Appendix A.

Assessing Youth Retreat Ministry via Guiding Principles

The principles detailed in the accompanying pages are provided as lenses for youth ministers, high school campus ministers, and youth retreat leaders in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to assess their youth retreats.

There are three sets of these “lenses”: theological, development & design, and ministerial. The first set has to do with retreat content. The second is concerned with retreat design, dynamics and processes. The third focuses principally on retreat providers, especially retreat leaders, adult team members, and youth peer ministers.

As you review the principles, you’ll no doubt notice overlaps between the sections. This is intentional, since each section could stand alone and also be used in conjunction with the others.

Retreat ministry is one of the Church’s most valuable and effective approaches to youth ministry – and it is also easily abused. Stories regularly circulate about the wonderful things that happen on youth retreats, as well as some of the bad things that can happen. There are wonderful, grace-filled, life-changing retreat moments, and there are the stories of emotional manipulation, inappropriate self-disclosure, poorly prepared adult and youth team members, and the list goes on.

The principles are provided to build on the best of what’s happening, and to provide some helpful screens for some of the worst things that can happen. These reflection questions might serve to focus your thinking, individually or as a retreat team, as you consider your retreat program:

For Your Reflection

1. As you review these principles and consider your retreat program, what are its strengths? Weaknesses? Gaps?
2. Are there particular principles that you feel are urgent to address because they’re related to the safety and well-being of participants, their families, peer leaders and/or adult retreat leaders?
3. Are there particular principles that seem important to address, if not this year in the next?
4. What does an assessment via these principles call you to affirm, change or do?
GUIDING PRINCIPLES:
Theological, Development & Design, Ministerial
(Revised and updated, June 2015)

Introduction
The following principles flow from Sacred Scriptures, our Catholic tradition, the documents of Vatican II, sound psychology and education theory, and have been clarified in the crucible of literally thousands of youth retreats. Originally crafted in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, they have been revised and updated for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Each principle is followed by a set of reflection questions designed to further elaborate the principle. The list is intended to serve as a set of guiding principles in the planning and evaluation of youth retreats of all styles and formats. They are comprehensive, thus no single retreat likely will embrace all of these principles. However, when retreat design, methodology, and methods significantly diverge from these principles, retreat leaders may find themselves outside the bounds of sound Catholic teaching, solid pastoral approaches, or the requirements of the Decree on Child Protection. Those who develop and lead youth retreats in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati must be well-versed in these principles and their practical implications.

Instructions
Use the following scale to assess your retreat program by ranking each item in the boxes below:

0 – This is a new idea and we haven’t considered it.
1 – Poor: We need quite a bit of work in this area.
2 – Good: We are consistently solid in this area.
3 – Outstanding: We have an ongoing and exceptionally positive record in this area.

Theological Principles

1. Retreats should evangelize and call youth to missionary discipleship. (RTV, Goal #1)
   a. How do retreats give witness to Jesus Christ and call young people into a personal relationship with Christ as disciples?
   b. How does the retreat help youth assess, affirm, redirect or focus on attitudes and behaviors that live out their baptismal call to discipleship?
   c. What aspects of the retreat call participants to, and equip them for missionary discipleship?
   d. How does the retreat provide examples of practical, everyday Christian discipleship?
   e. How are both the struggles and victories of Christian living given voice?
   f. How does the retreat affirm and give witness to charity and justice, in accord with Catholic social teaching?
g. How does the retreat explicitly assist participants in developing and discerning their unique callings, their vocations?

2. **Retreats should give witness to our loving and merciful God as revealed in Jesus Christ, a saving and forgiving God who has loved each one of us into being and who calls us by name. (RTV, Goal #1)**
   
a. What efforts are made to welcome youth at the beginning of the retreat and to provide an atmosphere of hospitality throughout the retreat experience?

b. Are there opportunities for personal reflection, peer listening or counseling, which might lead to healing psychological or interpersonal conflicts the participants may be experiencing?

c. Is there an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

d. How does the retreat call young people to that "sacred time apart" witnessed to in the Scriptures, and to experience the call to conversion through self-reflection, personal witness and/or Eucharistic Adoration?

e. How are the unique gifts and talents of each young person affirmed during the retreat?

f. What efforts are made to evangelize and reach out to those teens who may be marginally involved in the practice of their faith?

