



# Resource Toolbox for Retreat Captains



St. Paul of the Cross  
PASSIONIST RETREAT & CONFERENCE CENTER  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN



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# St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat & Conference Center

## Detroit, MI

Revised October, 2015



## WELCOME

Welcome Retreat Captain! The Captain's Toolbox is the work of the Captain's Committee for the Retreat Center Board of Directors. It is designed to assist and encourage you in your ministry of retreat promotion and recruitment. Through its publication, and other activities, the Captain's Committee wants to highlight your importance in the ministry of the St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat and Conference Center.

What does this resource contain?

- The *First Section* (Introduction) is devoted to the ministry of retreat promotion or recruitment. It puts in one place the basics of inviting others to join with you and your group in making retreats at St. Paul of the Cross.
- The *Second Section* (Annual Retreat Theme) contains information about the current retreat theme.
- The *Third Section* (Recruiting Tools) contains parish bulletin announcements, listing of promotion tips, instructions and techniques used successfully by many retreat captains over the years; as well as scripting to make a "sales pitch" and helpful discussion points.
- The *Fourth Section* contains links and references to the St. Paul Website and other helpful electronic resources; like the "Spirit of Passionist Retreat Centers" which is rich in describing the history and unique characteristics of Passionist retreats.

This manual is for you. Adapt it to your own needs. Try using the materials to enhance your effectiveness in inviting others in your parish or group. Use it to keep your records. May it help you experience the deep joy and satisfaction to be found in the ministry of the retreat promotion.

## NEW IDEAS

## A RESOURCE FOR YOU

## THE PASSIONIST SPIRIT



## Section 1 - Introduction

The Mission Statement of the Retreat Center is the foundation of our efforts in retreat recruitment and promotion:

*In the Spirit of St. Paul of the Cross  
and through the love of Christ crucified,  
we provide a unique, sacred place of  
hospitality and compassion  
where all are welcome to experience hope,  
renewal and the loving presence of God  
through spiritual retreats and hosted events.*

Our Mission Statement expresses a profound hope: that each person who enters our door will have the experience of being touched by God's love and goodness. It is our challenge to help make that happen!

We walk in the footsteps of St. Paul of the Cross who gathered companions to announce the Gospel of the Passion—the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love.

And with St. Paul of the Cross we walk in the footsteps of Jesus who came in the fullness of God's Spirit announcing the presence of the Reign of God.



Building the Kingdom of God Together

FOUNDATIONS

OUR MISSION  
STATEMENT

JESUS, PAUL,  
AND ALL OF US



## Introduction

### A SPECIALIZED CHURCH MINISTRY

Retreat captains and co-captains are more than volunteers. You are ministers. You are contemporary apostles. Your interest, energies and efforts have one goal—to bring others to Jesus. You receive special grace to perform this ministry. You are an integral and essential member of the Retreat Center team.

It is impossible to conceive of the ministry of Jesus without the presence of the apostles. They weren't decoration—they were necessary helpers and, later, the continuing presence of the Lord himself. Our ministry today is no different. We are His hands, His feet, and His heart. God comes to us—through us!



Jesus invited ordinary, normal men and women to follow him and to minister with him. They had no formal training and no experience. They did have, however, open hearts . . . and the willingness to give it a try. What they saw as they journeyed with him was most convincing—*the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the poor hear the Good News*. They devoted their efforts to carrying forth his message. That's how the Church grew . . . and continues to grow today.

The same story of discipleship is true here. Since 1948, men and women from all walks of life have shared in a retreat experience at St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat Center and carries the word of that experience to others. You yourself have been touched in a retreat and have volunteered to tell others—to lead them to the benefits of a retreat.

You are an ambassador. You are an apostle. You've been touched by God, formed as a minister of the Gospel in baptism, and invited to be a part of the Retreat Center story. The Retreat Center trusts you and depends upon you. We are grateful to minister with you.

Together, we respond to the summons of Jesus, *Come with me into the fields*. Together, we take our direction from his command, *Go out to all the world and tell the Good News*.



CAPTAINS ARE  
MINISTERS

INTO ACTION  
WITH THE  
LORD

THE CHURCH  
GROWS

WE ARE HIS  
AMBASSADORS  
NOW



## Introduction

### THE KEY TO RETREAT PROMOTION

At the turn of the Millennium, *Time Magazine* named Alcoholics Anonymous the most influential social movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century! It was an interesting choice because A.A. has no formal organization, a very tiny international staff and no master marketing plan! How does it work? What is its secret? You guessed it—the power of person-to-person, the influence of personal testimony.

When Retreat Captains gather to talk about what works best they always come back to the power of person-to-person. There is no substitute. Far and away, it is the best—and most important—promotion or recruiting method.

What could possibly be more effective than a **personal** invitation? To be on the receiving end makes you feel great. You feel important, special, included, wanted and cared for. In our world where, more and more, our social interactions are with machines, the real power of a personal invitation is ever greater.

