



MAMA RETREATS

Gathering together as a community of moms can be one of the most important aspects of developing the depth and glue of your group. These retreats can look a variety of ways, but typically it is meant to be a time for rest, relationships, and refocusing for the moms. Most of the time, these retreats are meant to foster dialogue and connection between the moms that only time together can do. Have fun, integrating time with God, one another, and space for free time. Gathering together in the evenings to focus on a specific topic and process prayer requests can become a powerful way to see how God is working and to know each other's true hearts. If you can, record the prayer requests so you can remember to celebrate God's answers over the years.

Suggested Retreat Themes:

BETTER TOGETHER: KNOWING MY PLACE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Have each mom take the **Core Values Index** (have link: <http://livingwholehearted.com/take-the-cvi/>) and unpack your unique hard wiring. Read through this chapter in the Mothering Courageous Girls book and discuss the ways you see God using your specific wiring to nurture your daughter. How do you see God reflected in your particular wiring? How do you see yourself contributing to this community of CG moms and daughters as you see your unique profile. It is exciting for moms to discover their gifts, talents, and greatest contributions. The comparison game can eat us women up just as much as it does our girls, so this retreat helps to level the playing field and show each woman how she uniquely reflects the image of God. This is a wonderful retreat to do before the 4/5th grade curriculum year, considering that the girls will have a chance to take their **Core Values Index** as well.

TELLING OUR STORIES

Take time in the evenings to share your spiritual journey. Explore the themes of where you were prior to coming to know the Lord, or joining your CG group, and how your relationships with Christ has changed you. The more vulnerable you are in sharing your stories, the deeper the connections become and we know how to better love and care for one another. Laugh, cry, and recall the highs and lows of our lives. This is such a profound journey for the mom who tells her story, as well as for the listeners. So much of why we do what we do today comes out of past.

A BEAUTIFUL MESS: Behind the masks

This retreat can focus on taking time to recognize the ways we wear masks. Katie Skurka, spiritual director in Portland, OR developed a word picture that describes the way humans present themselves to those around them. She says we are like peanut M & M's. She says that we all have a peanut, that reflect the image of God and the way He sees us - the best of who we are. Then we have a chocolate layer, that reflects our wounds through life as we interact with other sinful human beings and experience the loss of this life. Finally, we have a candy coated shell that reflects the way we want people to see us. These are our masks that protect us from being hurt again and looks "good" to those around us or keeps people at bay. For example:

- My peanut is that I am contemplative and wise.
- My chocolate is that I have been called "too serious" and "a know-it-all".
- My shell may be funny and performance based, never letting you see the depth of my feelings and thoughts.

Have the moms create magazine colloques one each part of the peanut M & M during the retreat, and then share with one another. This helps to bring clarity, awareness, and potential healing.

RYTHMS OF REST

This retreat focuses on contemplative journaling, prayer, and solitude times with God. In-between the fun and possible self-care times like massages, pedicures, and exercise, consider taking time to be "alone together" for longer periods of time with God. Using the Courageous Prayer Retreat guide for suggested ways to spend time with God. This can be very new for many Christian women, as much of our lives can be spent doing for others, including God. In these reflective times, we are learning to rest, be, and let God love on us through longer moments with Him. In the evenings, consider sharing what the mom's got out of the times of solitude. Sometimes women will just need to sleep, as they are so exhausted from their daily responsibilities at home and find grace in getting caught up on sleep. It can be considered a "spiritual discipline" in these cases! Hopefully the practice together will be a great catalyst for more times of solitude and rest with God at home.