

Organizing a Bus Trip for Your Chapter

By Wayne Mays, president of Arkansas Right to Life

Group trips to a special event- like the annual March for Life in Little Rock every January- can be exciting, enjoyable, and beneficial to your chapter, as you fellowship with members and prospects, discuss projects, identify leaders, and plan chapter activities. So, to get ready for a trip, consider the following steps:

- check with a local church for a bus or van (depending on number of travelers and space needed) you can borrow or "rent"; ask the church to provide names of drivers with CDL
- determine the cost of the trip, including mileage, gas, food (you could provide box lunches), etc.
- check your treasury and determine funds available; if you can cover the cost from the treasury fine; if not, determine the fee to be charged by dividing the number of seats on the bus by the total cost; TIP: to encourage certain groups, i.e. students, consider a staggered fee schedule, for example Adults- \$20, Students-\$5.
- "advertise" the trip through the members by announcing in churches, emails to members, flyers posted in good places (such as your local Caring Pregnancy Center); send a press release to local media, with contact name and phone number
- start a reservation list with dates of requests (in case there are more wanting to go than you can take)
- don't give confirmation of reservation until money is received (this is optional, but wise)
- ask volunteers to buy the ingredients and prepare box lunches- sandwich, cookie, fruit; carry a cooler with water and soft drinks (NOTE: space for box lunches and cooler will reduce the number of available seats); OPTION: stop at a fast food place for food and restroom break, but be sure to add this time to the trip plan
- choose a convenient, well-lighted starting point with adequate parking spots
- determine travel time required to Little Rock, and announce departure and (approximate) return times
- have at least one member carry a cellphone and announce the number(s) so you can be reached in case of an emergency
- if your chapter has a banner, carry it to use in the March
- advise your travelers that ARTL always needs help with the collection, and ask for volunteers to pass buckets in the crowd (they will get instructions when they you arrive)
- advise travelers to check the weather forecast and carry appropriate clothing, especially coats, hats, scarves, and gloves since January weather is usually cold (again, this can reduce the number of seats available if you pile the clothing in a seat)
- plan to use the trip time wisely; for example, you can have a minister or anyone give a pro-life devotional (the March for Life is always on Sunday, so Pastors will appreciate this); hand out

data sheets to get current information on everyone; have a chapter meeting, with reports on projects, fundraisers, plans, etc.

-finally, on the way home, capitalize on the raised awareness and "charged up" status of the folks who have experienced the emotion of the March- by asking for testimonials, recruiting leaders and workers for upcoming projects, setting dates, brainstorming, etc

-back at home, be sure to pay all bills promptly and send thank-you notes to supporters, like the owners of the bus, those who prepared box lunches, etc..

-HAVE A GREAT TRIP!