It is the fundamental approach of Jesus and of the first disciples. This is how the Church was built. The Church grew on the foundation of personal testimony. This is what God did for me . . . this is how my life was changed. . . this is how I found an answer to my problem.

A personal invitation to attend a retreat can lead to a conversation. The person has questions, concerns, fears, problems, objections. When you do base your work on the personal approach, you are able to reply with your own experience. You can reassure, encourage, perhaps challenge, enlighten and entice!

All the other methods we use—bulletin announcements, posters, letters, pulpit announcements and even public speaking—are good and necessary. But none of them will ever have the positive results of one-on-one.

***“Say, have you got a minute?  
I want to invite you to join us in making a  
retreat . . .”***



PERSON TO  
PERSON

MAKING  
OTHERS  
FEEL  
IMPORTANT

THE CHURCH  
GROWS





## Introduction

### INVITATIONS . . . PART II

Many of today's inactive church members can see a situation where they could become active church members. Additionally, many inactive members say they would return immediately if they were simply invited to participate in a meaningful religious function by a member of that parish. There is good reason to believe that reaching out with an invitation will produce a harvest in time. People can feel important and significant because you took the time to ask them.

Inviting people, especially new people, to make a retreat is an example of the Church's most basic—and most important—ministry: *Evangelization*. That's a big theological word. It means—the action of spreading the Good News, the Gospel; or as Pope Francis says, it is "*The Joy of the Gospel*".

A brief reflection on the state of our world reminds us how desperately we need the Good News. The Christian Gospel is one of the few visions for life that has the proven power to lift us out of our misery, violence and destructive selfishness.

A quick glance at the nature of personal life in our country—what people are living for, what inspires them—can also tell us how important the Gospel is. For all of the goodness in America, there is also vast selfishness and self-centeredness. There are huge amounts of living for the almighty dollar—and not much else. These approaches to life guarantee unhappiness.

A humble look at our Church's recent history reminds us of the power of scandal. Unfortunately, there are empty spaces in our pews because some Church members found the stress, conflict or shock to be too great. We should never judge those who stopped coming. Our Church is human, too, and in need of renewal. We can help rebuild by reaching out to those who've gone away. These believers—our friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members—will return if we offer them a kind, gentle and encouraging invitation.



WAITING TO BE  
ASKED...

WANTING TO BE  
ASKED

EVANGELIZATION

OUR WORLD

PERSONAL LIFE

THE CHURCH  
RIGHT NOW





## Introduction

### BUILDING A RETREAT GROUP

New + Young + Veterans = A Solid Retreat Group

Every healthy retreat group is a blend of ‘experienced’ retreatants along with new members and younger members.

Keeping a retreat group alive and vital requires a bit of inventive thinking. If you only rely upon those who came in past years, our efforts will diminish over time and our group will fade away. We have to be willing to add to the mix. We don’t want to rest on our laurels or rely only on the veterans. Get everyone in your group to join your “recruiting” team to share the retreat experience.

New retreatants don’t have to be young! **Where do we find them???** Among friends, neighbors, family members—anyone you know who would be interested in and benefit from making a retreat. **How do we find them?** As the saying goes, think outside the box! Get in touch with the parish groups you’ve never contacted. Try the folks you have written off for one reason or another. Approach ministers in your parish for help: ask the DRE, the RCIA director, the music minister, your deacon(s), your pastoral associate, etc. They often know of people who would benefit from a retreat.



**We want to make a special effort to reach out to the next generation(s) of men and women.** Younger men and women—building their families and careers—are in special need of the retreat experience. For them, a retreat can be a life-saving investment in the health and well-being of their marriage and family! For many reasons, they need special attention and we may have to work a bit harder to reach them. They will say they are too busy, too tired, too stressed. Many of them are alienated from the church yet intensely spiritual. Some of them are being overwhelmed by the challenges of life. **We have here something of what they need!** When they get to the retreat they will have an incredible experience.

Teens are most welcome to attend retreats . . . especially with their parent, older siblings, or other relative. Most can handle the experience from about 13 or 14 years of age on.

THE  
FORMULA

LOOK  
OUTSIDE THE  
BOX

THE NEXT  
GENERATION

Teens?  
Yes—Yes—Yes!



## Introduction

### HOW TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE

Some people fear a retreat as: “living like a monk for a weekend”, or doing 48 hours of solitary confinement”, “only for goodie-goodies”, “will I be required to take a test?”, “hard beds, bad food”. With these types of backgrounds, with the bad taste of bad memories, many people shy away from a first adult retreat experience. How can you explain what a retreat is really like?

