

# Reasons To Believe Chapter Guidelines

## Chapter Mission

Reasons To Believe (RTB) Chapters exist to connect the ministry of RTB with communities around the world, encouraging and equipping fellow believers for productive dialogue that invites doubters and skeptics to follow Jesus Christ.

## Chapter Vision

By 2015, RTB Chapters will increase the introduction of RTB and its resources to their local communities (both existing and new) and will focus on providing a forum in which RTB resources can enhance the spiritual growth and personal outreach of every member. Specific goals include (1) increased membership; (2) presentation of the *If God Made the Universe* (IGMTU) small group study; (3) increased enrollment in RTB's apologetics training; (4) identification and cultivation of local churches or organizations willing to sponsor an RTB outreach/equipping event; and (5) development and implementation of local community outreach endeavors.

## Chapter Basics

1. Persons interested in forming an RTB Chapter should contact [chapters@reasons.org](mailto:chapters@reasons.org). Chapters will be chartered and approved via the Chapters Manager (RTB CM).
2. Each person seeking to organize an RTB Chapter will fill out and submit a chapter application form\* and sign and return a copy of the RTB Statement of Faith (SOF). Once a chapter is formed, each officer must sign and return a copy of the RTB SOF before taking office.
3. A minimum of 2 officers is required to be an active chapter.
4. Upon completing the chapter application process, which includes having the application and SOF signed and countersigned by the RTB CM, the chapter will receive notification of approval.
5. Chapters should divide the work of the chapter among the following elected positions: President, Membership Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator, and Promotion Coordinator. Additional support officers (Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.) may be added as needed by each chapter.
6. For consistency, all chapters will be designated as "RTB [City, 2-letter postal abbreviation for state] Chapter." For example, "RTB Waynesboro, PA Chapter."
7. Upon election of officers, completion of officer applications, and receipt of all signed SOF's from these officers, the chapter will be officially recognized as an RTB Chapter in good standing.
8. Only approved chapters that have met the above requirements will be awarded affiliation with RTB.
9. After being awarded affiliation with RTB, chapters are required to submit content for their webpage on the RTB site. Please contact RTB CM for these requirements.

*\*Persons seeking to organize an International Chapter must complete an International Chapter application, in addition to meeting the requirements as outlined.*

## RTB Chapter Officer Qualifications and Duties

1. Chapter officer duties:
  - a. Be an active chapter member (see Active Member Definition).
  - b. Complete the chapter officer education and requirements either before taking office or within the first 30 days after being elected to office.
  - c. Read, sign, and return the SOF.
  - d. Be a regular and current (present-year) giver to RTB. (See Monthly Partners, for example.)
2. President's duties
  - a. Serve as the primary liaison between the chapter and RTB CM, providing any reports and documents requested by the RTB CM.
  - b. Preside over all chapter meetings, or assign another officer to preside in his/her absence.
  - c. Oversee chapter elections.
  - d. Review, sign, or request guidance from RTB CM on all agreements or contracts involving the chapter.
  - e. Manage chapter finances, including the receipt and disbursement of all chapter monies.
  - f. Encourage financial support of the RTB ministry.
3. Membership Coordinator's duties
  - a. Maintain chapter membership list and Smartsheet, including contact information, and provide regular updates to RTB CM.
  - b. Provide nametags for all meeting participants and personally greet newcomers.
  - c. Disseminate chapter communications and periodically check to make certain all members are receiving RTB communications.
  - d. Encourage participation in RTB online training courses.
  - e. Stay up-to-date on new RTB materials and keep members up-to-date on these resources.
  - f. Be actively involved in identifying and enlisting new chapter members and encourage members to help with chapter endeavors and in assisting officers.
  - g. Encourage financial support of the RTB ministry.
4. Outreach Coordinator's duties
  - a. Seek to build relationships with churches, businesses, schools, media, etc., to introduce RTB to the local community.
  - b. Develop plans and organize efforts to increase relationships and chapter participation.
  - c. In cooperation with the other officers, plan meetings and outreach activities using RTB materials whenever possible. (Meetings *may* include RTB scholars, in person or via Skype, as they are available.)
  - d. Provide outreach details to RTB CM for possible supporting materials.
  - e. Assist RTB CM in coordinating donor events planned in conjunction with RTB Advancement Director or outreach events planned by RTB Events Manager.
  - f. Look for ways to expand the availability and use of RTB resources in both Christian and secular arenas.
  - g. Be actively involved in identifying and enlisting new chapter members and encouraging members to help with chapter endeavors.
5. Promotion Coordinator's duties
  - a. Support Outreach Coordinator in publicizing upcoming RTB/chapter meetings

- and activities.
- b. Maintain (on a weekly basis) the chapter's Facebook page.
  - c. Update and maintain Google calendar. Be actively involved in expanding community awareness of RTB, the chapter, and the chapter's endeavors.
  - d. Promote the sale of RTB books and other materials to members and visitors.
  - e. Submit web updates and changes to RTB CM, as necessary.
  - f. Encourage financial support of the RTB ministry.

