

## RETREAT TOPICS

All of the retreats listed below (unless otherwise specified) are can be used by women's group, teenager groups and mixed church groups.

*The following retreats are the most popular:*

**Heading for High Places** - The title for this retreat is taken from the book "Hinds Feet on High Places". Using Habakkuk 3:17-19 as a theme, attendees are encouraged to find hope and strength to endure trials and injustice. The journey begins in the valley where, "the fig tree does not bud, and there are not grapes on the vines, the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food" (verse 17). In session 1 we will explore the benefits and blessings of valley experiences and how we should respond to trials. If we are to continue up the mountain and experience the "joy and strength of the Lord" (verse 18), we need to leave emotional baggage behind and learn to forgive. In session two we will look at the concept of forgiveness and how we can forgive ourselves and others. At the top of the mountain in session 3 we will seek to appreciate what happened on another mountain called Golgotha that enabled us to "go to the heights" (verse 19).

**Daughters of the King** (for women or girls only) - This retreat is based on I John 3:1a. Session one, entitled "Ordinary People", encourages the women to see themselves as ordinary people in the hands of an extraordinary God. Using I Corinthians 6:19b-20 women will be encouraged to recognize that they have worth, a purpose, and that they belong to the family of God. In session two, "Called to be Ambassadors", we will explore how to have a life of vision, joy and fulfillment. Using II Corinthians 5:17-21, we note that our call to be an ambassador is based on two things, we are anew creation in Christ and we are called to be ministers of reconciliation. The third session, called "Power to Live Like a Princess", uses a number of different verses to help the women discover ways to live as daughters of the King even when they struggle.

**Plug Into the Power** - This retreat helps everyone learn to plug into the power of the Holy Spirit within them. Through the use of an acrostic of the word POWER, the group is encouraged to see how they can: access the power through "P" prayer (II Corinthians 9:8); use the power to help "O" others in times of need (II Corinthians 1:3-5); acquire the power by being in God's "W" word (Hebrews 4:12); experience the power because they have been "E" equipped (Ephesians 2:10); and finally how they should "R" respond to the power (Nehemiah 1:4-11 and II Corinthians 4:18-21). These points are divided into three sessions with large and small group interaction.

**Spiritual Journey** - This retreat is designed to help people develop a deeper relationship with Jesus. The first session is based on Matthew 11:28-30 and focuses on helping the people to develop a deeper relationship with Christ through prayer. The second session helps the attendees to obey the command found in Psalm 46:10 as they discover ways to listen to God through His word. The last session is based on II Corinthians 5:20 and the importance of reaching out to others with the message of salvation in Christ.

**Discover Your Gifts** - This retreat helps women understand, identify and develop their spiritual gifts. It would require a workbook published by Church Development Resources (part of CRC Publications). The workbook is written from a reformed perspective. The retreat is very interactive. If you would like, I could send you a sample copy for the committee to look at, but I would need it back.

*Additional Retreats:*

**Battling Burnout/Keeping Balance** – In a fast-paced, hectic society, you can keep balance personally, emotionally and spiritually. This retreat examines how to keep personal balance by examining what burnout is and how to battle it from a biblical perspective. Participants will learn how to maintain emotional balance through forgiveness. Because prayer is one of the keys to staying spiritually balanced, this retreat will explore the power of prayer and how to more effectively engage in prayer.

**Celebrate Life** – This retreat uses Colossians 1:10-14 to help people appreciate the importance of celebrating who they are in Christ, the opportunity they have to make a difference in the lives of others, as well as who God is in them and in the world.

**Changing the World** – Changing the world is a humanly impossible task, unless we reach out to one person at a time and use the technique Jesus used - love. The theme verse John 15:16-17, will help people explore how to love ourselves enough to let others reach out to us, how to appropriate the love of God that enable us to endure difficulties victoriously, how to reach out to others in love.

**Communicating with Parents** – This retreat can be used for just teens or teens and their parents. It is highly interactive and experiential. The retreat helps both parents and teens understand where the other “side” is coming from and gives them a variety of suggestions for learning to communicate effectively.

**Experiencing the Miracle** – God wants us to daily experience the miracle of having a relationship with Him, but how do we do that. This retreat helps people experience that miracle by helping them develop a deeper, more personal devotional life. The retreat answers the questions, why have devotions, how do you have devotions, and what should you use for devotions.

**Understanding and Handling Failure** – Because we live in a world that is constantly reminding us that we fail in some way, we need to learn how to overcome the fear of failure. This retreat helps people what failure is and is not, how God can use our “failures”, and how we can effectively handle failure by getting a proper perspective of ourselves, of the situation and of God.

