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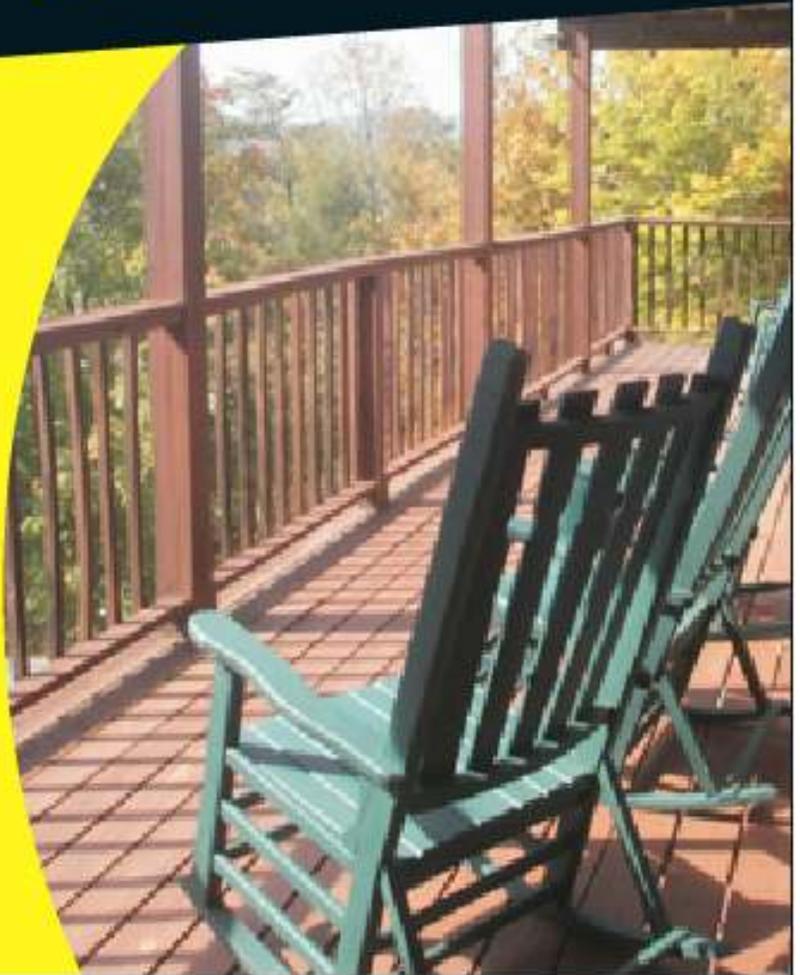
# "No Sweat" Retreat and Reunion Planning

FOR  
**DUMMIES<sup>®</sup>**

## *Learn to:*

- Plan Your Retreat or Reunion
- Enjoy the Process
- Please Your Guests

Ruth White- Innkeeper  
Tuckaleechee Retreat  
Center





Elk Lodge at Tuckaleechee Retreat Center

# “No Sweat” Guide to Planning Retreats and Reunions

## Are you panicked about your upcoming event?



Have you volunteered to plan a retreat or reunion? How does that make you feel?

Panic-stricken, anxious, fearful? Or maybe you have done this before, but encountered some difficulties. Well, fear not! We can help you make your plan and work through the details step by step.

There are many ways to accomplish this assignment, but there are a few basics that should be included in every plan of a nightly event.

Having talked with many

people who have come to our facility, I have heard a lot of horror stories and a lot of great ideas. So, based on that information, I have compiled a step by step plan for you to consider before starting.

Although there are many types of events, and many types of people attending those events, having a set of do's and don'ts to go by in advance will keep you on track and avoid being surprised, at least most of the time. I guess that would be the first rule to keep in mind. Expect the unexpected. Even with the best laid plans, someone is going to come to you and ask a

question or make a statement that you never even thought of. Rather than getting all flustered and upset, listen, then ask if you can get back to them with an answer. It always helps to mull over the situation, get with your co-planners and come up with a way to respond to that unexpected situation.

So, sit back, relax, and take a few minutes to read this guide and make a plan that will work in most situations.



If you are working with a committee, you will want to pick two or three dates to take before the committee. Choose one at your next meeting, and consider it THE date.

Of course, there is always the chance that you have overlooked some very important event that most people will be attending. Then you will have to start over. Ugh! Such is life. Now for Step 2.

## Step 1—Planning Your Date

What is the date? This is the first thing a facility will want to know.

