



Jewish Federation of  
Greater MetroWest NJ  
Centennial Mission

A ONCE-IN-A-CENTURY *experience*  
ISRAEL 2023

## BUS CAPTAIN TRAINING #1: How To Be A Great Bus Captain Example Of A Bus Captain Welcome

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

In less than 96 days we will be together as a community for this once-in-a-century experience!

Thank you for volunteering to be our bus captains. You are pivotal to the success of the mission!

Reminder about these important dates to please hold in your calendar. You'll be getting invitations soon. Please be sure to RSVP.

- **Wednesday, April 19 at 7:30 p.m.** on Zoom: Bus Captain Training #2
- **Monday, May 1 at 9:15 a.m.** on Zoom: Israel and Greater MetroWest Briefing
- **Thursday, June 1 at 7:30 p.m.** at Federation's Aidekman Campus in Whippany: Centennial Mission Pep Rally!

The following pages will:

1. Review and offer more details about your basic responsibilities as a bus captain.
2. Give a preview of an important aspect that will culminate our experience, something called a Reflection Session, which is our opportunity to share our impressions from the trip with our bus on our last travel day together.
3. Share an example of a Bus Captain Welcome Script.

## FUNDRAISING

- At our next training, on Wednesday, April 19, we will cover the basics of how the fundraising works on a Federation mission, what we will be fundraising for, and your role in partnership with Federation professionals.
- At the heart of this mission is the wonderful work of our Federation as a community, all of us together – in Greater MetroWest, Israel, and around the world – which can only happen because of the generosity of our donors.
- Missions are the best opportunity to demonstrate the power of these dollars.
- This [impressive two-minute video](#) showcases Federation's work, made possible by our donors.

## ROLE OF BUS CAPTAINS

### #1: SET A WARM BUS CULTURE

- On your bus, you're the host. It's as if someone's coming to your home. You want to make them feel welcome and treat everyone how you like to be treated.
- You set the tone by being visible and friendly. Make it a priority to spend time with everyone on your bus by choosing a different seat each day. Encourage others to switch seats too.
- Ask questions so you can really get to know your participants and what they value.
- Particularly for those people who are a little shy or quieter, who prefer not to share their feelings with the whole group, seek them out individually. Sit with them at lunch. Find them on the walk back to the bus. Say, I would love to hear about your experience at the activity we just did? If you meet them where they are, they'll be more likely to open up.

### #2: BUILD RAPPORT

- You are a key member of the leadership team on your bus which includes the Federation professionals, the tour guide, and you!
- Together you will set the overall tone for the trip since time spent on the bus is integral to the entire experience.
- Each bus has a microphone and you will be addressing everyone frequently on a variety of daily topics, including weather, the itinerary, instructions, etc.

## **#3: TAKE ATTENDANCE**

- You'll have a couple of logistical responsibilities but attendance is perhaps the most important because it is a security requirement.
- We use the number count-off system. It is the most reliable way to keep everyone accounted for.
- Some days you might have a senior professional or lay leader join you for the day. Be aware of this when you do your head counts.

## **#4: YOU CAN BE A BUFFER**

- Although we expect everything to run smoothly, we must also expect participant disappointments, complaints, or even last-minute itinerary changes. We cannot always adapt our itinerary to everyone's personal tastes, habits, and behaviors.
- In these circumstances, we look to our bus captains to listen sympathetically, remain positive, and explain clearly why certain decisions were made. Why do we look to our bus captains? Because you are viewed as a community member, while professionals are not, and from our experience, the bus captain is in a better position to have these conversations.
- Remember – your role is the perpetual cheerleader! And in your role as the “host,” you want people to feel as comfortable as they do at home.
- Part of this is also keeping your finger on the pulse of your bus to sense when you might need to try and be adaptable. Sometimes it might be thinking creatively to address whatever you sense will be important.
- For example, if you can tell your group is lagging a little – maybe too hot or tired, or they could use a pick-me-up – take a quick ice cream break to boost their mood. Speak to your tour guide about making that happen if the schedule allows.

## **#5: USE THE MICROPHONE WISELY**

- On Federation missions, a key element of the bus experience is the sharing that happens on the microphone because the time on the bus is used to inspire, inform, and connect participants to what we are seeing and doing.
- We are counting on you to connect our work at home with the projects and programs we are seeing in Israel – to create those “aha” moments for participants. That’s a term Federation uses frequently – and there will be a lot of these “aha” moments on the Centennial Mission.
- It’s up to you to reinforce that these profound opportunities are “brought to you by Federation.” And for you to help educate them that Federation supports these kinds of critical programs at home in New Jersey as well as here in Israel.

