



Church Bus Shopping CHECKLIST

Questions for your committee to answer before you buy. Work through it together, check each box, and bring it to your first call with a sales rep.

Updated September 2026

1 Size and drivers

- ☐ Count the most people you will carry on a typical trip, **including the driver**.
- ☐ Know the size that fits:

SMALL BUS
Up to 15
passengers

MEDIUM BUS
16 to 30
passengers

LARGE BUS
31 to 45
passengers

- ☐ Decide who will drive: **volunteers with a standard license**, or drivers with a CDL (commercial driver's license)?
- ☐ Before you buy, **check with your state DMV and your insurance carrier** about licensing. Whether a driver needs a CDL depends on federal and state law, how the bus is set up, and how you use it. Some states, including California and Connecticut, have stricter rules for churches and nonprofits.
- ☐ Don't go by the model name. Ask your sales rep for the bus's **rated capacity, counting the driver's seat**.

2 Safety and insurance

- ☐ **Call your insurance carrier before you shop.** Many insurers now restrict 15-passenger vans for youth transport.
- ☐ Compare any van against a purpose-built bus: **dual rear wheels, a welded steel cage, a center aisle, and a higher roof**.

3 How you will use it

- ☐ List every ministry that will use the bus: youth, senior adults, mission trips, outreach.
- ☐ **Plan for luggage.** Rick Cassels, Regional Sales Manager at Carpenter Bus Sales, says not enough storage is the regret he hears most often from customers after they buy.
- ☐ Do any members use wheelchairs? Most buses can be set up with a **wheelchair lift, tie-downs, and fold-away seats**.
- ☐ Want your church name and logo on the bus? **Add a couple of weeks** to your timeline for graphics.

4 Budget and financing

- ☐ **Know the ballpark** (as of September 2026, call for current pricing):

NEW VANS
~\$75,000
starting point

NEW BUSES
~\$100,000
starting point

USED BUSES
\$40K to \$80K
by year, miles, condition

- ☐ Ask about **loans (24 to 84 months), leases, and lease-to-own** programs.
- ☐ Ask who signs. Carpenter Bus almost always finances directly with the church, so **pastors and board members are not personally on the hook**.
- ☐ Is your giving seasonal? Ask about **skip-a-payment** options.

5 Warranty

Carpenter Bus Sales offers **the only 8-year unlimited mile warranty in the industry** for churches, ministries, and senior care communities.

- ☐ **New bus:** PlatinumCare covers the entire vehicle, bumper to bumper, for 8 years with unlimited miles, with a \$100 deductible per claim. Routine maintenance is not covered.
- ☐ **Used bus:** you get whatever factory warranty is left, plus an optional limited powertrain service contract. Ask exactly what it covers. It does not cover the A/C, brakes, or wheelchair lift.
- ☐ **Buying used from another church?** Their PlatinumCare does not transfer to you.

6 Timeline

- ☐ **Bus in stock:** often delivered the same week or the next, and almost always within a month.
- ☐ **Factory order:** about 10 weeks from your deposit.
- ☐ Count back from the date you need the bus, then add time for graphics and delivery.

7 If you buy used

- ☐ Ask for the **service history**.
- ☐ **Check the floor and the roof seams.** Randy Sadler, Fixed Operations Manager, who oversees the Carpenter Bus service shop, says replacing a used bus floor can run roughly \$2,000 to \$8,000 depending on the damage, and leaky roof seams are a usual source of the water behind it.

Talk it through with a church bus expert

We deliver to all 50 states from Franklin, Tennessee and Waco, Texas.
Find your rep: carpenterbus.com/find-your-salesman

(800) 370-6180