A retreat really should not feel like an incredibly long meeting, but it is certainly not meant to be a vacation paid for by your organization either. With some planning, a retreat can serve a number of purposes:

- Focused bonding and work time for group leaders
- Team building
- Goal setting and planning for the year
- Build skills in training sessions
- Get away from daily distractions
- Fosters informality (recreation)
- Creates shared experiences
- Psychological impact—it is important to take time to do it!
- Maximizes participation and minimizes daily distractions

Planning To-Do List

- Assess needs
- Set goals
  - clearly outline, based on determined needs and desired outcomes
  - identify problems to solve
  - be realistic and keep goals attainable
  - goals can include team building and unity, training, orienting, learning skills, communication, socializing
- Determine activities and program
  - select topics based on goals and objective
  - determine appropriate resources
- Make arrangements
  - set date and time
  - logistics: money, time, space, group size
  - develop budget: facility costs, photocopying, equipment, food, travel, etc.
  - reserve facility and vehicles
  - delegate responsibilities
- Develop retreat schedule
  - make sure you include break times, and leave room for questions
- Evaluate retreat
  - consider the planning process, facilities, schedule, how goals were met, usefulness
  - everyone should evaluate (verbal and written)
- Final details
  - ensure payment of all bills
  - write thank you notes to presenters
  - summarize evaluation results and share