

EPWORTH  
**Common Ground Lead**  
MANUAL

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# Common Ground Role

Common Ground Leaders are integral in creating a safe place for our Retreat Families (RF) to connect and share their stories with one another as they find rest, restoration, joy, and hope during their retreat. Common Ground Leads will be responsible for communication with Retreat Families pre-retreat and facilitating a small group time for parents to connect and process through their childhood cancer journey.

## PRE-RETREAT

- Attend Leadership call and volunteer calls (if you have time in your schedule)
- Introductory Retreat Family calls to answer questions, share your contact info and confirm and update details
- Update Staff as soon as possible with drops or red flags
- Keep in close contact leading up to retreat arrival making sure you have updated ETA's and details

## DURING RETREAT

- Create group text and update families daily on schedules, changes and reminders
- Arrive early to all meals and programmed times to greet retreat families as they arrive and reach out to those that are late
- Set-up an inviting Common Ground space each day with snacks, coffee, seating
- Facilitate Common Ground time as well as Parents Night Out
- Share encouragement and main themes to Family Partners during Sunday evening gathering and throughout the week during Refuel
- Attend all leadership meetings
- Assist with Hope Jar time on Friday for Family Partners

## POST RETREAT

- Before leaving retreat, send the retreat family survey
- Check in with retreat families on their way home
- Fill out your leadership survey
- Debrief with LFR Staff



## Common Ground Helpful Tips

- Common Ground (CG) is not counseling. As the leader you are there to facilitate discussion. If at any time, you are concerned about the well-being of the parent, family member or child, immediately see the Staff Lead.
  - As Common Ground Leaders you are not only there to support and facilitate CG, but to walk the Retreat Families through the week's schedule- greeting them at meals and following up with those that don't attend. **Retreat Families are NOT on the App – so ALL schedule changes, reminders and communication is your responsibility throughout the week.**
  - Ask, Listen and Love are 3 key components of Common Ground time. As facilitators of this time- the win for the week is for the Retreat Family Couples to connect with each other and form community.
  - Lighthouse understands Common Ground is a unique environment. Relationships and trust develop organically and take time. Take comfort in the fact that God is present, silence is okay, and people are lifting you and the families up in prayer during this time.
  - Our staff is always available to offer support to you in any way needed. Please reach out to Amanda Knothe any time before, during, or after the retreat if you have any concerns about a family, about the retreat, about Family Partners, or about any staff related issues. Our goal is to offer the greatest experience possible for our Family Partners, Leadership, Staff and ultimately and foremost our Retreat Families.
    - Amanda Knothe – [amanda@lighthousefamilyretreat.org](mailto:amanda@lighthousefamilyretreat.org), 256.698.9169
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# Pre-Retreat Initial Call

About two weeks before the retreat, you will receive information about each of the Retreat Families. You will receive a Google form with basic information & a “Profile Sheet” that will include information about their story.

## Best Practices for Connecting with Families Before Your Call

Before calling your assigned families, consider sending a brief introduction via email or text to help set the stage for your conversation. This allows families to know who you are and when to expect your call.

Here are two suggested approaches:

1. **Email Introduction:** Send a warm email introducing yourself, sharing your excitement about serving with them, and letting them know you’ll be reaching out soon. This gives families a chance to anticipate your call and prepare any questions.
2. **Text Introduction:** Some leaders prefer sending a quick text to introduce themselves and ask if there’s a convenient time for a call. This helps ensure the family is available and ready for the conversation.

Examples of communication are on the next page.

## **SAMPLE EMAIL**

Hi everyone!

This is \_\_\_\_\_ with Lighthouse. My wife, \_\_\_\_\_, and I will be leading Common Ground and be your point of contact from now through the end of the retreat. We are less than 2 weeks away from our retreat in the beautiful North Georgia Mountains/ Beach so wanted to remind you of a few key things before you arrive:

**Retreat location & housing** – We will be staying @ \_\_\_\_\_ (see attachment for detailed directions). The team is still working on exact housing information which may not be available until you arrive. Will keep you posted.

**Arrival time** – Check in is at \_\_\_PM Eastern/Central Time on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Please try to get to \_\_\_\_\_ at that time. (Dinner is scheduled shortly after arrival). Please contact me if you are running late.

**Common Ground** – We are so excited to be your Common Ground leads for this week. Common Ground is a very relaxed and informal time getting to know the other retreat family parents while the kids are having a blast with their family partners and Lighthouse staff.

**Forms** – Just a reminder to complete any required forms ... refer back to previous emails from Lighthouse staff or let me know if you have any questions.

**Policies & Guidelines** – Reminder of what not to bring on retreat, we ask that you not bring pets, alcohol, firearms, or fireworks...Lighthouse is an alcohol and smoke free environment.

Fyi, I will be reaching out to you in the next few days to say hello, verify contact information, and answer any questions. Looking forward to meeting your families.

See you in the mountains/beach!

## **SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE**

“Hi [Family’s Name]! My name is [Your Name], and I’m so excited to be your Common Ground Leader for your upcoming Lighthouse retreat! I’d love to connect and share more details about the retreat, verify a few things from your application, and answer any questions you might have. Let me know a time that works best for a quick call. Looking forward to getting to know you!”