3. **Retreats should assist youth in experiencing the sacramental presence of God, in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit. (RTV, Goal #1)**
   
a. How do retreats prepare young people for full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy, especially the Eucharist?

b. What activities help the participants experience and reflect on God’s presence in the ordinary events of their lives—school, family, friends, community, nation and world?

c. What efforts assist youth in understanding Christ’s Paschal Mystery—the pattern of Christ’s death and resurrection in their lives, families, communities, and in human events?

d. How is God revealed through creativity and beauty—through art, music and dance?

e. What elements of the retreat present our human bodies as sacred and as a revelation of Christ's continuing presence throughout all of creation?

4. **Retreats should assist youth in developing a personal relationship with God in three Persons. (RTV, Goals #1 & #3)**
   
a. What efforts are made to present a variety of images of God and to offer young people opportunities to reflect on their images of God?

b. Are human relationships discussed and presented as models for revealing God's presence in our lives?

c. Is Jesus presented as one who truly desires to be in intimate relationship with each one of us?
d. What activities assist youth in developing a healthy self-concept—as persons who reveal God to each other?

e. In sessions and prayer, is God addressed in three persons—Father, Son and Spirit?

5. Retreats should meaningfully connect participants with the local and universal Catholic Church. *(RTV, Goal #2)*

a. Does the retreat provide opportunities for faith-sharing, for community-building, for appropriate self-disclosure, for developing a climate of trust conducive to the work of the Holy Spirit?

b. Does the retreat explicitly connect the experience of community on the retreat with the broader communities of faith of the parish, the diocese, and the broader Catholic communion?

c. What activities help participants to observe, celebrate and respect cultural differences and giftedness?

d. Are conflicts and tensions managed with consistent care and Christian charity?

6. Retreats should give youth an experience of Church as a witness to an unbroken tradition; a community which proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ in Sacrament, Word and Charity. *(RTV, Goal #2)*

a. How are Scriptures and Church teaching/tradition incorporated into the retreat?

b. What activities help participants to relate Scripture and Catholic teaching to their lives, families, community and world?

b. Is the use of Scripture informed by the best of Catholic biblical scholarship? Does the retreat avoid literalist or fundamentalist approaches to the Scriptures?

c. How are the "communion of saints" and current persons who live the Good News in word and deed presented as models of Christian living?

7. The doctrinal content of youth retreats should be fully in accord with the teaching of the Catholic Church. *(RTV, Goal #2)*

a. How does the retreat include the teachings of the Catholic Church so as to form young disciples in the Catholic faith tradition?

b. How are youth retreats integrated into a program of systematic and intentional Catholic faith formation, via youth ministry, religion classes, PSR, etc.?

c. How are participants’ consciences formed?

d. What efforts are made to explain official Church teaching, especially in areas in which misunderstandings may lead to impediments to faith?

e. Are there opportunities for participants to raise questions and engage in dialogue about Church teaching?
Development & Design Principles

8. Prayer, in its liturgical, communal, and personal forms, is an essential aspect of the retreat experience, opening participants to ongoing conversion and deepening of faith and spirituality. (RTV, Goal #3)
   a. Does the retreat help youth encounter the living Christ in prayer?
   b. Does the retreat design engage participants in developing the habits and disciplines of daily prayer?
   c. What activities give witness to a living a life of personal, communal and liturgical prayer?
   d. Is prayer presented as essential and indispensable to one’s faith journey?

9. Retreats for youth should provide enlivening liturgical experiences which are celebrated in accord with the Church’s liturgical norms, and which are pastorally sensitive to the occasion and faith expressions of teens. (RTV, Goal #3)
   a. Is liturgical prayer prepared and led in accord with Church norms?
   b. Have liturgical ministers been adequately prepared for their important roles?
   c. How are participants assisted in understanding how to engage in liturgical prayer?
   d. Are youth prepared catechetically and spiritually for engagement in the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation?
   e. Does liturgical prayer on the retreat prepare and equip young people for full, active, and conscious participation in their parish’s Sunday Eucharistic liturgy?

