

Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Office of Life & Justice



National March for Life Planning Guide for Parishes and Schools

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Past Diocesan Trip and About this Guide

From 2007-2020, the (former) Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph hosted an annual March for Life Pilgrimage to Washington DC in January. In addition to sharing many spiritual and personal memories with the thousands of pilgrims, parents, teachers, priests, religious and volunteers who made these trips such life-affirming events, the Office of Life & Justice also gained useful insight into the planning, collaboration and execution necessary for a successful pilgrimage.

Though the Office of Life and Justice at this time no longer plans a diocesan national March for Life trip, we invite you to use this guide for your parish or school planning purposes; within each section we will also share what past resources were used for the diocesan trip (vendors, trip essentials, etc.).

Use this guide each year (the exact date 20__ has been left blank for you to be able to reprint and reuse this guide) for your planning purposes.

If you use this guide and find it useful OR want to add new ideas, please contact the Office of Life & Justice at lifeandjustice@diocesekcsj.org to share your feedback.

Blessings on your March for Life Pilgrimage!

20__ March for Life Dates

March for Life Date:

Time:

Location: National Mall, Washington DC

More Information: www.marchforlife.org

Optional extra events and gatherings around the March for Life:

Rose Dinner Gala Date:

Time:

Location:

More Information: www.marchforlife.org/rose-dinner/

March for Life Expo Date:

Time:

Location:

More Information: www.marchforlife.org/expo/

National Pro-Life Summit (Formerly Students for Life of America National Conference) Date:

Time:

Location:

More Information: www.prolifsummit.com; Summit registration opens in August; register your student/youth group ASAP since spots fill quickly

National Prayer Vigil for Life Date:

Time:

Location: Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception,
Washington DC

More Information: www.usccb.org/prolife/national-prayer-vigil-life-schedule

Gain Interest

Advertise

Advertise early to gain interest and recruit as many people as possible to sign-up! Talk to your parish/school group about the trip early in the school year (August/early September) and make announcements utilizing your available communication avenues and word-of-mouth. Send out a sign-up sheet at your parish/school to gain an idea of trip interest and follow up with them promptly. Take time to reach out to multiple other parish/school groups/ministries.

Contact the Office of Life & Justice (see end of this guide for contact information) if your group is open to having attendees from other parishes/schools in your travel group.

Hold an Interest Meeting

Hold an interest meeting in September to tell everyone about the trip. Try to have logistical questions answered beforehand so that everyone can have as much information as possible. If you would like a past attendee to share, contact the Office of Life & Justice.

Some attendees at your interest meeting may be unfamiliar with the March for Life and what to expect from the trip. Start your meeting with a video like:

March for Life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUo7uKApsiU>

or

Students for Life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQ2awIq7XCo>

Don't Stop Talking About It

Share March for Life and Students for Life news and updates about the March for Life with your group to build excitement and interest through the Fall. Remember to regularly post flyers or announcements for your parish/school and distribute handouts at events. Use your group's social media pages to post pictures or videos

of your group members sharing why they'll be attending, and challenge group members to share these testimonies on their personal accounts.

Events and Sight Seeing Options

March for Life Related Events (see pgs. 4-5 for more information)

Rose Dinner Gala

March for Life Expo

National Pro-Life Summit

National Prayer Vigil for Life

Sight Seeing Options

Smithsonian Museums (<https://www.si.edu/visit>)

Lincoln Memorial (free)

Washington Monument (free)

Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/visit/>)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (<https://www.ushmm.org/>)

Thomas Jefferson Memorial (free)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial (free)

The White House (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/visit/>)

Vietnam Veterans Memorial (free)

Arlington National Cemetery (<https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Visit>)

For more ideas, visit: <https://washington.org/things-do-washington-dc>

For venues and museums requiring tickets, it is best to factor in those tickets and cost into your trip and itinerary ahead of time. Take into account what free time you will have available and the distance between the locations and your

Travel Budget

Flight

If your group is flying to attend the March for Life, find the average cost for flights by going to a website like Expedia.com or Kayak.com. The best airport to fly into is Ronald Reagan International (DCA) as public transportation is most convenient from this airport. However, Baltimore-Washington Airport (BWI) also has public transportation, despite it being more cumbersome to navigate.

$$\text{\$} \underline{\hspace{1cm}} \text{ Average Flight Cost x } \underline{\hspace{1cm}} \text{ Attendees = } \text{\$} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Vehicle Mileage

To figure out the cost of driving to the March for Life, visit Fuel Economy for a calculation on your trip cost: www.fueleconomy.gov/trip/#?

This website maps out your trip and accounts for the average cost of gas along your route.

$$\text{Mileage Cost} = \text{\$} \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Bus

To figure out a bus trip's cost, we recommend reaching out to two companies we've worked with in the past. They can map out your trip and provide the price for the entire trip, including the cost per attendee. Mention the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph when you reach out to them!

