

# Sustain

ENCOUNTERING *God's heart* FOR YOU

## Host Guide





# Welcome

## *Welcome to the 2018 Velvet Ashes Retreat Host Guide!*

Perhaps you've hosted a Retreat gathering in the past. You're excited to do this again, because you know what a special time this is. Maybe this is your first time, and you're wondering what in the world you're getting yourself into. Rest assured, this Retreat Guide will fill you in.

Here's what we all have in common. We all love community. We all believe in the power of women connecting with one another and with God, and we want to see that happen where we are. That is what this Retreat is all about.

If this is your first time to consider hosting a Retreat gathering, you probably want to know how much time and energy this is going to require. Believe me, I get that! The goal of this Retreat is for it to be a sweet, life-giving time for everyone, including the hosts. That's why we've done the hard work of creating incredible content and planning out the details for you. We want this to be as simple as possible for you!

Here's what you'll find in this guide:

- **Make sure to...**
- **A Retreat overview**
- **Things you'll need**
- **Retreat schedule**
- **Spa Prep**
- **Food Ideas**
- **In closing**

With the help of this guide, the resources of the Velvet Ashes Retreat, and the support of our team, we hope that hosting a Retreat gathering will be something you look forward to each year.



1. Sign up to be a host at [retreat.velvetashes.com/host-signup](https://retreat.velvetashes.com/host-signup) if you haven't already. Why?
  - So we can help you host your gathering. We'll even give you early access to the Retreat so you can download videos and the Retreat Guide ahead of time!
  - So you can join a [private Retreat Host Facebook Group](#) where we'll share ideas, answer questions, and support each other in prayer.
  - So we can know how many gatherings are happening and where they are meeting around the world.
  
2. Have every person who attends your gathering register for the Retreat at [retreat.velvetashes.com](https://retreat.velvetashes.com).
  - We understand that it is possible for just the host to register and pay and then share the Retreat resources. We're going to trust that you won't do this though. Velvet Ashes needs the finances to be able to cover the costs of this Retreat. We want to be able to keep offering this Retreat for you, and payment makes that possible. There are some Retreat scholarships available if someone in your group is in need. Please [visit this page to complete a scholarship request](#).
  - Registering for the Retreat gives each woman 30-day access to all the Retreat resources (music, videos, artwork, etc). This allows women to use any resources that you don't have time to do during your group Retreat, and it also allows women to download and keep any portion of the Retreat for use in the future. Retreat access closes on May 22, and will be available to purchase for lifetime access after that date.
  - Registering for the Retreat allows Velvet Ashes to help prepare women for the retreat and then follow up with them.

# Retreat Overview



Let us tell you how this whole thing actually works. We will grant you early access to the Retreat on April 13, so that you can have time to print off the Retreat Guide and artwork, and download the videos (if you won't be streaming them). Here is a run-down of what all is included in the Retreat:

- **A Retreat Guide** will take you step by step through the Retreat experience. This guide is a pdf that can be used digitally or printed out. The guide provides space for you to journal and process through each part of the Retreat.
- **Downloadable music** – this is an audio album of the house concert worship video. You can use this in your Retreat experience and to add to your own music collection.
- **Retreat videos**
  - **Welcome Video** – a brief introduction to the Retreat with an opening “found object” activity for sharing.
  - **House Concert Worship Video** – an intimate worship experience for you and your group to join in with singing.
  - **4 Testimony Videos**
    - Megan shares how God has sustained her through the trials of miscarriage and her husband’s health issue.
    - Jessica shares how she has wrestled with the shift from being a highly capable person in her home country to being far outside her gifting and capability in her life and ministry in Japan.
    - Amy shares her heart-wrenching story of rape and the journey of healing that has led her where she least expected.
    - Caitlin shares how life overseas has continually reshaped her identity, revealing her heart’s idols and drawing her ever closer to God’s heart.
  - **3 Scripture Passages Videos** (Exodus 18, Psalm 131, Mark 4:35-41). Each of these videos introduces a practice to engage the passage and encounter God’s heart.
  - **Spa Video** – DIY Facial (details on [page 10](#)).
  - **Kickboxing Video** – a fun way for your group to engage your bodies.
  - **Closing Video** – the final wrap-up to the Retreat.
- **Printable art** – for a beautiful reminder to hang in your home.
- **Live Chat Invitation** – to join the VA Leadership Team in a Live Chat Conversation during the Retreat weekend.



