

Leader Resources:

Recruiting and Keeping Leaders

Getting and keeping volunteers in any ministry is an ongoing and often exhaustive job. Here are some tips on how to get and keep those valuable volunteers. Here are some things to think about when starting a recruitment process at your church, along with ways that might help you keep those volunteers excited about Child/Youth Ministry.

- 1. Everyone has a gift.** Christian ministry is a collage of individual gifts that, when combined, create a beautiful picture. Charismatic and out-going teachers may seem like your first priority in child and youth ministry, but don't limit your search to this gift.
- 2. Know what you need.** It is important to find leaders that match your leadership needs. If you have a family-based ministry, consider recruiting entire families to be leaders. If you have a sport-based program, recruit volunteers who are good at sports.
- 3. Break the barriers.** Some people believe that child and youth ministry can only be led by professionals. This may be true of some types of ministries, but certainly not for all of them!

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS – Have a Ministry Day

Host a Ministry Day in your church, or have 'Child/Youth Ministry' as a theme for a Sunday. This is a very productive way to recruit volunteers because you can show your entire congregation first-hand what goes on in your ministry and why their help is a vital necessity. Have displays about what areas of your ministry needs volunteers, and current or former volunteers present to answer questions. Please remember, not everyone who volunteers is appropriate for the ministry. The purpose of this day is to identify potential volunteers and follow-up with a personal contact.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS – Creating 'free' time

Sometimes volunteers are passionate about child/youth ministry but are have already committed their time and energy to other ministries. Work with your parish priest to help this person let go of some of their commitments without feeling guilty. Offer a 'slow start' or 'try out' phase where a person can volunteer on a limited basis (such as once/month for three months) with the option of increasing involvement at the phase's end (twice/month or weekly)

WHAT DO WE NEED?

HOW WILL WE RECRUIT LEADERS?

HOW WILL WE RETAIN LEADERS?

HOW WILL WE TRAIN AND EQUIP LEADERS?

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS – Volunteer Partnerships

A friends or couples in the congregation may be more willing to volunteer if they can do it together. For example, instead of advertising the need for 4 people to provide snacks for your program, invite two couples to provide the snacks on a rotating basis.

KEEPING VOLUNTEERS - Delegate Duties

People like to feel needed. When you see leadership skills in some of your volunteers that you know would fit a particular job that you are currently doing, be willing to hand it over. This will take some load off your schedule, and will make that person feel needed. Have monthly meetings with your volunteers to see how things are going.

KEEPING VOLUNTEERS - Keen Eye for Burnout

You may find that you have a handful of volunteers already that do most of the work for the ministry. These people are so valued, and the last thing you want to happen is find them becoming burnt out. You rely on these people because they have show their loyalty to the ministry, but keep in mind that they have families and other commitments that may make continuing in this ministry hard. This is why you can never stop looking for volunteers. Don't just assume that you have what you need and give up on the recruiting process. If someone in your ministry is doing more than two jobs, be looking for others who can take over some of those roles. Signs of volunteer burnout may include:

- Stops volunteering altogether
- Not chipper like they used to be
- Avoids eye contact with you
- Seems frustrated or tired all the time

KEEPING VOLUNTEERS - Incentives and Small Tokens of Appreciation

Letting your current volunteers know that they are a valued asset to the ministry is a critical necessity. People want to know that they are doing a good job. They want to know that they are appreciated. It only takes something small, like a stationery set, a \$5 gift certificate to get a free movie, or something along those lines. Acts of kindness like these will go a long way to keep volunteers enthusiastic in their roles.

KEEPING VOLUNTEERS – Train and Equip

The best thing you can do for your volunteers is train, screen and equip them properly for their ministry. This gives them confidence in themselves and their ministry, and the knowledge needed to address problems as they arise.