- **TALK ABOUT THE STAFF:** pleasant, down-to-earth, human people. They even tell jokes!
- **TALK ABOUT THE RETREAT CENTER:** beautiful grounds, great food, dietary requests, comfortable bedrooms with private baths, the tranquility of the chapel, handicap accessible.
- **TALK ABOUT THE SCHEDULE:** there is free time; you are not regimented, but have a chance to rest, to unwind, to think. There are a variety of experiences on the schedule and all of them are optional.
- **TALK ABOUT THE GROUNDS:** the serenity in midst of the city, good spaces to get out and walk, no feeling of being coped up!
- **TALK ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERE:** low-key, informal, accepting, encouraging comfortable quiet.
- **TALK ABOUT THE RETREATANTS:** normal people—parents, business people, workers—good people trying to be better people!
- **TALK ABOUT THE COST:** the policy is to ask for a free-will donation, based on the cost of operation. No one should stay away from a retreat because of finances. Gift Certificates are available to purchase and distribute.
- **TALK ABOUT GOD’S GRACE:** the peace, joy, insights and blessings God wants to share with them. Being a disciple...
- **TALK ABOUT YOU!** Share your story. Tell how retreats have helped you—and your family. Others can relate to you, to your experiences, to your life-situation. Your own experience is the best “selling point” for a retreat—bar none. Others will identify with you as a peer. They will feel that what worked for you can also work for them. It’s the personal touch that makes the difference.



ENCOURAGE

SHARE  
STORIES

JOKES?

TRANQUIL

TALK ABOUT  
THE  
RETREAT  
SCHEDULE

GROTTO  
PATHS

QUIET TIME

BE  
PERSONAL



## Introduction



### STANDS FOR *PLANNING!*

Planning is the key to success. Our time is limited—our goal is challenging—our resources are never enough. An army might march on its stomach, but the key to victory is planning.

THE KEY TO  
SUCCESS

#### THE ELEMENTS OF A PLAN

1. Invite several effective co-captains to help lead your team.
2. Make One! Write it down. Put it on paper...with deadlines, etc.
3. Contact your Pastor and other key parish staff.
4. Contact your team members—or create one!
5. Set goals. Know your quota and make a conscious choice to meet it.
6. Use the resources of the Retreat Center.
7. Remember that “heart to heart” is still, and always will be, the key!
8. Succession Plan... make a plan with someone who will follow you.



WRITE IT  
DOWN

*Remember what it did for you?* Every one of us knows the sensation of going on retreat and feeling ourselves so lifted up that we can hardly imagine the circumstance of our usual lives, or all the things that make us fret. In such a place, in such a state, we start to experience life differently. A retreat help us to see how God is a part of our life no matter what is happening. We can hear more clearly the Word of the Lord that we need to hear: a word of forgiveness, compassion, presence, encouragement or challenge, or a word of love. *We leave feeling like a new person.*

Those experiences are what recruiters seek to share with others. We want to pass on to them the Good News, the blessings, the peace and spiritual awareness we have received. Keep in mind a retreat is a powerful, personal experience. People’s lives are changed on retreat. So, the heart and core of retreat recruiting is the same personal approach; people inviting people.

*You’ve been there—you’ve done it—your example is very powerful!*

BEEN THERE  
- DONE  
THAT

## Introduction

### THE PLAN ELEMENTS

#### 1. It's Important—So Write it Down

When we write something down—we think hard about it, we make a commitment to do it, we emphasize its importance. The Gospels, the Declaration of Independence, your house mortgage—these are all written down because they are important.

#### 2. Contact your Pastor. . .and Other Parish Ministers & Leaders

Ask your parish priest or deacon for help in making the retreat date known to the parishioners. Request they announce and endorse the retreat, encouraging people to attend. After all, the reason the Retreat Center exists is to support the faith of the archdiocese.



THE PEN  
IS  
MIGHTY!

WORK  
WITH  
YOUR  
PASTOR

#### 3. Your Co-captain(s) or Team

Your team: Some parishes are fortunate to have several people working with the Captain. If so, the Team Leader should contact the others and hold a meeting several months prior to the retreat weekend.

If you are alone in your parish, carefully select some others who have shown a willingness to work and who can work with you. Who's available to help? Think of the people with you on retreat last year or other parish leaders who may have made a retreat in times past. Some of these people may be willing to help.



BUILD A  
TEAM

## Introduction

### RESOURCES FROM ST. PAUL'S

The Retreat Center considers the weekend retreat programs for men and women its most important ministry. It is our basic reason for existence.

**The Newsletter:** Each year a summer/fall newsletter is mailed to all current and past retreatants. Along with items of interest, the newsletter contains a copy of the schedule of retreats.

**Captains' Dinner Meetings:** These take place a couple of months before your retreat date. This is where important information about the retreat is communicated—and it's a chance to renew contact with the retreat Center and other captains. It is also where you can pick up your retreat roster and materials. It is important you attend—or send a representative.



**Reminder Letter:** Soon after the Captains' Dinner, we will mail a letter to all retreatants on your parish roster. It's their reminder to sign up. There will be a slip at the bottom of the letter for the retreatants to send back to the Retreat Center with their reservation deposit.

**Reservation Confirmation:** When you turn in your reservations, we send a confirmation note to those who register. We do the same for those who contact us directly.

