

Group

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**Director
Guide**



SAMPLE

Cozy
MOUNTAIN
LODGE



Your step-by-step guide to planning, leading, and implementing this refreshing and engaging retreat.

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Welcome to Cozy Mountain Lodge!

An Overview

Are you in need of a relaxing day in the mountains? Time to slow down, savor a warm beverage while chatting with friends, and enjoy the beauty of the great outdoors? Every woman longs for a day like this—even those who live hundreds of miles from the nearest mountain! That's why we created Cozy Mountain Lodge.

Cozy Mountain Lodge is a retreat where women slow down and enjoy time with other women and with God. It's an in-depth Bible study, an unforgettable worship experience, and an open invitation for women to draw closer together as they find shelter in God.

This guide will take you through all the steps of pulling together Cozy Mountain Lodge. It's fun and easy!

Cozy Mountain Lodge is a complete retreat for women of all ages. It includes worship, Bible study, a service project, and more. No speaker is needed—it's super easy for you and your leadership team to do this retreat yourselves!

You can do this retreat at your church, at a hotel, at a retreat center, or even in someone's home. The mountain theme will work no matter what your location is. It's flexible and easy. Cozy Mountain Lodge is created as a 24-hour or overnight retreat, but you'll find tips in this guide for ways to shorten or lengthen it to fit the needs of your group.

This Director Guide contains everything you need to plan a successful retreat, including finding volunteers, publicizing your event, and following up after Cozy Mountain Lodge comes to an end.

There are seven sessions during Cozy Mountain Lodge. Most sessions include worship and Bible study, and all also allow time for laughter with friends or personal time with God. Each session lasts about 45 minutes. Here's a quick look at what happens in each session.



Cozy Mountain Lodge Sessions at a Glance

❁ Session 1

In this session, women dig into the first chapter of Ruth. To get started, women consider how each of us is given different “building materials” in life. They discover that no matter what building materials we have, we can all choose to make God our firm foundation. This session includes a time of worship, a fun group activity, and Bible study.

❁ Session 2

The focus of this session is relationships with other women. Your guests will get to know each other and build friendships as they play familiar board games with a few new twists. Women grow closer together—and also gain insights on how to approach changes in their lives as they consider the Bible account of Ruth and Naomi.

❁ Session 3

Here women launch into a time of discovery and discussion on the importance of being surrounded by supportive Christian friends. This session includes worship, laughter, and a closer look at the story of Ruth and Naomi from Ruth 2, as well as a time of encouragement and prayer for each other.

❁ Session 4

In this session, women learn about the hardships in Ruth and Naomi’s lives. Then they move into a time of service as they demonstrate love and compassion for others by making hearty bean and barley soup mixes to be donated to those in need.

❁ Session 5

This session focuses on Jesus as our Redeemer. Jesus provides covering and protection for us, just as he provided the covering and protection Ruth needed through Boaz. Women delve into Ruth 3 and see this as an example of what Jesus Christ has done for us through the gift of salvation.

❁ Session 6

We all need quiet times of prayer and reflection on God’s Word. In this session, women move through five unique prayer stations where they experience God’s love, peace, comfort, and guidance. This time is focused around Psalm 23.

❁ Session 7

During this celebratory session, women affirm each other, spend time in worship, and complete their study of Ruth. It’s a time of joy—complete with warm fuzzies!

Hearty Hint

Yes, we’ve actually tried this whole retreat with women just like you and your friends. Women of all ages and stages of life joined us. They offered their feedback, and we listened. Throughout this guide, you’ll find tip boxes that clue you in to what worked great—and what didn’t!

