

Supporting Your Volunteers

1. Recruiting youth ministry volunteers is only half the battle. Once you have a team of volunteers working with you, be sure to say “thank you” often and offer as much support as you can. Here are 100 different ways to thank and support your volunteers
2. Create a climate in which volunteers can feel motivated
3. Provide a specific job description for your volunteers, complete with a starting and ending time for their ministry and the specific role they will play
4. Provide an orientation for your volunteers. Everyone from those who drive for an event to those who go white water rafter with the teens should be oriented to their role so expectations are clear and roles are defined
5. Say ‘thank you’ often, and mean it
6. Match the volunteer’s desires with the organization’s needs
7. Send birthday cards
8. Send a card at Christmas
9. Make sure new volunteers are welcomed warmly
10. Highlight the impact that the volunteer contribution is having on the ministry
11. Show an interest in volunteers’ personal interests and their outside life
12. Tell volunteers they have done a good job
13. Give volunteers a real voice within the organization
14. Set up a volunteer support group
15. Provide meaningful and enjoyable work
16. Always have work for your volunteers to do and never waste their time
17. Send ‘thank you’ notes and letters when appropriate
18. Smile when you see them!
19. Say something positive about their personal qualities
20. Involve volunteers in decision-making processes
21. Give a certificate to commemorate anniversaries of involvement
22. Develop a volunteer policy so the same ones aren’t used all the time
23. Allow volunteers the opportunity to debrief, especially if they work in stressful situations
24. Let volunteers put their names to something they have helped to produce or to make happen
25. Differentiate clearly between the roles of paid staff, trainees and volunteers
26. Have a volunteer comments box and consider any suggestions carefully
27. Make sure the volunteer coordinator is easily accessible and has an ‘open door’ policy

28. Provide insurance coverage
29. Supervise volunteers' work
30. Have a vision for volunteer involvement in your organization
31. Do not impose new policies and procedures without volunteers' input
32. Offer constructive criticism when appropriate
33. Ask volunteers themselves how the organization can show it cares
34. Permit volunteers to attend (for free) seminars, conferences and workshops from time to time
35. Give volunteers a proper induction
36. Celebrate the year's work together with a recognition dinner served by the young people
37. Offer to write volunteers letters of reference
38. Accept that different volunteers are able to offer different levels of involvement
39. Accept that an individual volunteer's ability to commit may change over time
40. Ask volunteers' opinions when developing new policies and strategies
41. Be sensitive to their other responsibilities, especially family
42. Make sure the pastor (especially in large organizations) shows her/his personal appreciation of the volunteers' work
43. Pass on any positive comments about volunteers from clients to the volunteers themselves
44. Provide the opportunity for 'leave of absence'
45. Add volunteers to memo and e-mail distribution lists
46. Set solid goals for volunteers and keep communicating them
47. Provide car or bike parking for volunteers
48. Give the volunteer a title which reflects the work they do (not just 'volunteer')
49. Consider providing, or paying for, child care for volunteers who are parents
50. Inform the local press about the excellent work of your volunteers
51. Undertake individual supervision and support sessions
52. Always be courteous
53. Nominate one of your volunteers as a "Volunteer of the Year" for the diocesan recognition dinner
54. Maintain regular contact with volunteers, even if they work 'off-site' or at odd hours
55. Allow volunteers to 'get out' without feeling guilty
56. Keep volunteers informed of changes in structure and personnel
57. Provide adequate clothing and name badges if appropriate

58. Use quotes from volunteers in leaflets and annual reports
59. Devote resources (time and money) to volunteer support
60. Count up how many hours volunteers contribute and publicize this information
61. Ensure all paid staff and trainees know how to work effectively with volunteers
62. Provide accredited training
63. Hang a volunteer photo board in a prominent position
64. Give volunteers the opportunity to evaluate their own performance and role
65. Do not overwhelm volunteers
66. Build volunteers' self-esteem by giving them a sense of ownership of their work
67. Always be appreciative of volunteers' contributions
68. Ensure volunteers have adequate space and equipment to do their work
69. Provide excellent training and coaching
70. Recognize that volunteers play a unique role
71. Focus on the problem, if there is one, not the personality of the volunteer
72. Create two-way communication processes
73. Have occasional lunches, dinners, barbecues, picnics, etc
74. Create a volunteer notice board
75. Set up a volunteers forum
76. Allow volunteers to get involved in solving problems
77. Pray for them daily and tell them you do
78. Review the progress of volunteers on a regular basis
79. Reimburse out-of-pocket expenses
80. Conduct an exit interview when a volunteer leaves
81. Have a 'volunteer voice' section in your newsletter or on your website
82. Be honest at all times
83. Provide constructive appraisal
84. Make volunteers feel good about themselves
85. Don't treat volunteers as 'second class citizens'
86. Ensure confidentiality for your volunteers
87. Provide volunteers with a 'rights and responsibilities' charter
88. Don't bully them into doing tasks which they have made clear they don't want to do
89. Ensure you have adequate support skills yourself
90. Ask why volunteers are leaving or have left

91. Throw a volunteers party
92. Use surveys as a way of eliciting your volunteers' views
93. Provide free refreshments during coffee and tea breaks
94. Celebrate United Nations International Volunteer Day (5 December each year)
95. Suggest sources of help and support for personal problems
96. Allow volunteers to air legitimate grievances and make sure they are dealt with swiftly
97. Encourage them to sit on committees and attend meetings
98. Ensure a safe and healthy working environment
99. Allow volunteers to take on more challenging responsibilities
100. Make sure that every volunteer has equal access to support