- Printed Retreat Guide – we recommend printing this guide out for each person. It can be used digitally, but especially in a group setting, the printed version is better. (Again we'll give you access to this Retreat Guide on April 13.)
- Videos – If your Retreat location does not have fast, reliable Internet, you will want to download the videos beforehand. Find out what your TV set up will be. You can save them to your laptop (or flash drive) and connect your laptop to a TV. Be sure to find out what kind of cords you need. Generally it's an HDMI connector, but there are different set ups. Ask your tech friends. :)
- Found Object – We will email each retreat registrant to tell them to bring a “found object” with them on their Retreat. This is any item that represents what you are bringing with you (emotionally, spiritually) into the Retreat. It might be a pebble from outside your home if you've moved to a new area, or a diaper if you have a new little one in your life. A photo would work too. If someone doesn't bring an object with her, then have some paper handy that she can sketch her object on. A photo on their phone can also work.
- Blank white paper to draw/color on (at least 2 pieces per person)
- Crayons, colored pencils or markers
- Supplies for Spa Video – Do your own facials. See [page 10](#) for details and a list of supplies
- Optional Gift – You could print out the printable art piece as a gift for each person in your group. If frames or lamination are available to you, that can be a nice touch.



# Retreat Schedule

We now have a few of these Retreats under our belts. And you know what? We've learned something along the way. For a group retreat, we've found that the ideal time frame is two nights. We suggest starting your Retreat late Friday afternoon and ending late Sunday morning, or Thursday – Saturday, or whatever works for you.

Here is the reason – two nights away gives you an evening to unwind and then a full and complete day of retreat. You don't have to think about the logistics of packing up and leaving until the next morning. Having that second night makes a significant difference in how renewing and restful your retreat will be. So two nights is what this Retreat is designed for. If that's not possible for you and your group, you can adapt and use the other schedule options, which include a one night, full day, half-day or two hour gathering.

As you think about the schedule, we want you to know what Val says in the Welcome Video: "Stay with what is fruitful. Don't rush. And feel complete freedom to do or not do any part of the Retreat." We don't want you as the Retreat Host to stress about creating a schedule and plan. So we've created these schedules for you. Simply choose the one that works best for you, and then adapt it to your groups needs.

## *Two Night Schedule*

### **ARRIVAL DAY**

4pm - Welcome Video and share your "found object"

5:30 – 6:30pm Dinner

7:00- 7:30pm – House Concert Worship Video

7:30-8:00pm – Two Testimony Videos

8:00pm – Share and relax

### **SECOND DAY**

(Early Morning – You could make the Kickboxing video available to those wanting an early morning workout)

8:00am Breakfast



# Retreat Schedule

8:30- 8:50am Exodus 18 Video

8:50 – 11:30am Alone time in the Word with the Retreat Guide

11:30am – Share and debrief together

12:00 -1:00pm Lunch

1:00 – 2:00pm Rest/Nap

2:00 – 2:30pm - Kickboxing Video, or go for a walk, do some kind of movement for your body

2:45 – 3:00pm Psalm 131 Video

3:00 – 3:30pm Visio Divina Activity and sharing

3:30-5:30pm – Free Time (or if you have an early morning departure the next day, watch the Mark 4 video, do journaling and sharing during this time).