- So – back to the importance of the microphone, when we have these “aha” moments on the mission, it will be important to invite people to share their own thoughts and emotions. And you should model that by sharing on the mic too.

## #6: PHILANTHROPY ON THE MISSION

- An important element of our trip is connecting participants with organizations, programs and the *people* who are supported by the dollars raised every year by our Federation.
- We will not only look to you to make these connections as clear as possible, but to also remind your bus that we are raising these very dollars on our trip and that, at some point on the trip, someone will be speaking to each of them about their personal financial support.
- We hope you will allay any fear or concerns about this important part of our experience.
- You don’t know how to do this yet – but our entire next training session will help prepare you.

## #7: CULTIVATE LEADERSHIP

- As you get to know your participants, identify their strengths and how they can help enhance everyone’s experience.
- For example, we will be asking you to help assign other mission related roles, including selecting one or two social media ambassadors to represent your bus.
- Also, the very first time you invite others to share on the microphone, you should know who you can enlist to be a “shill” — someone who can open up the conversation or sharing. It’s wise to have one or two people lined up and ready to share to get the ball rolling and help more people feel comfortable speaking up.
- Where could you help foster future Federation volunteers, committee members, etc.
- You’ll work with your bus professionals and part of this will be your homework leading up to the mission to start learning who your participants are, what they can do well, and what they’re passionate about so we can figure out how to empower people on the trip by making them contributors to the overall bus experience.

## #8: WE TRUST YOU

- Being a good bus captain is largely a matter of common sense.
- Use your good judgment and remember that people react differently to stress and travel, especially while away from home.

- You don't have to know all the answers, plenty of resources are available to you and the professional team will always be your first stop to help.
- So remember, you've got this. **Thank you for taking on this important role! And have fun!**

## WHAT IS A REFLECTION SESSION?

- At the conclusion of the mission, each bus will hold a sharing session which in Federation parlance is called a "Reflection Session." This is an opportunity for everyone on the bus to have a chance to share:
  - feelings about the trip
  - what they are taking home from the experience
  - observations about our community and Israel
  - an impactful "aha" moment
  - possibly an announcement of a financial commitment to our community's UJA Annual Campaign and/or Centennial Campaign
- For many people, this is the most impactful and meaningful part of the mission. Participants tend to become really vulnerable in these sessions. It can be quite moving and emotional.

## BUS CAPTAIN WELCOME SCRIPT

- From Tracey and Jason Hoberman Centennial Mission vice-chairs.
- Back in 2018, we were brand new bus captains. And the first time speaking on the microphone to our whole bus was a bit daunting. What exactly should we say?
- We reminded ourselves it's important to be the cheerleaders for these members of our community. To build the *ruach*, which is Hebrew for a genuine sense of spirit.
- So, it's going to go something like this...
- Welcome Bus 5!!! We're finally here! As a reminder, my name is Jason Hoberman – and my name is Tracey Hoberman – and we are your bus captains for this trip. We are honored to share this Israel experience with you.
- We're going to start by learning our Bus Cheer! "Five" in Hebrew is "*Chamesh*." The cheer is very simple – when I say "Cha" – you say "Mesh!" "Cha –", "Cha –." Ok, now let's do it with a little bit more *ruach*. "Cha–" "Cha–."
- We're going to celebrate 75 years since the independence of the state of Israel and 100 years since the creation of our beloved Federation.

- We're going to laugh; we're going to cry – probably at the same time.
- As your bus captains, we're here with you at every step – as we become more deeply involved with our Federation and Greater MetroWest community and explore our amazing Jewish state of Israel.
- You're going to see firsthand the power that our dollars have to impact our world and these memories will stay with you for your whole life. And that's only the beginning.
- What may surprise you is how much we're going to learn about our own selves in very moving and emotional ways.
- Right now, we want to introduce you to our tour guide Maya, our bus driver Yoni, and our security guard Oded. [Cheers!]
- Of course, you know our Federation professionals, Jennifer Cohen and Josh Smith! [Cheers!]
- This mic is not only ours – this mic is yours! We encourage you to speak to our group when you have something meaningful to share about our day's activity, a Hebrew word you just learned, a personal connection you made or a funny joke.
- Speaking of jokes – how does an Israeli make tea? He-*brews* it! Or, or..... you can tell a funny joke. That might work too. ☺
- In a moment we'll practice our count-off system, which is how we will take attendance each time we get on the bus.
- If you ever have any questions about anything – no matter how large or small – please ask us. Even if we don't have the answers, we'll help get them for you.
- So, get comfortable – but not too comfortable. This is not your permanent seat! We'll be moving around each day, getting to know different people which of course will help us strengthen our Greater MetroWest community when we return to NJ.

## QUESTIONS?

Any questions, please reach out to our mission professional team below or our vice-chairs.

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