

# **Church Volunteers Recruiting: 7 KEYS to Helping Believers Discover their Spiritual Gift of Faith and Rewards of Service**

## **Key #1 to Church Volunteer Recruiting: Develop Your Ministry Vision**

Clearly communicating your ministry vision is a critical first step to recruiting church volunteers. Traditional recruiting of church volunteers was often based on the needs of the church leader. “I need 25 volunteers each week to fill the slots I’m responsible for in children’s ministry. I’ll call Sally and ask her to serve this Sunday morning in the nursery at 11:00. If she calls to cancel on Friday morning I’ll grit my teeth and make more phone calls so that I won’t have to change diapers Sunday morning at 11:00.” This traditional approach to recruiting church volunteers based on your need as a staff person won’t motivate people to serve. Instead, invite people to join you in doing something significant that will have an impact and change lives.

**If your ministry doesn’t have a clearly defined vision, invite a team of people to come together and help create one.** Here are a few questions you can pose for that team to help you define and create your unique ministry vision: What do we want our ministry to look like? What kind of results do we want to accomplish? Where are we going? Where does God want us to be in five years? What changes are taking place in our community, and what will it look like in five years? What have we “always done this way” that is becoming obsolete? What issues are people in our community facing, and how could our church address those issues?

Once your team has answered these questions you should be able to craft a simple ministry vision statement expressing your desired future. Remember that good vision statements are no more than two sentences. It should describe a future that excites people in positive terms. (Not “we won’t”, but “we will”) Many ministries use the great commandment or the great commission as their vision but don’t put the extra work into understanding the unique vision that God has in store for their church. Membership in Church Volunteer Central provides access to articles, training, and forms that help church leaders develop and communicate ministry vision that will engage more volunteers in your visionary ministry.

## **Key #2 to Church Volunteer Recruiting: Clarify Your Ministry Expectations**

One of the most common reasons volunteers cite for quitting is that they didn’t have a clear understanding of what was expected of them. While it’s common in the workplace today for all new employees to have a job description that clearly lays out the

qualifications, responsibilities, and expectations the organization has for their performance, it's rare to find ministry descriptions for church volunteers that provide the same kind of clarity.

Every ministry description should include the following elements: title, goal of the position, who is responsible for the ministry that this volunteer will report to, a brief summary describing the role, the spiritual gifts and other life experience desired, the time required per week, the term of service, description of training that will be provided, responsibilities and ministry expectations, and finally the benefits the volunteer will receive for doing the work. Members of Church Volunteer Central can view and customize over 500 ministry descriptions as a benefit of their membership. Here's an example of a good ministry description:

### ***Title***

Sunday School Teacher

### ***Purpose***

The Sunday school teacher is a Christian adult who guides, loves, teaches, and cares for the children in a specific class. The teacher prays for the children in the class, desires to build relationships with them, and thoughtfully and prayerfully plans and implements a classroom ministry for them.

### ***Responsible to***

Children's Ministry Pastor

### ***Description of duties***

- Commit to be present each Sunday morning scheduled.
- Prepare lessons in advance and come to teach thoroughly prepared.
- Teach the Sunday school class.
- Pray regularly for each child, your teaching ministry, and other volunteers on your team.
- Ensure that classroom is clean and set up properly before children arrive.
- Gather all needed supplies before children arrive.
- Be present in classroom 15 to 20 minutes before class begins; remain until last child has been picked up.
- Take and keep attendance records.
- Fill out and utilize information cards on regular attendees and new students.
- Arrange for a substitute teacher from the approved list of subs if you can't serve when scheduled.
- Work to include and involve parents in your classroom.
- Attend teacher training meetings.

- Follow all established safety and security guidelines for children’s ministry programs, including submitting to the church’s policies on screening, background checks, safety training, etc.
- Attend training on child protection, health issues, and other procedures.

### ***Time requirements***

Most Sunday school teachers spend one to two hours preparing for their classes each time they’re scheduled to teach, as well as two hours in the classroom to prepare, welcome children, teach, send children home with parents, and clean up after the class.

### ***Term***

Sunday school teachers may serve one term of four-and-a-half months (approximately half of the school year/Sunday school year), one Sunday school year (nine months), or one full calendar year (12 months).