**Friendship Retreat** – This retreat helps people understand friendship, how to express friendship and how to have friends. It also focuses on the ultimate friend, Jesus Christ and how to develop a deeper friendship with Him.

**Go MAD (Make A Difference)**– This retreat focuses on helping people leave their well-defined, secure comfort zones and get out of the boat so they can experience the miracle of walking on the water. The first session encourages people to get out of the boat in the area of their personal comfort zones and learn to trust others as well as let others get to know them. The second session challenges them to walk on the water by reaching out past their social comfort zones and make a difference in the lives of others. The third session focuses on ways to experience the miracle of developing a deeper spiritual relationship with God through prayer, Bible reading and meditation.

**Get Out of the Boat** – Using the story of Peter walking on the water in Matthew 14:22-33, this retreat encourages people to experience the joy, freedom and miracle of being a child of God. Session one explores reasons we choose to stay in the boat and what to do if we start to sink. Session two examines three suggestions to help people get out of the boat: get powered up through prayer, keep your eyes on Jesus and take a step of faith.

**Hurting – Where’s God When it Hurts?** – This retreat will help to find some answers to the question, “If God is so good, why do I hurt?” It will explore ways to handle trials and difficulties in life and it will help people to learn to live without answers. It also encourages people to learn to be stewards of God’s grace – the grace of struggling, growing and victory.

**In His Steps** – This retreat explores how to have joyful, powerful and effective by walking in Jesus’ steps. The first session looks at how Jesus often withdrew into His Father’s presence in prayer and meditation and examines how we more effectively do the same. The second session explores the fact Jesus also walked the path of self-denial and submission to the Father’s will and shows us how to follow Jesus’ example. Their third session helps us to follow Jesus as He had the courage to be transparent, real and genuine with others.

**Life in the Fishbowl** (for people in positions of spiritual leadership) – This retreat helps people who are in positions of leadership handle the scrutiny of others by using the example of Jesus. His example shows us the importance of developing and maintaining close, trusted, and supportive friendships. By examining Jesus’ life we learn how to respond to expectations and public opinion and gives us ideas on how to make life in the fishbowl more enjoyable.

**Parenting Teens** (Adults only) – This series can be a retreat, a series of Sunday school talks or just single talks on certain subjects. The series covers the topics of understanding parenting styles, understanding basic developmental needs of teens promoting self-esteem in adolescents, the importance of peers, teenage sexuality, and handling anger, anxiety, fear and guilt.

**Power of Prayer** – This retreat helps people understand what prayer is, offers suggestions on how to make prayer a more dynamic force in their lives, and gives them a number of opportunities to experience different kinds of prayer.

**Proud to be Christians** – This retreat is based on Romans 1:16 and II Timothy 1:7. It explores three ways to live a power-packed Christian life. The first session helps people understand that the Holy Spirit gives them gifts and abilities. The second session encourages participants to experience the power of God as they reach out to others in love. The third session suggests two ways they can practice self-discipline and walk closer with God.

**Reach the Peak** – The retreat is based on Psalm 121:1-8. The first session looks at verses 1-2 and examines some of the stumbling blocks that try to keep us from reaching the peak. Session 2 focuses on verses 3-6 and explores tools we can use to reach the peak. Session 3 is based on verses 7-8 and talks about what will happen when we come down from the mountain.

**Self-esteem/Who Am I?** – Self-discovery and self-appreciation are important if we are to be effective Christians. This retreat meets those two needs by answering the following questions: where do you get your identity, how do you develop your identity, and what does the Bible say about me? The retreat ends with a celebration of who we are in Christ.

**Witnessing/Reaching Up, Reaching Out** – This retreat is based on I Peter 3:15 and examines who we can be filled with power and have the assurance to make a difference in this world. It helps participants reach up to God and be filled with His Spirit as well as how to let His power flow through us as we reach out to others.

#### *SPIRITUAL EMPHASIS WEEKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS*

**Choices** – A teenager's life is about choices – choices they will make that will affect the rest of their lives. During the week we will explore some of the most basic choices. The daily topics include, how do you choose to view yourself, others, life, or God. If a fifth day is needed, I include a session about excuses teens use not to obey God.

**From Fear to Freedom** – The theme verse for the week is II Timothy 1:7. Daily topics help teens understand and overcome fears of the unknown, loneliness, worthlessness, failure and the future.

**No Shame** – Romans 1:16 is the foundation of this retreat. Teens will learn how to face the fears of speaking out for Jesus and learn ways to share their faith with no shame.