

BMG Planning Group for the Central States

Southeast Michigan
Western Michigan
Greater Chicago, Illinois Area
Kansas City, Missouri
Springfield, Illinois
Columbus, Ohio

BMG Dates

Southeast Michigan - January 16, 17, 18, 2009

Chicago, Illinois – October 16, 17, 18, 2008/9

Kalamazoo, Michigan - June 5, 6, 7, 2009

Columbus, Ohio - May 29, 30, 31, 2009

Kansas City, Missouri - February 6, 7, 8, 2009

Springfield, Illinois - June 5, 6, 7, 2009

Oliver Thomas will contact Kalamazoo and Columbus and work on alternate dates from those shown here. The purpose of this will be to try to spread the dates out as a way of facilitating intercommunity support.

Learning from Here

- 1) We need to be sure that we make the necessary space in the program, such that we are able to have everything in the program that we want. (Ridvan Letter, other deepening material and prayer, need more time for prayer and also study and planning time.)
- 2) We will follow the past agenda format unless otherwise directed.
- 3) We learned that you have to invite the non-Baha'i Brothers who attend the BMG to join the Faith. **NOTE: This would be best done after the program, so that you wouldn't make the Brothers feel pressured into enrolling into the cause.** ALSO, All of these Brothers must have some instruction in the Faith. Anna's presentation needs to be made to them before they are invited to a gathering. They should not be brought in cold.
- 4) We need to de-emphasize the Annual Gathering, making it clear that that the local gathering is the Main Gathering.
- 5) Any non-Baha'is invited to the gathering must be treated like believers. They all participate in all of the activities.
- 6) For the planning committee, everyone should understand the organization of the plan for the Local BMG.

BMG Planning Group for the Central States

- 7) Over communicate about the Local Gathering. The more that you tell people, the better should be your attendance.
- 8) Once you publish a date, stick with the date, if you can, as to change it in mid-stream will make it hard for people to change their plans.
- 9) Recommend use of Baha'i facilities, if at all available, and to also publish, well in advance, information that clearly defines the cost of attending the BMG.
- 10) Working with an LSA, have a BMG fund that will help defray the cost of the BMG.
- 11) The planning committee should handle the issue of housing for attendees. If it's hospitality with the local friends, OK, if it's local Hotel/Motels – OK.
- 12) It would be good for the local BMG to have a workshop/discussion on the use of Anna's Presentation in Direct Teaching. It must be remembered that this is more than "Door to Door". There are many other "Direct Teaching" venues. **Add this to the Local BMG Template.**
- 13) Among the things that we should OVERCOMMUNICATE to the believers on is that "Direct Teaching" is more than "Door to Door" Refer them to the National Assembly, 2008, February 20th Letter.
- 14) We need to have a streamlined focus on executing the 5 year plan.
- 15) It is suggested that each invited attendee strive to bring one person to the gathering with them, making sure that they have presented Anna's Presentation to them and that they understand that we will be doing a workshop using Anna's Presentation/Introduction to the Faith and that we will want them to participate.
- 16) If a non-Baha'i attendee has not had Anna's Presentation made to them, then they have it made to them, somehow, there, and that we try to also find out what area of Direct Teaching they would be comfortable discussing.
- 17) Plan other activities, outside of the BMG, that will showcase a lot of other material that we've tried to incorporate into the BMG but that tended not to fit. (ie: Special presentations on the Faith and on the History of Black People in the Baha'i Faith.
- 18) We need to have more brothers who are trained to do Anna's Presentation, and are prepared to use it in multiple situations. This should be in a venue outside of the BMG.
- 19) The BMGs must be inspiring. We have to ID those things that make the BMG, the BMG. These are (a) The Devotions, (b) the Fellowship, which includes the "Introductions" and (c) the Deepening
- 20) Be sure to continue to give the new brothers who attend lots of love and hugs. Remember the setup for the BMG, that explains why the BMG is and that it is a safe environment. (What is said here, Stays here!)**
- 21) Try to use the Drumming as a good lead into the Prayers.
- 22) Don't forget to structure in some Fun Time.

BMG Planning Group for the Central States

- 23) We need to approach our local communities or the local BMG Planning Committee to see how we could support the Youth/Jr. Youth Retreat.
- 24) Planning for a Central Regional Youth/Jr. Youth Retreat will be revisited once we get feedback from the Pilot Retreat that is being planned from the Georgia Groups.
- 25) Everyone pays, BUT, encourage some to support others. This is done in the committee. This was both Money and Logistics.

Support Each Other's BMGs

- I) Everyone should provide adequate lead time, in publicizing their BMGs, to facilitate people attending their BMGs.
- II) The Dates needs to be publicized as soon as they are finalized so that people can make their plans. Use the 5 Times – 5 Ways approach.
- III) Identify contact people in the communities. This should be done by the Planning Committee.
- IV) Build support for the Targeted Population

Length of Each BMG

- A) The 3 day time frame, over a weekend is OK. We aren't ready to move on yet.
- B) We need to let the growth in the attendance drive how many days are planned for use of the BMG.

Planning

- a) Put "**BMG**" 1st in any Presentation/Title of the BMG.
- b) Be sure to form the Planning Committee well enough in advance to ensure that things are both planned and executed in a timely way.
- c) Be very specific in clarifying the Brother's understanding of the ground rules in bringing a contact to the BMG.
- d) Be sure to know the Local Teaching Plan in your area.
- e) Make the most of Individual Initiative for Direct Teaching to find people to bring to the Gathering. This would be done months and months ahead of time.
- f) Do outreach to the other LSAs, Cluster Core Teams and Individuals in the area to see if they are teaching men of African Descent. These people would be vectored to the BMG.
- g) Encourage people to do Home Visits to New & Old Baha'is as well as Contacts, Friends and co-workers.
- h) Remember, both Baha'is and Seekers need to be in Good Standing.

BMG Planning Group for the Central States

Notes For Metro Chicago.

A Metro Chicago BMG will be like getting them brothers together for the 1st time. Although it would be good to have them involved in the planning, you probably won't see them until the BMG.

Many of them also have been completely uninvolved with Direct Teaching. What can we do to make them feel involved with Direct Teaching? That may be an issue in Chicago.

In Chicago, getting the brothers together will be hard.