

GRACE CHURCH

STUDENTS

We recognize that the idea of retreats raises a lot of tension and questions for leaders and families in our church around COVID safety and we want to ensure we are communicating well as to how we have arrived at the decision to move forward with conducting retreats. This is not a decision that has been made lightly. For the last several months our staff has been engaged in vigorous and lengthy research, discussions, and weighing of pros and cons across a variety of possible scenarios. Here are some of the key aspects of this decision.

Consideration of Risk

- We are working very hard to mitigate risks to ensure as safe an experience for students, leaders, and staff as possible.
- Since the number of new cases has been trending downward since late January, we are hopeful that numbers will continue to decrease over the next six weeks.
- Our staff has worked very hard to make thoughtful decisions utilizing the best information available from trusted resources.
- Countless hours have been spent evaluating options ranging from doing retreats as originally planned to doing nothing at all and everything in between.
- We are continuing to evaluate circumstances over the coming weeks, including COVID numbers and will not hesitate to cancel retreats if the risk involved greatly increases.

Precautions We Are Taking

- Carolina Point has been operating with strict COVID safety precautions as set by the State of North Carolina which are more conservative than those of South Carolina. The staff leadership at Carolina Point has assured us that there has been no transmission of COVID, either during an event or post event, as a result of groups attending their facility.
- Many of our students are attending school most days of the week, playing sports, sharing meals, riding in cars with their friends, and even having sleepovers. Hopefully with the precautions put in place, their experience at Carolina Point will be just as or more safe than other activities they're engaging in regularly.
- Masks indoors (unless eating a meal or asleep in bed)
- Spaced throughout dining hall and at programs
- Sanitizing stations throughout the facility
- Staff disinfecting surfaces and spaces regularly
- Additional staff in attendance to help ensure precautions are being adhered to

Value of Retreats

- While we recognize the risks involved in conducting retreats, we believe that the importance of getting our students and leaders away for an extended period of time is worth these risks.
- Retreats have been core and catalytic to who we are as a ministry and as a church and we have seen significant impact on leaders and students through the years as a result of their experiences at retreats.
- Retreats give us a unique and dynamic environment with concentrated opportunities to help our students and leaders grow spiritually.
- Students and leaders who are uncomfortable attending their retreat are free to not participate and will not be pressured to do otherwise. We recognize that this will feel isolating to some to not participate and our staff will be working hard to stay connected to those students and leaders both leading up to and after the retreats.