

5 Tips for Recruiting Volunteers

By Josh Evans

Need some volunteer staff? Use these ideas to increase your team.

I do not know a church in America that could not use just a few more volunteers. Every church is in search of more volunteers to do more for the mission of their church. Why is recruiting volunteers such a problem? I believe that the problem might not be with the ones in the seats on Sunday. The problem might be in our approach to recruiting.

Here are five tips to help you recruit volunteers:

1. Celebrate volunteers

Your church will not maintain a steady influx of new volunteers if they are not celebrated. Whoever started the idea of posting a church volunteer of the week on their social media pages is a genius. Celebrate them, bless them and recognize them. When you celebrate volunteers, you communicate that you value and are appreciative of what they do each weekend for you. If you do not think that celebrating and recognizing volunteers is important, try to do church on Sunday without them. It would be utter chaos. It would be foolish. We need them, and therefore we should recognize them. Churches who keep volunteers recognize and celebrate them.

2. Communicate specific expectations

Leader, do not be aggravated with your volunteers and their performance if you have not clearly stated your expectations for them. If someone is holding a door for people, they need to know specifically what you expect. This may sound silly and tedious, but there is a certain way of doing what you want, and our volunteers want to know what that is.

3. Never sound desperate

Too often, we sound like the ministry will fall apart if you do not recruit more volunteers. Look, that may be true. I get it, we need volunteers and rely heavily on volunteers every weekend, but never sound desperate. Make your pitch to volunteers inspirational and motivational. Communicate that every volunteer gets to be a part of our mission every weekend. Every volunteer regardless of the position helps your church do what they do. Motivate and inspire your volunteers—do not guilt or make them feel like you are desperate. Desperate appeals for volunteers will leave you with people who are volunteering because you need them, not because you want them. Articulate your vision to prospective volunteers and where they fit into your vision.

4. Set clear start and end dates

We tend to never have a problem with the first part of this. Start dates are easy. We rarely set end dates. I believe too many churches have communicated to people who when they sign up, they are in it for life. This scares many away. When you recruit volunteers, tell them that this is for a six-month or one-year term, and then you will evaluate them to see if they want to continue serving. It gives time for volunteers to give it a shot and if they hate it, they have an out.

5. Communicate every position as fun and important

Do not ever down play a position in your church. From the guy in the parking lot, to the one passing out bulletins, to the one holding babies, to the one speaking to the adults, every position is important and helps churches accomplish their mission. You should paint it this way when you recruit. You also need to paint the position as fun. Make every position sound like the most fun job at your church. It encourages people and places value on the position.