

Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers

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I've been asked a 'few' times about how to recruit volunteers so I thought I'd throw some stuff together from my experience to see if it was of any use.

1. ASK!

Vague desperate pleas read out by the rector 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.

2. 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 bunch of 11-14's and now have an opportunity to run an Youth Emmaus course with the older ones and believe you could be a real blessing to that group and help to develop this ministry!"

3. GIVE DETAILS

Remember the church has a really really bad history with volunteers for youth work i.e if you got suckered into being a leader of a group there was NO escape unless you a) died or b) moved away! So if you do ask someone, let them know the expectations and timescale!

4. DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Think wider than just trendy young 20's and the newly wed couple, there are great youthwork volunteers of all ages.

5. 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.

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

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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. OUR SIDE OF THE DEAL

What support, resourcing, training, 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 or framework!

There’s also a foundational stage. Have you created a place where volunteers are supported, valued and encouraged? Do the existing volunteers work with vision and creativity? If your support of existing volunteers is rubbish and no-one is allowed to EVER retire from a job then you’ve created a climate in which no-one would want to volunteer.