Please call each family and complete the following checklist:

- Introduce yourself
- Go over info on the spreadsheet
- Confirm who is attending
- Confirm spelling of all names
- Confirm relationships of everyone attending
- Confirm each child's age
- Ask about allergies & special needs for ALL FAMILY MEMBERS ATTENDING (Food allergies, Down's Syndrome, Asperger's etc.)
- Ask if they need a Pack-n-play, Highchair, Wheelchair, Shower Chair, etc.
- Exchange contact info
- Go over an average day at Lighthouse, basic programming, and meals
- Tell them about Common Ground & Flip Flop
  - You might have families that are nervous about leaving their child- talk them through the Flip Flop time.
  - Remind parents that they need time with other parents just as much as their children need time with other children
- Tell them about Family Partner volunteers and what their role is
- Confirm the family's travel plans - What kind of car are you driving?
  - If they are flying, ask how they are getting to property and let them know if they do not rent a car, they will need to Uber if they go off property (Per insurance volunteers are not allowed to drive Retreat families).
- Remind families to join FB and help facilitate community in the FB private group
  - They need to Friend request - "Sandy Lighthouse" (If having issues contact Amanda)
  - We will invite you and Retreat Families to a private FB page for your specific retreat where you can all engage before you even make it to the sand.
    - Introduce yourself and add a picture
    - Comment on other families that introduce themselves
    - Ask questions (Taco Tuesday – what is your favorite taco)
    - Packing suggestions – Wednesday night party tie-dye, Friday beach picnic... Hawaiian shirts
    - Weather forecast – ideas on what to wear
    - Getting ready for retreat- send pictures of everyone in the car on the road to the beach.

\*\* If you find any changes or discrepancies with the information we have given you, please update Google spreadsheet no later than 1 week before retreat and highlight your changes.

\*\*If a family can no longer attend, please let us know immediately so we can try and fill their spot with another family as soon as possible.

\*\*If you are unable to reach a family after leaving messages, email and or text, please let us know right away.

# Common Ground Lead Schedule

## SUNDAY

### • DURING THE DAY

- Call/Text all Retreat Families to confirm the address to the location, ask them to keep you posted on arrival time and make sure they have Common Ground leader phone number. If you have families that you have not heard from, please keep your Staff Lead and Family Partner Lead updated.
- **ONCE ALL THE FAMILIES ARRIVE, SET UP A GROUP MESSAGE/TEXT WITH YOUR RETREAT FAMILIES.**
- Plan to arrive at 6pm with Leadership/Family Partner's.
  - Dinner is on your own, BEFORE you arrive.

### SAMPLE TEXT

 We can't wait to see you in the sand tomorrow! 

 Make sure to save our number in your phone.

 Check-in starts at **5:00 PM** — please keep us posted on your arrival time.

 Enjoy the ride and get ready for an amazing week! 

### • 6:00 PM

- Leadership/Family Partner Drive Through Registration – Family Partner Lead, Staff Lead and Logistics Lead will welcome you as you drive through registration to get your housing information
- Start organizing CG House.
  - Work Crew will have bins delivered to CG house.
  - If furniture needs to be moved, please be sure to TAKE PICTURES OF THE ROOM prior to moving so all furniture can be put back in the original location.
  - If you need additional chairs, check with Staff Lead about getting more.
  - Please take time to go through your bins to make sure you have everything you need.
  - If you do not finish setting up before you head to the tent at 7pm, you will have time tomorrow.

### • 7:00 PM

- CG, SL, LL, FPL and Host and Worship Lead meet at the tent to go over the agenda for the Family Partner gathering this evening.

- **7:30 PM**

- FP Gathering at the tent
  - FP intros
  - Common Ground Leaders share vision for Common Ground
    - Share the “what” that Common Ground is, we have new volunteers each week and it’s a good refresher for returners.
    - Please share the purpose and why of CG- some personal stories as well as thanking FPs for their FF time.
    - Talk about Hope Jars and Birthday cards and set the expectation for those (they will be picking up their Hope Jars and Bday cards at the end of the evening.).
    - Please ask FP's to not share personal info about their families on social media.
    - At the end of this time, you will have time to pass out profile sheets and discuss specific RF's with their FP's.
      - Use the profile sheets with pictures this evening. At the end of the meeting, collect the profile sheets with pictures and give to Hospitality/Fulfillment so they can use the sheets during Hope Jar time on Friday.
    - Family Partners can take pictures of the profile sheet to keep the family’s information at hand. However, please remind them to return the profile sheets to leadership after the group discussion. We want to ensure that no hard copies are left unattended in the tent or around the property.
  - Dessert Served.

- **8:30 PM**

- Leadership Meeting
  - Share with Leadership any special needs for CG families.
  - Give profile sheets with pictures to Hospitality/Fulfillment if you have not already done so.

# MONDAY

- **7:00-9:00 AM**

- Breakfast in dining hall

- **9:00 AM**

- Leadership Prayer at tent

- **9:30 AM**

- Family Partner Logistics meeting- you will be introduced
- Send morning text to Retreat Families:
  - “Good Morning! We’re so excited to meet you today! Please keep us posted on your estimated time of arrival – we can’t wait to welcome you!” and any other arrival instructions

## **BE AVAILABLE ALL DAY BY PHONE FOR RF’S AS THEY HEAD DOWN**

- **11:00 AM**

- Merch sale

- **12:00 PM**

- Lunch on your own

- **AFTERNOON**

- Prayer Walk - Visit all Retreat Family units at some point during the day and pray over each unit, if able to get in ahead of time. If not, please pray outside the door of each unit.
- As you get ETA’s, reminder that Epworth doesn’t do to-go meals. If a family arrives after dinner is over, they need to pick up dinner on their way.

- **4:45 PM**

- Assemble at tent or designated area for Retreat Family arrival and registration
  - We will do a drive through registration like we did for Leadership and FP’s.
  - Please be available to help with any early arrivals!
    - If families arrive before 5:00, please give them some options in the area to go and visit and have them come back at 5:00 pm.