### ***Training and resources***

Attend monthly or quarterly teacher training meetings; attend safety and security training provided by the church; use teacher’s guides of curriculum provided by the church; ask your supervisor for any other specialized training you need to deal with needs in your classroom.

### ***Qualifications, skills, and gifts***

- A strong and growing personal commitment to Jesus.
- Strong interest and belief in the value of Christian education for children.
- Spiritual gift of pastor, teacher or shepherd.
- A heart, passion, and love for children, particularly of those in the age group you’ll be teaching.
- Committed to values and vision of the church and of the larger children’s ministry.
- Organizational, planning, creative, and administrative skills.
- Strong commitment to teaching and learning in a fun, active, and interactive environment.
- Enthusiasm.
- Ability to work with other volunteers in a team environment.
- Dependable

### ***Benefits to the Worker***

Grow in your own knowledge of the Bible as you prepare lessons and teach classes; enrich your personal faith as you teach faith to others; feel satisfied in knowing that you’re making a significant contribution to the spiritual formation and growth of children; get to know the children of the church as well as their parents.

Putting ministry descriptions in place communicates to volunteers that you value them, you trust them, and that they're making an eternal difference in the lives of the people they serve. Creating ministry descriptions will both empower your existing volunteers to use their spiritual gifts and help you to recruit the right people for each ministry position you have on your team.

### **Key #3 to Church Volunteer Recruiting: Ask Individually**

Some of the most amazing future church volunteers are already attending your church services. They've developed an ability to ignore platform announcements, to walk past ministry sign-up tables, and to gloss over bulletin or newsletter information about volunteer opportunities. When asked why they haven't served at church yet their response is likely to be "nobody ever asked me to serve." The power of the personal "ask" or invitation can't be ignored. Some church leaders have the spiritual gift of "asking" AND the spiritual gift of faith for recruiting volunteers. Here are a few of the principles they use when they ask future church volunteers to serve.

**First**, don't consider recruiting to be a solo responsibility. Every volunteer serving in local church ministry should be trained and empowered to be a ministry recruiter. If every church volunteer was mobilized to invite their friends and family members to join them the ranks of church volunteers could double in the next month. Who is better equipped to share the ministry stories and personal satisfaction that comes from serving than the church volunteer? A quick training session could prepare your current volunteers to share an "elevator speech" or a quick two minute overview of what they do in ministry, which spiritual gifts they use, what impact their work is having, and how it benefits them personally. Train and equip your volunteers to be effective ministry-mobilizers or disciple-makers. Don't keep that responsibility to yourself or you'll constantly be in a mode of adding ministers rather than multiplying ministers.

**Second**, church leaders with the gift of "asking" get to know people and only invite them to serve on a team where their personal passion, experience, and spiritual gifts will most likely flourish. Getting to know people well enough to do this requires a significant up-front investment. The long term pay-off is more motivated, satisfied, and effective volunteers that tend to sign up for multiple terms of service in the same ministry.

**Finally**, church leaders with the gift of "asking" don't ask for a commitment to serve on the spot. The initial ask includes these essential elements: vision, ministry description, and an invitation to pray and then meet again in about a week. The follow-up conversation a week later gives the prospective volunteer the opportunity to ask questions or raise any concerns they might have about the ministry position.

## **Key #4 to Church Volunteer Recruiting: Match Spiritual Gifts to Role**

1 Corinthians 12 affirms that "God gives [spiritual gifts] to *each one*, just as he determines." (v. 11) All Christians have something to offer in ministry, because God gave spiritual gifts to each one—and it's our job to discover and cultivate these spiritual gifts in ourselves and others..

We also see in 1 Corinthians 12 that each believer has a unique (and vital!) function in the body, which is why He gives us different gifts. It isn't based on jobs that need to be filled, it's based on the individual's giftedness. A lot of frustration has been caused by coercing people into accepting positions, without determining if that was the right ministry for the person. That's why things like ministry descriptions, interviews, and spiritual gift assessments are important. Even though we use the word "recruitment" because people understand it, we are sensitive to the fact that it isn't quite precise. The point isn't filling jobs, it's moving people into discipleship by helping them identify, get training for, and move into the ministry for which God designed them. That's how they fulfill the function of their part of the body.

