



5 EASY STEPS TO BUILD A STRONG ADULT VOLUNTEER TEAM FOR YOUR YOUTH MINISTRY

**FACTS AND FICTION ABOUT ADULT VOLUNTEERS IN
YOUTH MINISTRY**

FACTS & FICTION ABOUT VOLUNTEERS

FACT #1

YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN YOUR SEARCH FOR VOLUNTEERS

Most non-profit organizations, charities or ministries need volunteers because they cannot afford employees; therefore they rely on the generosity of people to step forward out of the goodness of their hearts to volunteer. Last year in the US there were over 1 million charities registered.

PEOPLE ACTUALLY DO VOLUNTEER

Last year, 62 million people volunteered in some way. People volunteer based on their interests and you can be assured that the number one place that a parent would volunteer would be a place that could help their teenage sons or daughters.

FACT #2

FACT #3

YOU CAN HAVE AN AWESOME VOLUNTEER TEAM!

Many people think Youth Ministry should all fall on the shoulders of one youth minister. Youth Ministry is always more effective and works better with more people helping you out; it is not meant to be a one man or one woman show.

BUILDING A TEAM TAKES TIME, EFFORT, PATIENCE & PRAYER

You are not just trying to “Recruit Volunteers” to make your life easier or your organization run efficiently. If that was the case you could read tons of articles and attend seminars on Volunteer Recruitment Techniques. You are trying to do something different. You are building a team of volunteers.

FACT #4

TOP REASONS WHY WE DON'T HAVE MORE VOLUNTEERS

YOUTH MINISTRY SURVEY

A few years ago, we conducted a survey among youth ministers around the country. It was beautiful to see what is in their hearts. They all wanted the very best for their youth in the areas of deep formation and awesome activities. The most common problem stated was that many lacked sufficient volunteers to really make that happen. We then asked them why they felt they lacked a strong volunteer team. We took the most common responses and broke it down to offer some advice on how to solve the issues. Perhaps one or more of these obstacles and solutions could apply to your youth ministry group.

“I THINK I CAN MANAGE ON MY OWN”

You can probably do certain things better than other people, maybe even better than all of the volunteers in your group. You probably have more experience, which makes you a better leader. The best leaders are those who have completed tasks that they are asking others to do. We are all limited in our time -24 hours in a day- and capacity to do everything. When you take on too much, you do nothing well. On the flip side, no task is too great or burden too heavy when shared by a great number of people. If this is the obstacle: Recognize your limits and begin to teach others to enjoy the things that you have enjoyed doing for so long.



**NO ONE
CAN DO
EVERYTHING
BUT
EVERYONE
CAN DO
SOMETHING**

“I DON'T WANT TO ASK IN CASE THEY FEEL OBLIGATED. I DON'T LIKE PLACING BURDENS ON OTHER PEOPLE.”

You have to keep in mind that there is a big difference between burdening someone with something or offering the person an opportunity. The difference is all about where that person's heart and interests lie. The highest reward for a person's actions is not what they get for it, but what they become because of it. Working in your youth group can be a transforming opportunity for many men and women. Many moms and dads understand their teens better, meet good long lasting like-minded friends, and grow in their faith. We have heard the Gospel

saying that there is more joy in giving than in receiving. This is a mystery, but in most cases when you stretch your heart and give time to others there is a profound joy that comes from a selfless act. If this is the obstacle you feel or you face, a good rule of thumb is to realize that God places people in your path for a reason. Just invite them and be totally honest with them about time commitment. If they can, they will probably say yes and if they cannot, they will probably say no. But at least you asked them and left them to decide freely.

“I’VE ASKED BEFORE AND EVERYONE HAS SAID NO. WHY SHOULD I TRY AGAIN?”

Sometimes we have our hearts set on one particular person for a role within the group because we think that he or she would be perfect. In reality, God may have someone else in mind. We may need a “no” from one person, so as to open us to someone else’s “yes”.

“I WORKED HARD AND BUILT A TEAM IN THE PAST BUT IT ONLY LASTED A YEAR. PEOPLE GOT BUSY AND MOVED ON. I SPENT MORE TIME WORKING WITH PARENTS THAN WITH THE TEENS AND THAT IS NOT WHAT I SIGNED UP FOR.”