5:30 – 6:30pm Dinner

7:00pm Spa Video – Do your own facials

8:00-8:40pm Watch the final two testimony videos

## **DEPARTURE DAY**

8:00am Breakfast

8:30 – 9:30am Mark 4 Video and journaling

9:30 – 10:00am Final Sharing and Debriefing

10:00 – 10:10am Closing Video

Depart

## *One Night Schedule*

Adapt the Two Night Schedule to whatever fits your group and schedule the best. Here's a suggestion for what you could do:

## **ARRIVAL DAY**

4:00 - 5:30pm Welcome Video and share your "found object"

5:30 – 6:30pm Dinner

7:00 – 7:30pm House Concert Worship Video



# Retreat Schedule

7:30-7:45pm Spa Video – do your own facials

7:45pm - until bed Watch one or all testimony videos while you do your facials.

## **SECOND DAY**

8:00am Breakfast

8:30-8:50am Exodus 18 video

8:50-10:30am Alone time in the Word with the Retreat Guide

10:30 - 11:00am Sharing/Debriefing

11:00am – 12:00pm Lunch

12:00-1:00pm Rest/Nap

1:00 – 1:15pm Psalm 131 Video

1:15-2:30pm Visio Divina Activity and Sharing

2:30 – 3:30pm Mark 4 Video and Sharing

3:30 – 3:40pm Closing Video

Depart

## *Full Day Schedule*

8:30 – 9:30am Welcome Video and share your found object

9:30 – 9:50am Exodus 18 Video

10am-12pm Alone time in the Word with the Retreat Guide

12:00 – 1:00pm Lunch and debrief your alone time together

1:00 – 2:00 Rest

2:00 – 2:15 Psalm 131 Video

2:15-3:30 – Visio Divina Activity and Sharing

3:30 – 4:30 Mark 4 Video and Sharing

4:30 – 4:40 Closing Video



# Retreat Schedule

## Half-Day Schedule

8:30 – 9:15am Welcome Video and sharing “found object”

9:15 – 9:35am Exodus 18 Video

9:35-11:00am Alone time in the Word with the Retreat Guide

11:00-12:00pm Choose whatever Retreat element most appeals to you (Worship, Spa, Kickboxing, Testimonies, Psalm 131 or Mark 4)

Lunch – debrief your experience together

## Two-Hour Gathering

Have women do the Retreat on their own and then simply come together to talk and share about the Retreat experience. Share some snacks or desserts and pray for each other.

Some questions that might guide your time of sharing:

1. What was your favorite part of the Retreat?
2. What was your “found object”?
3. What do you feel God communicated to you through Exodus 18, Psalm 131 or Mark 4?
4. Which of the testimonies did you resonate with and why?
5. Did you try a new method for connecting with God that was meaningful for you?
6. What did you sense God speaking into your life through this time?
7. How did your Retreat time affect how you now view your “found object”?
8. How can we pray for you?

# Spa Prep



The goal of this Retreat is that it will be refreshing spiritually, emotionally, and physically. That's why we're offering a special spa video to show everyone how you can do your own facial. There's just something about being makeup-free and putting goop on your faces together! It's fun, silly, bonding, refreshing... and worshipful!

Special guest Anna Greer shares with us how caring for our bodies can be an act of worship. In taking care of our skin, we are tending to the temple of God, the place where his Spirit dwells. She shares how you can take care of your skin with natural items you probably already have in your kitchen.

By gathering these simple supplies (encourage your group to each bring an item), you can create an opportunity for some special physical renewal. If this is something you think your group would just not enjoy, there is total freedom to skip this! If you're on the fence though, we encourage you to go for it. You might be surprised at what this element can bring.

Here is a brief outline of the steps and supplies. The supplies are listed for ONE PERSON, so multiply by the number of people attending.

## 1. Cleanse

- Whatever you normally cleanse your skin with OR 1 tsp. coconut or olive oil
- Wash cloth

## 2. Exfoliate

- 1 Tbsp. Oatmeal (quick or rolled oats)
- 3 tsp. sugar
- Small bowl and warm water

## 3. Steam

- Large bowl filled with hot water (mugs or smaller bowls can work too if you don't have large bowls)
- Essential oils for scent (optional)
- Towel to drape over your head

## 4. Mask - For this step each lady chooses a mask recipe based on her skin type or the desired results. Here is a list of supplies for all of the different kinds of masks. If you don't have one of the ingredients, that's ok. You don't have to offer that kind of mask.

