

Youth Frontiers Responsibility Retreat Prep Pack

Preparation information to ensure a successful retreat experience

Responsibility Retreat 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 Book a facility

- Booking an off-site facility is strongly recommended for Responsibility Retreats.
- If you reserve an off-site facility, a large carpeted room in a community center, church, synagogue, banquet center, hotel conference room, or similar facility works best.
- Arrange transportation to and from the retreat site.

2 Nametags

- Create nametags for all participants before the retreat. There is no need to pre-assign students into small groups.

3 Inform teachers, staff, and parents

- Inform parents about the retreat (see sample letter).
- Ask any school staff that you think would be valuable to include in the retreat experience. A school counselor or school psychologist's presence is sometimes helpful to assist the students as they process the experience afterward.
- Look into inviting Youth Frontiers out to provide a Parent Talk to help parents understand and follow-up on their child's experience.

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO RETREAT:

4 Complete the YF Priority One form

- Your YF Priority One form will be emailed to you by the YF Retreat Coordinator six weeks prior to your retreat.
- You may complete the YF Priority One form online at www.youthfrontiers.org by clicking on the "Clients" bubble, then "Before Your Retreat" under the "Responsibility" tab; or fax a completed hard copy to Youth Frontiers at 952.922.2122.

Responsibility Retreat Overview

Youth Frontiers Retreats

Length	2.5 hours
Maximum #	100 participants

General Schedule:

- Welcome and group building activities
- Introduction to the theme of the retreat
- Small group activity
- Large group activity
- Presentation: topic-based talk
- Small group activity: time to process the message from the presentation
- Large group closing: participants commit to take action based on the retreat topic

General logistics: participants and length

Generally, the Responsibility Retreat runs 2.5 hours in length. For the highest quality retreat experience, the size of your group may determine the best length for the retreat. If your group is either very large or very small, please call our Retreat Coordinator to determine the best length for the retreat.

Opening and games

As soon as the students arrive, we engage them in interactive games. We have found that these activities help to break the ice and build a sense of community among the students. We consider this time "earning the right to be heard" on the part of our staff. We know that in order for students to get the most out of the day, they need to first get a feel for who we are and what the day has in store for them.

Topic-based talks

Retreat staff members will give a talk during the Responsibility Retreat. The speaker will focus on challenging the leaders of your school to "stand up" for respect, and "be good." As the influencers in your school, the students will know that their power gives them a responsibility to do what they know is right.

Small groups

Throughout the retreat, students will meet in small groups for discussion. Small groups allow more personalized attention to the issues that were discussed in the large-group presentations.

Closing

The closing is often hailed as a highlight of our retreats. This is an opportunity for students to begin to own the leadership responsibilities that lie before them as seniors. Each student will make a commitment to take a stand and be a leader in a specific way in the school.

Booking a Facility

Youth Frontiers Retreats

We strongly recommend that you book your retreat at an off-site facility away from your school campus. Retreats at a neutral location are more effective and free from distractions.

Location selection

When choosing an off-site location, schools typically reserve space at a nearby community center, church, synagogue, banquet center, hotel conference room, or similar type of facility. If hosting the retreat at your school, keep in mind the many distractions that an in-school retreat might face (ringing bells, announcements, moving gym classes, lunch space, etc.). The gym or other large room is adequate, but do what you can to minimize distractions.

The room size and flooring of the room are important factors when choosing a retreat location. The minimum size for a group of 100 students is 1600 square feet (allow 16 square feet per participant). Throughout the day, the room will be used for a variety of high-energy, large group games as well as small group interaction that requires adequate space for students to spread out. The room must be totally empty and free of chairs, pillars, bookshelves, etc.

Students will spend significant amounts of time sitting on the floor. If possible, book a location with a carpeted floor.

Location preparation

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

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

We need 1 eight-foot table and 3 chairs in the room, along with garbage cans for trash.

Teachers and staff may sit on chairs in the back of the room. If you have any students in a wheelchair, you will need to provide chairs for his or her small group (an additional 5-8 chairs).

Transportation

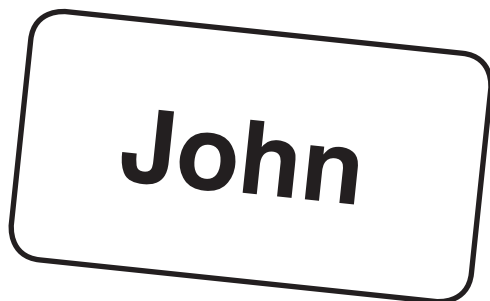
When holding your retreat off-site, please arrange transportation to and from the facility and notify Youth Frontiers of the exact arrival and departure times. We also need to know if students are arriving in shifts, as the retreat will not begin until all participants are present.

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

Nametags

Youth Frontiers Retreats

Students need to be wearing their nametags before the retreat begins. Please distribute nametags to the students prior to your arrival at the retreat location. When students are wearing nametags as they walk in the door, the Youth Frontiers staff can begin connecting with your students by name immediately. Students do not need to be placed into assigned small groups before the retreat. For computer printed nametags, be sure the font is at least 48-print type so our staff can read them from far away. (See below.)