### **Chapter Apologists**

RTB anticipates that even with the new criteria for chapter formation, over time there will be at least one member within each chapter who has completed the Reasons Institute apologetics training courses. This volunteer apologist (or group of apologists) can serve as a resource within the chapter by providing additional content and guidance, writing discussion guidelines for RTB DVDs and books, and encouraging members to complete apologetics training courses through Reasons Institute. They may also develop and present talks directly connected with RTB books and materials. These activities are all under the oversight of the RTB CM.

### **Active Member Definition**

1. Be in agreement with and sign and return the RTB SOF.
2. Participate in chapter elections and decisions by voting.
3. Subscribe to and read RTB communications.
4. Be available to assist chapter officers with normal duties.
5. Assist with set up/tear down for chapter meetings.

*Visitors are always welcome and may attend chapter meetings and events. They may also support chapter activities and are encouraged to receive RTB communications and chapter communications.*

### **RTB Chapter Benefits**

1. Free RTB resources, on occasion, for chapter use.
2. Certificate of Association signed by the RTB president and RTB CM.
3. Ministry email address, assigned to chapter and maintained by RTB office (e.g., LosAngeles@reasons.org).
4. Access to the RTB chapter officers' Facebook discussion group.
5. Promotional emails and, upon approved request, postcards or other materials sent from RTB to support local outreach efforts and communicate with chapter members, as well as with new RTB constituents within the chapter's community.
6. Group discount on books and other resources for chapter use. (RTB recommends that chapters collect the money from members participating in the study and order the desired number of copies at one time.)
7. 10% discount on RTB materials for chapter members and officers.

## Meetings with Purpose

1. Plan meetings that will encourage and equip members/attendees through:
  - a. The study of Scripture and RTB's unique science-faith apologetics resources for use in spreading the Gospel.
  - b. Direct evangelism—introducing nonbelievers to evidence and arguments from science for belief in Jesus Christ as Creator and Savior.
  - c. Fellowship with others interested in the relationship between science and faith.
2. Meetings or activities shall be held on a regular basis (i.e., semimonthly, monthly, bimonthly, or other) and stay focused on RTB material, message, and values.
3. Notice of meetings shall be placed on the RTB Google calendar and communicated in a timely way to ensure good attendance.
4. Business decisions to be considered at regular meetings must be communicated in advance, giving membership adequate notice to be a part of these decisions. Business decisions shall be recorded and summarized as meeting minutes and made available to members upon request and forwarded to the RTB CM in a timely manner.
5. Events or activities designed for larger outreach efforts and desiring the attendance of an RTB scholar must be coordinated and managed via the RTB Events Team.

## Election of Officers

This is a suggested formal method of electing officers, but our desire is to be flexible and to allow chapters to use an election process that works for them. Chapters wishing to use a less formal method may submit their election plan to the RTB CM for approval.

1. At the first meeting in the fall, current chapter officers (serving as a nominating committee) present nominees for any open officer positions. Other names can be added from the membership at large as long as the nominated person has agreed to have his/her name submitted for the election. All nominations will be presented to the members at the next meeting.
2. Elections shall be conducted and supervised by the current chapter president.
3. Elections shall be held by mail (or email), with all current members receiving the ballot sent to their address on file. Ballots will be returned to the RTB CM for tallying and the results announced at the next scheduled meeting.
4. Officers are elected by a simple majority vote. Ballots may be submitted by mail or email or by being turned in to a chapter officer and forwarded to the RTB CM. Officers serve a term of 2 years and can be re-elected, with no term limits.
5. All newly elected officers' terms begin on January 1 of the year following the election.
6. In the event that an officer position becomes vacant, a special election conducted in the same manner as standard elections will be held, with the term of the newly elected officer beginning immediately following the election. The newly elected officer will serve the remainder of the term of the officer being replaced.
7. Should an officer become unable to perform his or her duties, the chapter officers and the RTB CM will speak with that officer. This situation *may* result in the officer being asked to step down from duties. At that time, if necessary, a special election will be held, as outlined above, to fill the vacant position.

