

First Order of Business: Find a church or other location and confirm a date. The church should have parking, chairs and a kitchen to re-heat the food that will be prepared the night before and to plug in & set up the coffee pots.

Second Order of Business: Book some speakers. The suggested guidelines are to have one local speaker and then three speakers from different locations, preferably different states. Always use two men and two women. It is also suggested to use two somewhat seasoned speakers and two not-so-seasoned speakers. Your first speaker should be a good "kick-off" for the conference. The second slot is typically a good place to put a speaker that you're not positive will fill the hour. This will allow you to break a little early for lunch. Your third speaker should not be someone who might have a good message but a dry delivery. Everyone just got their stomach full, you don't want to put them to sleep. They will all leave before the last speaker if you do. Your last speaker should be your heaviest hitter...the bases are loaded...time to drive the message home.

Approx. one week before the conference, decide the following:

1) Who the speaker hosts are going to be: The speaker hosts job is to make contact with the speaker to make sure that they have all the direction they need, a place to stay and are taken care of while in town. The host will also introduce the speaker at the conference, so they should be dressed in a shirt/tie, or equivalent for women. They present the speaker with the "appreciation gift" after the speaker finishes talking and then makes sure they have everything they need for the rest of their stay and a ride to the airport. No long introductions...just "My name is #####, I'm an alcoholic. I'd like to introduce our next speaker, ##### from #####. You'll need to be sure to tell these people about the introduction. Alcoholics are notorious for enjoying hearing themselves talk. They will give long introductions if you don't give them directions.

2) Who is going to put the gifts together: We try to keep the total cost for all four gifts combined to \$50 or less. Simple gift bags work nice...I've seen things like coffee mugs, specialty type ground coffees, candies, thank you cards, little memento's for the weekend, etc..

3) Choose who the secretary is going to be: The secretary will be in a shirt/tie, or equivalent for women. His/Her job is to make sure the conference goes on schedule. Follow the secretary's instructions. Five minutes before each speaker, the secretary should send people out to push people in, typically the smokers.

4) Choose who is going to do the cooking: I have a recipe for the "sloppy joes". This seems to be simple and almost a "signature" of the "Acts of Recovery" at this point. It's cheap and easy to make, serve and clean-up. Then I would go to Sam's Club or BJ's to get variety boxes of the snack bags (like chips, Doritos etc.). I would also get some assorted soft drinks and bottled waters and put them in ice coolers. We usually do the shopping a couple days prior and the cooking the night before using disposable pans. We then just need to re-heat the sloppy-joe mix at the church.

5) Choose who will purchase the coffee, cups, creamer/sugar, stirrers etc. and who will set up the coffee and ensure the coffee supply doesn't run out.

6) Decide who is to be your treasurer: The treasurer's job is to collect all receipts, pay all the bills and ensure the conference is self-supporting. After the first collection, which is done right before the second speaker after everyone is back in their seats from the break...count the money to see if the expenses have been covered. If not, do another collection right before the last speaker after everyone is back in their seats from the break. You should try to keep about a \$50 prudent reserve saved for the next conference that you might do. This way you have some start-up money to work with. No one should have to burden any costs...the goal is to have the conference self-supporting or better. Everyone should be reimbursed for any expenses they had. Expenses for the speakers are generally not covered. The idea is to keep the expenses as low as possible so that the seventh tradition can cover everything and the conference can be self-supporting without ever having to charge a registration fee.

7) Decide who is to be your pitchman: The pitchman is the person who will go to the podium before the 7th tradition basket is passed and give a brief history of the Acts of Recovery conference. I can help whoever you chose with this. I attached a history writing that I did...I wouldn't suggest reading it from the podium...I would suggest the pitchman reads it to himself and then just talk from his heart from the podium. The emphasis on the pitch is to let people know that we want to keep this free and available to all, but there are some bills that have to be paid, so if they can afford to help out, please put whatever you can into the baskets. I always make sure that we tell people that if you cannot afford to contribute, to not feel obligated and please feel welcome. If the first collection is enough to pay all the bills with a little prudent reserve, then the pitchman can just get up and thank everyone for their generosity and let them know that we won't be passing the basket again. Otherwise, pass the basket a second time. I would never pass the basket more than twice though. Don't start the speakers until the baskets have all been returned. The pitchman should have four people with baskets at each corner of the audience to help direct the baskets in the proper direction. We want to make sure that goes completely around the crowd to everyone, but not back and forth through the crowd. We like to expedite this matter so we can start up the conference again.