



Tips for Effective Retreat Planning

At Caraway Conference Center and Camp

- 1) **Plan early!** At Caraway the conference center will accept reservations 18 months in advance and the camp accepts reservations a year in advance. Keep in mind that weekends are the most popular time for churches to retreat, so they fill up fast. Have several dates in mind that might work for your group when you call. Caraway's most sought-after dates are mid-September through early November.
- 2) **Be realistic with your attendance numbers!** If this is the first time you have planned a retreat, it is better to be able to fill up all the space you reserve and have a waiting list for next year, than to overestimate and have to pay for unused space. At Caraway you can adjust your original reservation 90 days out without a penalty.
- 3) **Ask lots of questions!** Both the conference center and camp has its own unique features and benefits. You need to know if you are sleeping in bunk beds or in a hotel-style room. Are linens provided? What are the meal times? Caraway has staff that can assist you in planning your retreat, the more they know your needs the more they can help.
- 4) **Stay in touch with us!** The plans we make for each retreat or conference are only as good as the details you provide. Caraway wants your group to have a quality experience. Do not wait until the day before to call with a number of requests; it may be too late to make arrangements.
- 5) **Read your contract!** Yes, Caraway is a ministry; however we must also utilize good business practices in order to be good stewards of the facility. Know how much your deposit will be. Is it refundable? What is the final date changes can be made? What are the check in and check out times? What is or is not allowed. Share these details with your group.
- 6) **Charge appropriately!** If this is a retreat or conference that individuals pay their own way, you should get a financial commitment from each person to match the commitment you made with the facility. If you have add-on services such as recreation or refreshments, make sure you add those to the amount each person pays. If the church or organization is paying for your retreat, make sure the appropriate person or department writing the check understands the financial arrangements with the facility.



- 7) **Pay your bill on time!** Caraway has expenses that must be paid in order to provide quality services to your group as well as others. It is essential that payment is received in a timely manner. Also, if you feel adjustments should be made to your bill, ask to talk with someone before you leave the facility or at least ask for someone to call you.
- 8) **Arrange for speakers or special guests!** If your retreat or conference requires that you have a special speaker or musician, please determine if they require special set ups or needs before they arrive. Then relay that to the Caraway. Remember, for a successful retreat; schedule your speaker or entertainers well in advance as well. Caraway also has speakers or entertainers that can be recommended to you if you are having difficulty scheduling one.
- 9) **Promote your retreat or conference!** Make sure the targeted attendees know of your retreat or conference and the scheduled dates. State the specific purpose and details. The more informed your group is the more likely they will attend
- 10) **Evaluate your retreat!** The most successful retreats or conferences are those that are planned well from start to finish. Caraway would like for you to evaluate our services. Also, you should allow your attendees to evaluate your program as well.
- 11) **Rebook for next year!** If you know that you are planning to repeat your retreat or conference check on available dates before you leave the facility. If possible go ahead and make a tentative reservation