## **RTB Statement of Faith**

The RTB Statement of Faith (SOF) expresses the doctrinal conviction of every member of the RTB staff, board of directors, chapter officers, and chapter members. Officers and members must affirm by signature their agreement with the SOF (see attached). If a member takes issue, in good conscience, with any part of the SOF, the concern or question should be submitted in writing to the RTB CM. Each case will be reviewed and responded to by the RTB Scholar Team.

## **Monthly Partners**

Becoming a Monthly Partner is an easy way to support RTB regularly. By signing up at a level that best fits your finances you can receive the benefits RTB has created to express gratitude. These include a monthly message from one of the RTB scholars and other RTB appreciation resources (5–6 a year). Staying up-to-date with the ministry of RTB is an important part of staying involved in an RTB Chapter, and the Monthly Partners program is an excellent way for you to do just that.

## **Operating Income and Revenue**

1. Reasons to Believe (RTB) shall provide each chapter a stipend of \$250 per fiscal year for operational support and outreach endeavors. This money will be deposited into each chapter's account here at RTB and held until requested by the chapter president. Stipends do not carry over into the next fiscal year. Stipends can be collected 4 ways:
  - a. The chapter president may request a check from RTB. Requests must be sent to the Chapters Manager (CM) via email and include how much of the stipend is desired, what it will be used for, and the purpose this serves within the chapter. The CM will evaluate the request and approve or decline it. If approved, the chapter president must provide receipts for expenditures within 90 days of receiving the check. In the event that a chapter does not provide receipts, the CM will evaluate the situation and this could lead to the chapter being excluded from receiving a stipend for 2 years. The stipend must be spent on what it was requested for or the chapter will be responsible for repaying RTB.
  - b. A chapter may be reimbursed for purchases made to support chapter activities. The chapter president must submit a receipt with a description of the purchased item(s) and how it serves the chapter. The CM will evaluate the purchase and if approved a check will be sent to the purchaser. Receipts must be submitted within 90 days of the purchase. To ensure the reimbursement is approved, it is recommended that you inquire with the CM before the purchase is made.
  - c. The stipend or a portion of it may be used on RTB resources (books, booklets, study guides, DVDs) for the chapter. The chapter president should submit a request via email to the CM with a list of what resources are desired. All resources will be sent to the chapter president. Shipping costs will be deducted from the stipend.

- d. A chapter may elect an officer or member to receive a scholarship for a Reasons Institute course. All chapter officers should agree on who should receive the scholarship. The chapter president should then submit a request to the CM including the name of the person elected, their role in the chapter, and how this will benefit both the individual and the chapter. Upon approval, the scholarship will be deducted from the chapter's stipend and the individual will be contacted with instructions on how to register for the course. Those selected for a scholarship will be responsible for paying for any textbooks required for the course.

2. Chapters *may* collect dues (non-tax-deductible) from members, whether annually, quarterly, or monthly, **if additional funding is needed for normal operations**. The amount of the dues, if any, shall be recommended by the chapter officers and approved by a membership vote. Every effort should be made to keep membership affordable to all. A member's request for exemption from paying dues shall be considered and action taken on an individual basis by the chapter officers. Dues will be managed by the Chapters—not by RTB.

3. Chapters may choose, on occasion, to make RTB books and other RTB materials available for sale to members and guests at Chapter meetings. Contact the CM for details on how to manage sales.

4. Chapters may apply for funding of special outreach projects and activities by filling out the RTB

Chapter Funding Request Form (available upon request from the CM). The CM will evaluate, approve, and/or provide direction to those chapters seeking outreach funding.

### **Donation Policies**

1. Money and/or in-kind gifts given to chapters may be accepted but are not tax-deductible.

2. Tax Deductible Donations to RTB for chapter outreach efforts will be accepted and or considered in the following circumstances: a. RTB will accept and receipt donations directed for immediate (current year) use by a particular chapter upon submission and review of a description of the nature and specific usage of the gift. The gift must meet the tax-exempt purpose of RTB and involve RTB ministry personnel in an approved manner. All funds will revert to RTB's Chapter Ministry Fund if unused by calendar year end.

b. RTB will accept and receipt donations to the general account "Chapter Ministry Fund." Donations made to this account will be used for activities related to chapter development, support, and/or outreach. RTB retains the right to allocate these funds as the RTB executive team and CM deem appropriate.

c. All donations must be made to and received by RTB through current donation channels in place. RTB will receipt in accordance with IRS policies when the donation is accepted.

3. Chapters may not apply for Federal Tax-Exempt Nonprofit 501(c)(3) status nor establish chapter bank accounts.

4. Current RTB donation policy is on file at RTB headquarters and is available upon request.