

Service Team Captain's Fall Retreat

Why?

Many churches struggle to find volunteers who are active, engaged, and excited about serving. In order to be the kind of church that has a thriving volunteer force, you must make caring for your volunteers a priority. In order to effectively develop relationships with each volunteer, you'll need to create a system of volunteer leadership- where leaders are assigned the responsibility for caring for no more than 15 volunteers. When volunteers feel heard and cared for, they'll willingly go the extra mile, recruit their friends to join, and be passionate about what they're doing.

This yearly retreat format is designed to train and equip volunteer leaders (Captains). Friday evening we review expectations, renew vision, and build relationships. Saturday morning focuses on developing captains to lead volunteers and care for their teams.

Who?

All leaders (Captains) of service teams are invited and expected to participate in this weekend retreat. At The Chapel, this includes leaders in the following areas: Hosts (greeters, ushers), Security (parking lot), Coffee Shop, Communion, Work Crew (facilities), Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Admin (counters, office volunteers), Tech Team, Worship Team, Missions, Care Ministries such as hospital visitation, meals ministry, and counseling ministry, etc.

When?

This weekend retreat format takes place once a year on a Friday night from 5-9pm and Saturday morning from 9-noon.

Where?

This retreat can take place at your church or an off-campus retreat setting. Just make sure that you have enough space to move around for games and activities.

How?

Decorate your area with nautical themed accessories- shells on tables, sand in mason jars with votive candles, etc. Provide dinner for participants on Friday night and a light breakfast with donut holes, fruit, and granola bars on Saturday morning. Provide mints and chocolates on tables both days.

Friday Night, 5-9pm
Preparing to Set Sail

Materials: a variety of shells on each table, copies of the captain handbook, rope

Welcome and Remember-

What brought you to The Chapel?

Why did you stick around?

Why do you think God has called you into leadership here?

Connect- Choose a shell that represents you. Tell those sitting next to you why you chose that shell. What does it reveal about who you are?

Just as each of these shells is unique and beautiful in its' own way, each of you are uniquely equipped for the leadership role to which you've been called. It's our desire that throughout the course of this weekend, you'll remember your calling and renew your desire to serve others through this leadership role.

Support Circle- We want this group of leaders to serve as the support circle for our volunteer teams. In order to do that, we're going to need to create an environment of trust and support to hold each other up.

Using a rope that is appropriate for the size of your group, do a "YURT Circle" activity similar to the one found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNSsYqtWrTo> . Have everyone first stand up holding the rope and lean back, bearing each other's weight and supporting each other. Then ask everyone to lower themselves to a seated position on the floor while using the rope for support as they lower themselves. Ask them to stand up while pulling against the rope for support. Repeat with one hand.

Basics- Review the vision and discipleship process of your church, reminding leaders how service teams and leadership responsibilities fit in with the vision, mission, and discipleship process of your church. Review general guidelines and expectations for all volunteers (found on page 5 of the booklet).

Dinner Bell- Take time to eat dinner and encourage conversation among leaders and teams.

Clarifying Expectations- Take time to review volunteer expectations outlined in the booklet.

Stretched- Begin by giving each leader a rubber band and ask them to stretch their rubber band as they think about and discuss the answer to this question: Where are you currently being stretched by your leadership role?

Explain that a rubber band is only useful when it's being stretched. Leaders are the same way! When we are being challenged and stretched, pushed outside of our comfort zone, is when we are most effective. It's when we're being stretched that we rely on God for our strength.

Structure- Review the structure of your volunteer teams so leaders know where they fit into the overall system.

Job Description- Ask captains to read through their job description and talk about the expectations with those at their table. Have them give you feedback about concerns, questions, or suggestions to improve their job description to make it a useful, flexible document.

HEART Principles- Use these principles as a guideline for communication and interaction among your staff, volunteers, and leaders. Review each principle and talk about how that looks when implemented in your ministry setting.

Grievance Procedures- Help Captains understand their role in responding to and handling grievances.

