

YOVASO

Parade Event Guide



Parades are a fun way to showcase your club to the community and increase awareness about youth traffic safety issues. Be creative and use this guide to help plan an award-winning float for a parade in your school or community.

Let the Parade Begin!

For more information, contact:

YOVASO

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Getting the Details

First things first . . .

- Contact the person planning the parade. Often, there is a website where you can get contact information.
- When you call or e-mail that person, tell him/her why you want to be involved in the parade and offer information about YOVASO.
- Make sure to leave **your** contact information as well as your **sponsor's** information.
- If there is an entry fee, make sure to check with your bookkeeper to get the money. He or she should be able to either send the money in or get it to you.
- If you make a phone call, be sure to identify yourself and the organization. If you have to leave a message, be sure to leave a number where you or your sponsor can be reached!

Recruiting Participants

Why would I want to be in a parade?

- That's a question you may face when talking with your club members. If that's the problem, you can always remind them this is a prime opportunity to get the traffic safety message out to your community. After all, this is a part of the mission statement.
- When recruiting participants make sure the dates of the parade are announced well before the big day. Make it known that you want as many people to participate as possible, and ask the club members to keep their schedules clear for that day. Hold them accountable!
- Also, when talking with the planners of the parade, ask if there is any sort of prize for the best float. This could be a great incentive for the club members.
- Another exciting prospect is the media attention that can come from a parade. Generally there is at least one media group there, so it could be a great chance for increased exposure! Don't be afraid to talk to someone with a camera!
- Finally, remind the participants that the parade experience is a lot of FUN!

What are you going to do?

Now that the ball is rolling . . .

- You need to decide what you are going to do. Depending on your location you may have more or less choices than others.
- If you are going to get your own float, do so immediately. Call around town to different companies. Tell them what you are doing and why it is important – then ask if they will donate their services. You may be surprised how willing people are to help you!
- If you are working in conjunction with another group, make contact with them as soon as possible. Invite them to your meetings, and make sure both groups communicate frequently.
- Start brainstorming on possible themes and aspects of the parade
 - o Are you going to have a crashed car on your float?
 - o Will the Crash Dummies be a part of your parade?
 - o Are you handing out information? Candy? Both?
 - o Do you need a banner? You can order a personalized banner from YOVASO
 - o Will you have a booth at another location?
 - o Do you want to borrow the spinning wheel for the booth?
 - o Will you have definite shifts that volunteers will work?
 - o How will you get all the materials to the parade?
 - o What will you have to buy?
 - o Is there a rain/snow day?
 - o Do you have money to spend?
 - o Do you need an adult sponsor there?
- These are some questions you will need to answer in your planning sessions. Be prepared!

Deciding on a Theme

Oh, the dilemma . . .

- The theme of your float is what will identify you to the public. Obviously, it is a very important decision and one which all the club members should be actively involved in. At your brainstorming meeting, have an easel with a notepad. That way, when ideas are said you can record them for everyone to see. Ideas can stem from things already said.
- If people are quiet at first, it will be up to you or other leaders in the group to break the ice. It might be a good idea to have a few thoughts already written down to start conversation.
- Be sure to write everything down no matter how crazy it may seem! People will say off-the-wall things, but they should feel like their voice counts.
- Be creative! People will remember your float and your message if you make them remember! Take pride in what you do! Be sure the theme relates to traffic safety. Sometimes, in the heat of the moment, the focus can be lost. Try to keep everyone focused.

Who's Doing What?

Time to tap your resources . . .

- A parade is a great chance to get out into the community, but it does require some work. In this situation, delegation is key!
- To begin, make a list of all the things that need to be accomplished. From there, you can make committees. Some sample committees could be “Decoration Committee,” “Volunteers Committee,” “Booth Committee” and so on.
- If you have a booth, make a schedule from the start of the day until the booth needs to be taken down. Make sure that the people who sign up are held accountable!
- For the float, get a group to help decorate and a group of people to ride/walk in the parade. Make it clear that those who rode will also have to stick around and take down the decorations on the float. With several people, it shouldn't take very long.
- However you decide to organize the volunteers, make sure they stick around and are held accountable. Remind them of their jobs!