A lot of people agonize over this, trying to pick the date that is right for just about everybody. Unfortunately, you are not able to please every person who might attend your event. So, the best way to pick a date is to take into consideration your

personal calendar and your organizational calendar to see what events are already planned. Then choose a date that is as far away as possible, so that others can arrange their schedules to attend your event. A big mistake is to ask the group if this date works for them. You will get as many excuses as you have people.

## Tuckaleechee Retreat Center

A Christian facility with group lodges and individual cabins.

### Inside this issue:

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- > Step by step.
- > Enjoy the event.
- > Check list.



Owned and operated by Children's Bible Ministries

## Seven Easy Steps

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**"No Sweat"**



Bear Lodge at Tuckaleechee Retreat Center

## Step 2—Picking a Facility

Once you have decided on a date, you must find a facility that has that date available. You can find places on line, get a recommendation from friends, or use a location you have been to in the past. However, if the place you chose in the past was not suitable, consider whether the problems you encountered can be fixed, and if not, search for another facility.

The facility you choose should be large enough to accommodate the number of people you think will attend your event. Then consider what you are going to do about meals. Does the facility have food service, or kitchens for you to prepare meals, or are you going to eat at restaurants or have each meal catered?

The only other thing to consider is activities for your group. Are you staying on property the whole time, or do you have free time for people to plan local activities? Ask questions about the area and what is available to do.

But there is one more step to consider before you book. See Step 3.

## Step 3—How Many People Will You Have?

**"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, <sup>8</sup> because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free."**

**Eph. 6:7-8**

This will be the second question a facility will ask you. The usual answer is, "well, I don't know." Of course you don't know at this time, but try to make an educated guess about the number attending. Once you learn what's available, number of buildings, number of rooms, and cost, you can better say what your numbers will be.

Do not leave the number open-ended. Take a long hard look at your group. Who has attended these

events before? How many actually showed up? Based on the size of the building, the number of rooms and the cost, what is a realistic amount you can afford?

NOTE: Don't make the mistake of putting more people in a room than will be comfortable. Ask yourself these questions: Will the ladies group be willing to sleep 2 to a bed, or do they prefer their own bed? Do you have single men in the group? Be sure they each have their own bed. Is your group all

couples? It is imperative that each couple have their own room. There are not many couples who are willing to share a room with another couple.

It is quite OK for you as the event planner to limit the number of people who can attend this event. You are in charge of the accommodations and the costs. Be a good steward of both and your event will be a success!

If you don't specify the rules up front, but make them up as you go along, hard feelings may result.

Of course, it's not wise to have a lot of rules. Try to be flexible on most issues, but try to anticipate what the problems could be and create rules to alleviate those problems.

Remember, boundaries are like fences. They keep people away from areas that need protecting, but the rules provide gates and paths for them to walk through.

## Step 4—Setting Your Boundaries

What are the do's and don'ts for your event? It is sometimes hard to determine what the rules should be, but if you don't have any, your event could be a disaster. You need to set some boundaries.

So, be realistic, but specific. For example, if an attendee says they are coming to the event, and they have paid the deposit, if they cancel,

they either pay for the room or find someone else to take their place. Be sure they know that they will be held responsible for the expense.

So, if you put this condition in your initial information, it is out there right away and everyone knows what the rule is. Most people will abide by the rules if they know them ahead of time.

What are your boundaries?



## Step 5—Who is Paying the Cost?

Finances! Who's paying what and when?

When you are planning a reunion, usually all households share the cost. If that's true, it is easy enough to figure the cost per person or per family. However, there can be variations in costs. If one family wants their own cabin, and the rest of the group is sleeping in the big lodge, there could be a cost difference.

On the other hand, if you are planning a retreat, the question is, will the church or organization be paying anything? If so, how much?

Once these questions have been answered, it will be easy enough to figure what each person owes.

The only other consideration is when they pay. Most facilities require a deposit up front. If your guests are paying most or all of the

cost, ask them to pay a deposit when they sign up for the event. They will have a vested interest in their attendance and be more likely to show up.

Do not be shy about asking for payment up front. You will have better attendance in the long run.



Who Pays and When?

## Step 6—Reminders and Final Payment

Keeping your guests informed is a vital part of your responsibility. When they sign up to attend your event, be sure to get a phone number, email address, or ask them to check the box that says they do not have an email address. Then ask for a physical address to mail information to them. You need to have some way to communicate with them.

Also, at sign-up, be sure to ask them for their deposit, or

give them a date the deposit is due and the amount.