- **5:00 PM**

- Retreat Families Arrive!
  - Greet the families but be brief – this is a drive through registration, and you can connect with more time at dinner.
  - Logistics Lead will discuss housing and parking and point them in the right direction of their condo.
  - FPL will notify FP's that family has arrived and to be ready to greet them and help unload at their room(s).
  - ML will introduce themselves to the RF. (Allergy and other information will be confirmed later).

- **5:45 PM**

- Follow up with SL regarding any RF's who have not arrived

- **6:00 PM**

- Meet at tent for the Blessing song before dinner
- Dinner in dining hall
  - FP's will make sure to sit and eat with their RFs to establish a connection.
  - Take time during the evening to make sure you have connected with each family.
  - After dinner families are welcome to hang out at the tent and play games. FPs will walk RFs back around 7:30 PM.

**\*\*Make sure your RF's visit the medical lead table as they arrive at dinner. This is to meet the medical lead, confirm special needs and allergies, as well as get swim and Flip Flop bands.**

- **8:00 PM**

- Refuel

- **9:00 PM**

- Leadership Meeting
  - Identify any information we did not know before families arrived (i.e. extra people, allergies, special needs, etc)
- Send a Reminder text to RF's reminding them about breakfast the next morning and CG. Remind them to bring their kids ready for FF in the morning! (That means sunscreen and bathing suits).
  - If you haven't already, set up a group message/text with your Retreat Families

## SAMPLE TEXT

We're so glad you're here! 🧡

Get some good rest tonight—we can't wait to see you tomorrow!

Here's what your day will look like:

- 🕒 **Breakfast – 7:00-9:00 AM**  
Come hungry any time between these hours! 🍳🥓🍓
- ☀️ **Morning Watch under the tent – 9:30 AM**  
Make sure the kids are swim-ready! 🩴👙☂️
- 🤝 **Common Ground – 10:00 AM**  
A special time just for parents.
- 🍷 **Lunch – following Common Ground**
- 🛖 **Conched Out Time – 1:30 to 5:30 PM**  
Rest, recharge, and relax however you need to.
- 🍴 **Dinner under the tent – 5:30 PM**
- ♠️ **Dads Poker Night – 7:30 PM**
- 🌙 **Flip Side – 8:00 PM** (Sharks & Starfish only)

Can't wait to kick off an amazing week with you all! 🎉💙

## TUESDAY

- **7:00-9:00 AM**
  - Breakfast in dining hall
  - Be sure to start your coffee before Leadership prayer time so it is ready when Common Ground starts. It takes about an hour to brew.
  
- **8:45 AM**
  - Leadership prayer at tent
  
- **9:00 AM**
  - Bullet Points with FP's
  
- **9:30 AM**
  - Morning Watch
    - Be on lookout for all RF's and let SL know when they are all present.
    - Follow up with those that are not there.
  
- **10:00 AM**
  - Common Ground / Flip Flop
    - See Detailed CG time agenda on the next page
  
- **12:00 PM**
  - Head back to tent with parents for lunch – Try to keep this timeframe. If you are going to run over, be sure to let the Staff Lead know
  - Everyone stays at the tent from 12-12:25, kids play on the lawn
    - Worship will lead everyone in Blessing song and dismiss for lunch
  
- **12:30 PM**
  - Lunch in dining hall
  
- **1:30 PM**
  - Leadership meeting
    - Leadership Team photo will be taken
  - Conched out – get some rest!
  - Confirm PNO and details with your Logistics Lead
    - Confirm address/location/parking/payment
  
- **5:30 PM**
  - Dinner under the tent
    - Let SL know when all RF's have arrived
      - If a RF is running late, we will start dinner but make a plan to have someone connect with them and get them to dinner.

- **7:00 PM**

- CG Dads – Dad’s Poker Night
  - “Host” the night
  - Make sure all dads feel welcome and are included in everything.
  - Make sure there are a couple RF dads sitting together at each table.
- Assist with clean up at the end of the evening.

- **8:00 PM**

- Flip Side – For Starfish and Sharks (FF groups)
  - Run by FF Lead and Summer Staff
  - Location to be determined – All kids will be walked home by Summer Staff and/or Staff.

- **9:30 PM**

- Send Reminder text to all Retreat Families about Wednesday morning schedule

## SAMPLE TEXT

### What an incredible day! 🧡

We loved seeing your family connect, laugh, and rest today. We hope you’re settling in and feeling the love—we’re so grateful you’re here! 💙

**LAUNDRY** - If you would like laundry done, please be sure to leave it for FP’s to pick up in the morning. FP’s will only pick up what is in the laundry basket provided by LFR. Laundry will be returned on Friday afternoon.

Here’s a quick look at **Wednesday’s schedule** so you can rest easy tonight:

- 🕒 **Breakfast – 7:00-9:00 AM**

Come hungry any time between these hours! 🍳🥓🍓

- ☀️ **Morning Watch under the tent – 9:30 AM**

Make sure the kids are swim-ready! 🩴👙☂️

- 👣 **10:00 AM – Flip Flop Activities (kids) / Common Ground (parents)**

- 🍷 **12:30 PM – Lunch** (in the dining hall)

- 🛖 **1:30 PM – Conched Out begins**

- 🌅 **4:30 PM – Retreat Family parents head out for Parents Night Out**

- **Family Partners will meet you at your room(s)**

- 🎉 **6:00 PM – Un-Birthday Party** (at the tent—fun for all!)

