Group options by energy level, rest, movement, social, or creative.
- Update the board daily so it reflects what is actually available.
- Include "no plan" as a valid option, naming rest, naps, or quiet time explicitly.
- Add simple icons or symbols so guests can scan quickly.
- Use invitational language, such as "Available if you'd like" instead of directives.

Why This Matters

Unstructured time can feel either freeing or uncomfortable. A free time menu provides gentle guidance without pressure, helping guests choose how they want to rest or engage.

Choice creates comfort.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does free time feel awkward or freeing for guests?
2. Are options clearly communicated without pressure?
3. Would I feel comfortable choosing rest over activity?
4. Does the menu reflect different personalities and needs?

31. Open Craft Table Set Up

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.

Colossians 3:23

- Set up simple, self-directed supplies, coloring pages, markers, clay, or journaling tools.
- Avoid instructions or finished examples, reducing pressure to "do it right."
- Place the table where people naturally wander, not hidden away.
- Refresh supplies daily so it looks inviting, not picked over.
- Include a small sign that says "Come and go as you like."

Why This Matters

Hands-on creativity allows guests to process internally without conversation. Crafts give people something to do without requiring instruction, competition, or outcome.

Creating can be restful.

32. Board Game Library Available

A cheerful heart is good medicine.

Proverbs 17:22

- Curate a small collection of easy-to-learn games, avoiding long rule explanations.
- Place games where people naturally gather, lounges, dining areas, or near fire pits.
- Label shelves clearly so guests know games are available.
- Include games for different group sizes, from two-player to larger groups.
- Rotate or refresh games occasionally to keep interest high.
- Don't forget the kids either. A box of legos or Magnitiles work great for them!

Why This Matters

Games provide low-stakes connection and laughter. They give guests permission to play without formal programming or facilitation.

Play builds relationships.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do guests naturally gather around games?
2. Are games easy to access and understand?
3. Does this encourage connection without pressure?
4. Would this appeal to a wide range of ages?



33. Fire Pit or Gathering Space Clearly Marked

*They devoted themselves to fellowship.
Acts 2:42*

- Have a Fire pit area with a fire going every evening
- Clearly mark the fire pit location with signage so guests know it is available.
- Schedule predictable fire times, even if attendance is optional.
- Provide simple seating, chairs, logs, or blankets that encourage lingering.
- Train staff on safe fire management, so guests feel secure.
- Offer conversation starters nearby, such as question cards or reflection prompts.
- Allow silence, not every fire needs structured discussion.

Why This Matters

People naturally gather around fire. A clearly marked fire pit invites connection, storytelling, and unhurried conversation without needing facilitation.

Fire creates community.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do guests know this space exists?
2. Does it feel safe and welcoming?
3. Are we over-programming this space?
4. Would I naturally stay here?



34. Guided Walks Offered

*Enoch walked faithfully with God.
Genesis 5:24*

- Offer walks at set times, such as early morning or late afternoon.
- Keep walks optional and low-pressure, clearly labeled as come-and-go.
- Choose routes with varying lengths, allowing guests to choose.
- Create a Mystery Trail (Escape Room on a Hike) for your Camp and offer to groups. Check out our Escape Room Book for how to do this
- Create a History Trail (Scavenger Hunt) all about your camp. Check out our Escape Room Book for how to do this.

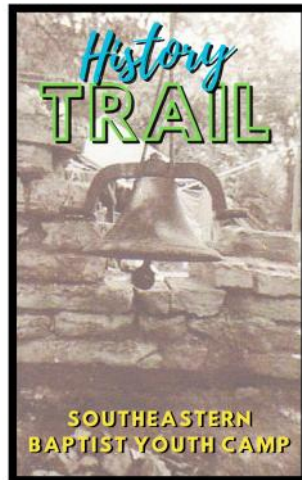
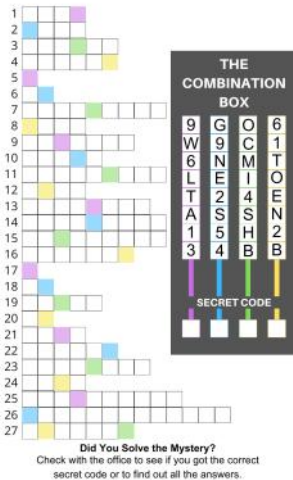
Why This Matters

Movement helps people process thoughts and emotions. Guided walks provide gentle structure while honoring reflection and conversation.

