

# Youth Frontiers Honor Retreat Prep Pack

Preparation information to ensure a successful retreat experience

## youth frontiers honor retreat small group

1. Share one thing you are passionate about that might surprise other people in your small group.
2. Share – if you dare – your most embarrassing or humbling moment as an educator.
3. Honor a person in your past (teacher, coach, advisor, professor, etc.) by describing how they influenced you as an educator.
4. Who are some staff members who have contributed to the positive culture of your school? How?
5. In what ways does your school honor staff? In what ways could you envision these efforts being improved?
6. If you had “naming rights” for the following locations in your school, after what staff person in your school’s past would you name these places?  
The \_\_\_\_\_ Cafeteria  
The \_\_\_\_\_ Auditorium  
The \_\_\_\_\_ Locker Room  
The \_\_\_\_\_ Hallway  
Other Location:  
The \_\_\_\_\_
7. Share a time when you felt honored by a fellow educator, student, or community member.

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An example  
of our retreat  
materials



# Honor Retreat School Preparation Checklist

## Youth Frontiers Retreats

Now that your retreat date is set, you will need to complete each item in the checklist below to ensure the success of your retreat. If you have questions, please call us at 952.922.0222 or toll-free at 888.992.0222.

### 1 Secure a location for the retreat

*We strongly encourage you to hold your Honor Retreat at a location away from your school campus.*

— Ideal locations are nearby community centers, churches, synagogues, district headquarters, and hotel conference rooms.

— Arrange for a chair for every participant and two eight-foot tables to be set-up (see diagram on p.3).

### 2 Prepare nametags

— Have nametags available for your staff to fill out and wear.

— **Optional:** Create nametags ahead of time that include first name and small group number (see diagram on p.4). Do this if you would like to pre-assign small groups, assigning 5-7 per group.

### 3 Plan for food

— For half-day morning retreats, consider providing breakfast before the retreat, or a catered lunch after the retreat.

— Half-day afternoon retreats should have a mid-retreat snack.

### 4 Inform teachers and staff

— Communicate the expected events and activities to the teachers and staff prior to retreat (see sample memo on p.5).

## ONE MONTH PRIOR TO RETREAT:

### 5 Complete the YF Priority One form

— Complete the form online under “Before Your Retreat”, in the “Clients” section of our website, [www.youthfrontiers.org](http://www.youthfrontiers.org); or fax a completed hard copy to Youth Frontiers at 952.922.2122.

# Honor Retreat Overview

## Youth Frontiers Retreats

Length	3.5 hours
Maximum #	250 participants

### General Schedule:

- Welcome and community-building activities
- Introduction to the theme of the day
- Small group activity
- Large group activity
- Music: A professional musician shares music and a message
- Presentation: topic-based talk based on the theme of the day
- Small group discussion: time to process the presentation’s theme and ideas
- Closing: participants identify and share ways they can honor each other more

### Retreat logistics: participants and length

We recommend the number of faculty and school staff attending a retreat be under 250 participants. We have led Honor Retreats for groups as small as 10 and as large as 300. The dynamic of your retreat day will change depending on your group size.

The Honor Retreat runs 3.5 hours.

### Topic-based talks

Retreat Directors will give one topic-based talk during the Honor Retreat.

### Large group

Staff will participate in a few playful large group teambuilding activities, aimed at connecting staff with each other and building a cohesive group.

### Small groups

During the day your staff will break out into small groups. This gives the staff an opportunity to interact with staff members with whom they do not usually work. Small groups give the staff time to have a more in-depth discussion of the topics covered on the retreat.

### Closing

Participants will close the retreat by sharing specific ways that they will honor and support each other in the coming school year.

# Booking a Facility

## Youth Frontiers Retreats

We strongly encourage you to hold your Honor Retreat for faculty and staff at a location away from your school campus. Retreats at a neutral location are more effective and are free from distractions. Ideal locations are nearby community centers, churches or synagogues, district headquarters, and hotel conference rooms.

If you must stay at your school, please find a room that is free of distractions (e.g. bells, announcements, students walking through, etc.). School gyms are unsatisfactory for participants: they are usually too big, have very poor acoustics, distractions, and buzzing from the lights. Auditoriums with fixed seating are also unsatisfactory. Depending on the design, some cafeterias may work, but are seldom as nice as an off-site location. Please note that the volume at the retreat will be loud. A Media Center, or similar space where a quiet level of noise is required, will not work.

### Location selection

Throughout the retreat, the room will be used for a variety of large group activities that require room to move around. The small group discussions require room to spread out. The minimum room size should be 1,200 square feet for 100 people or less. Throughout the retreat the room will be used for a variety of large group activities that require room to move around, and small group activities where the groups will need to spread out.

Please provide the following in the retreat space and have the space set-up according to the diagram at the right at least one hour prior to the retreat:

- One chair per participant that can be moved, initially set up auditorium style
- Two rectangular, eight-foot tables
- Open “performance” space for the retreat staff to facilitate the activities