- Honey
- Cinnamon

# Spa Prep



- Plain whole milk yogurt
  - Avocado (or substitute egg yolk and egg white)
  - Lemon juice (or lime or other citrus fruit)
  - Face lotion (or coconut oil or olive oil)
  - Aloe Vera gel
  
  - **MASK RECIPES** - Here are the different types of masks along with measurements (for one person):
    - **Acne-Prone Skin** - 3 tsp. honey + 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
    - **Dry Skin** - 1 tsp. plain whole milk yogurt + 1 tsp. mashed avocado + 1 tsp. honey  
OR 1 egg yolk beaten + 1 tsp. honey
    - **Sensitive Skin** - 2 tsp. honey + 1 tsp. aloe vera gel
    - **Scars and Dark Spots** - 2 tsp. honey + 1/2 tsp. lemon juice (lime or other citrus fruit can be used)
    - **Anti-Aging** - 1 tbsp. honey + 2 tbsp. warm water + 1/2 avocado (or 1 egg white)
5. Moisturize - Face lotion or coconut oil or olive oil

For a full description of the facial process that will be shown in the video, check out this [blog post](#).



# Food Ideas

If you're planning to make your Retreat food, we have a great selection of recipes at Velvet Ashes. Only choose what would be enjoyable and do-able for you. If food planning and prep feels stressful, go with something super simple! Have your group help out and bring food too. We suggest prepping as much food before the Retreat as possible, so that you won't have to spend too much time cooking during the Retreat.

What are your tried and true hosting recipes that work for your region of the world? Share them in our [Host Facebook Group!](#)

## Breakfast

- [Banana Bread Oatmeal](#)
- [Cinnamon Rolls](#)
- [Homemade Donuts](#)

## Snacks

- [Soft Pretzel Bites](#)
- [Roasted Chickpeas](#)
- [Crunchy Caramel Popcorn](#)

## Lunch or Dinner

- [Crock Pot Pulled Pork](#)
- [White Chicken Chili & Skillet Cornbread](#)
- [Thai Butternut Soup & Thai Sticky Chicken Fingers](#)
- [Coconut Lime Chicken over Rice](#) (you can use lemons if limes aren't available!)
- [Chicken Tikka Masala](#)
- [Swedish Meatballs](#)
- [Broccoli Cheddar Soup](#) with this easy [One-Minute Ciabatta Bread](#)



# Food Ideas

## Desserts

- **Simple Apple Galette**
- **Homemade Ice Cream** (without an ice cream maker!)
- **Blueberry Buckle**
- **Simple Frozen Peanut Butter Banana Bars**
- **Apple Crisp**
- **Chocolate Cake**
- **Microwave Mug Brownie**

## Drinks

- **Ashley's Chai**
- **Brazilian Lemonade**

# In Closing



Know that we are praying for you and your group! Please share any prayer requests in our [Host Facebook Group](#) or email [info@velvetashes.com](mailto:info@velvetashes.com) and our Strategic Prayer Team will cover you in prayer.

Let us know if you have any questions. We're here to help you make this Retreat a renewing time for you and your group.

Thank you for your willingness to host a Retreat gathering. We are anticipating what God will do in you and your group. We pray that each one of you will encounter God's heart for you during this retreat and leave feel renewed and sustained by his presence.

With love and prayers,

*Danielle Wheeler*

Velvet Ashes Founder and Executive Director

P.S. Be sure to take pictures and share on Instagram and Facebook with hashtags [#velvetashesretreat](#), [#velvetashesretreat18](#) and [#velvetashes](#). And we want to hear all about your Retreat in the comments at [velvetashes.com](http://velvetashes.com). Sharing your Retreat story is what makes this a global community experience!