Walking creates space to think.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does this feel invitational or forced?
2. Are walks accessible to different ability levels?
3. Is silence honored during the walk?
4. Would I feel comfortable joining alone?



35. Hammocks or Rest-Friendly Seating Available

*In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord,
make me dwell in safety.*

Psalm 4:8

- Place hammocks or loungers in shaded, peaceful areas, away from noise.
- Limit signage, letting the seating speak for itself.
- Ensure safety and stability, checking setups regularly.
- Offer a variety of seating types, hammocks, chairs, benches, or swings.
- Respect these areas as quiet zones, not social hubs.

Why This Matters

Some people need physical rest more than activity. Hammocks and rest-friendly seating visibly communicate permission to slow down.

Comfort encourages stillness.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do guests feel permission to rest here?
2. Are these spaces respected as quiet?
3. Would I choose this over staying busy?
4. Does this match the retreat's tone?



CAMPFESSION

WE SCHEDULED SOME MUCH
NEEDED FREE TIME ONLY FOR
THE SPEAKER TO GO OVER HIS
TIME AND TAKE ALL OF IT

CAMPFESSION

I SIGNED UP FOR A "FUN
HIKE" AT A RETREAT I WAS
ATTENDING ONLY TO FIND
OUT UPON ARRIVAL THAT IT
WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FOR
CHILDREN. I STILL WENT ON
THE HIKE AND IT WAS
AWESOME

SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT

CAMPFESSION
WE DIMMED THE LIGHTS
FOR REVERENCE AND
IMMEDIATELY CAUSED PANIC

36. Prayer or Reflection Space Set Aside

*But when you pray, go into your room, close the door
and pray to your Father, who is unseen.*

Matthew 6:6

- Choose a space that feels physically separate, not just a corner of a busy room. Distance matters.
- Provide comfortable, grounded seating, chairs, cushions, or benches, not folding chairs.
- Place a simple sign at the entrance, "Quiet Prayer Space" or "Reflection Room," so guests know expectations.
- Include one focal element, a cross, candle, Scripture card, or nature image, not multiple distractions.
- Create a Prayer Walk around the grounds where attendees prayer for specific things at specific areas of Camp. (you will to go create a guide for them to take with them)

Why This Matters

Group worship is powerful, but many spiritual breakthroughs happen privately. A designated prayer or reflection space gives guests permission to step away, slow down, and meet with God without being observed or managed.

Sacred space must feel intentional to be trusted.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would I feel safe being emotionally honest in this space?
2. Does this room feel set apart or repurposed?
3. Are staff protecting this space consistently?
4. Is silence respected here?



37. Journals and Pens Available

Write down the revelation and make it plain.

Habakkuk 2:2

- Place journals and pens in multiple locations, prayer spaces, lounges, and meeting rooms.
- Use open baskets, not drawers or containers that feel restricted.
- Provide a mix of lined and blank pages when possible to accommodate different styles.
- Add a small sign saying "Use these however you'd like," reinforcing freedom.
- Replace pens daily, assuming some will disappear.
- Mention availability once verbally, then let guests discover them on their own.

Why This Matters

Writing allows guests to process thoughts they may not yet want to speak aloud. Providing journals removes friction and gives permission to reflect privately.

Access matters more than instruction.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Are journals easy to find without asking?
2. Do we unintentionally pressure journaling?
3. Would I feel free to take one?
4. Are supplies consistently stocked?



38. Gratitude Wall or Board Available

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
Psalm 107:1*

- Place the board where guests linger, not in a pass-through hallway.
- Provide multiple writing tools, pens, markers, or cards to reduce waiting.
- Offer a simple, repeatable prompt, "Today I'm thankful for..."
- Refresh the space daily, removing clutter or fallen notes.
- Reference the wall gently, never forcing participation.
- Be sure to share the notes with staff and volunteers so they see their job and time at Camp was appreciated

Why This Matters

Gratitude reorients perspective and builds community without spotlighting individuals. A gratitude wall allows shared reflection without performance.

Anonymous participation lowers barriers.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does this feel authentic or performative?
2. Is participation truly optional?
3. Would I feel safe sharing here?
4. Does this support the retreat's emotional tone?