10. Retreat dynamics should dialogue with the life experience of participants, providing them opportunities to integrate retreat experiences into their lives, thereby enhancing the integrity of their faith. (RTV, Goal #3)
    a. Do ice-breakers and other community-building activities foster a climate of trust helpful to conversion?
    b. Does the design of the retreat reflect solid catechetical and pedagogical methodology and methods?
    c. What efforts have been made to assess faith development and other developmental needs—emotional, social, moral, spiritual—of participants?
    d. Does the design provide sufficient time for participants to begin integrating the retreat into day-to-day life?
    e. Will the retreat help participants become connected to the larger faith community, especially the parish?
11. **Retreats must avoid emotional manipulation. Retreat environments should be characterized by acceptance, growth, and freedom.** *(RTV, Goal #3)*

   a. Does the retreat appropriately respect the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity of participants without compromising Catholic identity, teaching and practices?
   
   b. Does the retreat convey acceptance of stages in ongoing faith development?
   
   c. Does the retreat help youth take the next steps on their faith journey?
   
   d. Have provisions been made so that deep emotional expressions or accounts of traumatic experiences (e.g. sexual or physical abuse, suicide attempts, etc.) will receive proper support or referral services?
   
   e. Is discretion used by team members in the sharing of personal stories and experiences (i.e. working on a retreat team is not a substitute support group or therapy session)?
   
   f. Are activities with the potential to elicit strong emotional responses balanced with a variety of other kinds of activities?
   
   g. Is there respect for participants' privacy and appropriate boundaries in faith-sharing and self-disclosure activities?
   
   h. Are ground rules established and honored for discussing and sharing that preserve the right of an individual to decline to share personal experiences, such as the option to "pass?"
   
   i. Is there respect for diversity of learning styles, including a variety of activities that accommodate both introverts and extroverts, and the full range of kinesthetic, auditory, visual, etc., learning strengths?
   
   f. Are participants' differing capacities for prayer, self-disclosure, self-reflection, attention-span, physical activity, etc. honored and accepted?
   
   g. Have efforts been made to avoid activities or questions which evoke predictable emotional responses so as to intentionally manipulate participants? (i.e. Are the activities and questions open to natural emotional response or are they designed to create a particular kind or level of emotional response?)
   
   h. Is the retreat appropriately “open to the Spirit” or is it inflexibly managed?

12. **Retreat experiences should lead youth to growth, enhanced health and wholeness.** *(RTV, Goal #3)*

   a. Does the retreat honor parents and families, and explicitly include them in preparation, prayer for retreatants during the retreat, and in follow-up?
   
   b. Does the retreat offer ample peer-peer and adult-peer interactions so as to develop a variety of supportive relationships for after the retreat?
   
   c. Does the retreat offer ample time for quiet, personal reflection, and a variety of approaches (e.g., journaling, Ignatian contemplation, lectio divina)?
   
   d. Does the retreat team offer ongoing affirmation, and avoid coercion and shaming?
   
   e. Are authentic emotions honored, shared appropriately, and respected?
   
   f. Are active listening skills encouraged and demonstrated?
g. Are there resources identified and available in the event of the need for various kinds of referrals (e.g., suicide, depression, cutting, eating disorders)?

13. Adolescents should be given the opportunity to participate in experiences leading to enhanced identity strength and self-worth. (RTV, Goal #3)
   a. Does the retreat provide a variety of activities that are age, and culturally, appropriate?
   b. Does the retreat afford opportunities for greater self-knowledge and affirmation of one’s gifts and strengths?
   c. Does the retreat provide activities engendering freedom of expression?
   d. Do retreat materials, audio-visuals, etc. both represent the diversity of youth present, and appropriately respect their diversity?

14. The retreat experience should help build life-affirming competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes). (RTV, Goal #3)
   a. Does the retreat leadership model, name, and reinforce the need for respect, listening, living within guidelines and rules, being on time, getting rest and sleep, individual and group needs, accepting others, respecting the environment, property, etc., honesty, courtesy and the like?
   b. Does the retreat leadership have the skills to effectively manage conflicts and discipline when necessary?
   c. Do the elements of the retreat afford opportunities to practice and consolidate newfound abilities (e.g., prayer)?

