

Beginning the Semester: Hosting a Kickoff Event

The beginning of the fall semester is a critical time for your group. You want to engage with new and returning students before they become overcommitted to other groups and busy with classes. In order to engage these students, you need to start out strong with a kickoff event that will keep students coming back.

Key Considerations

When planning a kickoff event, you want to make sure you are...

- **Timely.** Your kickoff should take place during the first or second week of school.
- **Attractive.** Plan an event that will interest students and draw a crowd.
- **Well publicized.** No event is a success without an advertising plan.

Planning a Timely Kickoff Event

If you are participating in your school's recruitment fair (and you should be!), plan to have your meeting the following week. That way, you can personally invite students who visit your table, hand out flyers for the meeting, and ensure that you are planning a timely event.

A good rule of thumb is to hold your kickoff event within the first two weeks of school. You will also want to avoid scheduling your event at the same time as other like-minded groups. Avoid scheduling a kickoff event during times that conflict with classes or sporting events.

Attracting & Engaging New Students

The goal of your kickoff should be to welcome new members and make them feel like a part of the community from the instant you meet them. Protect Life Michigan often recommends a pizza party or ice cream social, focused on creating a casual setting to engage with every new person who comes through the door. Consider having friendly members of your group play the role of "greeters" to have a conversation with new students and make them feel welcome.

We also recommend giving a brief (5 minutes) presentation on your group's plans for the upcoming year. You may also want to play a motivational, pro-life YouTube video.

Make sure your flyers are eye catching and make the event sound interesting. Pictured at right is an example from Wayne State University's pro-life group.

Print four flyers to each sheet of paper and plan to hand out hundreds!

(Need help designing and printing flyers? Just ask! Protect Life Michigan is here to help.)

Publicizing Your Event

Getting the word out about your kickoff event is the most important aspect of the planning process. Here are some recommended tips:

- Create a Facebook event for the kickoff meeting. Ask all of your members to invite at least ten of their friends.
- Chalk campus about the meeting.
- Hand out hundreds of quarter sheet flyers. Personally handing a flyer to someone makes a memorable connection and increases their likelihood of coming.
- One week before and on the day of, send an email out to you contact list with information on the event and an idea of what you will do. Make sure to mention there will be free food! Include a link to the Facebook event.

While this is a basic guide to planning a successful kickoff event, Protect Life Michigan would love to work with you to create a custom plan! Contact us at info@protectlifemi.org to get started today!

