

BUS MINISTRY GUIDELINES

1. **Purpose:** The bus ministry exists to bring children from private homes to the congregation for educational and other programs as a part of the congregation's total outreach and evangelism program.

2. **Essentials:** The following items need to be planned for and continually worked on in order to have an optimum bus ministry.
 - a. A sense of God's call to minister to the homes in a given area.
 - b. An understanding of the socio-economic, cultural, and racial distinctives of people in the area, as well as special problems that may exist in the area, such as drugs and gangs.
 - c. Sufficient Sunday School and children's congregation workers to handle the number of children coming in.
 - d. An organized program with qualified drivers and standard routes.
 - e. Regular followup on absentees and visitation to homes on the bus route to meet parents and invite them to congregation.

3. **Qualifications:** Drivers should be required to meet the following requirements.
 - a. Meet the requirements for drivers in *Minimizing Liability to the Congregation* and the state motor vehicle code.
 - b. Have experience working with children.

4. **Training:** All drivers should receive an orientation regarding relevant state motor vehicle laws. Training should also be provided in such topics as personal evangelism, understanding contemporary family problems, handling child behavioral problems, conducting visitation, performing first aid and organizing routes.

5. **General Guidelines:**
 - a. Whenever possible an adult supervisor or other adult worker should ride with the children or youth on the bus or van.
 - b. The driver is personally responsible for operating the vehicle in accordance with the state motor vehicle code. The driver must do his or her best to insure that passengers use seat belts (if installed) and remain in their seats while the bus is moving.
 - c. For weekly programs the bus should run a specified route. Regular and predictable stops makes it easier for parents to plan and provides good advertisement for the congregation.

- d. An attendance record book should be maintained in the bus and the driver mark attendance for each one way trip. If a different driver makes the return trip, this driver should double check the incoming trip attendance to establish accountability of all the children who came on the bus. If a parent picked up a child who came on the bus, the attendance record should be marked with a "P" for the return trip.
- e. A route description should be prepared for each route describing the time of departure from the congregation, specific street directions to be followed, the location of stops and the times of those stops. A driver should not unilaterally alter or deviate from the specified route.
- f. A route schedule should be prepared giving the location (street address or intersection) and times of stops. The route schedule shall be provided to parents of children who ride the bus. When delivering children home after dark, children should be let off as close to their residence as possible.
- g. A signed permission slip and medical release must be obtained from the parent or legal guardian of every child transported by the congregation bus.
- h. A monthly driver schedule should be prepared listing the drivers for each Sunday or ministry event and/or route, with copies distributed to the drivers and children's ministry director.
- i. The driver, while on the route, must not leave the bus with children inside unattended.
- j. The bus should contain a first aid kit and a suitable fire extinguisher, and any other safety equipment as required by law.
- k. In the event of an accident, the driver, if able, should call the police and insure that a police report is taken. The driver should report the incident to the pastor as soon as possible. Accident report forms provided by the insurance company need to be kept in the bus.

6. **Post-Route Actions of the Driver**

- a. Check the gas and oil and replenish them if necessary before turning in the keys. Gas only needs to be replenished if the tank is one-half full or less.
- b. Perform a general body and under-the-hood inspection to make note of any item needing attention, and report any deficiencies to the Bus Ministry Director.
- c. Inspect the interior of the bus and remove any trash left behind.
- d. Replace any seats that were removed, lock the bus and return the keys to the congregation office.