**Other Resources:** We have available for you at the Captains' Dinner—

*Website* – [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org)

*Business Cards* – great to pass out; put your number on the back

*Trifold Brochures* – great weekend information, including map and schedule

*Posters* – large and small, for your parish use

*Sample Bulletin Announcements* – re-write them to your liking

*The Captains' Handbook* – this book with all it contains.

MOST  
IMPORTANT

RETREAT  
SCHEDULE

THIS IS A  
MUST

YOUR ROSTER

SIGN-UPS

RESOURCES



## Introduction

### A SUGGESTED SAMPLE PLAN

Planning is the key to success! It's important to write down a plan—and then follow your plan. Here's a sample:

- 60 Days 1. You attend the Captains' Dinner Meeting at the Retreat Center. You bring home materials to help in the retreat promotion work. Follow-up with scheduled bulletin announcements.
- 59 Days 2. The day after the Dinner Meeting you sit down and write out your own plan of groups and parish leaders to contact.
- 50 Days 3. Organize a team to share in the duties of recruitment.
- 50 Days 4. Inform the pastor or deacon of the retreat and ask for their support.
- 50 Days 5. Consult with pastor, deacons, and other pastoral leaders—identify new retreatants and begin to contact them.
- Each Day 6. Pray for the success of the retreat...that the Lord truly touch those in need.
- Often 7. Continue to reach out to new candidates. Encourage your team to register and send in their \$30 reservation deposit ASAP;
- 45 Days 8. The Retreat Center mails a letter of invitation to every member of your parish who is on our mailing list.
- 40 Days 9. Your follow-up...Contact by telephone or email the retreatants from your parish who are on our mailing list. Get the assistance of other team members.
- 39 Days 10. Touch base with parish leaders and team about more new retreatants.
- As Needed 11. Arrange transportation for those who may need a ride.
- Each Day 12. Pray for the people who are on your list.

COUNTDOWN

ENCOURAGE YOUR TEAM TO REGISTER ASAP; The deadline to register is 14 days in advance of your retreat weekend.

ENSURE TO REGISTER ONLINE

STAY IN TOUCH

CAR POOL



## Introduction

### A SUGGESTED SAMPLE PLAN (continued)

- 21 Days      13. Make announcements during the Sunday Masses. Have a sign-up sheet available after the Sunday Masses, attended by former retreatants.
- 14 Days      14. Sunday Announcements. Sign-ups take place between Masses.
- Each Day     15. Pray for us here at the Retreat Center.
- 8 Days       16. On Friday, one week before your retreat (or earlier), contact the Retreat Center with a final listing of retreatants and any special needs. You can fax your material to (313) 535-9207 or you can email it to the Weekend Retreat Coordinator.
- 0 Days       17. Come for retreat—and enjoy it.
- +7 Days      18. Publish names of retreatants in bulletin, or post pictures of retreat group on parish web or bulletin boards.
- +14 Days     19. Touch base with “no shows” to find out the reason; encourage them to sign up for the coming year.
- All Year      20. Stay in touch with other retreatants. Email is a great way to keep in touch all year. Mention retreats to potential new retreatants. Let the Lord guide you in your efforts until the next period of formal promotion and recruitment.



SHARE A STORY FROM THE PULPIT

PRAY ... PRIVATE AND PUBLIC

TIME WITH THE LORD AND YOUR GROUP

PUBLISH A LIST OF YOUR PARISH RETREATANTS



## Introduction

### BEST PRACTICES . . . LOTS OF GOOD IDEAS

We list here a number of tips, tricks and techniques retreat captains have found useful and helpful. Here's the wisdom of your brothers and sisters serving in the same ministry—you have to adapt it to your situation, but these ideas may spark something that works for you.

**Face Time!** Nothing is more important than one-on-one interaction. Nothing else comes close. Retreat promotion is a kind of personal witness. Speak from your own experience—it is very powerful and very effective.

**Get Help!** After “face time” the second most effective recruiting tool is getting a co-captain or forming a team. You will automatically reach more people, have less work to do alone, experience less frustration and have more fun. And you will also have more success.



**Call the Team Together!** After the Captains' Dinner Meeting, get your team together and make a plan together. Decide who will do what, set deadlines, go into action.

**Gather your Entire Retreat Group!** Invite everyone to come together—at the parish or at your home—to discuss the coming retreat. Enlist the support of all who come on retreat. Get them to reach out to people you don't know yourself. (Sometimes, someone from the Retreat Center can come to attend!)

**Make an appointment with your Pastor!** Call him, ask for 30 minutes. Sit down and tell him about the retreat. Seek his help and support. Ask him if he has any people he would like you to invite to attend the retreat.

**Touch base with your Parish ministers and leaders!** Talk to your deacons, assistant pastor (if you have one), pastoral associate, DRE, RCIA director, young adult minister. Let them know about the retreat. Ask them for suggestions of who to contact. Ask them to publicize the program. Invite them to attend with you.