15. The psychological well-being of participants is safeguarded by maintaining a good balance of recreation, reflection, structured activity, rest and diet. (RTV, Goal #3)
   a. Do participants have at least a general sense of when sessions, meals, breaks and free time are going to occur?
   b. Does the retreat offer a balanced range of experiences (e.g., indoor and outdoor, active and reflective, physical and mental, etc.)?
   c. Does the retreat model provide for ample breaks for refreshment, physical activity, decompressing emotions, etc.?
   d. Are special dietary needs solicited and accounted for?
   e. Are healthy meals, beverages and snacks timely and available, with alternatives for vegetarians?
   f. Is state law regarding the use of tobacco products by minors stated and reasonably upheld?
   g. Do retreat rules clearly express expectations and the consequences for avoiding them?

16. Retreat experiences are but one aspect of an ongoing formation process, therefore family/parish/school-based preparation before the retreat, and follow-up activities after the retreat are essential elements of retreat design. (RTV, Goal #3)
a. Does the retreat afford opportunities to create projects, artwork, music, etc. that are incorporated into the ongoing formation program and environment?

b. Are there ongoing opportunities to further build upon, develop and deepen the themes or goals of the retreat?

c. Are there opportunities to further build upon and broaden outward the sense of community created at the retreat?

d. Are retreat team members available for follow-up conversations regarding issues, plans and decisions made at the retreat? (e.g., if two or three youth are very motivated to action, etc. would there be an adult to follow through with them?)

e. Are efforts made to connect the retreat with what’s happening at home with parents and siblings? To prepare parents and family members to understand, support and build upon what happened at the retreat?

f. What provisions are made to follow up on referrals made during or as a result of the retreat?

17. Retreat designs should respect the needs of families (in all their forms). (RTV, Goal #3)

   a. What efforts have been made to involve families and parents in the total retreat process?
   
   b. Are provisions made for financial assistance to participants whose families may not be able to afford the cost of the retreat?
   
   c. Are talks, handouts, activities and processes sensitive to the diversity of family structures (i.e. single-parent, blended, divorced, unemployed parent, etc.)?
   
   d. Have potential family issues (e.g., divorce, alcoholism) been anticipated with available resources and referral options?
   
   e. Are reasonable alternatives available when family scheduling conflicts arise?
   
   f. Are retreat directors and team members available to answer questions/concerns of parents?
   
   g. Is relevant information on family situations made known in advance to retreat team members?

18. Retreat activities, presentations and processes should be developmentally appropriate. (RTV, Goal #3)

   a. How have previous experiences with these young people helped to shape the design of this retreat? (e.g., need assessments, evaluations)
   
   b. How does this retreat relate to the overall scope and sequence of the catechetical program?
   
   c. What efforts have been made to assess the developmental needs within this retreat group?
   
   d. If the retreat design is already established, what efforts have been made to adapt its content and process to the needs of this particular group?
   
   e. Are sufficient optional activities planned so as to address various developmental levels and needs?
   
   f. Is there provision for team meetings to assess the effectiveness of content and process while the retreat is still in progress?
19. Retreat designs should allow participants reasonable freedom and autonomy to make decisions about and/or evaluate their experiences. (RTV, Goal #3)
   a. Do participants have the right to abstain from a particular activity with good cause?
   b. Are there opportunities for participants to give verbal or written evaluative feedback during and at the conclusion of the retreat, and is it received openly?
   c. Does the evaluation process allow the option for anonymity?
   d. Are participants' suggestions respected and considered?

20. Retreat designs should have clearly stated mission, goals, themes and objectives.
   a. How does each of the retreat activities contribute to accomplishing the stated purpose and objectives?
   b. Are the goals, themes and objectives of the retreat clearly articulated and developmentally appropriate for this particular group?