## **Key #5 to Church Volunteer Recruiting: Screen Based on Risk**

Not every church volunteer position requires careful screening and risk management prior to placement but many do. If your ministry serves anyone under the age of 18, anyone with a disability, or senior citizens you should utilize careful screening before placing volunteers in a position of trust. Church leaders need to have a careful screening procedure in place that incorporates the following ministry best practices.

Consider the essential screening process outlined below:

- 6-month waiting period before volunteers are allowed to serve
- Application
- Interview
- Reference Checks
- Background Checks
- Acceptance or Denial of the Candidate
- Training—including a review of church policies and expectations
- Rescreening of your volunteers on a yearly basis

## **Key #6 to Church Volunteer Recruiting: Interview**

One of the most important steps a church leader can take to ensure the right volunteer will be placed in the right ministry responsibility is to schedule a personal interview. Open ended questions will lead to great conversations about the applicants background and fit for ministry. Here are fifty great questions to use as you interview prospective church volunteers.

1. What have you done that's given you the greatest satisfaction at our Church? At another church? In the community?
2. What have you always wished you could do?

3. What do you enjoy doing in your leisure time?
4. Tell me about yourself
5. Tell me about someone who has been a very significant person in your life.
6. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
7. What are your strengths / weaknesses?
8. List three adjectives that describe you?
9. What type of work do you enjoy the most?
10. What type of people do you find most difficult to deal with?
11. What things have you done that have given you a great deal of satisfaction?
12. What do you like best about yourself?
13. Why do you think you would like this particular position?
14. What do you think determines a person's success in this position?
15. In what areas of this job would you expect to be most successful? Least?
16. What specific skills, talents, or qualifications do you have that you think would be an asset in this position?
17. What experience would you bring to this particular ministry?
18. What personal strengths / weaknesses would you bring to this ministry?
19. Would you rather work independently or with a team?
20. What past positions have you experienced that are similar?
21. What education or training have you had that would equip you for this position?
22. How would your spiritual gifts be used in this position?
23. Why do you enjoy working with children? (or youth, or adults)
24. How would you handle a child's inappropriate behavior?
25. How would you handle a defiant child?
26. What discipline methods have you found helpful in working with children?
27. Have you ever been accused of inappropriate behavior with a child?
28. What did you like the most about your childhood? Least?
29. How do you deal with personal stress?
30. Have you ever led a child to Christ before?
31. What quality of Jesus reflected His love for children?
32. How do you see this ministry position contributing to the mission of our church?
33. What makes your heart grieve? Rejoice?
34. Give a recent example of how you demonstrated mercy?
35. What quality of Jesus best reflects his ability to care for others?
36. What experiences do you have in worship/theater arts?
37. What spiritual gifts, talents, or training do you bring to this position?
38. Describe how God is glorified through your talent/gift.
39. What brings you the most joy in worship?
40. How can music/drama/the arts lead someone to Christ?
41. How do you make someone you just met feel welcomed?
42. What experiences do you have in showing hospitality?
43. What qualities do you have that demonstrate friendship?
44. What qualities of Jesus reflect his ability to make people feel accepted?
45. How can friendships grow a church?
46. Is there any other information about yourself you wish to share?
47. Why are you interested in doing volunteer work?

48. Thinking back, what are the most significant decision you have made in your life and how do you feel about them?
49. What makes you really angry – on the job or at home – and how do you deal with this anger?
50. What questions would you like to ask me?

Church Volunteer Central Members have access to hundreds of sample interview questions as well as customizable interview forms and articles that provide wisdom for church leaders conducting interviews with prospective church volunteers.

### **Key #7 to Church Volunteer Recruiting: Pray**

We saved the most powerful secret weapon of church volunteer recruiting for last! Put your spiritual gift of faith into action—and ask those around to pray with you. Prayer should really be both the beginning, middle, and end of all of your church volunteer recruiting efforts. Jesus gave us this most important ministry recruiting secret in Matthew 9:37-38 (NIV); “Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

Apparently over-ripe fields of ministry harvest but not enough workers have been a problem since the time of Christ. Jesus gave us clear instruction to ASK the Lord of the harvest to send workers. Are you investing time daily in prayer for fellow ministers to join you? Are you making your needs known to other prayer warriors at your church? Invite as many people as you can to join your ministry prayer team and provide specific prayer request needs so they can be praying for the right person with the right gifts and experience for this season of ministry at your church.