

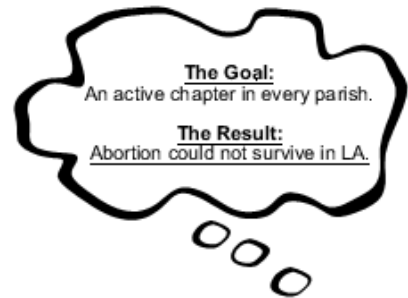


## **WHY NOT START A RIGHT-TO-LIFE CHAPTER?**

### **CHAPTER INFORMATION GUIDE**

#### **Have you thought about the starting a Right to Life Chapter in your area?**

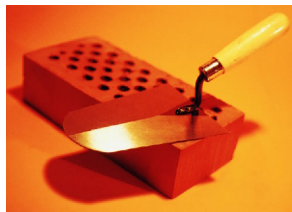
**Imagine:** An active pro-life chapter in every civil parish in Louisiana, all working to the same goal of passing pro-life legislation, electing pro-life officials, educating the community, serving those in time of pregnancy, and bringing all churches into action... abortion could not survive.



Louisiana Right to Life is a Federation of numerous chapters across the state dedicated to making a difference and saving lives in local own communities. We are here to support local efforts.

We encourage you to read more and consider starting a chapter in your local community. Join our mission of having an active chapter in every parish in Louisiana and making abortion unthinkable in our state.

#### **What is a Chapter?**



Right to Life Chapters are the *bricks and mortar* of the pro-life movement. Just as a building cannot stand without its bricks, neither can the pro-life movement succeed in its educational and legislative goals without the work of chapters on the local level.

A distinct extension of Louisiana and National RTL, a chapter is a group of people in a local community who are committed to working to spread the message of life. Together, we will keep the issue before society and blanket the nation in pro-life action.

Chapters are non-denominational and must be committed to working with people of all Christian denominations and faith backgrounds to advance the message of life in a local community. The goal is to unite different people behind the message of life.

Chapters typically consist of a group of people who meet regularly to discuss pro-life issues and involvement in the community. The outcome of planning may include, but is certainly not limited to:

✚ **Legislative Action:** Whether at the local, state, or national level, chapters work with Louisiana and National RTL to educate their area on the pressing legislative issues of the day. From petition drives to phone drives, the voice of local citizens can make a profound difference on how a legislature defends life.



✚ **Educational Efforts:** There is always a need to educate the public on the life issues. From classroom presentations to the youth, to adult focused education at fairs and other events, the options are limitless. Your chapter can have a profound impact on how your community understands the life issues.

✚ **Targeted Outreaches:** Many people say that if the Body of Christ rose up and was united against abortion and other life destroying actions, abortion could never survive. Your mission in this area is to target specific groups, whether local Churches, the African-American Community, or others, to stand for life. This includes working with pastors and community leaders to educate their people.



✚ **Service Efforts:** Many RTL chapters make it their mission to start a local crisis pregnancy center that can serve pregnant women. Others focus on Sidewalk Counseling at abortion facilities in the hopes to drive women to better options. Other RTL chapters focus on education, but support these service related efforts.

✚ **General Activism:** Events such as marches, walks, billboards, and other public displays keep the issue before the community. It provides a constant reminder to citizens that life is being taken in the United States by abortion.



While the core purposes of chapters are the same, the structure and appearance of a RTL Chapter can vary tremendously. While LARTL ideally wants every chapter to be engaging in constant action to protect life, we welcome and value the work of any chapter within our Federation. Here is a general classification system for RTL chapters:

✚ **Large:** Some chapters are large and have plenty of involvement, with monthly meetings, fundraising, many large events, etc. New Orleans RTL regularly will have part-time or full-time employees. Terrebonne-LaFourche RTL, another such example, has multiple educational presentations for various groups every month.

✚ **Medium:** Chapters in the middle may not necessarily meet every month, but they do have regular events every year or host annual events/newsletters surrounding the March for Life.

✚ **Small:** Some chapters are smaller, consisting of a few people who serve mainly as a contact point between the State Federation and their local area. These chapters are extremely essential, especially when legislative matters are brewing.