**Talk to Spouses!** In pulpit talks and bulletin announcements, encourage husbands to give their wives the gift of a weekend retreat. Encourage wives to send their husbands away for rest and renewal. This is the beautiful art of practical persuasion . . . and it works.

JOB #1

DON'T WORK  
ALONE

FACE TIME  
WITH  
FATHER!

FRIENDLY  
PERSUASION



## Introduction

### BEST PRACTICES . . . LOTS OF GOOD IDEAS (continued)

**A Promotion/Recruiting Slogan or Mantra!** Keep your focus fresh and sharp with a simple slogan—***Think New . . . Think Young!***

**Plant Seeds!** Some retreatants had been cultivated by captains for several years before they finally made a retreat. Take the long view. Plant the seeds of growth.

**Create Your Own Reality!** Your attitude is critical. If you approach the ministry with a hopeful, positive spirit you will have more success... and more fun. If you begin fearful, doubtful or pessimistic, those attitudes will weigh you down and make it hard to do well. Pray for the confidence and hope.

**Year Round Recruiting.** Seek to keep the idea of retreat before the entire parish throughout the year. Put a monthly notice in the parish bulletin or newspaper. Change out posters on the bulletin boards periodically. If your parish has a parish festival or fair, or a ministry weekend - set up a “Retreat Booth or Table.”

**Look Beyond!** We want everyone in the parish to feel they are welcome to come to retreat. Without our even knowing it, many parishioners may have come to the conclusion the “retreat group” is closed; or just a ‘group doing its thing.’ Reach beyond the immediate circle of present and past retreatants. Find ways to reach out to the parish groups you don’t normally think of.

**Create a Scholarship!** Get your group to pitch-in and create a ‘retreat scholarship’ you can offer to someone who needs to come but who is concerned about their financial situation.

**Name Names!** After the retreat is over, publish a list of those who attended the retreat in the parish bulletin. Or take picture and post a picture of the group on your parish website or bulletin board.

**Parish Website.** Put retreat information on the website; or create a link between your parish website and St. Paul’s.

**Personal Testimonies.** Have retreatants write an article about what a retreat did for them – publicize it. Ask first-timers, especially to do this.



THINK NEW...  
THINK YOUNG



THINK  
OUTSIDE THE  
BOX

NAME -  
NAMES

## Introduction

### BEST PRACTICES . . . LOTS OF GOOD IDEAS (continued)

**Transportation.** Helping others get to the retreat center is a great aid. Sharing rides, car-pooling creates a bond among retreatants. It encourages first-timers who might be anxious or on-the-fence. It saves money, saves the environment! And on your way home, you can retell some of the retreat jokes!

**Keep Your Vision Clear!** You are performing a Church ministry. In fact, you are engaged in the first and most basic of all ministries – **evangelization**. You are spreading the Good News. You are inviting others to know the joy, help and blessing of life in Christ. The Lord is immensely proud of you and your generosity in sharing the invitation to be on retreat. Your ministry has an impact in the lives of others far beyond what you can begin to imagine. In the words of an ancient Jewish proverb - Save one soul and you save the world!



*St. Paul of the Cross gathered companions...  
to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all.  
He wanted them to live their lives like apostles.  
Keenly aware of the evils that affected the people of his time,  
he never tired of insisting that the most effective remedy  
is the Passion of Jesus, “the greatest and most overwhelming  
work of God’s love.”*

RIDE SHARING

DISCIPLESHIP &  
WITNESSING TO  
THE HOLY SPIRIT



### Sample Parish Bulletin Inserts

The following samples of *Bulletin Inserts* can be used about 8 weeks before your scheduled weekend (Men / Women)

#### RETREAT FOR MEN – 1<sup>ST</sup> CALL

This is a First Call for men/women of the parish to make the annual retreat at St. Paul's Retreat Center on the weekend of [event date]. Don't miss out on this wonderful experience of spiritual and physical renewal. Call [Name at ###], or go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to make a reservation.

#### JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEN'S RETREAT.

During this weekend you can experience God's love, healing, peace and forgiveness. Join men/women of the parish on the weekend of [event date]. Don't miss out on this wonderful experience of spiritual and physical renewal. Call [Name at ###], or go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to make a reservation.

#### HAVE YOU BEEN THINKING ABOUT GOD LATELY?

Perhaps this is a special time for you. Renew your inner life at our parish weekend retreat for men/women on [date]. You'll be amazed how much the retreat will help you find how God is active in your daily experience and what peace this awareness can bring you. Call [Name at ###], or go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to make a reservation.

YOU ARE INVITED to spend a relaxing, spiritually insightful weekend with men/women of our parish Friday evening to Sunday at noon, on [date] at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center. For more information call [Name at ###], or go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to make a reservation; or call the Retreat Center at [###].

