

REGIONAL PARISH LIFE CONFERENCES

Planning Timeline

A Regional Parish Life Conference is a huge undertaking for any parish and requires more than two (2) years to plan, organize and administer properly. The Antiochian Archdiocese, through its Department of Convention and Conference Planning (DCCP), has the overall responsibility for the Conferences and publishes the Regional Conference Planning Manual. Additionally, the Regional Fellowship of St. John the Divine oversees the conference and assigns a regional planning coordinator to work with the host parish throughout the conference planning timeline.

The following Conference Planning Timeline will assist the host parish in planning a successful Conference.

I Initial Startup (Months 24-18)

1. Host Parish makes commitment to host regional Parish Life Conference.
2. Host Parish appoints Conference Chair/Vice-Chair/Co-Chairs/Executive committee.
3. Conference Chairs propose a hotel **that can meet the requirements of the Conference.**
4. Develop a preliminary agenda for hotel planning purposes (see sample in manual).
5. Invite regional planning coordinator to preview hotel and to assist in contract negotiations.
6. Make presentation at regional General Assembly at Parish Life Conference (2 years prior) and obtain regional approval of hotel.
7. Submit final contract to region and DCCP for approval.
8. Sign contract with hotel.

II Planning (Months 17-12)

1. Commence monthly meetings of Executive Committee.
2. Obtain conference budgeting database and prepare conference budget.
3. Appoint committee chairs and members (see manual).
4. Make conference presentation to regional General Assembly at Parish Life Conference (1 year prior), including hotel information and rates, tentative agenda, and proposed pricing.
5. Contact regional bishop for input on keynote speaker and seminar leaders.

III Planning (Months 11-9)

1. Finalize commitments for seminar leaders and keynote speaker.
2. Make final conference presentation to regional Fall Delegates Meeting (current year).
3. Start to obtain donations for conference events and hospitality bags.
4. Appoint remaining committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs/Co-Chairs.
5. Set souvenir journal prices.
6. Set souvenir journal and early registration deadline.
7. Obtain and edit **WORD** database for mailings.
8. Submit conference information for website.
9. Prepare first mailing to churches/missions, attendees, potential souvenir journal donors.

IV Planning (Months 8-6)

1. Finalize social events.
2. Submit, schedule, souvenir journal, social event, and vendor prices for conference database.
3. Arrange for computer equipment. Obtain specs from coordinator, including networking equipment.

V Planning (Months 5-4)

1. Meet at hotel with social and food event chairs.
2. Prepare second mailing, to attendees, potential souvenir journal donors
3. Submit final agenda to Archdiocese for Metropolitan/Presiding Bishop approval.
4. Finalize contracts with vendors.
5. Submit ad and articles to **WORD Magazine** (requires 2 months lead time).
6. Visit local churches/missions to spread word.

VI Planning (Months 3-2)

1. Prepare third mailing to churches/missions, attendees, potential souvenir journal donors.
2. Resolve requirements for complimentary rooms, activity books, special arrangements, for honored guests.
3. Follow-up and make arrangements with keynote speaker and seminar/workshop leaders
4. Finalize room assignments and set-up instructions with hotel.
5. Test computer hardware and software and train all registration staff on database.

VII Planning (Month 1)

1. Print souvenir journals, agenda and other materials.
2. Print badges of pre-registration and prepare registration packages.
3. Prepare hospitality bags.
4. Arrange for transportation for all VIPs and bishop.
5. Submit sales tax exemption certificate to hotel.
6. Obtain fire permit for candles in church in hotel if required by code.
7. Schedule work teams for moving bookstore, church and registration equipment to and from hotel.
8. Obtain epistle and gospel reading for conference days from Department of Liturgics and Translations.

VIII Conference

1. Install and test computer network.
2. Manage the registration process.
3. Visit and validate every function, event and room to assure proper arrangements.
4. Hold daily meetings with staff and committees as required.
5. Be patient and flexible.

IX Post Conference

1. Submit data file and reports to regional coordinator within 2 weeks.
2. Submit registration fees to Archdiocese Headquarters within 4 weeks.
3. Obtain all expense activities from committee chairs and suppliers.
4. Follow-up on collections of money from attendees who owe additional money, failed to supply proper credit card information, or, whose check or credit card did not clear.
5. Pay all bills and close financial records within 8 weeks after the conference, and distribute checks of conference proceeds to regional organizations.
6. Submit final data and reports to coordinator and DCCP after closing all books.
7. Return computer equipment after the books are final and closed.
8. Submit photos and articles to **WORD Magazine** and to the Archdiocese webmaster.
9. Send thank you letter and copy of souvenir journal to all patron and donors.