A chapter subscribes to the mission of the LARTL Federation and takes part in our state events and bi-annual State Board meeting. An appointed member from each chapter sits on the State Board of Directors. Chapters are encouraged to fill out minor paper work including a *Chapter Plan* at the beginning of the calendar year and *Year in Review* at the end of the year.

## ***Why should I start a Right to Life Chapter?***

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You maybe thinking that there is no reason to start a chapter, or that your local church effort is sufficient. Let me give you three reasons why I believe a chapter can further you pro-life efforts:

1. **A Pro-Life Foundation-** Since it does align with one Church or another, a RTL Chapter allows a central point in your community for all pro-lifers, no matter their stripe, to come and work together. On this foundation, events and education, even those already established, can draw larger crowds and have a more potent impact. Remember, RTL chapters do not make your former pro-life activities obsolete... it enhances them!
2. **Resource Center-** Through association with the LARTL and possible internal fundraising, chapters, not dependent on another group, can gather resources to provide to people doing specific work. For example, churches often will not provide the necessary funding for resources. Through the chapter, these resources could be distributed at minimal or no costs.
3. **Joining the Right to Life Network-** From D.C. to local communities, the Right to Life Network is vast and provides you an insight into the larger movement. Also, both National RTL and the Louisiana RTL Federation will do work for you, whether with the stances of political candidates or new manuals, resources, and ideas.

## ***How would I get started?***

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We have provided below some suggested steps to follow when starting a chapter. These can change according to your chapter and its interests.

1. **Contact** LARTL for assistance. Here are a few of the resources we can offer:
  - Contacts in your local community that we already know and work with.
  - Web space on our website.
  - Speaker to opening meeting.
  - Manuals and documents, such as “how to’s” and sign-up sheets.
  - Advice and Ideas
  - [www.prolifelouisiana.org](http://www.prolifelouisiana.org) | [info@prolifelouisiana.org](mailto:info@prolifelouisiana.org) |
  - 1-866-463-5433 | 504-835-6520
2. **Gather** a few members of your community active in different pro-life efforts and discuss the idea with them. It is important to evaluate your community and its specific needs. We encourage you to use our *Chapter Plan* and be as detailed as possible in charting you chapter’s future. Here are a few questions that need to be answered:
  - What is the need for a RTL Chapter?
  - What is not being done that a Chapter could do?
  - What is our goal for this chapter?
  - What specific activities will this chapter make as its first priorities?



### 3. Plan an initial “Right to Life Chapter Interest Meeting.”

- ✚ Talk and advertise the event to churches, civic groups, friends, schools, etc.
- ✚ Preferably, host the event at a “neutral” location (library, home, etc) so no religious denomination feels left out. Remember, your goal is to unite different people on one core issue.
- ✚ Have something to attract people to come (food, speaker, etc).



### 4. Hold the “Right to Life Chapter Interest Meeting.”

- ✚ Introduce yourself and the other members of the original planning committee.
- ✚ Share your vision of the chapter and what it can accomplish.
- ✚ Have a speaker, DVD, or other pro-life media to encourage people. If schedules align, LARTL could send a representative.
- ✚ Set goals, elect officers, and schedule your next meeting at a minimum. We encourage you to elect a President, Treasurer, and Secretary. From there, chapter members can become the head of a committee within the group (such as head of Fair Booths, etc) Either in that meeting or in ones to follow, work to open a bank account, plan events, and set regular meeting place and time. Also, decide the best way to communicate between chapter members.

5. **Dispel** one of the biggest myths: you do not need a room full of people to be an effective chapter. Though it would be nice, this may not be the case, so do not be discouraged. All you need is a solid group of dedicated people to spread the message of life in your community!

### ***And your off!***

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It may seem like a daunting task, but creating a chapter should not be that hard. Yes, it may take a bit of work, but once people follow along with your ideas, the fruit that can be reaped through saving lives and inspiring others to stand for life is rewarding.

Louisiana Right to Life is with you every step of the way. Let us be your pro-life resource.

You are now on your way to a successful active Right to Life chapter. Congratulations and good luck on your life-saving work!