Cozy Mountain Lodge Basics

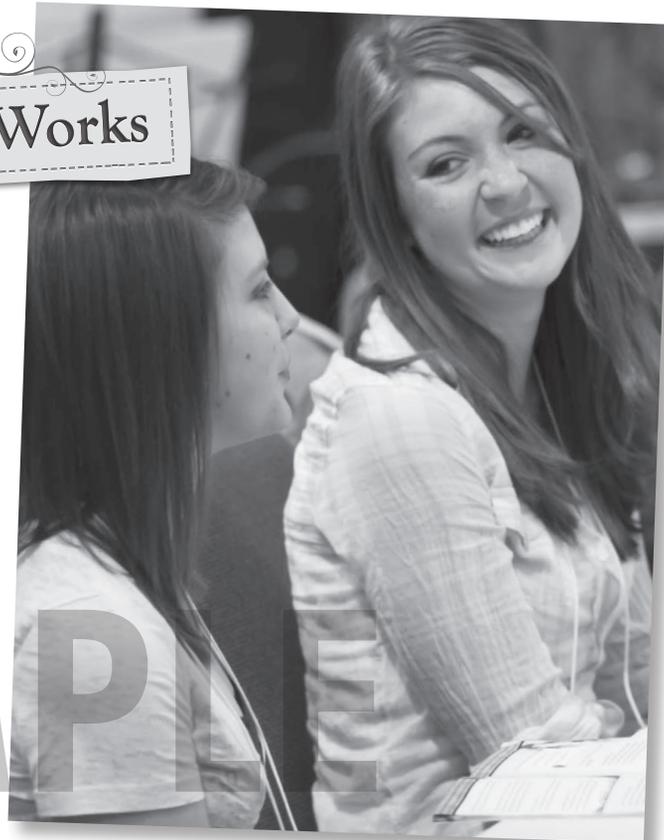
Why Cozy Mountain Lodge Works

It seems that just about every church or women's group has an annual retreat where women gather for a few meals and listen to a speaker. It's a standard formula that's worked for a long time, so why change it?

Cozy Mountain Lodge is different from any other retreat because women *experience* every lesson, every point, every Scripture. They're in the midst of the action. And when women experience the difference, they love it!

- **We've got what women want—even those hard-to-reach younger women!**

Year after year we ask women what they really want to do (and *not* do) at retreats, and over and over we hear the same comments. Women want to talk, laugh, and interact with one another. They're interested in relationships with others and with God, not in sitting and listening for hours on end. They want to share their own stories in an authentic way. So we took that information and created Cozy Mountain Lodge, where women get to share with each other, dig into the Bible, and *experience* God instead of just listening.



- **It doesn't require a speaker.** At Cozy Mountain Lodge, you don't need a speaker. We know (because you told us!) that speakers are hard to find, can be expensive, and aren't always as interesting as you'd hoped. Plus, when you have a speaker, everyone is forced to listen to only her experiences, and they don't have the opportunity to be part of the discovery and application process. Women love to share their own stories, dig into the Bible themselves, and really discuss what they're learning. We make sure that happens.

Hearty Hint

Many leaders are skeptical about a retreat without a speaker—after all, that's all they've ever known. But when our Cozy Mountain Lodge retreat was over, every woman there expressed how excited she was to try this retreat in her own church. Trust us! They'll love it!

You or other women from your church can lead any of the sessions at Cozy Mountain Lodge. Each guide explains in an easy-to-follow format what supplies to gather, what women will learn, and what to say. And because you don't have to spend money on a speaker, you'll be able to pamper and delight your women with small gifts.

- **It includes service.** We talk to women a lot and know that women today long for opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others. So we've incorporated service as a part of Cozy Mountain Lodge.

In Session 4, guests make a hearty bean and barley soup mix. This project ties to the service that Ruth did in taking care of Naomi and is practical for women today, as well. These soup mixes are donated to an organization chosen by your own leadership team. We give more information on how this works later in this guide.

Making service a part of Cozy Mountain Lodge lets women put God's love into action right away!

- **It's fun for women of all ages.** Our research shows that 96% of women's ministry leaders say reaching younger women is important to them. We know you want to reach women of *all* ages through your ministry, so we included both young and old at our own Cozy Mountain Lodge retreat. High school girls joined with grandmothers in laughing and sharing. Several women brought their daughters, and they shared later that this was a great experience for them. (The daughters said the same thing—not just the moms!)
- **Everyone gets involved.** Cozy Mountain Lodge is so easy to lead that the leaders don't have to miss out on anything themselves. Everyone—even the people who share in the responsibility of leading the retreat—gets to participate in every step of the adventure and fun. No one has to miss out on a second of the journey.



Cozy Mountain Lodge FAQs

What are Getaway Groups?