21. Retreats should connect the life experiences of youth to those of Christ and the Catholic community.
   a. Do talks and presentations include relevant personal faith sharing experience, or are they abstract, pious and overly theological?
   b. Is adequate time and space provided for participants to reflect on and share their own life experiences so as to connect them with Christ and the Church?
   d. Are adult and peer team members skilled in sharing their own faith stories?
   c. Are retreat activities, skits, songs, prayers, liturgy, music, etc. relevant and relatable to the life experiences of the participants?
   d. Is the image of Jesus portrayed and presented as one who could share our life experiences (i.e., Jesus as both truly human and truly divine)?
   e. Is the message of Jesus presented as having concrete relevance for youth living in today's world, culture and environment?

22. Retreat designs and components should respect the developmental journey of participants in the areas of (RTV, Goal #3):
   a. Faith development;
   b. Psychological development;
   c. Moral development;
   d. Intellectual development;
   e. Social development;
   f. Spiritual development.
23. The content of youth retreats should reflect appropriate faith themes as recommended in *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (USCCB, 1997).

a. Does the retreat design respect the differences between younger and older adolescents?

b. Do retreat activities accurately represent the faith and values of the Catholic Christian tradition and invite adolescents to adopt and own them?

c. Is the retreat designed both to foster in youth their own personal faith identity, and to develop their communal identity as members of the Church?

d. Are appropriate faith themes for adolescents incorporated into the retreat, so that the retreat is well-integrated into the broader faith formation project of the parish or school?

**FAITH THEMES FROM RENEWING THE VISION – A FRAMEWORK FOR CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY** (Important: for Catholic high schools substitute the approved curriculum framework).

**The Profession of Faith**

- **Catholic Beliefs**—understanding the Creed and the core beliefs of the Catholic faith.
- **Holy Trinity**—introduction to God's unique self-revelation as three in one and some implications for living Christian faith and spiritual life.
- **Jesus Christ**—exploring the meaning of the Incarnation, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, and the call to discipleship.
- **Church**—understanding the origins of the Church in Jesus Christ and understanding and experiencing the history of the Church and its mission.

**The Sacraments of Faith**

- **Sacraments**—understanding the role of the sacraments in the Christian life and experiencing the Church's celebration of the sacraments.
- **The Church**—understanding the reason for and beauty of the Church; identifying the necessity of the Church for our salvation.
- **Church Year**—understanding the meaning of the liturgical seasons of the Church year and the scriptural teachings presented through the Lectionary.

**The Life of Faith**

- **Life in the Spirit**—understanding how the Spirit dwells in our midst in a new way since Pentecost and understanding that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
- **The Dignity of the Human Person**—recognizing the divine image present in every human person.
• **Morality and Living a Virtuous Life**—incorporating Catholic moral principles and virtues into one's life and moral decision making.

• **Personal Growth**—discerning the Spirit at work in their lives and incorporating the Catholic vision of life into personal identity.

• **Relationships**—developing and maintaining relationships based on Catholic values and the meaning of Christian community.

• **Sexuality**—understanding the Church's teaching on sexual morality, understanding the Church's positive view of sexuality as a gift from God, and understanding the importance of valuing chastity and sexual restraint.

• **Social Justice and Service**—understanding the importance of respecting the rights and responsibilities of the human person, appreciating our call to be stewards of creation, and discovering and living Jesus' call to a life of loving service.

• **Grace as Gift**—recognizing God's indwelling spirit in our lives and responding to this gift, which justifies and sanctifies us through God's law.

• **Lifestyles and Vocation**—discerning how to live the Christian vocation in the world, in the workplace, and in marriage, single life, ministerial priesthood, permanent diaconate, or consecrated life.

### The Profession of Faith

• **Jesus Christ**—discovering the meaning of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and what this means for living in Christ's spirit today.

• **The Mystery of the Trinity**—understanding and experiencing the triune God.

• **Revelation**—understanding the revelation of sacred scripture and sacred tradition.

• **Old Testament**—developing the knowledge and tools to read the Old Testament and to understand its meaning and challenge for us today.

• **The Gospels**—developing the knowledge and tools to read the Gospels and understand their meaning and challenge for us today.

• **Paul and His Letters**—developing the knowledge and tools to read Paul's letters and to understand their meaning and challenge for us today.