Emergency Protocols- Quickly review the procedures for responding to emergency situations.

Safe Sanctuaries- Review the highlights of your safe sanctuaries (child abuse prevention) policy.

Listening and Learning- Take time to listen to and learn from your leaders. Ask them to grab their rubber band again and think about an area in which they would be open to stretching and growing as leaders. Spend time talking about the challenges/rewards of leading volunteers in your church.

Dismiss with prayer.

Saturday, 9-noon
Volunteer Leadership

Materials: Handbook, masking tape,

“In the Same Boat” Game – Develop relationships with this fun game. Have everyone stand in a circle and call one person to stand in the middle of the circle. Pass around a roll of masking tape and ask everyone except the person in the middle to tear off a piece of masking tape and put it in front of their feet on the floor. The person in the middle will say something that is true for them- for instance, “I like spicy food.” Everyone who agrees, will leave their spot and race to stand on another piece of tape. Let participants know that they are not allowed to move to the piece of tape directly to the left or right of their current location. Whoever is left without a piece of tape must stand in the middle and becomes the next caller. Repeat for several rounds.

“How to Impact and Influence Others” by James Merritt

This 45 minute experience is a quick summary of the book, “How to Impact and Influence Others” by James Merritt. It is recommended that you read the book prior to leading this part of the retreat.

“One person with just one idea can set off a chain reaction of other ideas that can change the course of history.”

“A power-of-one person understands that what a person is will leave a far greater impact on others in the long run than what a person does. The emphasis is not *conduct* as much as it is *character*.”

- 1- **Principle One- Love:** Make sure someone sees it, hears it, or feels it from you every day, either by telling them or showing them.
 - a. Matthew 22:37-38, “Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord you God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.”
 - b. “Variety may give life spice, but relationships give life significance, purpose, and meaning.”
 - c. “If you want to have the maximum influence and the greatest impact on others, you must believe that *who you are matters more than what you do.*”

- d. Team Talk: How do you show love to the people on your team?
How do we demonstrate *who you are matters more than what you do*?

2- **Principle Two- Joy:** By your words and deeds, let the joy of a loving God shine through your life to others.

- a. John 15:11, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."
- b. "We cannot be happy without being joyful, but we can be joyful without being happy."
- c. Difference in happiness and joy

Happiness	Joy
external	internal
depends on circumstances	depends on character
depends on what happens to us	depends on who lives within us
based on chance	based on choice

3- **Principle Three- Peace:** Respond to every difficult situation believing that God will lead you through it and that His peace will build confidence in your ability to influence others.

- a. Isaiah 26:3, "the Lord gives perfect peace to those whose faith is firm."
- b. "The primary cause of our difficulty in maintaining external peace is our lack of internal peace."
- c. External Peace- "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Romans 12:18
- d. Internal Peace- "So let the peace that comes from Christ control your thoughts." Colossians 3:15b
- e. Peace with God- "By faith we have been made acceptable to God. And now, because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we live at peace with God."

****Peace Test! Bouncing Birdies!****

Leaders will be tested by their ability to maintain peace under pressure. Give each leader a badminton birdie and ask them to write one responsibility from their area on the ball of the birdie using a permanent marker. Depending on the size of your group, you may need to divide into smaller groups with 8-10 people in each group. Each person brings their birdie to the circle and you'll assign one person from each group to be the keeper of the birdies. Explain that the goal is to keep these birdies bouncing in the air using your hands as a racquet. Ask the keeper of the birdies to toss one in the center and have the group begin to bounce it using their hands. If desired, have a competition to

see which group can get the most consecutive bounces without letting their birdie fall to the ground.

When groups have mastered the activity with one birdie, tell them you're going to add more tasks and increase the stress. See if they can maintain their peace in the midst of chaos! Ask the keeper of the birdies to gradually add more and more birdies until they are trying to keep up multiple birdies at the same time.