#### GET AWAY FOR THE WEEKEND

Men/Women, sign up for our annual parish weekend retreat at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center on the weekend of [date]. With quiet surroundings, spacious grounds, provocative talks, you'll return refreshed, perhaps with a whole new outlook. Call [Name at ###], or go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to make a reservation.

#### YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS IT!

It is one of the best bargains - our PARISH RETREAT FOR MEN/WOMEN on [date]. You'll come away renewed and with a better perspective on job, family and life. The suggested donation is less than a weekend at a good hotel and the benefits are priceless! A private room with a shower add to the comfort for you. For more information call [Name at ###], or go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to make a reservation; or call the retreat center at [###].



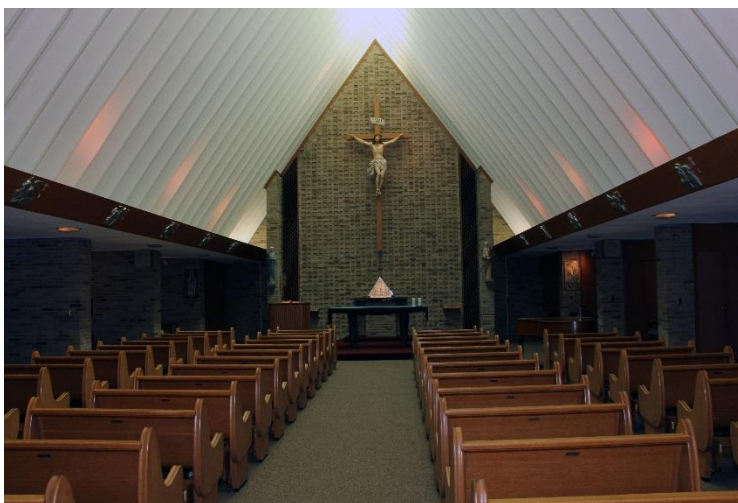
**Sample Parish Bulletin Inserts (continued)****TOP TEN REASONS TO GO ON A RETREAT:**

1. Physical rest.
2. Peace and recollection.
3. Answers to a pressing problem.
4. Reconnect with your religion.
5. Release for tension and fear.
6. Listen for God's help in making an important decision.
7. Obtain a new awareness of God's love for you.
8. A weekend away with great meals and good company.
9. Interesting and practical talks on spiritual issues.
10. Offers a rich blessing.

For more information call [Name at ###], or go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to make a reservation; or call the retreat center at [###].

**RETREAT FOR MEN/WOMEN**

Join the men of the parish signing up for the annual retreat at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center on the weekend of [date]. Ask someone who has made the retreat and they will tell you they have never been more at peace with God and the world. A retreat once a year is a vital necessity these days. For more information call [Name at ###], or go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to make a reservation; or call the retreat center at [###].





### Sample Letters to Retreatants

Dear [Retreatant Name],

Our retreat weekend at St. Paul of the Cross is almost here, [weekend date] and since a few of you have not attended in the past, we have put together some helpful notes. This year's theme is "[THEME]". We expect around [number] of men/women from our parish to join us this year.

This weekend will begin with check-in starting on Friday at approximately 4:00 pm. It is recommended to get there as early as you can so you can begin to wind down for the weekend of reflection. All rooms have a private bed and bath and facility is purposely quiet. Dinner is served at 6:30 pm; the meals are always very good. Five meals are provided and are included in the donation for the weekend. Please see the enclosed brochure for a schedule and weekend agenda.

Although there will be many opportunities to participate in the sessions, you may make the weekend whatever you want it to be; so please feel free to take full advantage. If rest and relaxation are what you need, then sleep in and take naps as necessary. If quiet and nature are what you are looking for, the beautiful grounds can be your haven. The sessions, however, are very thought provoking and spiritually motivating. The retreat team is available for personal guidance or face to face reconciliation if you so desire. The chapel is also inviting and beautiful, and the sound of a chapel full of men (women) singing a Mass is something you will not soon forget. This year's recommended donation for the entire weekend is \$[cost], which is very reasonable when you compare the cost of hotel rates, not to mention 5 meals and the retreat staff's contributions! But the donation is strictly based on individual means. The donation is a confidential offering made at the Sunday mass. If snacking is important, you may want to bring your own stash, but coffee, tea, and fruit are available 24/7. The facility is smoke-free (smoking is limited to porch areas). There is a spiritually focused library and gift shop available for your convenience.

If for some reason you have to cancel at the last minute, please call either of us so we can inform St. Paul's to open up your room reservation. Some suggestions for what to bring include casual comfortable clothing, books, any medication and toiletries; towels and linens are provided. We suggest cell phones be used on a very limited basis (if at all) to allow God to speak to your heart this weekend. We generally come away refreshed and recharged in faith and in many cases, with a new set of priorities.

If you have any question, please feel free to call me [###] or our Co-Captain [Name ###]. Thank you very much for considering to share your weekend with us. We look forward to an uplifting retreat at St. Paul's again this year.