CAMPFESSION
THE GROUP CREATED A QUIET,
PEACEFUL PRAYER AREA...RIGHT
NEXT TO THE KITCHEN

CAMPFESSION
WE HAD CALM
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
PLAYING DURING A PRAYER
TIME. IT WAS GREAT UNTIL
THE ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION
AD CAME ON

WEATHER, PROBLEMS,
AND PLAN B

CAMPFESSION
WE HAD TONS OF OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES PLANNED. IT RAINED
THE ENTIRE WEEKEND

39. Weather Monitored by Assigned Staff

*The prudent see danger and take refuge.
Proverbs 22:3*

- Assign one clear staff role responsible for monitoring weather, not "everyone."
- Use a reliable weather app or alert system, checking it at scheduled intervals.
- Post a simple "Today's Weather" update, reinforcing awareness without alarm. Use a Google Chromecast to have camp pictures on a TV and the optional weather in the lower corner.
- Set a predetermined decision time, so cancellations or changes are not debated endlessly.
- Communicate changes consistently, using the same channels every time.
- Train staff to defer questions to the assigned weather lead to avoid mixed messages.

Why This Matters

When weather becomes uncertain, guests look for leadership. Assigning one person to monitor weather prevents panic, conflicting decisions, and last-minute chaos.

Calm leadership builds confidence.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do we have a clear decision-maker for weather?
2. Are decisions communicated calmly and consistently?
3. Would guests feel informed rather than surprised?
4. Does our response reduce anxiety?



40. Indoor Alternatives Prepared in Advance

Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field.

Proverbs 24:27

- Design indoor versions of outdoor activities ahead of time, not day-of.
- Keep supplies pre-packed and labeled, so transitions are quick.
- Brief staff on Plan B options, not just Plan A.
- Communicate alternatives as normal, not disappointing.
- Practice the transition mentally, so it feels smooth under pressure.
- Some great back up options: Our Book about CAFÉ Bags, Trivia Nights, Escape Room, Table-Top Game, DownloadYouthMinistry.com, Glow Activities, etc.

Why This Matters

Scrambling indoors when weather changes communicates unpreparedness. Having indoor options ready preserves momentum and trust.

Preparedness feels professional.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would staff know what to do if plans changed right now?
2. Are indoor options engaging or just fillers?
3. Does the transition feel smooth?
4. Are guests confident in the plan?



4. Tech Backup Kit Available

Two are better than one.

Ecclesiastes 4:9

- Create a dedicated tech kit, chargers, adapters, extension cords, batteries.
- Store it in a known, accessible location, not locked away.
- Assign responsibility for maintaining and restocking the kit.
- Check equipment daily, especially before key sessions.
- Train staff to respond calmly, not urgently, when issues arise.
- Have printed backups, schedules, lyrics, or notes when possible.

Why This Matters

Tech failures derail focus quickly. A backup kit prevents minor issues from becoming major distractions.

Preparedness preserves flow.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do we rely too heavily on technology?
2. Is our backup kit complete and accessible?
3. Would tech issues derail the schedule?
4. Are staff confident troubleshooting basics?



42. Emergency Information Posted Clearly

*The Lord watches over you.
Psalm 121:5*

- Post a one-page emergency sheet in each room and common area.
- Use clear language, not legal or technical jargon.
- Include maps, phone numbers, and procedures, not paragraphs. Be sure to include the camp address
- Review information briefly with leaders, so it is not a surprise.
- Keep signage consistent, using the same formatting everywhere.
- Update regularly, removing outdated info immediately.

Why This Matters

Clear emergency information increases safety and reduces panic. Guests want to know that someone has thought through worst-case scenarios.

Visibility builds trust.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would guests know what to do in an emergency?
2. Is information easy to understand?
3. Does this create calm rather than fear?
4. Is it visible without being alarming?

IN CASE OF

EMERGENCY

CALL 911 AND FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS

- TORNADO// SEVERE WEATHER**
 - SEEK SHELTER**
 - Monitor local weather
 - Shelter on the lowest level of the building
 - Do not pull the fire alarm
 - Stay away from windows
 - Move to interior hallways
 - If outdoors, shelter in a ditch
 - Wait for an all-clear message
- CHEMICAL / HAZARDOUS SPILL**
 - CALL 911**
 - Provide the type of chemical, size, and possible exposure
 - Evacuate the area and/or building
 - Wait for an all-clear indication from emergency personnel
- MEDICAL EMERGENCY**
 - CALL 911**
 - Provide name, location & type of emergency
 - Stay on the phone for instructions
 - Move victims only if danger is imminent
 - Have someone meet first responders outside building on the street
 - Complete the UGA Injury report and send to I2C file
- FIRE// EVACUATION**
 - EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY**
 - Activate nearest fire alarm
 - Proceed to nearest exit
 - Call 911
 - Use stairs, not elevators
 - Assist persons with disabilities
 - Meet at designated assembly area
 - Account for individuals
 - Re-enter area only when authorized by emergency personnel

ACTIVE SHOOTER

- CALL 911**
 - Try to safely escape area
 - Hide and barricade if cannot escape
 - Protect yourself by locking doors, turn off lights, silence cell phones
 - Fight back as a last resort
 - Remain in place until authorities arrive

The Fire Evacuation/ Monitoring location for this office is:

Fifth floor

The Severe Weather Shelter location for this building is:

First floor Reception Hall & adjacent rooms. For the Grand Hall or other large events - 3rd floor concourse away from windows.