Debrief- How did it feel to be under such pressure? What are the pressures of your volunteer leaders role that sometimes threaten to undermine your peace? How can you work to maintain your peace in the midst of so many pressing tasks?

4- Principle Four- Patience: Just for today, in dealing with people and problems, hang in there and don't quit!

- a. "Long-suffering is the willingness to exercise patience, perseverance, and persistence in the pursuit of worthy goals."
- b. Difficult people must be handled with patience; demanding problems must be handled with perseverance.
- c. "Problems are not tools to tear you down, but tests to build you up."

5- Principle Five- Kindness: By word or deed, make an opportunity to be kind to someone today.

- a. "Tenderness and kindness can motivate people to do things that toughness never can."
- b. "It costs to be unkind, but it pays to be kind. Kindness always pays dividends, either for you or for someone else down the line. Kindness is never a waste of time or effort. It really is one link in an unbroken chain."

6- Principle Six- Goodness: Everyday, either take the opportunity or make the opportunity to do a good deed or say a good word.

- a. Psalm 16:2, "I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.'"
- b. "Goodness motivates a person to attempt to do what is best for others regardless of the cost."
- c. "Character cannot be manufactured on the outside; it emerges from what a person is on the inside."
- d. John Wesley said...

"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,

At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as you can."

- 7- Principle Seven- Faithfulness:** Take every opportunity today to be faithful and dependable, to do your best and be your best."
- a. "Without faithfulness, your influence will be limited or wiped out. Without faithfulness, the sum total of your other great talents is diluted."
 - b. "We are not born with equal abilities; some are more gifted than others. But everyone is born with an equal responsibility to use his or her abilities at full capacity."
 - c. Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."
 - d. "When the game is on the line, it's the dependable person you want up to bat."
- 8- Principle Eight- Gentleness:** Always make people you deal with feel as if they are more important than you, and treat them that way.
- a. Matthew 5:5, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."
 - b. "Meekness is not weakness. Gentleness is not wimpiness. Meekness means power under control. Meekness is the security to practice humility."
- 9- Principle Nine- Self-Control:** Respond according to principle and do what is right. Don't react to the actions of others.
- a. "You can not have happiness without restraint."
 - b. "Self-control is postponing the impulsive pleasure for the important task."
 - c. "Winners are those who can stay cool in a hot place, sweet in a sour place, and little in a big place."
- 10- Under the Influence**
- a. "We are all influencers, and we are all influenced. Studies tell us that even the shiest introvert will influence 10,000 people in a lifetime."
 - b. John 15:1, 5, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener... I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Prayer Stations

Volunteers are the gears that make ministry happen in our churches. Without the right people in the right positions, ministry is ineffective and eventually comes to a stand-still. It's crucial that church staff and leadership have the skills they need to lead teams of volunteers. In this retreat, leaders will hone their leadership skills and take time to reflect on and appreciate their volunteers.

Setting the Stage: Ask all team members bring a list of their volunteers to the retreat. You'll need to set up the different prayer stations in advance.

Materials: several mirrors, dry erase markers and erasers, volunteer lists, posters for each service team that says, "What's working in _____ (name of team)?" and "What's not working in _____ (name of team)?", markers, clothesline, clothespins, index cards, pens, thank you notes, stamps, pens

Prayer Stations: Have everyone go through the following prayer stations at their own pace, then meet back together for a time of group discussion.

Is it in you? You have to be the kind of person you expect your volunteers to be. If you expect volunteers to be energetic, you need to model that for them. If you want them to be open to new ideas, you need to demonstrate that quality in your own life. At this prayer station, each team member will take time to consider the qualities and characteristics they look for in volunteers and do some self-examination to make sure they are modeling what they expect from others. In this station, place a few hand mirrors, dry erase markers and erasers along with the instructions sheet that follows.

Intercessory Prayer Station- Using the list of volunteers each team member brought with them, provide a place for people to read and pray over the list of volunteers, ask God to bless each one and thank Him for all they do in your ministries.