- 🌂 **7:30 PM – Family Partners + RF kids return to room(s)**

- 🌟 **8:30 PM – RF parents return**

Sleep well and get ready for another meaningful day together! We can’t wait to see you in the morning. zZ🧡

# Tuesday Details

## TUESDAY TRUTH: REST

Common Ground is not counseling. As the leader, you are there to facilitate discussion. All the Retreat Families are at different places in their relationship with Christ, some may not even have a relationship or are very angry at God. Remember to meet them where they are and gently lead them or guide them to where God wants them to be. If at any time, you are concerned about the well-being of parent, family member or child, immediately see the Staff Lead.

## DAILY VERSE:

“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

## MORNING AGENDA

### • 10 AM: WELCOME & OVERVIEW

- Share the Common Ground Expectations:
  - Safe Space – This is a place where you are safe to express whatever you need to. Everyone in the room has had a child diagnosed with cancer, so there are no judgements when feelings are expressed. We also need to agree that whatever is said in this space, stays here.
  - Respect Others’ Experiences – We are all gloriously unique. Everyone grieves and engages with others in unique ways. While you may not agree with some of the sentiments expressed during Common Ground, we ask that you celebrate differences and try to understand each other in a loving, understanding, and respectful way.
  - Share the Air – Our time with each other is limited. Every group is unique and dynamic. Some may engage more vigorously than others. While we don’t want to stifle anyone, we ask that you ensure there is time for everyone to participate in the discussion.
- Share your cell number and let them know you are their main contact for questions, concerns, and emergencies while at the retreat.
- Provide the Medical Lead’s contact information.
  - Explain that if they need the medical lead for any reason, they should call their cell number and the medical lead will come to them.
- Go over all Policies & Rules. (Copy included in manual.)
- Answer any questions regarding logistics.

- **10:15 AM: ICE BREAKER**

- Start the morning off with an ice breaker. This will help ease the tension in the room and make the parents feel more relaxed to share their stories. \*See ideas for Ice breakers at the end of this manual & a copy will be with the daily cards in the CG box.

- **10:30 AM: INTRODUCTIONS**

- Start the sharing time by reading the Daily verse (Poster to be displayed each day).
- Explain you want to do introductions and tie in this verse.
- Introductions: Common Ground Leaders go first and model the expectation of what to share. If possible, pick a family that has been on a retreat previously to go second. As facilitators, frame the time: set a time frame for each family to share (5-6 min each is good) and try to adhere to it as possible so everyone has the opportunity to share.
- The win for Tuesday is to give every couple the opportunity to at least introduce their family- there will be time later in the week to tell their whole story. This gives them a place of connection with other families that very first day.

### **QUESTIONS TO ANSWER**

1. Who are you?
2. Who is with you at the retreat?
3. Child's diagnosis.
4. Stage of treatment.
5. Where is the child being treated?
6. To bring in the Truth of the day – How or where do you find rest? What can you do today to rest?

**\*DAY ONE IS THE FIRST FULL DAY OF THE RETREAT. PLEASE ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO ARRIVE ON TIME TO ALL ACTIVITIES. TUESDAY NIGHT WILL BE DAD'S POKER NIGHT AND FLIP SIDE.**

### **REVIEW THE SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY**

- Lunch following Common Ground
- 1:30pm to 5:30pm – Conched out
- 5:30pm – Dinner under the tent
- 7:30pm – Dad's Poker Night
- 8:00pm – Flip Side (for Starfish/Sharks only)

### **DAD'S POKER NIGHT:**

- Take time to talk up this activity during CG. The hours spent at Poker Night help break down walls and create a community for the dad's – the benefits of this time together can be seen and felt all week long.
- Identify any Retreat mom's that might need some help with dad gone and discuss with the FPL.

## WEDNESDAY

- **7:00-9:00 AM**
  - Breakfast in dining hall
  - Be sure to start your coffee before Leadership prayer time so it is ready when Common Ground starts. It takes about an hour to brew.
  
- **8:45 AM**
  - Leadership Prayer at Tent
  
- **9:00 AM**
  - Bullet Points with FP's
  
- **9:30 AM**
  - Morning Watch
  
- **10:00 AM**
  - Common Ground / Flip Flop
    - See Detailed CG time agenda on the next page
  
- **12:00 PM**
  - Head back to tent with parents for lunch – Try to keep this timeframe. If you are going to run over, be sure to let the Staff Lead know
  - Everyone stays at the tent from 12-12:25, kids play on lawn
    - Worship will lead everyone in Blessing song and dismiss for lunch
  
- **12:30 PM**
  - Lunch in the dining hall
  
- **1:30 PM**
  - Conched out - get some rest!
  - Send Reminder about tonight's schedule
  
- **4:30 PM**
  - Head to Dinner – PNO
    - Summer Marketing Intern will be at the restaurant ready to take photos when everyone arrives
    - **BE SURE TO GET A CREDIT CARD FROM YOUR STAFF LEAD**
      - Make sure you get an itemized receipt from the restaurant and give to Staff Lead.

- **7:00 PM**
  - Wrap up dinner and send parents out on individual date time, etc.
    - It is important we don't take up too much time & space at the restaurant.
  - Remind parents to return to resort/retreat at 8:30 PM but not before!
- **8:00 PM**
  - Leadership Meeting
    - Coordinate location for Men to break out for CG on Thursday
  - Write Thank You note to PNO restaurant for parents to sign.
  - Send Reminder text about Thursday morning schedule.

