

Organising a Retreat in Daily Life – Planning (2 pages)

Getting Started

A feature of Manresa Link is that retreats are organised ecumenically where possible. Even if the retreat is based in a particular church, it is good to ensure that other churches in the area know about the retreat and have been invited to take part.

Possible points of initial contact include:

- your own parish priest, vicar or pastor
- your local Churches Together group
- Chaplaincies – in colleges, universities, business groups, retail centres etc
- other local or regional Christian networks

Choosing a venue

A good sized space is needed for the opening and closing meetings, preferably big enough so that all participants and prayer guides can sit in a circle.

You also need to consider where the individual meetings will take place. These meetings usually last around 30 minutes each. Points to consider:

- what spaces does your church have?
- do other churches have rooms you could use?
- are there suitable local coffee shops?

Publicising Your RIDL – a possible timetable

Around 12 weeks before your RIDL starts, if possible organise a meeting of the clergy/leaders of the churches/organisations that will be involved. See if you can talk about the retreat to your local Churches Together group. You could also offer to visit churches to run a taster session for those interested, perhaps introducing imaginative prayer and Lectio.

Around 6-8 weeks before, send information and booking details to your contact churches so that they can put a notice in their weekly sheets. You could also produce and circulate leaflets and/or simple posters. Two sample leaflets are available on the website to download in Word, which you can adapt for your own use.

Recruiting your team

The database of Manresa Link members is held by the Secretary, John Price. He will be able to give you details of guides around your area for you to contact. If you don't know them, or are unsure whether they are suitable, John or someone from the Core Group should be able

Organising a Retreat in Daily Life – Planning (2 pages)

to help. It is good to ensure that some of your team are experienced, and so able to encourage others who are newer.

Don't forget to include someone to run the supervision sessions for the guides on the retreat. Again, John will be able to tell you who is able to do this. (*See sheet called 'Organising supervision'*).

Check with your guides how many retreatants they are prepared to accompany on the retreat. You are responsible for matching retreatants with guides.

Pre-retreat meeting for the prayer guides

Around 2 weeks before the RIDL begins, arrange a meeting with all your prayer guides and the supervisor. At this meeting you can pray together for the retreat, let the guides know who their retreatants will be, plan the opening and closing meetings and discuss any other details.

Some guides like to contact their retreatants before the opening meeting to arrange times to meet; others prefer to do that at the opening meeting. There's no right or wrong process!

Planning the opening and closing meetings

It's good to include as many of the prayer guides as possible in these. Here are some suggestions for things that would usually be covered:

Opening meeting

- creating a focal point display
- leading a stilling exercise/prayer
- introducing and demonstrating imaginative prayer
- introducing and demonstrating Lectio Divina
- leading a closing prayer

Closing meeting

- creating a focal point display
- leading a stilling exercise/prayer
- leading an examen of the retreat or some kind of reflection on it
- leading a closing prayer

See the sample meeting plans in this area of the website. You can download them in Word and adapt to fit your retreat.

NB: If you are thinking of using candles, do check with your venue regarding smoke detectors, sprinkler systems and overall fire regulations.