• **Faith and Identity**—exploring Catholic beliefs and what it means to live as a Catholic today.

### The Sacraments of Faith

• **Sacraments of Initiation, Healing, and at the Service of Communion**—understanding the sacraments and how they are both personal and ecclesial, evoking a response from each of us.

• **Worship**—developing an understanding and skills for participating in the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Eucharist.
The Life of Faith

• Catholic Morality—applying Catholic moral teachings to contemporary life situations as one encounters the many complexities in our world.

• Conscience, Virtue, and Sin—understanding and uncovering the desire to turn toward God and to do good and to act in accordance with God's grace, understanding the meaning and impact of sin, and learning to make decisions in accordance with one's rightly formed conscience.

• Justice and Peace—understanding that the Catholic faith calls people to work for justice, to pursue peace, and to defend human dignity, and developing skills to act for justice, peace, and human dignity.

• Lifestyles and Vocation—discerning how to live the Christian vocation in the world, in the workplace, and in marriage, single life, ministerial priesthood, permanent diaconate, or consecrated life.

Prayer in the Life of Faith

• Christian Prayer—understanding and experiencing the many forms of prayer in the Church—especially prayer through the church year—and the importance of the "Our Father" in Christian prayer.

• Christian Prayer—understanding and experiencing the variety of Christian prayer traditions and discovering and responding to the Spirit's personal invitation to develop a personal prayer life.

24. **Retreat designs should reflect a balance of content, prayer, activities, small and large groups, community-building and the sharing of personal faith experiences.**

   a. Are the various retreat components integrated, connected, building upon one another, and with variety?

   b. Is prayer integrated into the overall flow and movements of the retreat?

   c. Are there opportunities for community-deepening spaced throughout the retreat, or only as participants arrive?

   d. Are the amounts and focus of content, prayer, community building and personal sharing appropriate for this particular group's needs?

25. **Retreat designs should include a variety of interactive processes including large group activities, small group sharing, games, non-verbal exercises, personal reflection times, and others.**

   a. Have retreat sessions and activities been organized using solid pedagogy and methodology(ies)?

   b. Has the retreat team been adequately prepared to lead the activities?

   c. Do the retreat activities appropriately challenge the participants to risk and build trust through their experience?
d. Do team members also participate in all activities and interactions, and engage with participants during breaks and free time?

26. **Personal witness, storytelling and faith sharing experiences should be regularly included in youth retreat designs.**
   a. Are there opportunities for proper preparation and rehearsal of witness talks and other presentations?
   b. Is emotional manipulation avoided in personal testimonies or witness talks?
   c. Do the people selected to do faith sharing or witness talks model Christian behavior outside of youth ministry or school? Do they walk their talk, and talk their walk?

27. **The overall retreat design reflects solid pedagogy and methodology (e.g., the five movements of “Shared Christian Praxis,” the Pastoral Circle, the movements of Catholic worship, etc.).**
   a. Are retreat team members clear on the mission, aims, goals, objectives, methodology and methods of the retreat?
   b. Does the retreat design encourage and equip participants for further action after the retreat?
   c. Are there follow-up opportunities for the participants to continue their action and awareness?
   d. Does the retreat prepare participants to return to the day-to-day reality of their life experience?

28. **Opportunities for peer ministry and peer listening should be included in youth retreat designs.**
   a. Does retreat ministry include ministry by and with young people, as appropriate?
   b. How have youth members of the retreat team been prepared for their role(s) as peer listeners?
   c. Is there sufficient flexibility in the retreat schedule to allow for peer ministry to occur formally and informally?

29. **Retreats should provide for a suitable physical environment.**
   a. Are space, light, sound and temperature of the facility appropriate for the activities planned?
   b. Have alternative activities been planned to account for unexpected changes?
   c. Are the facilities appropriate for younger and/or older adolescents?

**Ministerial Principles**

30. **Retreats should be appropriately sensitive to and attuned to the psychological needs of the participants. (RTV, Goal #3)**
a. What efforts have been made to identify current events, issues or situations which may affect
the attitudes and behaviors of participants (e.g. a recent suicide at the local high school, a
traumatic event in the community, upcoming exams, social or sports events)?

b. What efforts have been made to identify personal or family issues and concerns which may
affect the attitudes and behaviors of participants (e.g. letters to parents, participant
reflectionaires, personal interviews, etc.)?

