

Tips for Organizing a *What Not to Wear* Retreat

A “What Not to Wear” retreat is a great way to encourage the women in your group to grow in their relationship with God by participating in a makeover of the heart. The fashion of our souls is a great theme to connect with God and each other in a fun and meaningful way.

The retreat is based on God’s “what not to wear” instructions in Colossians 3:9-10. The teachings help participants weed out unattractive attitudes like the Worry Handbag, the Field Marshal Uniform of Control, and the Prom Dress of Pride. As we dig into God’s Word we will experience God’s transforming power.

This guide will offer tips for organizing a “What Not to Wear” retreat. Included are ideas for:

- Theme Verse
- Decorations
- Icebreakers
- Programming
- Favors
- Fun Factor
- Retreat on a Budget

Theme Verse

My “What Not to Wear” talks are based on Colossians 3:9-10:

*“You have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”
Colossians 3:9-10 ESV*

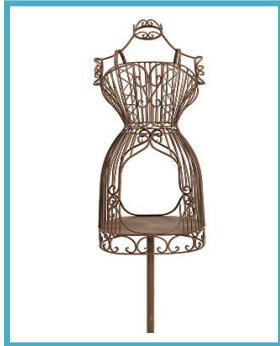
Other suggestions for theme verses:

- *“You have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which...is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:21-24 ESV*
- *“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.”
I Peter 3:3-4 NIV*
- *“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.” Isaiah 61:10 ESV*

Decorations

Have fun decorating with the fashion theme!

One simple way to decorate would be to put a cute purse on each table and use it as an anchor for helium balloons.



You might consider having a large mannequin dressed in fashionable clothes as a focal point for the retreat and wire dress forms like this on the tables.

At one of the “What Not to Wear” retreats I spoke at, the decorating committee created a “still life” of beautiful accessories at each table. (Think boutique window display.) Here are pictures of some of their lovely creations:



Icebreakers

Continue the fashion theme with some creative getting-to-know-you activities.

- **Jewelry Game:** Have everyone take off one piece of jewelry and put it in a pile on a table. Hand out slips of paper with conversation starters. (These could be general questions like “Name one thing on your bucket list” or fashion-themed like “What was your favorite or least favorite outfit as a child?”) Next have everyone pick up one item from the pile of jewelry that isn’t theirs, find the owner of the piece and discuss the questions. Don’t forget to give back the jewelry!
- **Purse Get-Acquainted Game:** Tell the participants to look in their purses and find the item that is most important to them. Go around the room and have each woman state her name, show the item and tell why it is so important.
- **If I Were a Dress Game:** Have each participant state her name and tell what item of clothing she is most like. For example: My name is Jenny and I am most like a pair of yoga pants because I like to be comfortable and I don’t really care about making a fashion statement.
- **Do You Know Me?** Have each guest introduce herself to someone she doesn’t know very well. After giving them a few moments to get to know their conversation partners, have them stand back-to-back. Hand out index cards and pencils and have everyone answer these questions about their partner without looking back :
 - What color hair does she have?
 - How many rings does she have on?
 - What color clothing is she wearing?
 - What color are her shoes or sandals?
 - Is she wearing earrings?
 - Does she have a necklace on?
 - Is she wearing a watch?
 - Does she have nail polish on?
 - Is she wearing a belt?
 - Does her top have buttons?

After the questions have been answered, have the partners face each other again and check their answers. The person with the most correct answers wins a prize.

Programming

A great retreat has a variety of activities included in the program. You will want to include time for:

- **Worship:** Time to focus on God in music and prayer
- **Teaching:** Time to hear from the speaker talk on the topic
- **Discussion:** Time to get to know one another better and internalize the concepts learned
- **Food:** Time to feed the body
- **Free Time:** Time to rest, have a quiet time with God, or talk with other participants
- **Fun Time:** Time to laugh

Favors

It's fun to give the attendees something to take home to remind them of what they learned at the retreat. Simple favors for a "What Not to Wear" retreat might include:

- A purse mirror
- A small cosmetics bag
- A bookmark with the theme verse printed on it
- Jewelry or accessories from the dollar store
- A copy of Sharla's book *Divine Design: 40 Days of Spiritual Makeover*

Fun Factor

Increase the fun factor with time to kick back and laugh. Here are some fun activities that help everyone bond.

- **Fashion show:** A fashion show is a natural activity for a spiritual makeover retreat. You could contact a local store and ask them to do a fashion show for your group (Dress Barn is often willing to do this). Or you could do a silly fashion show. For example: Have everyone bring a fun pair of pajamas and have a PJ fashion show before going to bed.
- **Fashion Designer Game:** Divide the attendees into groups of 4-8. Give each group several rolls of toilet paper, some sheets of colored tissue paper, tape, and some fashion accessories from dollar or thrift stores (e.g. feather boas, scarves, hats, purses). Each group will choose one woman to model their creation. They will then create an outfit by taping the toilet paper and tissue paper to her clothes and adding the accessories. Have the entire group vote for the most creative outfit.
- **Purse Scavenger Hunt:** Divide the group into teams. Give each team a small basket and a copy of the Scavenger Hunt List. Allow the teams two minutes to hunt for the items in their purses. When time is called, see which team has the most items. Suggestions for Scavenger Hunt list: child's toy (rattle, matchbox car, etc.), mints, safety pin, calendar, comb, grocery receipt, shopping list, pink lipstick, ticket stub (to a theater, etc.), eyeglass case, ponytail holder, coupon, Starbucks card, dental floss.
- **Fashion-themed Crafts:** Some ideas for creative fashion crafts include:
 - Decorate some flip flops: Have everyone bring a pair of flip-flops. You provide ribbons, glue, and other decorations. For ideas check out this Flip-Flop Fabulous page:
http://www.hobbylobby.com/assets/pdf/project_inspiration/projects/hl-447938.pdf
 - Do a simple jewelry-making project:
Bracelet: <http://www.allfreejewelrymaking.com/Strung-Bracelet/Quick-and-Easy-Bracelets>
Necklace: <http://www.allfreejewelrymaking.com/Fabric-and-Bead/Covered-Bead-Necklace-Tutorial>
Ring: <http://www.allfreejewelrymaking.com/Button/Button-Rings>

Retreat on a Budget

At times a full-fledged retreat does not work with the budgets of your group members. There are ways to get together to grow in your relationships with God and each other while keeping costs down. Here are some ideas for doing a retreat on a budget.

- **Have the retreat at your church.** Eliminate the hotel costs by having the activities at the church and everyone sleeping in their own homes.
- **Have a mini-retreat.** Meet from 9 am to 3 pm to lower the costs for place and food.
- **Partner with another church.** Share the costs of the speaker and venue by having another church join your retreat. This also divides up the work of planning the event.
- **Use Frequent Flyer miles.** Ask if anyone in the church has frequent flyers to donate to fly in the speaker.
- **Use a DVD instead of a live speaker.** My teaching DVD: *Divine Design: 40 Days of Spiritual Makeover* has eight fifteen-minute teaching segments on the topic of “What Not to Wear.” The retreat could be organized around these video lessons followed by time for discussion and reflection.

Have a Wonderful Retreat!

Take time to listen to God’s voice speaking to your heart. Connect with your sisters in Christ. Gab and grow, laugh and learn.

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