Sincerely,

[Name and Co-Captain]



### **Using the Telephone**

Contact by telephone can be very effective – if you are comfortable with its use. Some people, however, are intimidated by “cold calls.” Some people just don’t know what to say, or how to say it. This section offers several “phone scripts” that make suggestions as to what to say and how to say it; for a variety of situations... like:

- **The Voice Message “Sales Pitch” for *New* Retreatants**
- **“Inviting” a potential *New* Retreatant**
- **The Voice Message “Sales Pitch” for *Repeat* Retreatants**
- **“Inviting” a *Repeat* Retreatant**
- **The Call the Week *Before* the retreat**
- **“The Call *After* the Retreat for those who did not make it**



### The Voice Message “Sales Pitch” for New Retreatants

\_\_\_\_\_, thank you for taking this message.

This is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am calling from St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center. I am so sorry I missed you. I am the St. Paul’s Retreat Captain for our parish (or Group) and I am calling you to let you know about our upcoming retreat for the weekend of \_\_\_\_\_.

I know you have not attended a weekend retreat at St. Paul’s in the past, but:

1. Your name was given to me by \_\_\_\_\_
2. I’m calling all the members of the (choir, Parish Council, Parent Club, etc.)
3. We talked briefly after mass \_\_\_\_\_ (last week) following the announcement by Fr. \_\_\_\_\_ about the retreat
4. You called me and left a message after reading of the retreat in the Church bulletin

... and I would like to talk with you about your interest in attending the retreat and answer any question you may have.

\_\_\_\_\_, perhaps you could call me back at \_\_\_\_\_ so we can talk further. I am looking forward to hearing back from you. Again, thank you for taking the voice message.



## Recruiting Tools

### “Inviting” a Potential *New* Retreatant

“ \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for taking my call.

\_\_\_\_\_, do you have a minute, or is this a bad time?

**“Bad time”** – Not a problem, when would it be more convenient for me to call back?

**“Good Time”** – Great! Please let me tell you why I am calling.

\_\_\_\_\_, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m calling for St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center. I’m the Retreat Captain for St. Paul from our parish and I am calling to invite you to our upcoming retreat for the weekend of \_\_\_\_\_.

I know you have not attended a weekend retreat at St. Paul’s in the past, but:

1. Your name was given to me by \_\_\_\_\_
2. I’m calling all the members of the (choir, Parish Council, Parent Club, etc.)
3. We talked briefly after mass \_\_\_\_\_ (last week) following the announcement by Fr. \_\_\_\_\_ about the retreat
4. You called me and left a message after reading of the retreat in the Church bulletin

... and I would like to talk with you about your interest in attending the retreat. Would you like to attend a weekend retreat or would you like to know more about the benefits of a weekend retreat before deciding?

**“No Interest”** – I understand and want to thank you for your time and consideration. (There is no need to make them explain or justify their reason.)

**“Yes, I would like to attend”** – Great! Let me verify your contact information. Do you have access to a computer? (If Yes), please go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) and hover over “Retreats”; on the dropdown, click on Register/Upcoming Retreats. Select the date of our group’s retreat on \_\_\_\_\_. On the left side of the screen, you will see our group’s name. Then simply use the secure site to register and place your deposit. About a week before our retreat you will get a reminder post card in the mail. Would you be interested in car-pooling for the retreat?

**“Need more information”** – Sure, what would you like to know...?

**It is most important to convey a sense of passion and excitement at their interest in attending the retreat!**





## **Recruiting Tools**

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*Continued....*

**“Why should I go on a Retreat?”** – Well there at least ten good reasons you might want to go on a retreat...

1. It is very restful
2. An opportunity to reflect and recollect
3. Think about things going on in your life
4. Really think about your faith
5. Release of tensions and fears
6. Ask God for help in making important decisions
7. A weekend away with great food, private baths, and good people
8. Discover new ways how the Lord loves you
9. Very interesting and practical talks on spiritual issues
10. A rich blessing for you and your family

Also:

- During the weekend you can experience God’s love, healing, peace, and forgiveness
- You’ll be amazed how much the retreat will help you find God in your daily experience and what peace this awareness can bring you
- You’ll come away with faith renewed and a better perspective on job, family and life

**“What’s involved?”** – Mostly just showing up, but the emphasis is on personal prayer, reflection and growth. The retreat does not involve any group dynamic exercises. The retreat weekend is planned in advance with a focus on private reflection. The talks have a general theme for the weekend, and there is time for reading, reflection, prayer, counseling and spiritual direction (if desired) and even naps.

**“How much time will it take?”** – We generally arrive between 4:00 and 6:00 pm on Friday to check in and get settled. The retreats starts with dinner about 6:30 pm. The retreat ends following mass on Sunday about noon.



## Recruiting Tools

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*Continued...*

**“What room arrangements are there?”** – Everyone gets a private room, with a private bath and shower. Towels and linens are provided.