At Cozy Mountain Lodge, guests join into small groups of four. They'll sit with these groups during the sessions so they get to know each other better and become comfortable enough to share more openly.

Women get into these groups in a fun way—we'll explain it later—and have a chance to really belong and go deep with each other. About halfway through the retreat, they'll switch to a new group so they have the chance to meet more women and make more friends. They'll still get to interact with other women at meals, during free time, and at other activities.

Hearty Hint

Keeping Getaway Groups small gives everyone a chance to talk. You might be tempted to let them grow to six or more members, but we've learned from doing our retreats over and over that having groups with more than four members means not everyone will get to participate.

Do I need to adapt Cozy Mountain Lodge to fit a large or small group?

This retreat works great with groups of all sizes. It could happen with a few girlfriends who rent a cabin for the weekend or a huge gathering of women from several churches. It's easy to hold this retreat in one room, ideally with women sitting around small tables. They can move to another room for meals or other activities if you like, but you won't need breakout rooms or additional space—just enough room for everyone to sit comfortably together.



Who should come to Cozy Mountain Lodge?

We've done Cozy Mountain Lodge with women of all ages and life stages. We included high school and college students, single women, moms, grandmothers...and about then, we stopped asking for ages! We've used this with women who don't consider themselves frilly and with those who do. We tried it with ladies who seem more comfortable in dresses or business suits and with those who prefer jeans. And you know what? Everyone loved it! Women formed friendships across age and interest areas. No one balked at participating.

You can invite all the women of your church to Cozy Mountain Lodge—from high school on up. Or this might be a fun mother-daughter event. Perhaps you're a parent or youth leader who wants to do this with a group of high school or college girls—it would work great with them! Maybe you have a group of friends you get together with for coffee; rent a cabin and do the activities all together!

And this retreat doesn't require any previous Bible knowledge, so you can invite women from your community who might not have heard about Jesus. In fact, your guests don't even have to own a Bible—all the Scripture passages are provided in the Cozy Mountain Lodge Participant Guide. The relaxed and welcoming atmosphere makes this a great place to invite friends and neighbors you've wanted to introduce to God.

Women love to connect with other women and long to slow down and have meaningful time with God. Cozy Mountain Lodge gives them the opportunity to do both!

What are Cozy Mountain Lodge Participant Guides?

Each woman who attends your retreat will need her own Cozy Mountain Lodge Participant Guide. This is her personal guide to the experiences at the retreat. Inside this guide are all the Bible passages used during the retreat, discussion questions, instructions for the activities, song lyrics, and more. Plan to order one for each woman.



Cozy Mountain Lodge Schedules



Cozy Mountain Lodge is created as a 24-hour retreat that begins with an evening meal and ends just before the evening meal on the next day. For example, it could begin on a Friday afternoon and end on Saturday afternoon. However, it can be adapted to be a shorter or longer event. Use these schedules as samples for your own getaway.

Note that each session generally takes about 45 minutes to complete. However, we like to “pad” the schedule a little to allow extra time for talking. If you’re doing the retreat in one day, you’ll have to keep things moving. But if you have a one-night or two-night retreat, you’ll notice we’ve allowed more time in those schedules simply because there’s no reason to rush. Let women linger longer and spend refreshing time with each other and with God!

Sample Schedule for One-Day Retreat

Saturday

8:30-9:00	Women arrive and check in
9:00-10:30	Sessions 1 and 2
10:30-11:00	Break
11:00-11:45	Session 3
12:00-12:45	Lunch
1:00-1:45	Session 4
2:00-3:30	Sessions 5 and 6
3:30-3:45	Break
3:45-4:15	Session 7
4:15	Finish, clean up, and go home

Sample Schedule for One-Night Retreat

Friday

2:00	Leadership team arrives to check in, decorate, and set up
4:00	Women begin to arrive—Begin registration and room check-in.
5:00-6:30	Dinner is available
7:00-9:00	Sessions 1 and 2
9:00-??	Free time for snacks, board games, jigsaw puzzles, talking, and laughing

Saturday

7:30-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-11:00	Sessions 3 and 4
11:00-12:00	Free time
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	Sessions 5 and 6
3:00-3:15	Break
3:15-4:00	Session 7
4:00	Finish, clean up, and go home