What's Working? What's Not?- In this station, you'll spend some time in quiet reflection about each of your volunteer service teams. Before the retreat, create a poster for each of your service teams that says, "What's working in _____ (ex. Host Team)?" Create another poster for each team that says, "What's not working in _____ (ex. Host Team)?" Ask everyone to spend some time thinking about what is working and not working in each of your service teams. Provide them with a stack of post-it notes and pens. Have them write comments about the various service teams and stick the notes on the appropriate poster board. After everyone is done with the prayer stations, spend some time discussing your service teams. Pray together and thank God for what is working and ask Him for guidance to improve in the areas that are not working.

Creative Ideas for Encouragement- How often do you encourage your volunteers? In this station, team members will spend time coming up with creative ways to encourage volunteers. Hang up a clothesline with clothespins in this station and place some index cards and pens on a table along with the station instructions.

Saying Thank You- There's nothing like getting a hand-written thank you card in the mail! Put a selection of cards, pens, and stamps in this station and invite your team to spend some time writing thank you notes to their key volunteers or anyone who has been going above and beyond in their ministry area.

Wrapping It Up-

After everyone is finished with the stations, bring your group back together for a discussion.

What's Working? What's Not? Debrief- What were the strengths and weaknesses that were revealed on your posters? What is the root cause of your weaknesses? How can you intentionally continue to build up your strengths while working on some of your weaknesses?

Creative Ideas for Encouragement Debrief- Read through some of the suggestions on the line. Ask the leader of each area to decide on one or two ways they will appreciate their volunteers in the upcoming weeks.

Is It In You?

Station Instructions

As a leader of volunteers, you need to be the kind of person you expect your volunteers to be. If you expect them to be energetic, you need to model it. If you want them to be open to new ideas, you must demonstrate that quality in your own life. Consider the qualities and characteristics you look for in your volunteers. Write these characteristics on one of the mirrors in front of you. Then look into the mirror again and reread each of these expectations. Do you demonstrate what you hope to see in your volunteers' lives? Spend some time in thought and pray that God will reveal the areas of your character where you need to improve so you can more effectively lead your volunteers.



Creative Ideas for Encouragement

Station Instructions

How often do you encourage your volunteers? Spend some time coming up with creative ways to show volunteers how much we appreciate them. Challenge yourself to think of a wide variety of ideas- some that involve money, some that are free; some that involve lots of time, some that take no prep. Write each idea on an index card and hang them up on the clothesline using a clothespin. After we are done with the stations, we'll take a look at all these suggestions and pick a few we'll use with our volunteers in the near future.



Intercessory Prayer Station Instructions

One of the best ways to encourage and care for your volunteers is to pray for them. Take some time in this station to pray over the lists of volunteers. Ask God to bless each one and thank Him for all they do in your ministries.



What's Working, What's Not?

Station Instructions

In this station, you'll spend some time in quiet reflection about each of your volunteer service teams. You have a stack of post-it notes and pens. Write comments about the various service teams and stick the notes on the appropriate poster board- either what's working about that team or what's not working. After everyone is done with the prayer stations, we'll spend some time discussing service teams and praying together, thanking God for what is working and asking Him for guidance to improve in the areas that are not working.



Saying Thank You

Station Instructions

There's nothing like getting a hand-written thank you card in the mail! You have a selection of cards, pens, and stamps. Spend some time writing thank you notes to your key volunteers or anyone who has been going above and beyond in their ministry area expressing your gratitude for their service.



Team Debrief Session-

Ask leaders to meet in groups and debrief the comments and concerns addressed on the "What's Working? What's Not?" posters from the prayer stations.

How are you caring for your volunteers?

On a scale from 1-10, 1 being the least excited and 10 being the most excited, how do you think your volunteers feel about serving in your ministry area?

What are some creative ideas you came up with for appreciating your volunteers?

Which one can you implement immediately?

Do any changes need to be made to your areas' job descriptions/training process?

Other Agenda Items/Details to Discuss