Support/Funding

Show me the Money!

- Now that you have your theme, volunteers, and decorations in place it's time to figure out how to pay for everything.
- First and foremost, try to get things donated! Sometimes chain stores have trouble donating things, so stick with local, independently-owned businesses if possible.
- When dealing with managers or store owners, BE PERSUASIVE! Don't forget to mention that if they donate something for the parade, you will recognize them as a sponsor! Remind them that it's free advertising!
- If there are things that can't be donated, shop around for the best price.
- Remember to keep all receipts for the bookkeeper, especially if you paid for something.
- If you are worried that there may not be enough money, have some sort of fundraiser. Bake sales and t-shirt sales can boost your accounts.

Providing Your Volunteers with Information

Keeping everyone in the loop . . .

- It's very important to be sure everyone is on the same page with what's going on. Make it clear that if anyone has any questions, be sure to speak up!
- With the committees that you have already established, have them give weekly (or whenever you meet with your group) updates on progress. This will benefit you in several ways. One, you are not constantly doing all the talking. Two, other people are taking ownership of this project. Three, it will give the heads of the committees a chance to ask for more help or let the group make decisions if need be. Also, it will ensure the work will get done since the committees will have to speak in front of the group.
- Also, at the meeting before the parade give every club member a sheet (preferably on brightly colored paper) with how the day will go, and leave a space for them to write in what time they are working. Be sure to put a cell number where someone in charge can be reached should there be any questions or problems.

Items to Hand Out during Parade

One more chance to spread your message

- Floats that give out free material are the ones that are remembered.
- YOVASO can provide material for you to hand out during the parade. Contact YOVASO headquarters to gain access to tip cards, pens, lanyards, ribbon magnets, bracelets, key chains and more.
- You may want to include bags of candy into your budget. Once again, shop around for the best bargains. Ideas for candy:
 - o Dum Dums: Make a small card that says, "Don't be a Dum Dum, Buckle Up," you can attach a Dum Dum lollipop to this card and hand out at parade
 - o Riesens: You can purchase bite sized Riesens, a chocolate candy bar, and attach reasons not to drink and drive or reasons to buckle up and drive safely.
 - o Smarties: "Be a Smarty, Buckle Up"
 - o Crunch Bars: Make a small card to attach to a Crunch Bar that says, "Don't Crunch your car, Drive Safely."
 - o Dots: Attached a card that says, "Department Of Transportation."
 - o M&Ms: You can now buy M&Ms with personalized messages. Perhaps you can order some with traffic safety themes.
 - o Be Creative! These are just a few examples. There are so many types of candy that could apply.
- YOVASO can also provide material for your booth if you choose to have one.

Parade Day

It's finally here!

- Be sure to get there early! You want to ensure that if problems arise they can be handled as soon and as early as possible. Should problems arise, STAY CALM!
- If possible, have walkie-talkies or cell phones (walkie-talkies are much more fun) so everyone can communicate.
- Try to oversee that the tasks are being carried out as they should be and help if needed.
- Take pictures!
- Set the example by networking and talking to people. Whether you have a booth, float, or both make an effort to talk to people and hand out information. Make sure both the booth and the float are attractive and stand out.
- After everything is over, make sure your area and float are clean. You want to leave a positive impression on the people who coordinated the parade.
- Most of all have a GREAT TIME! Events like parades are great to get the message of traffic safety to all types of community members.

Say Thank You

"I'd like to thank all the little people . . ."

- Be sure to thank all those who helped you. Bring the Thank You notes to the next meeting and have all the club members sign them. It would not hurt to send a t-shirt or pen if possible to show them you truly appreciate their services.
- Also, thank all if the volunteers at the meeting. Be sure to recognize each person by name; it is much more personal. People like to be recognized for their efforts.

Float Examples

Other schools have had successful parades . . .