Sample Schedule for Two-Night Retreat

Friday

2:00	Leadership team arrives to check in, decorate, and set up
4:00	Women begin to arrive—Begin registration and room check-in
5:00-6:30	Dinner is available
7:00-9:00	Sessions 1 and 2
9:00-??	Free time for snacks, board games, jigsaw puzzles, talking, and laughing

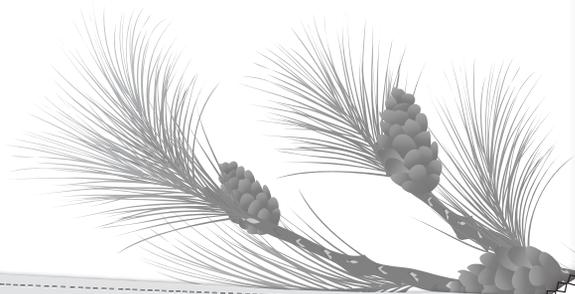


Saturday

8:00-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-11:00	Sessions 3 and 4
11:00-12:00	Free time
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-5:00	Free time
5:00-6:00	Dinner
6:00-8:00	Sessions 5 and 6
8:00-??	Free time for snacks, board games, jigsaw puzzles, talking, and laughing

Sunday

8:30-9:15	Breakfast
9:15-10:00	Session 7
10:00	Finish, clean up, and go home



Recruiting for Cozy Mountain Lodge

Finding Leaders

Since you're reading this book, we know you have a heart for helping women grow closer to others and to God. But putting together a retreat is a lot of work, and you might be feeling a little worried about recruiting all the right volunteers to create a memorable getaway. Well, we're here to help you!

Recruiting doesn't have to be a headache. It can actually be a fun, energizing opportunity to connect with people who have a passion for women's ministry... people just like you! We're here to help you find all the leaders you need for Cozy Mountain Lodge.

Use the following recruiting ideas, and print the job descriptions from the *Graphics & Other Goodies* CD to give to women you'd like to join your team in leadership roles.

To get started, pray!

Ask God to direct you to the women he wants involved. Then make a list of women you think might want to be involved in leading with you. Finally, talk to them. There's no substitute for a personal touch. If you truly believe someone will be a wonderful Supplies Coordinator, tell her! Share the vision for Cozy Mountain Lodge, explain why you think she'd be great on the team, and give her time to pray and make a decision. Assure her that she won't be in this alone, as you and others on the team can work together to get each task completed. And promise her she'll have adequate training. Treat women with respect if they decline, and pray about who God might have you ask next.

Begin with your core leadership team.

Your core leadership team consists of a Facility Coordinator, a Registration Coordinator, a Publicity Coordinator, and a Supplies Coordinator. Once you have these women alongside you, they can help recruit others.

We encourage you to look beyond your "regular" church women's ministry team and invite new ladies to join in getting Cozy Mountain Lodge started. And if you have a large number of people attending Cozy Mountain Lodge, those on your leadership team may want to ask others to assist them in their roles.



I've got my team... now what?

Gather with these women right at the beginning of your planning process, and go over the steps described in the planning section that begins on page 13. Talk about how team members can support one another. Determine how often you'll meet to check in and report back on what's been accomplished and what the next steps are.

Recruit additional leaders.

When you're ready to recruit leaders for the sessions and to lead worship, talk with your team about whom they suggest for the various roles, and then share the responsibility of inviting women to lead in these areas. As you did with your core leadership team, pray first and then extend the invitation to lead. Use the job descriptions that can be printed from the *Graphics & Goodies* CD as a guide for recruiting. When these people are on board, your team will be complete, and you can schedule a training session.



Decorating for Cozy Mountain Lodge



Creating a Cozy Lodge Atmosphere

Adding creative touches can establish a warm and welcoming atmosphere for your retreat. Choose as many ideas as you'd like from this section to make Cozy Mountain Lodge as inviting and comfortable as possible. Check out the decorating segment on the *Cozy Mountain Lodge Training & Promo DVD*. This shows you some of the fun ideas we incorporated when we did our own retreat.