Office of Emergency Preparedness
www.prepare.uga.edu
706-542-5945

www.police.uga.edu
706-542-2300
(non-emergency)

If you need more information on emergency procedures, go to www.prepare.uga.edu.

43. Umbrellas or Ponchos Available for Weather

*He will cover you with his feathers.
Psalm 91:4*

- Keep umbrellas or ponchos in visible baskets, not behind desks.
- Place them near exits, where decisions are made.
- Use neutral or branded items, avoiding novelty gear.
- Replenish promptly, assuming some will disappear.
- Frame availability positively, not as emergency equipment.
- Return bins promptly after storms, keeping spaces tidy.

Why This Matters

Bad weather happens. Providing umbrellas or ponchos communicates foresight and generosity, turning inconvenience into care.

Small comforts matter.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would guests feel cared for in bad weather?
2. Are items easy to find at the right moment?
3. Does this reduce frustration?
4. Would I appreciate this as a guest?



CAMPFESSION

WE HAD A GROUP THAT
THOUGHT ALL OF OUR PROVIDED
UMBRELLAS WERE FREE TO TAKE
HOME

CAMPFESSION

WE ONCE HAD A GROUP GET
LOCKED OUT OF A
BUILDING.... DURING A
STORM... FOR OVER AN
HOUR

DEPARTURE AND FOLLOW UP

CAMPFESSION

WE FOUND MULTIPLE LOST
AND FOUND ITEMS BEFORE
DEPARTURE... ONLY TO
FORGET AND THEN HAVE
TO MAIL THEM AFTER
DEPARTURE

44. Staff Assigned to Send-Off Roles

*Encourage one another and build each other up.
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

- Assign specific send-off roles, parking, buses, exits, or luggage areas.
- Coach staff to focus on gratitude, eye contact, smiles, and simple goodbyes.
- Avoid task-only posture, send-off staff should not be cleaning or packing simultaneously.
- Stagger roles, so staff energy remains high during departures.
- Encourage staff to use names, when possible, personalizing the goodbye.

Why This Matters

A strong send-off reinforces that guests mattered from start to finish. Assigned roles ensure that departure feels personal, not rushed or forgotten.

Presence at the end seals the experience.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does departure feel warm or transactional?
2. Are staff visibly present during goodbyes?
3. Would guests feel missed if they left quietly?
4. Does this reflect how we want to be remembered?

45. Take-Home Reflection Card or Token Given

Bind them as a sign on your hand.

Deuteronomy 6:8

- Choose one small, meaningful item, a card, stone, bookmark, or token.
- Tie it directly to the retreat theme, not camp branding alone.
- Include a short reflection prompt, one question or Scripture.
- Give it at the right moment, after the final session, not during chaos.
- Keep it simple, meaning matters more than cost.

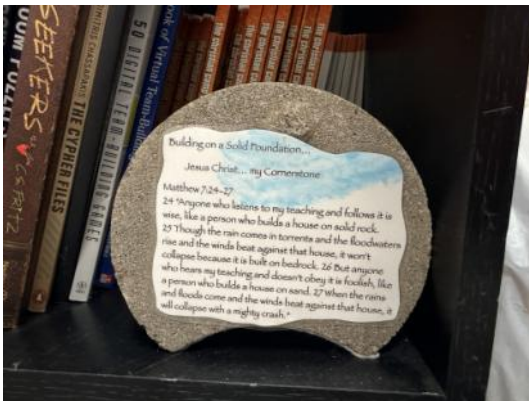
Why This Matters

A simple take-home item helps guests remember and reflect after they leave. It extends the retreat beyond the weekend without adding obligation.

Reminders reinforce meaning.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Would this item actually be kept?
2. Does it connect clearly to the retreat experience?
3. Is the timing intentional?
4. Does it feel meaningful, not promotional?



46. Leader Thanked Personally

Give honor to whom honor is due.