## SAMPLE TEXT

### Another sweet day in the books! 🍷

We've loved every moment with your family—thank you for being here, for showing up, and for making memories with us. Here's a look at **Thursday's schedule** so you're all set for tomorrow:

- 🕒 **Breakfast – 7:00-9:00 AM**  
Come hungry any time between these hours! 🍳🥓🍓
- ☀️ **Morning Watch under the tent – 9:30 AM**  
Make sure the kids are swim-ready! 🩴👙☂️
- 🕒 **10:00 AM – Flip Flop Activities (kids) / Common Ground (parents)**  
*Note: Common Ground will meet in 2 different locations tomorrow!*
- 🍷 **12:30 PM – Lunch for FP's, dads, and kids**
- 🍷 **1:00 PM – Moms' lunch ends**
- 🎧 **1:30 PM – Unplugged begins**
- 🌞 **5:00 PM – Dinner On Your Own**
- 🎵 **7:30 PM – Night of Worship (we would love to have you join but this is optional!)**

Soak up the rest, joy, and togetherness—can't wait to see you in the morning! 💙🌟

- **8:45 PM**
  - Refuel
    - Share how you see God working and connection, what is happening in the room.
    - Provide encouragement of impact to Family Partners who may be tired mid-week
    - Talk about prayer time on Thursday and give a few topics FPs can be praying for specifically

# Wednesday Details

## WEDNESDAY TRUTH: EXPERIENCE JOY

### DAILY VERSE:

“The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust in him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy.” Psalm 28:7

#### • 10 AM: WELCOME & RECAP

- Provide parents with instructions on how Parents Night Out works.
  - Reassure them that their Family Partners will be with their children every minute they are gone.
  - Encourage them to take advantage of this special time for themselves after dinner and not return to their room(s) until 8:30pm.
  - Offer them suggestions of where they can go after dinner.
  - Photos will be taken as they arrive at the restaurant.
- Prayer cards
  - Hand out prayer cards to each couple and let them know we have a specific time of prayer on Friday afternoon. Invite them to take these cards and write specific prayers for their family and return on Friday during CG. These cards will be read by other FP’s on retreat, they won’t be private.
- Unplugged day is Thursday – remind parents money for Unplugged Day as well as any travel assistance will be sent to their PayPal account. If they are having problems with PayPal, they need to call directly as we have received confirmation that the funds were sent and accepted.
- Recap 1st Day – how did you find REST yesterday?
  - If necessary, finish introductions to make sure every family has a chance to share.

#### • 10:15 AM: STORY CARDS AND TRUTH FOR THE DAY

- Read the Truth and Daily Verse for today. Explain exercise of Story Cards:
  - Have all cards laid out on a table or a counter.
  - Explain, we all have a story. Right now, you are in a difficult part of your journey, and it can sometimes be difficult to share how we are doing during this time. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. So, we are going to use the picture cards scattered about this table to tell part of our story.

- We want you to pick one of two cards – you are going to choose a card that either best represents how you are doing/feeling today, or a card that represents where you want to be in 5 years.
  - One per individual, not couple.

\*\*Note for folks to first identify their card and not take it yet as there may be another individual that wants to use the same card.

- Have each individual share their picture and why they chose it.
- Once everyone has shared, re-read the daily verse & if there is time left after the Story Cards, ask parents to share using the following questions. Try to limit sharing time so all families get an opportunity to share.
  - As hard as cancer is, what positive things have you experienced personally or as a family?
  - Are there things you engage in personally or as a family that tend to bring you joy during this season?
  - Has your faith affected your joy in a positive way? If so, how?

#### **REVIEW THE SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY**

- Lunch following Common Ground
- 1:30pm – Conched out begins
- 4:30pm – Retreat Family parents head out for Parents Night Out
  - Family Partners will meet you at your room(s)
- 6:00pm – Un-Birthday Party (at the tent – fun for all!)
- 7:30pm – Family Partners + RF kids return to room(s)
- 8:30pm – RF parents return

# THURSDAY

- **7:00-9:00 AM**
  - Breakfast in the dining hall
  - Be sure to start your coffee before Leadership prayer time so it is ready when Common Ground starts. It takes about an hour to brew.
  
- **8:45 AM**
  - Leadership prayer at tent
  
- **9:00 AM**
  - Bullet Points with FP's
  
- **9:30 AM**
  - Morning Watch
  
- **10:00 AM**
  - Common Ground / Flip Flop
    - See detailed CG time agenda on the next page
    - Be sure to share with RFs about bikes if they would like them for the afternoon Unplugged time
  
- **12:00 PM**
  - CG Dads - Head back to the tent with dads for lunch
    - Try to keep to this time frame. If you are going to run over, be sure to let Staff Lead know
  - Everyone stays at the tent from 12-12:25, kids play on the lawn
    - Worship will lead everyone in Blessing song and dismiss for lunch
  
- **12:30 PM**
  - Lunch for all FPs, kids, and RF dads in the dining hall
  
- **1:00 PM**
  - Mom's lunch wraps up
  
- **1:30 PM**
  - Prayer Time
  - Hospitality will be by to clean up mom's lunch and inventory the bins and Common Ground supplies
  - Unplugged begins

- **5:00 PM**
  - Dinner on your own
  
- **7:30 PM**
  - Night of Worship
  
- **9:00 PM**
  - Send an encouraging text to all Retreat Families about Friday morning schedule

## SAMPLE TEXT

**We can't believe it's already Thursday night!** 🧡

What a joy it's been to watch your family connect, laugh, and create memories this week. Thank you for letting us be a part of your story—it's truly an honor. 💙

