

SLUH Sophomore Retreat

April 5-6, 2017



February 24, 2017

Dear parents of a SLUH sophomore,

We are pleased to remind you that the Sophomore Retreat is a month and a half away! It promises to be an exciting time in the life of your sophomore. First, here is the basic outline for the retreat, as it pertains to parent involvement and what you most need to know. Specifics about the home visit component follow.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5

- **7:50am:** Homeroom begins on what is a school day with a normal schedule.
- **3:30pm:** Retreat check-in and the opening keynote in chapel. Sophomores are excused from other after-school activities, practices, and games for the day.
- **5:30pm:** Mass begins in the Chapel. Space is limited. One parent is invited to join.
- **6:30pm:** Departure for host houses.
- **7:00pm:** Parents and sophomores arrive at host house. Dinner, movie, discussion to follow.
- **11:00pm (approximate):** Lights out.

THURSDAY, APRIL 6

- **7:15am:** Arrivals begin at SLUH, optional breakfast offered for sophomores in the Old Cafeteria.
- **8:30am:** Opening address for the day in the Chapel.
- **3:00pm:** Retreat concludes. Your son will be able to attend any after-school activities, practices, or games he may have on Thursday.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How will my son get from SLUH to the host house on Wednesday? We are asking families to limit the amount of drivers. If at all possible, have him get dropped off at school on Wednesday morning. If you are attending the Mass on Wednesday evening, you will ideally drive him to the host house for the evening. For reasons of safety and practicality, we don't want a multitude of different drivers all descending upon the same home. The host family will make arrangements to get him back to school on Thursday morning. Please discuss this with your host family.

Who is my son's host family? Good question! [Please see this spreadsheet to find your son's name and group.](#) Creation of these groups involved no small feat of coordination and were based on input from your son back in the fall. Your host family should be in contact with you over the next few days to coordinate the details of the home visit.

What do we want to do for dinner? The host family knows that the choice is theirs and yours together. Potluck, carry out, pizza, and barbeque are all good options. Perhaps some parents will want to prepare the dinner, while others attend the Mass and help with transportation. Whatever you decide will work best for your group and your host house, go with that. Unless it presents a particular hardship for your family, please do not let the host family provide all the food themselves. Host families expect that you will chip in to help spread the financial/preparation burden around.

What should my son do with equipment that he'll need for practices or games on Thursday? He should bring these to school on Wednesday. We'll have a space that he can keep them until after the retreat on Thursday.

Should my son bring a sleeping bag and a pillow to school on Wednesday? No, this wouldn't be practical. Ideally, the parent would bring that over to the host house on Wednesday evening and make arrangements to retrieve them from the host house at a future point. The same goes for toiletries and a change of clothes, etc. As much as possible, limit what your son has to bring to school on Wednesday morning.

What behavioral expectations will be placed on my sophomore while he is at the host house? Basically put, the same rules that would apply for your sons while on any SLUH retreat would apply here. There will absolutely be no drugs or alcohol. They are to remain on site at all times and take no visitors. They are to respect the house rules of the host family, including the “lights out” instruction at the end of the evening. Also, they will be asked to turn over their phones at the start of the evening to the care of the host family. They will hear about these expectations directly at a sophomore class meeting on Tuesday, March 28. Violations will be dealt with according to their severity, with serious problems resulting in a middle-of-the-night call to you to come back to get your son and a call to retreat administration.

COMMUNICATION TO MAKE WITH YOUR SON’S HOST HOME

In the coming days, the family of your son’s host house will reach out to contact you to discuss several particulars about the evening at their house. Communication with them is vital for the success of the evening! In addition to ideas for dinner, there are several things the host families will ask of you, all in an attempt to best care for your son when he is staying in their home. Some of these questions you’ll be asked are listed below. Please try to be forthcoming with your answers. If you don’t hear from your host family by the time Spring Break starts, contact Campus Minister Brian Gilmore at bgilmore@sluh.org.

- Does your son have any medical considerations or instructions to be aware of?
- Does your son have any pertinent allergies - food or otherwise?
- Does your son have any emotional or psychological considerations that would be worth noting?
- Are there special family situations to be aware of that may limit parental involvement on that particular night? Death, sickness, divorce, separation, work or travel conflicts, etc?
- What else should I know about your son, your family situation, or anything else, in order to best care for and support him that evening?

A component of these conversations will also be the host family working with you to choose a movie for the group to watch that evening. In one way or another, all the films involve themes that are pertinent to the lives of sophomores.

- “Journey of Self-Discovery” - a character seeking to strengthen a sense of his own identity
- “Coming of Age” - a character growing in relation to his friends and his ability to love
- “Journey of Maturation” - a character growing and/or strengthening relationships with members of his family

The host families have a list of movies that your group will choose from. When the host family shares the movie choices with you, please keep this information from your son, so they might enter into the night with an open mind. Among the many other places to find film reviews these days, www.common sense media.org is a resource that may be of particular help to determine which film to watch and discuss with your son.

Please note: some of the films deal with heavy topics, some have intense situations in them, and some even carry with them an “R” rating that may not make them seem like a typical “retreat movie.” Know that each of the films deals with real-life, sometimes messy, situations that are real to your son’s experience or that of the people around him. We believe that a shared experience of watching any of these films with your sons can be of great value between parent and child, but we would never force a host to choose a particular film that he or she is not comfortable sharing with the group. Again, we stress that communication with your son’s host family is of utmost importance for the success of the evening’s activities, including the movie. Please let us know if you don’t hear from them and we will get you in touch.

Please let any of us know if you have any questions. A strength of this particular retreat is the relationship that we are entering into with you to help create what we believe will be a memorable and important experience. For that, we offer you our sincere gratitude.

Sincerely,

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