Romans 13:7

- Within 48 hours, ensure a staff member sends an email to thank the leader by name, not just generally.
- Acknowledge their effort, not just attendance.
- Avoid turning thanks into a sales conversation, gratitude first.
- Invite return gently, without pressure or pricing talk.
- Follow up with written thanks, reinforcing the moment later.

Why This Matters

Leaders carry responsibility and pressure throughout the retreat. A personal thank-you acknowledges their role and builds long-term partnership. Honor strengthens relationships.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Do leaders feel seen and appreciated?
2. Is gratitude personal or generic?
3. Are we building relationship or closing a transaction?
4. Would this make a leader want to return?

47. Lost-and-Found Table with Clear Signage

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.

Luke 16:10

- Set up a clearly labeled table in a visible area.
- Group items logically, clothing, electronics, books.
- Assign responsibility, ensuring items are monitored.
- Communicate pickup procedures clearly, including after departure.
- Remove the table promptly once departure ends.

Why This Matters

Small frustrations at the end can overshadow a great experience. A clear lost-and-found system reduces stress and shows attention to detail.

Details protect goodwill.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Could guests find missing items easily?
2. Is the process clear and calm?
3. Are items handled respectfully?
4. Does this reduce end-of-day frustration?



48. "We're Glad You Came" Sign at Exit Points

*May the Lord bless you and keep you.
Numbers 6:24*

- Place signs where guests slow down, exits, parking areas, gates.
- Keep wording simple and sincere, no slogans.
- Ensure signs are visible and clean, not weather-worn.
- Pair signage with staff presence, when possible.
- Remove signs promptly, preserving their intentionality.

Why This Matters

The last thing guests see becomes the emotional bookend. A simple message of gratitude reinforces belonging and sends guests home well. Endings linger.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. What is the final emotional note we leave?
2. Would this make guests smile?
3. Does it feel genuine?
4. Does it reflect our heart for ministry?



49. Provide a Follow-Up Devotional

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Colossians 3:16

- Choose a devotional that matches the audience, such as Keys for Camps, unlocked for teens, or Sacred Playgrounds for staff and leaders.
- Introduce the devotional briefly before departure, framing it as a gift, not homework.
- Provide a clear starting point, such as "Start with Day One on Monday morning."
- Include a short personal note or bookmark, tying the devotional back to the retreat theme.
- Offer both physical and digital options when possible, meeting different preferences.
- Follow up with one reminder email, encouraging guests to keep going without pressure.

Why This Matters

Spiritual growth rarely happens in one weekend. A follow-up devotional gives guests a simple on-ramp to continue reflecting after they leave, extending the impact of the retreat into daily life. Continuation reinforces transformation.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. Does this devotional fit the spiritual maturity and context of the group?
2. Are we presenting it as an invitation, not an obligation?
3. Would I realistically use this after leaving?
4. How does this extend the retreat's message into everyday life?



50. Camp Promo Shared at the End of the Final Session

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:24

- Keep the promo short and focused, one or two key upcoming opportunities, not everything the Camp offers
- Place it at the emotional conclusion, after reflection or gratitude, not during logistics.
- Use storytelling instead of selling, sharing who the next event is for and why it matters
- Include one clear next step, such as a date, QR code, or simple takeaway card.
- Have a real person share, not just a video, so it feels relational
- End with gratitude, thanking guests for being a part of the Camp community.

Why This Matters

Guests are most receptive at the end of a meaningful experience. A brief, well-timed Camp promo helps them see what is next without feeling like a sales pitch. Invitation works best when trust is high.

Questions for Staff and Leadership

1. Does this feel like an invitation or an interruption?
2. Are we sharing too much or just enough?
3. Would I feel excited, not pressured, hearing this?
4. Is the timing respectful of the retreat's emotional arc?

51. Go Above and Beyond

Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people.

Colossians 3:23

- Train staff to look for the "next need," not just the current request. If a guest asks for towels, bring the towels and ask if they need extra blankets or an extra trash bag while you're there.
- Create a "Surprise & Delight" kit. Stock a small bin with items staff can deploy instantly: hot chocolate packets, glow sticks, stickers, handwritten cards, phone chargers, ponchos, snacks, or camp swag. The goal is readiness, not spending.
- Celebrate milestones that happen on-site. Birthdays, anniversaries, first-time retreats, or final retreats for a leader. A card, dessert, or verbal acknowledgment goes a long way.
- Offer help loading vehicles, walk guests to their cars, or provide a warm goodbye even when departure is hectic.