31. Participants should be involved in the planning, implementation and follow-up, as
appropriate.

   a. Have the voices of participants been heard in the shaping of the retreat model?
   b. When appropriate, are participants part of the planning? Preparations? Follow-up?

32. Retreat team members should be appropriately mature, discerning, flexible and
competent in their respective responsibilities and tasks.

   a. Have retreat team members been sufficiently prepared for their roles, having received
   adequate training in facilitating small groups, witness talks, leading prayer, etc.?
   b. Are retreat team members capable of adjusting the retreat program to respond to emerging
   needs or the "tug" of the Spirit?
   c. Are retreat team members pursuing the legitimate goals of the retreat guided by sound
   principles, or operating out of inappropriate personal expectations or a hidden agenda?
   d. Are retreat team members attending, listening and reflecting throughout the experience?
   e. Are there opportunities for team members to share their reflections on the movement of the
   Spirit in the retreat?
   f. Is prayer that seeks the guidance of the Spirit part of retreat design, preparation, and
   implementation?

33. Retreat team members must know the limits of their role as "listeners" and be prepared to
make referrals as necessary.

   a. Do retreat team members know their limits? Are they equipped and trained to handle
   situations that are likely to emerge on retreats?
   b. Do retreat team members understand the boundaries of their role/s, particularly in regard to
   issues that demand professional intervention, such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, substance
   abuse, eating disorders, suicidal ideation? Are there plans in place for handling these
   situations? Is there a reference list of hotlines/agencies/counselors available for referrals?
   c. Are team members trained in active listening techniques? Do they have the necessary referral
   skills?
   d. Are there clear guidelines for retreat team members to assist them in determining when they
   are in over their heads, and how to get help?
e. Have the retreat team members been Virtus-trained and thoroughly oriented to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection?

34. **Retreat team members respect confidentiality, as appropriate and ethical.**
   
a. Do retreat team members understand what legally must be reported to authorities?
   
b. Do retreat team members understand what morally and ethically should be reported?
   
c. Are the youth participants aware that some things must be, or may be reported?
   
d. Do the retreat team members understand, affirm and protect participants' right to privacy – except in situations requiring referral or reporting? Is there an understanding that information shared in confidence mustn’t be repeated, including to other retreat team members?
   
e. Do the director and team members use appropriate discretion when handling sensitive and personal information?

35. **Developmental disabilities and other health matters that may affect participation should be understood, prepared for, and treated with sensitivity and respect.**
   
a. Do team members have access to and have they read the medical forms of participants, particularly those participants in their small groups?
   
b. Have members of the team been informed of any issues that do not appear on the forms but that they may encounter in people on the retreat?
   
c. Are team members prepared to respond appropriately to a variety of predictable developmental disabilities, such as people with speech defects, hearing impairment, ambulatory difficulties, etc.?

36. **For the integrity of the retreat model and its messages, retreat team members should be practicing in their personal lives what is proclaimed on the retreat.**
   
a. Is team behavior, individually and collectively, at the retreat and away from it, congruent with the Gospel?
   
b. Are team members following the same rules that participants must follow?
   
c. Are discipline issues handled charitably, reasonably, and firmly, with consistent adherence to the consequences that have been announced?
   
d. Are the team leader and team members giving witness to their faith and the faith of the Church, at the retreat and in general?

37. **Retreat team members should pray together and minister to each other.**
   
a. Have team members devoted time to forming as a ministry team, praying together, learning to trust one another and care for each other in advance of the retreat?
   
b. Is there time for the team to pray together in the retreat schedule?
c. Are team members encouraged to and supported in reflecting and praying individually throughout the retreat?
d. When necessary and appropriate, are team members being ministered to (by each other) in the same way that the participants are?

**Conclusions and Next Steps**

1. What are the strengths of your retreat program?

2. What are areas in need of attention? Urgent attention?

3. What areas do you want or need to learn more about? Find resources on? Get help with?

4. What do you intend to do?