Be sure to use one essential decoration. Women form their Getaway Groups using candles, so this is the "decoration" that is truly essential for the retreat. Each woman will need one small candle, such as a votive candle, and you will need four of each candle style or color. These will be placed on the tables in groupings so that the four matching candles are together at the beginning of the retreat. For example, you would put four white candles together in a cluster at one table and four blue candles in a cluster at another table.

If you are using long rectangular tables, place a cluster of four at each end. This will make it easy for the women who are sitting at that table to each take a candle nearby. If you are using round tables that seat eight, you could make one centerpiece that has eight candles—four of one color and four of another color.

Candles of this size are inexpensive—you should be able to find them for less than a dollar each. And while these are used twice in the retreat to help women form their small groups, these also become a small gift that each woman takes home at the end

of the retreat. Be sure to watch the "Decorating Tips" segment on the *Training & Promo DVD* for helpful information on ways to find enough different candles and stay within your budget.

Do note that you will *not* want to light the candles at the tables. The scent of that many candles burning will be overwhelming. Plus, as these are gifts for the women, they will want to burn them later in their homes.

Here are more decorating ideas for your Cozy Mountain Lodge retreat.

- Incorporate color to brighten rooms.** The theme colors for Cozy Mountain Lodge are cranberry and sage or forest green, with cream and country blue accents. Use these colors as often as possible! One way to stir color into a room is by using bolts of fabric. Lengths of solid colors topped with printed fabric runners add vibrancy to any surface.
- Add props.** What else reminds you of a being in a comfortable lodge? Fluffy throws and puffy pillows? A fireplace? Bowls of pinecones? The location we used when we did this didn't have a fireplace, so we printed a huge picture of one, cut it out, and hung it on the wall—then shone light red lights nearby. A lot of people thought it was real! Be creative as you think about your area. Strategically place items such as these throughout your meeting areas for fun accents.

• **Hang colorful posters.** Nothing paints a visual picture better than a poster! The *Graphics & Other Goodies* CD includes posters that give the impression you're inside a cozy lodge, looking out the windows to see the beauty of God's creation. Plus, each one has a Bible verse, reminding women of the themes of this retreat. Print a set on a large-format printer for your retreat! Afterward they can be framed or given away as door prizes.

• **Include music as part of the décor.** Anytime you can, have music playing softly in the background. This may mean placing portable CD players in several areas. You'll find one copy of the *Music of Cozy Mountain Lodge* CD in your kit, and you can purchase additional copies for each portable CD player; let the songs repeat softly during breaks, as women are entering and leaving rooms, and even during meals. You can also play soft jazz music, sounds of nature such as a babbling brook or wind blowing, or other pleasant music that adds to the ambiance.



Ideas to Warm the Heart

As women arrive, welcome them with platters of cut fresh fruit, small pieces of chocolate, chunks of cheese, or baskets of salty pretzels.

If there are large items in your meeting area that are unattractive and cannot be moved, you might want to cover these with theme-colored sheets or lengths of fabric. This will not only keep them out of sight but it'll add a splash of color to your room.

See what you can borrow from people in your church or community to make the room feel relaxing, refreshing, and enticing.

Cozy Mountain Lodge Master Supply List



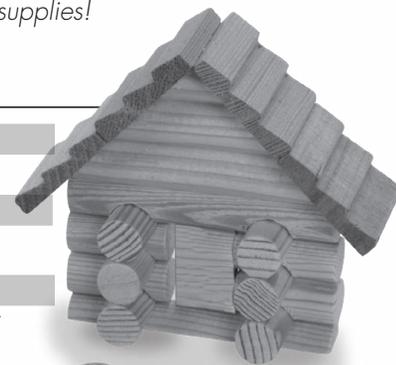
Photocopy this list for your Supplies Coordinator. She can work with the various leaders to determine who will gather supplies for each area. She might also put out notices in your church bulletin to see if some items can be borrowed. (But do be sure they're labeled so they can be returned!)

The supply lists in each leader guide have detailed information regarding specific sizes, amounts, and where to find items. One copy or sample of each item that has an asterisk (*) beside it is included in the Cozy Mountain Lodge Director's Kit, and additional ones are available from Group Publishing (group.com or 800-447-1070) or your church resource supplier. *Be sure to talk to each Session Leader before you purchase supplies!*

*General Supplies

- Cozy Mountain Lodge Participant Guides*, 1 per woman

- Cozy Cabin Kits*, 1 per woman—Women work on building their cabin at several sessions.