Here's what **Friday** looks like:

- 🕒 **7:00-9:00 AM – Breakfast-** any time between these hours
- ☀️ **9:30 AM – Morning Watch-** swim ready
- 👣 **10:00–11:45 AM – Flip Flop Activities (kids) / Common Ground (parents)**
- 🍷 **12:30 PM – Lunch**
- 🛍️ **1:30 PM – Merch Sale + Conched Out begins**
- 📸🍴 **5:45 PM – FP's pick up RF's for dinner + family photos + family fun night on the lawn**

We hope tomorrow is full of sunshine, laughter, and a whole lot of HOPE. Sleep well! 🌙🌟

# Thursday Details

## THURSDAY TRUTH: RESTORE RELATIONSHIPS

### DAILY VERSE:

“Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.” – 2 Cor. 13:11

### • 10 AM: WOMEN/MEN BREAKOUTS

- Moms & Dads will split from the very beginning. Moms will meet in the CG House; Dad’s will meet in a predesignated location. Creates the opportunity for everyone to share more freely – for example, a guy may be less open to sharing about something when there is a room full of women, etc.
- Make sure Dads know that they need to get their kids after Flip Flop, have lunch in the dining hall and head back to the room(s).
- Explain Unplugged Day
  - Let RFs know that bikes are available at Epworth. LFR will pay for any RFs who want to use the bikes during Unplugged on Thursday afternoon. They can go to the front desk to rent them. If RFs want to rent bikes on other days or for the full week, they will have to cover the cost.
- Invite the families to the Night of Worship, but make sure they know it is not a requirement to attend, just an option.

### • REVIEW THE SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY

- Lunch – Dad’s + kids following Common Ground
- 1pm – Mom’s lunch ends
- 1:30pm – Unplugged begins
- 5pm – Dinner on Your Own
- 7:30pm – Night of Worship (we would love to have you join but this is optional!)

- **WHEN BROKEN OUT:**

- Start with the Daily Verse with each group. Focus your discussion and questions around the idea - Restoring your relationships must start with you being restored by God first.
- Use the following questions to help guide your discussion.
  - Discussion topics for MEN:
    - How has cancer affected your relationship with your family?
    - What concerns you the most about this?
    - How can you restore your relationship with your spouse and/or your children if it has been lost?
  - Discussion topics for WOMEN:
    - How do you find strength when you feel emotionally lost, your marriage is suffering, you feel like the whole burden is on your shoulders, etc.
    - What concerns you the most?
    - How can you restore your relationship with your spouse and/or children if it has been lost?

- **MOM'S MORNING SCHEDULE:**

- 1st hour – Mom's make trucker hats / utilize conversation cards, have coffee / special drinks
  - You may ask Hospitality for assistance with the craft and/or to help serve lunch, if needed
  - Provide one LFR logo patch for each mom, spread other patches out for the mom's to choose what they would like
- Epworth will bring and set-up Mom's Lunch
- 11am – Transition to CG time
- 12pm – Lunch served
- 12:30 – Pass out Gift bags (let moms know that they have a gift in their PayPal account) & cards from Kids
- 1pm – Encourage them to have fun in Unplugged. Let them know about Night of Worship if they want to attend but remind them this is family day. Dismiss them by 1:00 pm. Dad's will be wrapping up lunch in the dining hall by 1:30pm so they should have a few moments to themselves before everyone is back in the room(s).

- **THURSDAY AFTERNOON / EVENING:**

- Day Three afternoon and evening will be free for the families to “be a family, reconnect and make memories.”
  - Answer any questions they may have.
  - Families will have received money in their PayPal account for their unplugged day. Remind families if they are having trouble with PayPal, they need to call PayPal directly.

- **PREPARE FOR FRIDAY:**

- Take some time today to discuss as a couple how you would like to close out Friday.
  - It is not required for the Worship Lead of the week to join you in Common Ground Friday morning unless you feel it would be appropriate and beneficial for the parents.
    - If you would like them to come in, please discuss with the Staff Lead before talking to the Worship Lead. Then if you both agree, you may invite them to join you for a short time Friday morning.
  - You can also open the floor at the end of CG if you still have time to see if there are any topics the parents would like to talk through.
  - Please close the day in prayer, in whatever form you all choose.

## FRIDAY

- **7:00-9:00 AM**
  - Breakfast in dining hall
  - Be sure to start your coffee before Leadership prayer time so it is ready when Common Ground starts. It takes about an hour to brew.
  
- **8:45 AM**
  - Leadership prayer at tent
  
- **9:00 AM**
  - Bullet Points with FP's
  
- **9:30 AM**
  - Morning Watch
  
- **10:00 AM**
  - Common Ground / Flip Flop
    - See detailed CG time agenda on the next page
  
- **12:00 PM**
  - Head back to the tent with parents for lunch – Try to keep this timeframe. If you are going to run over, be sure to let the Staff Lead know.
  - Everyone stays at the tent from 12-12:25, kids play on the lawn
    - Worship will lead everyone in the Blessing song and dismiss for lunch
  
- **12:30 PM**
  - Lunch in the dining hall
  - **Give signed PNO Thank You Note to Staff Lead**
  
- **1:30 PM**
  - Merch Sale
  - Conched out begins
  - Organize & pack up all supplies in appropriate bins as labeled.
    - If moving, have bins, chairs & signs ready for Work Crew to pick up.
      - Return all furniture to the original location.
    - If not moving, be sure the room is picked up and ready for the next retreat.

