

Teen Retreat

What is the Teen Retreat?

The teen retreat is a safe, non-threatening, supportive overnight weekend gathering of teenagers who are grieving the death of someone significant. It starts on Friday evening and ends on Sunday mid-afternoon.

What will happen at the Retreat?

The retreat offers a time for you to relax and meet other teens who share a common experience, to explore issues, concerns, and feelings about the death, and to discover more healthy ways for coping during the grieving process. You will determine your own level of participation in activities and discussion.

Friday evening, as well as some of Saturday, there is time for you to go hiking, listen to music, or simply hang out. Items such as Jenga, Trivial Pursuit, Scattergories, etc., are available for your use if desired. You may bring music that you enjoy.

Are we going to sit in a circle, stare at each other and be expected to talk about our feelings?

Absolutely not! Only you determine the way that you explore your grief. If you are willing to come but are scared of sharing any of your grief, that's OK. Just being there and hearing the other kids' stories is often helpful. If you would like to participate in the activities but would like to do so privately, that's OK too.

Will everyone else know each other?

Most of the teens coming to the retreat will not know anyone else. They will be meeting and making new friends just like you. Most of the teens are nervous or scared about spending a weekend with others whom they do not know. 99 % of the time they say they are happy they went. They report that just being with the others helps them to feel less alone and more normal.

What are the activities that we may do while we are meeting in a group?

Some of the activities include claywork, creative writing, music, stain glass, story telling, creation of stepping stones or quilt blocks, drawing, temporary tattoos, poetry, adaptive games, journaling, candle making, letter writing, and graffiti walls.

How many teenagers will be there?

Each retreat can hold up to 10 teens ranging from 13 to 18 years of age. There are 3-4 adults at each retreat.

How will I know if I'll fit in?

The teens that attend have usually experienced the death of a parent, sister or brother, friend or grandparent. The cause of the person's death varies. Some have died from a long illness, some from a short, sudden illness, some from accidents, HIV/AIDS, suicide or murder. Some teens have had more than one significant person die.

Where is the retreat held?

The retreat is held at a quiet, peaceful place not far from St. Louis. Free transportation is provided.

What does it cost to participate?

There is no cost to attend a teen retreat. Our programs are mostly paid for through donations by individuals, foundations, corporations and fundraising events. Any family who can make a financial contribution is encouraged to do so. All contributions are gratefully accepted.

What will I need to participate?

You will need clothes, a sleeping bag or blanket, a pillow, and hygiene supplies. If you do not have something you need, it will be provided for you at no cost. All meals & snacks are provided.

Is smoking allowed at the retreat?

Cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol are strictly prohibited. Also, no music that connotes violence, explicit sex or vulgar language is allowed. Cell phones are not permitted either.

If I can't participate in a retreat, is there another way to meet grieving teens?

Yes. You may join the support group that meets every week for eight weeks, you may attend the social events, Camp Courage, and Hope & Healing Gatherings, and you may connect with others through the use of letter writing, e-mail or telephone conversations. Any and all of these services are offered to you.

If you have any questions, need further information or need enrollment forms,

please contact *Annie's Hope*:

**314-965-5015 (Office) annieshopekids@aol.com (E-Mail Address)
314-918-1438 (Fax)**