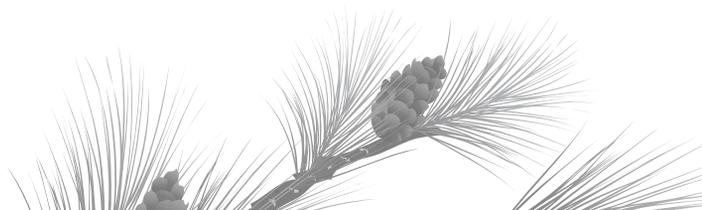


Note: Each woman will need her own guide. The guides contain copyrighted material and cannot legally be photocopied, so be sure to order enough.

- small candles, 1 per woman—These votive-sized candles help women get into their Getaway Groups. You'll need four candles of each color or style; for example, four red candles, four blue candles, four green candles, and so on. Watch the "Decorating Tips" segment on the Cozy Mountain Lodge DVD for more information and hints on what is needed and how to keep the costs super low.
- name tags—There is a template on the *Graphics & Other Goodies* CD* for printing these, but you'll need additional supplies to turn those pieces of paper into name tags.



- fine-tipped markers—These are used at most sessions. For best results, choose darker colors such as brown, black, blue, and green.
- white glue, 1 small bottle per group of 4 women—This is used to build the cabins.
- Graphics & Other Goodies* CD*—It includes resources you'll use for the sessions.
- Music of Cozy Mountain Lodge* CD*
- CD player or sound system
- noisemaker—This helps the leader get the attention of guests without raising her voice. A bell, tiny gong, whistle with a funny sound, maraca, or other item will work!



❁ Session 1

- a variety of items that can be used as building materials, such as Legos, playing cards, drinking straws, Styrofoam cups, building blocks, and toothpicks
- paper lunch bags, 1 per group of 4 women

❁ Session 2

- a variety of board games (see the session leader guide for more information)

❁ Session 3

For the skit you'll need:

- large bag of M&Ms
- a few chocolate bars (the bigger the better!)
- fashion magazine
- hand-held mirror
- shoe with a pointy heel
- pretend money (you can use "money" from a board game or just draw dollar signs on slips of green paper)
- piggy bank

❁ Session 4

- bowls and measuring cups/spoons.
- hand sanitizer
- ingredient cards—Print these from the *Graphics & Other Goodies* CD.

For each woman you'll need:

- 1 quart-sized resealable bag
- 1 snack-sized resealable bag
- 1/3 cup split peas
- 1/3 cup dried romano beans or cranberry beans
- 1/3 cup white navy beans
- 1/3 cup pinto beans
- 1/4 cup pearled barley
- 2 tablespoons beef bouillon or 6 bouillon cubes per person
- 2 tablespoons dried onion flakes
- 1 tablespoon parsley or oregano
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 Bean Soup Mix Bag**—These are available in packs of 20 at group.com.
- gift tag—Print these from the *Graphics & Other Goodies* CD.

Note: The session leader guide has additional information on calculating quantities of the food items.



Session 5

All the supplies used in this session are ones that women have used in previous sessions and should already have on their tables.

❁ Session 6

The session leader guide includes tips on how to make this session more elaborate or simple—so be sure to check with that leader before gathering these items.

- blankets and pillows
- candles and matches
- chairs
- small Styrofoam cups, 1 per woman
- disposable spoons
- hot cocoa in carafes
- mini marshmallows
- Heart Scripture Pendants*, 1 per woman
- Prayer Station Cards—Print these from the *Graphics & Other Goodies* CD*.
- sound effects track from the *Worship Instrumental* CD

❁ Session 7

- small sticky notes (1½ x 2 inches) of any color

❁ Fun Extras

You may also wish to order these items to make your retreat more delightful for the women who attend:

- Cozy Mountain Lodge Tote Bags*
- Music of Cozy Mountain Lodge* CDs*
- Rustic Twig Pens**

*one copy or sample included in the Director's Kit; additional ones available from Group Publishing or your church resource supplier

**available from Group (group.com or 1-800-447-1070) or your church resource supplier