- **3:30 PM**

- Hope Jar and Prayer Time (location, TBD)
  - Plan to be in the room to help answer questions, and keep the environment a prayful, intentional time. You may coordinate with the FPL to split this time but either you or the FPL needs to be in the room during this time.
  - When prayer time is over, you may take the RF prayer cards with you, take them home and continue to pray for the families.

- **5:00 PM**

- Refuel
  - Share update on how CG went
  - Work with HOST/WORSHIP and FPL to share wins, shout outs of FP and kids
  - Give Leadership the opportunity for thanking FPs

- **6:00 PM**

- Dinner in the dining hall
  - Games and music outside after dinner
  - This is our “See Ya Later” as a group so connect with families and notify staff of anyone departing early in the morning so we can let FPs know and get Hope Boxes ready
  - Get prayer cards from Hospitality so you can take them home to continue to pray for the families (if you didn’t get them at the end of Hope Jar / prayer time)

- **8:15 PM**

- Sent Reminder about the Saturday morning schedule

## SAMPLE TEXT

**What a beautiful week it's been.** 🧡

We've laughed, cried, played, and made memories we'll never forget. Thank you for letting us be a part of your family's journey—it's been an absolute gift. 💙

As we wrap up, here's what **tomorrow morning** looks like:

- **7:00 AM – Breakfast** will be in the dining hall between 7:00 to 8:00 AM. You must be finished by 8AM.
- 📦 **Be ready for your Family Partners to meet you at your condo by 8:15 AM** to help with move-out. You'll probably want to start packing a bit tonight!
- 🙌 **8:15 AM – "See ya later's" + Check-out help**
- 🚗 **8:30 AM – Safe travels home!**

We're praying over your family as you head back, and we hope you carry the peace, rest, and joy of this week with you. 🧡

# Friday Details

## FRIDAY TRUTH: FIND HOPE IN GOD

### DAILY VERSE:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him.” Romans 15:13

#### • 10 AM: WELCOME/RECAP UNPLUGGED DAY

- Welcome everyone into the last day, recap what everyone did for Unplugged day
- **Have each couple sign the Thank you Note for PNO restaurant. Please give this note to your staff lead to take back to the LFR office**
- Collect prayer cards. Make sure the family last name is on the card and plan to give these to Hospitality at lunchtime.

#### • 10:20 AM: DISCUSSION OF THEIR JOURNEY AND FAITH

- Read the verse of the day and talk about how God wants us to place our hope in him.
  - One option is to use the story cards again and this time ask for the picture to show what their relationship with God is like- other things to share:
    - Our hope in God can be the anchor for our soul.
    - Many of us, if not all of us, have at one point or another placed our hope in a cure. While that’s understandable, we also know that there’s nothing certain about that hope.
    - While there is nothing wrong in hoping for a cure for your child, ask the parents to consider that there is another hope that is promised, that is secure and that is permanent.
    - That’s the hope of eternity that we receive when we place our faith in Jesus for our lives. What he did on the cross and through his resurrection made it possible for us to have a permanent, eternal relationship with him.
    - It’s that hope that can be an anchor for your soul that cannot be taken away. Other hopes can be pulled from you like an anchor that does not take hold, but this one is guaranteed to remain.
- Here are some questions that you can ask:
  - Have any of you experienced this “hope” that can anchor your soul that we talked about?
  - Can you describe what that’s meant to you?
  - What have you been placing your hope and trust in while dealing with cancer?
  - Ask parents to share the role faith has played in their journey

- You can also ask:
  - What is one positive thing they have experienced this week?
  - What would they like to bottle up and take with them and continue experiencing when they leave?

- **11:45 AM: CONCLUSION/LOGISTICS**

- Photos and a Retreat Slideshow will be emailed out 2 weeks post-retreat.
- Wrap up the week and discuss logistics of the evening and the logistics of the morning move out.
- Before parents leave Common Ground on Day 4 be sure to explain “See ya later.” Let them know that Friday night is the last night the whole retreat will be gathered together.

## **REVIEW THE SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY + SATURDAY**

- Lunch following Common Ground
- 1:30pm– Merch Sale + Conched out begins
- 5:45pm – FPs pick up RFs from room(s) for dinner + family photos + family fun night on the lawn
- **SATURDAY MORNING**
  - 7am – Breakfast in dining hall (must be finished by 8am)
  - Be packed and ready by 8:15am – FPs will be there to help you load your car
  - 8:30am – RFs on the road headed home

## SATURDAY

- **7:00-8:00 AM**
  - Breakfast in the dining hall (you must be finished eating by 8AM)
  
- **8:00 AM**
  - Make sure you are out of your housing and have completed checkout list
  - Send out survey link your Logistics Lead sent you to each Retreat Family THIS morning and ask the Retreat Families to complete the survey on the drive home.
    - Sample text you can send –
      - What a wonderful week we've had! We've truly enjoyed meeting you and hearing your stories. As you head home, Lighthouse Family Retreat would love for you to take a few moments to reflect on your retreat and complete this quick survey. Thank you so much, and safe travels home.
  
- **8:15 AM**
  - See Ya Later's - we will not gather for See Ya' Laters
    - FP's will help load out RFs and say "see ya later"

\*\*Please complete the retreat survey you received this morning through messaging in the LFR app on your way home.

