



How to ...

Recruit new children's/youth volunteers

The heartbeat of any church is the faithful team of volunteers who undertake roles and tasks faithfully and diligently as part of their commitment to their church and their relationship with God. Recruiting volunteers for any role, from a Sunday School leader, someone who makes refreshments after a service to a Church treasurer, needs careful consideration and preparation. Here are some helpful tips to get you thinking when enlisting a new volunteer, especially in a youth or children's work context...

1. ASK:

Vague desperate appeals read out from the pulpit do not work. "We need someone, anybody PLEASE?" is not a great pitch and beside which it gives a potential volunteer the idea that they are just being thrown at a problem rather than recruited to a ministry! Pray, think, reflect and ask specific people and affirm them saying that you notice the skills, gifts and potential that is desirable for the role

2. GIVE DETAILS:

We all have heard about or know someone who got suckered into being a role and there was NO escape unless they a) died or b) moved away! So if you do ask someone, let them know the expectations and timescale!

3. DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS:

Think wider than just young 20 year old leaders and the newlywed couple, especially for youth work. There are great volunteers of all ages who exude wisdom, passion and commitment.

4. BUILD TEAMS:

No one wants to be passed a crisis, however people do enjoy joining functional envisioned teams that enjoy what they do. In a good team people grow and develop in their faith, that's attractive. Teams allow you to recruit a more diverse mix of people too so greater pool to draw from.

5. PRESENT VISION:

People don't respond to vague need; they respond to Vision. They also respond even more to thought-out vision that has some practical framework, e.g. "We have built relationships with a great group of 11-14's and now have an opportunity to run a Youth Emmaus course and believe you could be a real blessing to that group and help to develop this ministry."

6. OVERCOME FEAR:

Remember that congregations are heavily influenced by media opinions of young people, they are often scared of them and at the very least think "*I could never talk to one of those TEENAGERS!*" *quake* So ask one or two people to help with a one-off specific event where they encounter the young people and may be surprised to find themselves in conversation with young people. Get the young people involved in running an event for the congregation that'll will break down some barriers.

7. RECRUIT SAFELY:

It is important to follow a safer recruitment procedure when recruiting volunteers. The Diocese regularly hosts Safer Recruitment training which explores the scope of Safer Recruitment procedures in the church context for both paid staff and volunteers who work with children and adults.

A full Safer Recruitment toolkit with template forms and role descriptions can be found on the diocesan website here: <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/PSO-resources/>

8. WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM:

What support, resourcing, training or budget can the volunteer expect? Is there demonstrated commitment from those doing the recruiting or is the volunteer just going to be left to it with no budget, framework or support!

Invest in creating a place where volunteers are supported, valued and encouraged. Meet with them occasionally to show your support. Have a group meal, an informal cup of tea, anything that will make them feel valued. If your support of volunteers is rubbish and no-one is allowed to ever retire from a job how do you expect anyone to give their time to volunteer?

9. VOLUNTEERS SUNDAY:

A great way to do this is creating a special service of thanksgiving for all the voluntary workers in your church. You can list all the areas where people help out from flower arranging, brass cleaning to prayer ministry, visiting teams and youth/children's work. People can be interviewed, displays made and details given out on how to get involved etc. You could also create some humorous awards that affirm them in their roles too.

10. IF YOU NEED MORE HELP:

If you would like further advice exploring or expanding your children's youth ministry in your church, please contact Daniel Jones (Youth & Children's Adviser) to discuss this further on:

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