Why This Matters

Most camps can deliver the basics. What guests remember, talk about, and return for are the moments that feel unexpectedly thoughtful. "Go above and beyond" is not about extravagance. It is about proactive, personal, and timely care that makes people feel truly seen.

Excellence is often one small step past what was required.

Questions for Staff & Leadership

1. What are the most common "next needs" guests have that we could anticipate instead of waiting for requests?
2. Do staff feel empowered to take initiative, or do they feel like they need permission for everything?
3. If a guest described our camp to a friend, what "unexpectedly thoughtful" moments would they mention?

CAMPFESSION

WE HAD A GROUP LEAVE BEHIND
MULTIPLE SLEEPING BAGS AND
LUGGAGE AND ASKED IF WE
COVERED RETURN SHIPMENT
COSTS

CAMPFESSION

WE SENT A "THANK YOU"
CARD TO THE GROUP'S
LEADER FROM LAST YEAR,
WHO HAD BEEN FIRED FOR
INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Key Questions to Ask the Staff

- Where do guests experience the most uncertainty during a retreat, and what is one practical step we could take to remove that friction? .
- Are we designing retreats around our systems or around the guest experience?
- Do staff feel empowered to act in the moment, or are we unintentionally slowing excellence with unnecessary approval steps?
- If a guest described our retreat to a friend, what moments would they call out as thoughtful or unexpected?
- What is one small change we can commit to implementing before the next retreat that would noticeably improve how guests feel?

Conclusion

Excellence Is Quiet, But It Is Felt

Guests may not remember every session, activity, or meal. They will remember how the retreat made them feel.

They will remember whether they felt rushed or rested. Confused or confident. Seen or overlooked.

What you have just read is not about perfection. It is about **presence**.

It is about leaders who think one step ahead so guests do not have to. Staff who stay curious instead of shutting conversations down. Systems that support calm instead of creating stress. Spaces that invite reflection without forcing moments.

When camps and retreat centers commit to this kind of intentionality, something powerful happens. Guests relax. Leaders trust. Staff feel empowered. Spiritual growth has room to take root.

You do not need to implement everything in this book. You do need to choose something.

Choose one friction point to remove. Choose one moment to slow down. Choose one way to better anticipate the needs of those you serve.

Over time, those small choices add up to something unmistakable.

People stop saying, "That was a nice retreat."
They start saying, "That place felt different."

And when that happens, guests do not just attend retreats. They return to places that feel like home.

That is retreat greatness.

Other Books by Chris & Carrie

Steal This: Ideas of Awesomeness

(Updated: December 2018)

ST: Ideas for Outdoor Ed & STEMiness

(Updated: October 2019)

ST: 50 Ways to Be Awesome

(Updated: November 2019)

ST: Ideas of Portableness

(Updated: October 2019)

ST: Ideas of Contemporary Craftiness

(Updated: February 2020)

ST: Ideas of Virtualness

(Updated: May 2020)

ST: Ideas for Time Fillers & Brain Breakiness

(Updated: August 2020)

ST: Ideas of Camp Boxiness

(Updated: April 2021)

ST: Ideas During Covidness

(Updated: April 2021)

ST: Ideas of Social Distancedness

(Updated: May 2021)

ST: Ideas for Escape Rooms & Puzzleness

(Updated: October 2021)

ST: Ideas of Teambuildingness

(Updated: October 2022)

ST: The BIG Book of Awesomeness

(Updated: February 2023)

ST: Ideas of Games & Funness

(Updated: October 2023)

ST: Ideas of CAFÉ Bagginess

(Updated: October 2023)

ST: 25 Rules for Unparalleled Hospitalityness

(Updated: February 2025)

ST: Ideas for Camp Board Greatness

(Updated: July 2025)

ST: Ideas of Parenting Awesomeness

(Updated: August 2025)

ST: 50 Ideas for Retreat Awesomeness

(Updated: December 2025)

ST: Ideas of Staff Training Greatness

(Updated: January 2026)

Princess Diary: Devos for Girls

(Updated: October 2021)

Man Book: Devos for Boys

(Updated: October 2021)

Church Notes Vol 1-4

(Updated: October 2022)

Coming Soon (whenever they get time to write)

Steal This: Ideas for Fun Fundraisingness

Steal This: Ideas of Successful Marketingness

Steal This: Ideas for Waterfront Awesomeness

Steal This: Ideas for Nighttime Funness

Steal This: Ideas of Rainy-Day Campiness



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