## See Ya Later Details

- Ask if any family is planning to leave early –
    - If so, make sure to let Staff Lead and Hospitality know. Arrange for them to get their Hope Box before they leave.
  - Family Partners will be at Retreat Family's condo/house to pack their car at 8:15 am.
    - Retreat Families need to be totally packed up and ready to go.
    - We will not gather for See Ya' Laters.
    - Family Partners will have their Hope Box to give as they pack them up.
  - Be sure to remind them breakfast is from 7:00 to 8:00 AM in the dining hall. Everyone must be finished by 8:00 AM.
  - Let them know they will be receiving a "Hope Box" to take home with them so the Hope that they received this week will continue when they return home. The box will include:
    - Hope Jar (You can explain what this is)
    - Picture of FP's who served you this week
    - Conversation cards for them to talk about their week at Lighthouse on their way home with their children.
    - Share Cards – To be passed out to friends that could benefit from a Lighthouse Family Retreat
    - Bible /Devotion Cards
    - QR codes for our podcast, blog, resource list and playlist
-

## Policies & Guidelines for Retreat Families

- Our Mission is to help you rest, restore relationships, experience joy and find hope in God. Please read over the following reminder Policies and Guidelines so that we can have a safe and amazing week.
- What is said in Common Ground stays in Common Ground.
- Lock your valuables in your car. We don't lock your condo doors during the day to allow your family partners the opportunity to do your laundry and straighten up your unit. Many units have codes to enter but for those with keys, this will apply.
- No alcohol or smoking allowed during the retreat.
- Do not throw ANYTHING off your balcony or hang towels off your balcony. It is unlawful to throw any object, water or ice off your balcony. Throwing anything off your balcony will result in immediate eviction from the resort and possible monetary fine – no exceptions.
- No Firearms or weapons allowed anywhere (including your condos) during the retreat.
- No pets allowed at a retreat.
- No fireworks allowed at a retreat.
- If something breaks in your room(s), please let us know right away.
- Parents, you must take all children with you when leaving the retreat site.
- Parents must accompany children to the pool or beach.
- Family Partners (volunteers) are not to watch your children, except during Flip Flop & Parents Night Out.
- Conched out time is every afternoon for everyone. Take the time to rest, enjoy your family and have fun!
- No one except Staff & Adult Leadership are permitted to drive the golf carts.
- Lanyards are to be worn during all retreat activities, including at meals.
  
- Flags at the beach
  - Double Red – NO Swimming for anyone at the beach (can be fined by the state)
  - Single Red – NO Lighthouse Swimming
  - Yellow – Caution – swimming OK but be careful
  - Green – All Swim
  - Purple – Dangerous Marine Life in the water
  
- Please reach out to Amanda Knothe at [amanda@lighthousefamilyretreat.org](mailto:amanda@lighthousefamilyretreat.org) if you have any questions or concerns about these guidelines.

# Coffee Instructions

## HELPFUL HINTS ON USING THE 40-CUP POT:

- Our pots do not need filters, just use the basket inside for the coffee grounds.
- Brewing time is approximately 1 hour
- Amount of grounds per pot:

<b>WATER LEVEL</b>	<b>STRONG</b>	<b>MILD</b>
40 cups (max)	3 1/2 cups	2 1/2 cups
30 cups	2 3/4 cups	1 3/4 cups
24 cups	2 1/4 cups	1 1/2 cups
18 cups	1 3/4 cups	1 1/4 cups
12 cups (min)	1 1/4 cups	1 cup

# Common Ground Ice Breaker Option #1

## INSTRUCTIONS

Get everyone on their feet. Let them know you are going to do a little icebreaker to get everyone moving around a little and an opportunity to learn a little more about the group before we get started.

Read each of the items on the list and have the group choose which they fit into a group up with others that are the same. For example: eye color – everyone group up by eye color.

Leaders can add any questions they have.

## CATEGORIES:

- Birthday month
- White or Wheat (bread)
- Which side of the bed do you sleep on
- Fold your arms across your chest – is your right or left arm on top?
- Coke or Pepsi
- Only child or siblings
- Salty or sweet
- Favorite season
- Pool or ocean
- Toilet paper under or over on the roller
- Scrunch or fold toilet paper
- Flip flops or sandals
- Beach or Mountains
- Favorite color
- Has had Chick-fil-A or not
- Been to Lighthouse or not

## Common Ground Ice Breaker Option #2

### HUMAN TREASURE HUNT

- List of questions to ask people (see Grid)
- Pens

### INSTRUCTIONS

Give each person a copy of the questions and a pen. Give the group directions – their task is to go around the room and find different people who can answer “yes” to the questions. Their goal is to get as many boxes signed off as possible in 7 minutes.

Once they’ve found someone who can give a positive answer, they have that person initial that box.

### ADDITIONAL RULES

To encourage the player to talk to as many different people as possible, there is a limit on the number of times each person can appear on someone’s list – ONE time!

For example, Human A speaks to Human B and finds that they can answer “yes” to one of the questions, they cannot sign off on any other boxes.

### DISCUSSION

After 7 minutes, have everyone finish with the person they are with and take their seat. Go around and review who has done each and where folks have things in common – spend time on the ones you feel most relevant – debrief should last 10 minutes.

### (TREASURE HUNT GAME BELOW)

### “HUMAN TREASURE HUNT”

Born in December	Climbed a Mountain	Is left-handed	Played Sports in College	Has Twins or is a Twin
Is an Only Child	Has never had Chick-fil-A	Has Been on TV	Prefers Pepsi over Coke	Was in the Military
Speaks Another Language	Still has Christmas Decorations Up	Has Blue Eyes	Has Never Had a Broken Bone	Has won a Contest
Knows someone famous	Has a Nickname	Has Never had Braces	Has Been Camping	Has Traveled to Another Country

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Born in December	Climbed a Mountain	Is left-handed	Played Sports in College	Has Twins or is a Twin
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