



Thinking about the volunteers in your local church



Volunteer ministry
Toward
daring discipleship

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- Who is the coordinator of your volunteers? Is there some identified person in a supervisory position? Some person or persons to whom they can go with issues, questions?
- Have you thought of having a paid coordinator? Why or why not?
- Do you realize that not only *can* volunteers be fired, but sometimes the church has an *obligation* to fire its volunteers?
- Do your volunteers have job descriptions that enable them to understand the church's expectations and how their work connects with the church's greater work?
- Do your volunteers receive training and or orientation in order to equip them to the work?
- Does your church understand your volunteers as those involved in 'ministry' and do the volunteers find meaning in their work?
- Can your volunteers answer the question... 'What's in it for me?' or 'In what way does this enrich my life or enable me to better connect with the purposes and presence of God?'

"What volunteers repeatedly have said they want and need are:

- ♦ to be carefully interviewed and appropriately assigned to a meaningful task;
- ♦ to receive training and supervision to enable them to do that task well;
- ♦ to be involved in planning and evaluating the program in which they participate;
- ♦ to receive recognition in a way that is meaningful to them;
- ♦ to be regarded as persons of uniqueness;
- ♦ to be accepted as a valued member of the team."

Wilson, Marlene. *How to Mobilize Church Volunteers*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983.
<http://www.energizeinc.com/art/ahow.html>



Volunteer ministry



Volunteers are the heart of congregational life.
This is good.
This is where ministry happens.

-But-

Do we take seriously enough.. preparing, honoring, training, respecting and thanking our volunteers?
Can we do better?





Treasuring and Respecting our Church Volunteers

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS WHAT NOT TO SAY...

We are looking for someone to teach Sunday School, anyone who is interested can start next Sunday or

Anyone who wants to serve on the visioning committee, the meeting is Tuesday.

NO OPEN INVITATIONS.

An open invitation suggests the obligation to accept the leadership of anyone who comes forward. We are not all equally qualified for all tasks! The church has the right, ability AND responsibility to choose its volunteers carefully. We are not looking for 'warm bodies' but people with call, dedication and the skills required for the task.



A better way to offer an invitation might be:

We need teachers for the Sunday School. For further information about these positions and what is required, talk to... or The Visioning Committee is looking for two new members. For more information or to discuss this possibility speak to...

We are desperate for someone to fill this position. It really doesn't demand much. I know you can do it.

NO DOWNGRADING OF THE POSITION (or by implication the work and volunteer)

To be invited because a church is desperate is not attractive. To be told the position is not difficult nor particularly important, does not honor the volunteer or the work. To make the position overly simple or with little meaning might make a person ask: *Why would I want to do that? If it doesn't mean much or demand much, why bother?*

on-line resources



the following are for adaptation for specific use and are offered as resources only

Sample Position Charter (Job Description) <http://www.volunteerpower.com/resources/Charter.asp>

Volunteer Manual Sample available through Volunteer Hamilton (Download Centre) <http://www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca/>

Screening Procedures the United Church of Canada—Faithful Footsteps <http://www.united-church.ca/files/handbooks/faithfulfootsteps.pdf> (or available from the Conference office)

Creating an orientation template for Non profit organization volunteers: <http://www.whyvolunteer.ca/FCKeditor2FC1/UserFiles/File/Volunteer%20Orientation%20Manual%202008%20Feb%2011.pdf>

Health and Safety and the Volunteer- PSHSA ONT (to order <http://www.esao.on.ca/products/manuals/resource/volunteer.htm>)

Our Shared Resources at <http://www.oursharedresources.com/> **free resources for volunteer management**—including templates, worksheets and forms ... to be adapted to your context.

Spiritual Connections

- + Recognize Volunteering in the church as *ministry*.
- + Recognize the thirst for people to be involved in something with *spiritual meaning* that will further their involvement with God's purposes, strengthen their faith and bring them closer to God.
- + Enable the *discerning of Spiritual Gifts* in the church community.
- + Encourage Volunteers or prospective volunteers to *discern prayerfully* around their ministry, and give them tools to help them to do that.
- + *Covenant* with or install volunteers in a meaningful way (probably in worship) that values their ministry and recognizes their commitment.
- + *Thank* volunteers in a meaningful way (perhaps with a banquet) that allows the community and the individual to rejoice in the work that has been done, even when it is difficult or has not worked out as hoped.
- + *Allow* volunteers to resign with dignity and offer sincere gratitude for the time and effort that they have given.