Crossroads Tours

913-829-6644

www.crossroadtours.com

Arrow Stage Lines

816-453-8727

Travel Budget

Hotel Cost

Most hotel rooms can hold four people, and some can hold five with a rollaway bed. Depending on the size of your group, you may be eligible for a group discount at a hotel.

Some groups opt to drive straight to Washington DC, attend the March, make time for a short amount of sight seeing, and then immediately drive back. Decide on how long you will want your trip to be and if a hotel will be needed for that time.

Hotels our Diocese has used on past trips include:

Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill

202-737-1234

<https://www.hyatt.com/hyatt-regency/en-US/wasrw-hyatt-regency-washington-on-capitol-hill>

Grand Hyatt Washington

202-582-1234

<https://www.hyatt.com/grand-hyatt/en-US/wasgh-grand-hyatt-washington>

\$ ____ hotel per night x ____ # of Rooms x ____ # of Nights = \$ _____

***NOTE:** Some parishes and Catholic schools in Washington DC *may* allow traveling groups to stay overnight in their gym or parish hall. While we cannot say which of these parishes/schools do or don't allow other groups to stay at their facilities, you are welcome to reach out to them and ask!

Food Cost

Calculate an estimated amount for the cost of food per traveler. You may also opt to have pilgrims pay for their own food options.

Total Trip Cost

Once all the expense items are filled in, add them together to determine the overall cost for the trip. This is the number you will need to use when reaching out to sponsors like the Office of Life & Justice, Knights of Columbus, or school alumni to ask for help with funding. Round numbers up to create an emergency buffer for your trip.

Registration = \$_____

Travel = \$_____

Local Travel = \$_____

Hotel = \$_____

Food = \$_____

Total Trip Cost = \$_____

Fundraise

Parish Fundraising

While you may receive funding from your parish/Respect Life Committee, it may not be enough to pay for the entire trip. To offset costs for individuals wishing to attend, plan parish fundraising activities. Fill in the provided budget sheet and start brainstorming fundraising ideas.

Fundraising event ideas will need the approval of your pastor and Respect Life Committee. Here are a few ideas to get your fundraising creativity flowing:

- Host a bake sale
- Sell scrip cards
- Hold a holiday raffle with great prizes
- Ask other ministries (Knights of Columbus, Altar Society, etc.) to support your group's trip

School Fundraising

Some schools will give recognized student organizations funds for trips and conferences. Talk to your Student Government Association or your administration to find out how to apply for funds.

Some schools may not sponsor a trip to the March for Life but will sponsor the National Pro-Life Summit since it is considered educational. If you are attending a public school and are concerned with fundraising + excused attendance, consider sharing with school officials that the March for Life is a great opportunity to encounter civic demonstration and peaceful expression of freedom of speech.

Find out what forms you need to submit when they are due, and what kinds of trips or events are typically funded by your school. This will help you to obtain a good idea of what to put on your application (i.e. the whole trip, the March for Life, and/or the National Pro-Life Summit).

Sample Fundraising Letter

Dear [Name],

[DATE]

I cannot tell you how excited I am to be a part of [parish/school Respect Life group/committee]! Our mission is to further create a culture of life in our community/school.

So far, we have [share here some accomplishments or activities of your Respect Life group]. We are so excited to see hearts and minds changed in our community/school!

This January our [parish/school Respect Life group/committee] would like to attend the March for Life [and/or other related events you plan to attend], but we need your help. Can you send a gift of \$100, \$50, or \$25 today? Your gift will enable me to raise the money I need to attend the March for Life.

Attending the March for Life [and/or other related events you plan to attend] will further strengthen and encourage all of us as a team to stand up strong, with courage and boldness, to abolish abortion in our country and state!

Our [parish/school] does not give our group enough funding to completely cover the cost for us to go on this trip. While we can give of ourselves by reaching our [community/school] with this life-saving mission, you can “go” with us by joining our support team! To end abortion in our nation, we must equip ourselves to further accomplish this mission together.

I hope that you will “go” with me to the March for Life at [parish/school]. Thank you for considering joining my support team!

For Life,

[Name/Signature]

[Position in parish/school Respect Life group/committee if applicable]

Map It Out

If you are driving or considering chartering a bus, reach out to the Office of Life & Justice and other parishes/schools. You may be able to get a group big enough to fill several cars or a full charter bus...or two!

If You Are Driving

Use Google Maps to get an accurate idea of how long it will take to reach Washington DC (most locations in our diocese will take about 17-18 hours, not including break times).

Driving hours to Washington DC_____

Driving hours to return home_____

Use the number of driving hours with 60-90 minutes of time padded in for stops, refuels, traffic, etc. to figure out what day and at what time you will need to depart and then return.

Date & time of departure to Washington DC_____

Date & time of return home_____

If You Are Chartering a Bus

If you are chartering a bus, contact a bus company right away for quotes. Provide the dates and locations to obtain a quote. Most bus companies require a minimum of 40 paying passengers on a 52-passenger bus, and some will arrange for accommodations as part of the trip.

