

# Building a Volunteer

A strong volunteer team results from intentional recruiting, careful screening, discerning when to say yes or no to certain people, and time in prayer. As we remember our purpose to create a safe ministry where children and adults can learn and grow spiritually while expressing joy, we move patiently through the process of growing our Youth and Family Ministry on a solid foundation.

To build a strong volunteer team, take time to go through these six steps.

1. Defining the Needs
2. Recruiting
3. Screening and Interviewing
4. Orientation and Training
5. Supervising
6. Recognizing



*This article is a condensation of one of the chapters in the new Youth and Family Ministry Guide that is under development for the Association of Unity Churches International by a team of Youth and Family Ministry Directors. Only the first three steps in building your team are briefly described here. Watch Education Links and [www.unity.org](http://www.unity.org) for an announcement on when the new guide can be ordered, probably this fall.*

—Anna Andes, CSE, LUT  
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As you help others spiritually and in every way, you not only fulfill the law of giving and receiving, you develop your own resources and

capabilities in fuller measure. By helping others under the guidance of the Spirit of truth you at the same time help yourself.

—Myrtle Fillmore

## Step 1: Defining the Needs

Whether you have a small or large youth ministry, begin by identifying the needs of your program. What tasks are essential to conducting a meaningful Sunday morning youth program? List the actual tasks that volunteers are needed for. Remember the tasks that need to occur before Sunday as well.

These are suggested requirements for your church or program to consider when selecting volunteers.

- Six months regular attendance at your church (Recommend requiring this as a safety measure)
- An understanding of Unity principles demonstrated in some way such as having completed a “Lessons in Truth” class
- Love and acceptance for children/teens
- Willingness and desire to be of service to children/teens/families
- Willingness to work in a team
- A background check for all who work directly with children or teens
- Willingness to commit (2 Sundays per month) for 6 months or a year
- A completed application

## Step 2: Recruiting

Here are some ways to consider. Be creative and enjoy the recruitment process. Know that your passion and enthusiasm will motivate others to want to be a part of the program.

1. Gather names of potential volunteers.
2. Announce the needs during a service and offer a short informational meeting afterwards or have them meet you near the exit. In the bulletin include an “Interest Inquiry” sheet and promptly call those who return it to answer their questions.
3. Have a mature youngster or another teacher make the announcement. Be sure to assist this person with exactly what to say and help them practice. This could be a “testimonial” about the joys and fun of being in youth ministry.
4. Hold a volunteer fair after a service with each church area represented that needs volunteers. People can visit each of the tables to learn about a variety of volunteering opportunities. At the youth ministry table, display pictures of your volunteers in action. Have some of them present to share what they do.
5. Encourage and arrange for an interested individual to visit a class.
6. Wear a button that says “Ask me about Youth Ministry!” Then be ready to promote your program to anyone who asks.
7. Feature youth ministry for 8-10 minutes during a service. Honor current volunteers in front of the congregation. Possibly show pictures of children doing interesting things in youth ministry. Include in the bulletin an “Interest Inquiry” sheet offering ways a person can support youth ministry.

## Step 3: Screening and Interviewing

1. Ask everyone interested in volunteering to complete an application.
2. Review the application carefully. You may want to schedule a date and specific time for an interview. Or you may want to call the references before scheduling – both personal ones and other churches where the applicant volunteered.
3. The interview provides an opportunity for the volunteer to learn about the different needs in the program and where they might best serve. Before the interview, write a list of what you want to discuss. Then write the thoughts as specific open-ended questions for the candidate to answer.
4. Conduct the interview.
  - Welcome the potential volunteer warmly. Use good eye contact and body language to establish rapport and make them feel at ease. Begin with prayer.
  - Ask specific open-ended questions and listen carefully to their response.
  - Offer them the opportunity to ask questions about the youth program.
  - Explain any policies that apply to this volunteer position such as a background check.
  - Briefly explain training and support offered.
  - At the appropriate time, give them a clear indication of whether or not you are interested in them and a projected date for a final decision. End the interview by thanking them for their interest and effort.
5. Prayerfully consider each applicant. Listen to your intuition and guidance.
6. Conduct background checks before offering the person the job.
7. Offer the position. Once the volunteer accepts, both parties sign a Volunteer Agreement that describes the responsibilities and agreement.
8. Schedule the observation and orientation with them so they are clear when they begin.