If you have email addresses, it is easy to send out reminders. Start with what's expected of them (the rules). Then remind them when their deposit is due. Then each week after that, send an email follow up. Ask for their final payment to be in your hands two weeks prior to the event. This time frame might change depend-

ing on the facility's requirements, but you want the payment in hand prior to arriving at the facility.

The week before your event, send a reminder of the date and time they are to arrive at the facility. Most property managers don't appreciate guests arriving way before check-in time, so be clear on what's expected of your guests.

**"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."**

**Mark 10:45**

## Step 7—Review of Your Event

OK, what happened? When you are back home and have recuperated, schedule a team meeting to go over what went well, and what needs to be changed for next year. Then send an email thanking your guests for their participation. Be sure to ask for comments from them. You need to know the good and the bad, so you can adjust your plans for next year.

Now you are finished. Are you going to do this event next year? Did you like the facility you chose? If so, call to book a date for next year as soon as possible.

I hope these thoughts and ideas have been helpful. Be sure to see the check-list on page 4.

If you have questions, my contact information is listed on Page 5. May your next event be all that you hoped it would be.

Ruth White,  
Operations Manager,  
Tuckaleechee Retreat Center,  
Townsend, TN 37882



# Checklist for Planning Your Event



## Step 1—Planning Your Date

- Check your calendar
- Check the organization calendar or family events
- If you have a committee, pick 2 or 3 dates to take to the committee
- Choose a date and stick with it (barring any unforeseen conflicts)

## Step 2—Picking a Facility

- Check online
- Recommendations from friends
- Use a previous facility
- How will meals be handled
- What activities are near

## Step 3—How many?

- Look at past events for numbers of attendees
- Check your budget to see what you can spend
- How many can the facility accommodate
- Count how many bedrooms you will need.

## Step 4—Setting Boundaries

- Try to anticipate the problems
- Be realistic, but specific
- Pick a few rules to follow
- Be sure everyone knows up front what the rules are
- When an unexpected situation arises, take time to think it over before coming up with an answer

## Step 5—Who is Paying?

- Is everyone paying an equal amount
- Is the organization paying any or all of the expense
- Have you advised everyone they are to pay a deposit
- Set a date for the balance due

## Step 6—Reminders & Final Event

- Get contact information, including email addresses
- Give reminder of important rules, deposit due, when and how much, and when final payment is due
- Include your contact information so they can email/call you
- Be sure to remind them of the date, as well as the time they should arrive

## Step 7—Review Your Event

- Schedule team meeting to review what worked and what did not
- Email guests to ask for feedback
- If all went well, be sure to schedule next year's dates with the facility you booked



*Grace to all who love  
our Lord Jesus Christ  
with an undying love.*

*Eph. 6:24*



See us on the web:

TuckaleecheeRetreatCenter.com



Tuckaleechee Retreat Center is owned and operated by Children's Bible Ministries. This property was purchased to house the national office of CBM, to serve as a training facility for the ministry, and to practice the ministry of hospitality. When you rent one of our cabins, you are donating to CBM and their ministry of teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to children. Win a Child, Win a Life is CBM's motto.

Tuckaleechee Retreat Center has 6 cabins for rent. Three of them are very large, three are smaller individual cabins. Check out our website or our Facebook page for descriptions of our property.

Contact: Ruth White, Operations Manager

Phone: 865-448-6442 or 800-487-6659

Email: [ruth@tuckaleecheeretreatcenter.com](mailto:ruth@tuckaleecheeretreatcenter.com)

**“The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.”**

Psalms 33:5



Like us on Facebook or write a guest review on TripAdvisor



Deer Lodge at Tuckaleechee Retreat Center

## Q & A

### Question:

My group has 14 women and 5 men. What cabin would you suggest I use?

### Answer:

Our Elk Lodge has 10 bedrooms. Each bedroom has 2 queen beds, so you could use 7 of those bedrooms for the 14 women, and the other 3 bedrooms for the 5 men.

### Question:

I'm having a hard time selecting a date. How can I accommodate everyone?

### Answer:

You probably can't. Pick a date far enough in advance and start advertising it. Most people will be able to put that date on their calendar and work other events around it.

### Question:

We have families with small children in our group. How can we accommodate them?

### Answer:

Most of our rooms have multiple beds. Each family can use one bedroom. Only 2 bedrooms have tubs in them. Families with small children will appreciate them.

### Children's Bible Ministries

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### Tuckaleechee Retreat Center

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