**“How long are the sessions?”** – The sessions are generally about an hour each, with plenty of breaks for quiet time, prayer, or reflection. Some retreatants take naps during breaks, some read in the library or their room, some take long walks on the private spacious grounds of St. Paul Retreat Center.

**“Is this a silent retreat?”** – Yes, we keep silence except at meals; but for those who want to talk with friends or other retreatants, there is a room adjacent to the dining area where people can talk anytime.

**“Who else is involved?”** – There will be other men/women from our parish along with other parishes in the Detroit area.

**“Is there a financial commitment?”** – Yes and no; There is a required \$30 reservation deposit that will guarantee you a space on the retreat as well as a suggested contribution of \$[cost] for the retreat (two nights, five meals, linens, and the retreat itself); but ***no one is turned away if they cannot afford the retreat at this time. Some retreatants give more, to assist those who cannot afford the entire amount.***

**“I’m interested, but I can’t make it that weekend.”** – Well, there are many weekend retreat options. You can go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) to look for the other available weekends.



## Recruiting Tools

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*Continued...*

“Now that we’ve talked, would you be interested in attending a retreat this year?”

“**No**” – I understand and want to thank you for your time and consideration.

**If “No” reason is given, say:**

“ \_\_\_\_\_, we are always working to make our retreat experience better, is there any particular reason why you can’t make the retreat?”

(Be understanding, there is no need to make them explain or justify their reason.)

**If there is a conflict with something else that weekend, say:**

“There are many other men’s/women’s retreat weekends available, would you like to know about some alternative dates?”

**“Interested, but I need to check the date with my...”**

“I understand, when would be a convenient time for me to call back?”

**“YES”** – Great! Do you have access to a computer? (If Yes), please go to [www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org) and hover over “Retreats”; then on the dropdown, click on Register/Upcoming Retreats. Select the date of our group’s retreat on \_\_\_\_\_. On the left side of the screen, you will see our group’s name. Then simply use the secure site to register and place your deposit. About a week before our retreat you will get a reminder post card in the mail.

(If they do not have access to a computer, then verify their contact information. Advise them about the deposit.)

“Would you be interested in car-pooling for the retreat?”



## **The Voice Message “Sales Pitch” for Repeat Retreatants**

“ \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for taking this voice message.

This is \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m calling for the St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center and am so sorry I missed you. I’m the retreat captain for St. Paul’s here at (our) \_\_\_\_\_ parish. I’m following up with you in regard to our upcoming retreat for the weekend of \_\_\_\_\_.

You’ve joined us in the past at St. Paul’s in the past and would like to talk with you to determine if you would be interested in attending again this year.

\_\_\_\_\_, perhaps you could call me back at \_\_\_\_\_ so we can talk further.

I’m looking forward to hearing back from you. Again, thank you for taking the message.”



### The Call the Week before the Retreat

“ \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for taking this call.”

“ \_\_\_\_\_, do you have a minute or is this a bad time?”

**“Bad Time”** – “Not a problem, when would it be a convenient for me to call back?”

**“Good time”** – “Good! Please let me tell you why I am calling. This is \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m calling to remind you about the weekend retreat St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center next weekend. You should be receiving a confirmation postcard approximately 5 days before we head on retreat!

“ \_\_\_\_\_, do you still plan on attending?”

**“No”** – “Oh dear, what happened?”

(Listen to their explanation and see if there is anything you can do to convince them to attend; if it’s a cause beyond your ability to control, say the following.)

I understand and want to thank you for your time and consideration.”

(There is no need to make them explain or justify their reason.)

\* \*VERIFY INFORMATION \* \* (If they ask about their deposit, explain that it will be lost for cancelling.)

And / or...

\* VERIFY INFORMATION \* “ \_\_\_\_\_, there are many other retreat weekends available. Give the Retreat Center a call and speak with the Weekend Retreat Coordinator about transferring your deposit to a weekend that will fit your schedule. You can reach him/her at 313. 535.9563.

**“Yes”** – “wonderful, do you plan on driving alone or would you be interested in car-pooling to the retreat? Do you need directions?”



## Recruiting Tools

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### **The Call if They Didn't Make the Retreat**

“ \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for taking this call.”

“ \_\_\_\_\_, do you have a minute or is this a bad time?”

**“Bad Time”** – “Not a problem, when would it be a convenient for me to call back?”

**“Good time”** – “Good! Please let me tell you why I am calling.

\_\_\_\_\_, this is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling to find out why you didn't make the retreat last weekend at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center. When you did not show up we were concerned. We certainly hope nothing bad happened to you.

(Get them to tell you why they did not make it – listen and sympathize with their reason.)

\* VERIFY INFORMATION \* “ \_\_\_\_\_, there are many other retreat weekends available. Give the Retreat Center a call and speak with the Weekend Retreat Coordinator about transferring your deposit to a weekend that will fit your schedule. You can reach him/her at 313. 535.9563.



[www.stpaulretreat.org](http://www.stpaulretreat.org)