Your volunteer team will change every year. That is a fact. Some people will last longer than others, based on how many years their sons or daughters are in the group. Life throws us changes we don’t expect all the time. The best we can do is try to expect the curveballs to come. Make sure everyone works with a small team. For the most part, people like to work with their friends so pair them up in tasks. That way someone will be able to take over if another person needs to move on. The reality is that a youth minister is called to work with adult volunteers for the good of the teens involved. Training others and inspiring them to work with youth is probably the toughest part of the job.

Another reality of working with any group of people who interact regularly is that conflict can arise when and there are a lot of different personalities and temperaments that sometimes do not mix well. Everything happens for a reason. Sometimes we have the wrong people in the wrong volunteer roles and God wants us to see that.

STEPS FOR BUILDING A STRONG VOLUNTEER TEAM

**REMEMBER — AS A YOUTH GROUP LEADER YOU ARE A TEAM BUILDER —
FOR BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS**

TEAM: By definition, it is a group of people working together and united to reach a common goal. You are not trying to simply get individuals to take on tasks. They need to understand that they are part of a team from day one and that they have each other to rely on and work with to achieve their common goal. Teams have different players, with different talents and roles. The common goal is what will unite them in their work, help them rise above their differences, persevere, etc. That goal is providing a good place and opportunity for their sons and daughters to get to know Christ and grow in their faith.

BUILDING: A builder maps things out, finds the right “pieces” and makes sure it is put together in a solid way. Your role as a team builder is to map out what is needed and have the vision and master plan in mind. Try to find the right people for the right places on the team. Make sure you put it all together and keep them cemented together “firmly in Christ”.

STEP 1 BELIEVE.



Believe that you are not meant to do this alone. Believe that this is an opportunity for people to be generous and answer God’s call to a mission.

“Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find.” God wants this and it will happen. There are people out there that he wants involved, and you to be the instrument to invite them.

STEP 2 **KNOW THE NEEDS.**

Know what you are trying to build. Know what positions need to be filled. Know what you need the team to learn and do. Setup a framework then fill it in. It helps to sit down and map out your team.

Take your plan of activities for the year in your hands and write down a list of people and responsibilities they would have to make these activities happen. No help is too small. No task is too large if divided up among enough people.

**VOLUNTEERS
DO NOT NECCESARILY
HAVE THE TIME.
BUT THEY HAVE THE
HEART.**

STEP 3 **GET THE WORD OUT & INVITE PEOPLE.**

Start looking at your list of parents and volunteers. Look in your parish or school to see the people God places in your path and then invite them. Not many volunteers show up on your doorstep. You'll need to get the word out that you need help. You can do this through a mass email to your youth group or maybe through the parish or school. You can also get the word out to people by hosting a parents' information night at the beginning of the year where you list off all the opportunities in the group for adult volunteering. Get to know the people who are part of your youth group - parents, teachers, etc. - and get to know their talents. Maybe one of the parents in the group is a web developer or professional photographer. All you have to worry about is making the needs clear, inviting people and let God do the rest.

STEP 4 **ONCE ON THE TEAM. GIVE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS.**

Once they have decided to volunteer, explain to them their role and tasks very clearly. Let them know what to expect from the youth group and what it is like to work with teens. Share with them the goals of the group and let them know that you do not strive for having the group run like a perfectly oiled machine, but rather a place where kindness and team work reign. Introduce them to everyone on the team so they know who they are working alongside.

STEP 5 **MOTIVATION, APPRECIATION, COMMUNICATION.**

Understanding why someone is volunteering can be very important to help motivate and encourage them along the way. Don't forget to show your appreciation for the volunteers. A thank you can go a long way. Share with the other volunteers the successes of their team members so that they learn to appreciate each other. Communication should be something that is clear, frequent and personal. Try to have monthly meetings where the volunteers can gather together and even try some team building activities to bring them closer together. Get them a small award at the end of the year the teens actually present to them. These are all opportunities to build a strong volunteer team for your group.

Finally, do not forget to pray and even sacrifice for your generous volunteers. God's grace is unlimited, and with purity of intention, you will have success!