### Retreat specifics

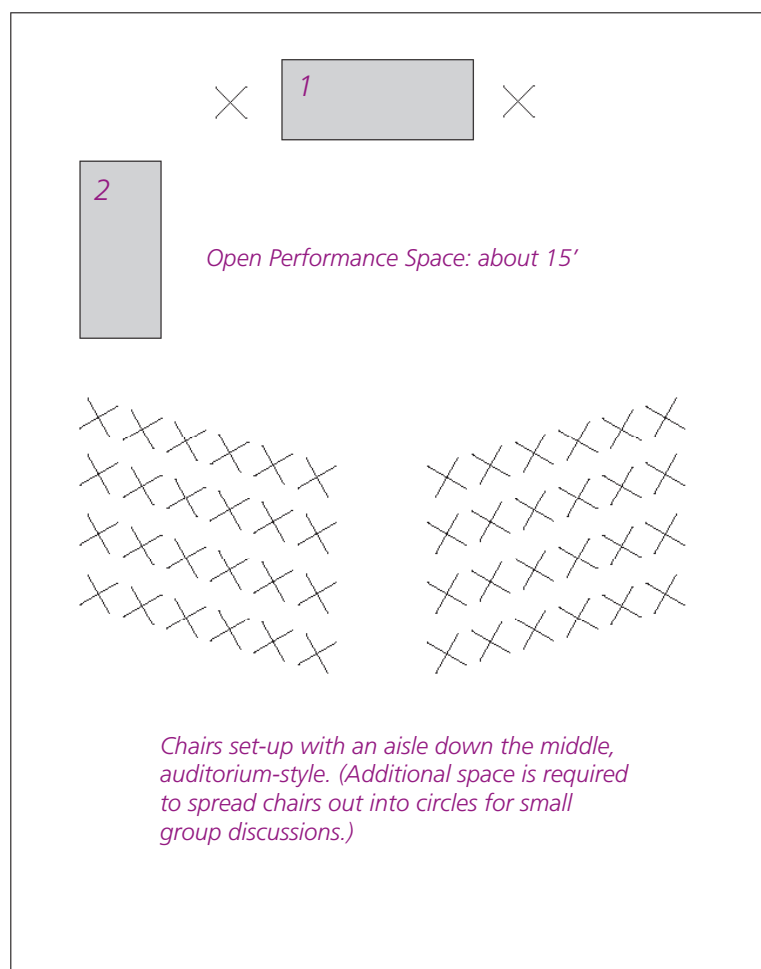
Please notify the staff at the facility that the volume during the program will be somewhat loud. Since music is an important element of our retreats, we use a sound system to play live and recorded music throughout the retreat.

Please arrange to have the facility opened at least one hour before the faculty and staff arrive to allow the Youth Frontiers staff to set up.

### Transportation

Faculty and staff usually drive themselves, but you may choose to hire a bus.

Please remember that transportation costs are paid by the school and are not included in the Youth Frontiers retreat fee.



- 1 —Eight-foot table and two chairs for YF staff
- 2 —Table for teambuilding activities

## Small Groups

### *Youth Frontiers Retreats*

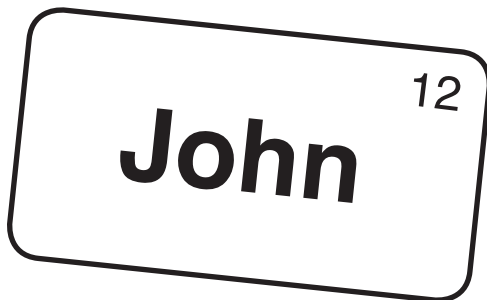
One of the most important elements to our retreats is the small group discussion.

During the day the staff will break up into small groups for discussion. This allows the staff to talk more in-depth about the topics covered on the retreat.

If you would like to pre-assign your staff into small groups, assign the staff into groups of 5–7. Most schools have found that small group activities are most effective with diverse groups. Split up grade levels, years of experience, subjects, and job descriptions.

Please make name tags for all of the faculty and staff participating. Please have only their first name and group number on their name tag. Be sure nametags are in at least 48 point type. (See example.)

Please distribute nametags to staff prior to the beginning of the retreat.



## Food

### *Youth Frontiers Retreats*

Many of the Honor Retreats that start first thing in the morning begin with a continental breakfast. For afternoon retreats, consider offering a mid-retreat snack (cookies/soft drinks, for example). Some schools prefer to keep the snack in the room so that staff may snack together throughout the retreat.

## Communicate Expectations to Your Staff

### *Youth Frontiers Retreats*

Please take a moment to send a memo to your staff about the retreat experience (see Sample Memo on following page). This will help set the expectation for your staff, and help answer any questions they may have.

It's important that your staff come wearing comfortable clothing. As noted, there is a time throughout the retreat for discussion and activities that require minimal movement, and we want the staff to feel comfortable and ready to participate.

# Sample Memo to Staff

*Youth Frontiers Retreats*

## MEMO

To: Staff

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Re: Honor Retreat for Faculty and Staff

We are excited about the upcoming Honor Retreat to be presented by Youth Frontiers, Inc. Youth Frontiers is a nonprofit organization that has been working with schools for over 20 years, providing innovative retreats to both students and educators to help build more positive school communities. Last school year, Youth Frontiers worked with nearly 100,000 students and educators throughout the country.

You can expect a day of spirited group mixers and inspiring discussions designed to build staff community in our school. Please come to the retreat wearing comfortable clothes so you can fully participate in the retreat activities/discussions.

Teachers recently made these comments following their experience on the Youth Frontiers Honor Retreat for faculty and staff:

*"Wonderful presentation, good pacing, excellent humor, engaging small & large group activities."*

*"Thank you so much. You reinforced in us to value who we are and how we got here."*

*"This was the best workshop I have ever attended. You made me feel energized and appreciated."*

The retreat is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ (date) and will be held at \_\_\_\_\_ (place).  
Please arrive no later than \_\_\_\_\_ (time). We will be finished at \_\_\_\_\_ (time).

We look forward to seeing you on our Honor Retreat.

Sincerely,