Teacher and Staff Participation

Youth Frontiers Retreats

Expectations of teachers and staff

We understand how busy educators are and the desire for staff to complete work outside the retreat. However, we encourage teachers/staff to be present the entire retreat to observe and experience for themselves the power of these programs. The retreat offers unique perspective and insight for both teachers and students about the school's climate and community, and gives teachers touch points of language to continue the impact of the retreat in the classroom.

We expect teachers to:

1. Be present during the large group activities and topic-based talks.
2. Participate in the activities as they feel comfortable.
3. Assist with any disciplinary problems when requested by our staff.
4. Help distribute materials as needed.

Benefits of teacher and staff participation

1. Teachers and staff will better understand the messages of the retreat and can reinforce those lessons in the classroom. This can help lengthen the impact of the retreat.
2. The experience builds community by allowing teachers and staff to interact with students outside of the classroom. Teachers have told us that the retreat gave them a chance to see students in a different light, and many students say the same about their teachers.
3. The values being taught are timeless, and adults can benefit from thinking about them as well.

End-of-Day Sharing and Disclosure Information

Youth Frontiers Retreats

A Youth Frontiers retreat provides many opportunities for dialogue in both large and small group discussion.

During both small group conversations and large group sharing, students will be asked to refer to their own experience at school. Students will be instructed to be mindful of maintaining appropriate boundaries in their small group conversations and to redirect the conversation if a student is sharing personal information inappropriate for a peer setting.

In our large group sharing at the end of the retreat, our staff will also create expectations for your students regarding what is appropriate to share during that time. The students will be asked to focus on honoring their experience together and to be sensitive to blaming or embarrassing classmates.

If, during any part of the retreat, a YF staff member is made aware of a student referring to wanting to hurt themselves or someone else, the Youth Frontiers Retreat Director on your retreat will document the incident and relay it to one of your staff, ideally a counselor or school psychologist, if present.

Counselor/ Mental Health Professional Recommendation

Youth Frontiers Retreats

At the end of our Responsibility Retreat there will be time for students to share some of their thoughts and reflections from the day. Our staff will set expectations for the students that this should be a time for them to reflect on their high school experience. Occasionally, students may bring up emotional or personal experiences. Our staff will redirect students, when necessary, to stay within appropriate boundaries. Because we are encouraging students to reflect on their own personal experience, it can sometimes elicit a strong emotional response in students. We recommend that you have a counselor or mental health professional present at the retreat in the event that a student requires further support following the retreat experience.

Sample Memo to Staff

Youth Frontiers Retreats

Dear Staff,

We are excited about the upcoming Responsibility Retreat to be presented by Youth Frontiers, Inc. Youth Frontiers is a nonprofit organization that has been delivering programs to schools for over 20 years that build positive school communities and help young people realize the importance of respecting themselves and others. Their vision is to change the way young people treat each other in every hallway, lunch line, and classroom of every school in America so that today's young people can make tomorrow's world better. Last year, Youth Frontiers worked with nearly 100,000 students and educators throughout the country.

On the day of our retreat, you are asked to fully participate in the retreat experience. Youth Frontiers staff members recognize how busy educators are, and that you may want to complete work outside of the retreat room. We encourage teachers/staff to be present the entire retreat to observe and experience for yourself the power of these programs.

Your participation is important, both to understand and be able to reinforce the messages of the day, and to help build on the momentum created from this experience. The shared efforts of both teachers and Youth Frontiers will help build a greater sense of community in our school.

Youth Frontiers expects teachers and staff to:

- Be present during the large group activities, topic-based talks, and closing activity
- Assist with disciplinary problems if requested by the YF Retreat Staff

The Responsibility Retreat is scheduled for _____ for a select group of juniors, and will be located at _____.

Thanks in advance for your support and participation at this important event.

Sincerely,

Sample Memo to Parents

Youth Frontiers Retreats

We are excited about the upcoming Responsibility Retreat to be presented by Youth Frontiers, Inc. at _____ School.

Youth Frontiers is a nonprofit organization that has been delivering programs to schools for over 20 years that build positive school communities and help young people realize the importance of respecting themselves and others. Their vision is to change the way young people treat each other in every hallway, lunch line, and classroom of every school in America so that today's young people can make tomorrow's world better. Last year, Youth Frontiers worked with nearly 100,000 students and educators throughout the country.

The Responsibility Retreat is designed to help prepare juniors for their transition into senior year, and to challenge them to be strong leaders in their school. It will also give the students a chance to reflect on their high school years and time to consider their choices for the future.

This high-energy, interactive retreat is scheduled for _____ for a select group of juniors and will be held at _____. We encourage parents and caregivers to inquire about the retreat experience once the student returns home.

For more information on the organization presenting the retreat, you can visit www.youthfrontiers.org.

Sincerely,