Several Right to Life affiliates in Missouri and other parishes/schools in our diocese may open up seating to other groups. **Before you sign a contract for a bus, reach out to see if you can join a bus trip that is already chartered.**

Schools: If your school has a bus that is made available to student groups, talk to your administration as early as possible to find out the process of obtaining a bus. High schools may require an approval process through their Board of Directors and will have both permission slip and chaperone requirements.

If You Are Flying

Remember, the easiest airport to fly into for the March for Life is Ronald Reagan International Airport (DCA). You may have to fly in on Thursday and pay an extra night in a hotel with the higher average costs of flights on a Friday.

Best dates and times of departure to Washington DC_____

Best dates and times to return home_____

Consider Location (especially for those not staying at a hotel)

Find a central location to stay, one with parking available, during the entire trip. Determine a location that is easy to find with simple access to the DC Metro. Once you decide on a location, make it your departure and return location.

If you are driving, please note that oftentimes universities and churches can facilitate short-term parking. This will be especially important if you are carpooling or chartering a bus.

Local Departure/Return Location (address)_____

Accommodations (hotel or host during stay)_____

Address of March for Life: National Mall, Washington DC 20372

Metro Map

Download the DC Metro App – available for free in your app store.



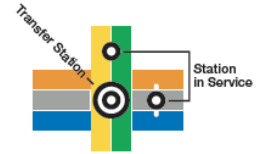
wmata.com
 Information: 202-637-7000 | TTY: 202-962-2033
 Metro Transit Police: 202-962-2121 | Text: MYMTPD (696873)

- Legend**
- Red Line • Glenmont / Shady Grove
 - Orange Line • New Carrollton / Vienna
 - Blue Line • Franconia-Springfield / Downtown Largo
 - Green Line • Branch Ave / Greenbelt
 - Yellow Line • Huntington / Mt Vernon Sq
 - Silver Line • Ashburn / Downtown Largo

Station Features

- Parking
- Hospital
- Airport

Connecting Rail Systems



Metro is accessible.

N
 Map is not to scale



Other Trip Essentials

Planning Committee

Don't try to plan things all by yourself! Create a team of 3-5 planning members, especially someone who has been on the trip before. Multiple viewpoints will help you make sure you're not missing any details.

Planning Committee Names: _____

Merchandise

Many groups like to wear matching hats, scarves, or sweatshirts; some groups bring signs representing their school or a particular pro-life message. Consider this in the cost of your trip per person, as well as in packing space in your method of travel.

Emergency Contact Info/VIRTUS

Regardless of whether or not your group is bringing youth ages 18 or under, make sure that you are gathering everyone's needed information per VIRTUS standards, as well as emergency contact information. If you need help creating a registration form or gathering the appropriate VIRTUS information, please contact the Office of Life & Justice and the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Games and Activities

Be sure to incorporate games and activities into your travel time, and even some of your time in Washington DC if you are staying overnight. Bus activities can include prayer, pro-life education, icebreakers, movies, and more. Some groups staying overnight in Washington DC with youth may opt to do a fun activity such as pizza and arcade. If you need help brainstorming, please contact the Office of Life & Justice and the Office of Youth Ministry.

Booklet for Pilgrims

One helpful tool for your pilgrims can be a trip program in a booklet. You can fill the booklet with your itinerary, important contact information, the DC map and activities you have planned, prayers, coloring pages, pro-life articles, and more. To cover the cost of printing, consider allowing businesses and parish ministries to have their advertisements and messages for the pilgrims in the booklet. Contact the Office of Life & Justice if you would like to see past examples of previous March for Life trip booklets.

Packing List

Make sure you have a packing list for your pilgrims. The most important thing to communicate is: layers! A trip in January may include a snowstorm or be unseasonably warm; best to plan for a snowstorm and have to shed layers if it is warm. Some other packing items, besides clothing and winter wear, might include:

Rosary

Small pouch/backpack (encourage leaving big purses and valuables at home) (use plastic if possible to cover valuables if it rains/snows)

Airpods/earphones for music

Small games for travel (deck of cards is ideal)

Charging cable

Non-peanut snacks

Questions, Assistance, and Contact

www.lifeandjusticekcsj.org

March for Life specific: <https://www.lifeandjusticekcsj.org/march-for-life>

lifeandjustice@diocesekcsj.org

Deb Sheppard, Director: 816-714-2367

sheppard@diocesekcsj.org

Chelsea Voboril, Program Coordinator: 816-714-2375

voboril@diocesekcsj.org

Other helpful Diocesan Offices:

<https://kcsjyouth.org/>

<https://kcsjcatholic.org/office/child-youth-protection/>

Other helpful websites:

<https://marchforlife.org/>

<https://studentsforlife.org/>