

Life Chain's Sign Policy

Re. ABORTION KILLS CHILDREN: The first Life Chain (1987) used only one sign: *Abortion Kills Children*. We wanted everyone to realize that a) abortion “kills” and b) that preborn human beings of any age are “children” also and are as precious and deserving of love and protection as post-birth girls and boys. The second Life Chain sign was *Jesus Forgives and Heals*, and today we have seven approved sign messages.

We've always asked that half of the signs in each Life Chain be *Abortion Kills Children*. When a few pastors first opposed the sign (as too radical), we defended it in *Regarding “Abortion Kills Children” Life Chain Sign* (under Life Chain Materials at www.NationalLifeChain.org). Coordinators should provide anyone a copy who believes *Abortion Kills Children* is too strong.

Re. GRAPHIC SIGNS: Whereas Life Chain's national office firmly supports various uses of graphic pro-life signs and pictures, including their use in Please Let Me Live's most widely read pamphlet *America Must Decide*, we restrict graphic signs in our Chains. A primary Life Chain goal is to urge every family and every congregation possible to take their “first serious step into pro-life activism” by joining their local Chain, and many first-time participants are not ready for graphic signs. Their use would distress many pastors, reduce participation, and create undue controversy.

Re. COORDINATOR APPROVAL OF HOME-MADE SIGNS: Self-designed signs can be both appropriate and beneficial to Life Chain, and we modified our sign policy in 2013 by authorizing local Coordinators to judge the worthiness of “new signs” crafted by participants. We also authorized use of pro-life pictures and banners (with Coordinator approval) and the use of both small crosses (held with Life Chain signs) and large crosses that rest on the sidewalk. Graphic signs, as noted above, were restricted.

Re. ARBITRATION OF GRAPHIC OR OTHER RESTRICTED SIGNS:

Kind and thoughtful discussion is the best tool for resolving sign disputes. Options available to Coordinators include the following resources and practices:

1. Pray for an absence of sign unrest, and use *Regarding “Abortion Kills Children” Life Chain Sign* freely.
2. Stress the fact that no single pro-life event can be “all things to all participants” and that ministry guidelines are necessary to prevent confusion and disorder.
3. Explain graphic signs' potential to reduce attendance, create unrest among clergy and law enforcement, interfere with Life Chain's prayer emphasis, increase the likelihood of anger and accidents, and prompt some (if not many) cities to burden Life Chain with wearisome requirements.
4. Point out the degree to which Life Chain's longevity has relied on unity among participants and that controversial signs could endanger unity.
5. Suggest to insistent owners of unapproved signs that they plan and schedule their own pro-life event, with guidelines they prefer, while respecting Life Chain's guidelines.

6. Some Coordinators may prefer to train a gifted Marshal (see Life Chain Manual) or an amiable and influential pastor to help with sign disputes.
7. Whenever possible, resolve sign problems before National Life Chain Sunday.
8. Kindly urge insistent holders of unapproved signs to please select a location that is sufficiently removed from Life Chain.
9. In extreme cases, ask a police officer to assist. The officer cannot curb First Amendment speech rights, but his recommendations may achieve timely concessions.
10. Months before your Life Chain, provide local pastors a copy of this document, and encourage pastors to help their people choose appropriate Life Chain signs.
11. Provide a copy of this document to everyone involved in sign dispute/arbitration discussions.
12. Share Life Chain Director Royce Dunn's phone number / email address (530-674-5068 – Royce@NationalLifeChain.org) with Chain participants whenever the Coordinator desires Royce's assistance.

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