

Mobilizing Volunteers for Your Ministry

Goals:

- Create an environment of giftedness and stewardship in your parish
- Envision a system for volunteer management
- Enhance your current recruiting methods
- Explore new ways of mentoring and training volunteers
- Develop a pattern of celebrating and sustaining your volunteers



Our Thanks for Your Participation:

To show our gratitude for your participation today, we have several free resources for you from our Fashioning Faith and Youth Ministry Access subscription websites. You will also find the PowerPoints and Handouts from today's workshop on the site. Just visit www.cmdnet.org/movo!

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About the Center for Ministry Development:

The Center for Ministry Development provides training, resources and consultation for pastoral ministry and catechesis with youth, young adults, families, and the intergenerational community. Since 1978, Catholic parishes and dioceses have trusted CMD to provide a vision and practice for ministry that is rooted in Scripture, Church documents, and best practices research. Through our partnership with ministry leaders, CMD strives for excellence and innovation by providing practical, field-tested ministry solutions and resources.

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Morning Prayer



Gather

Song: *Gather Your People*

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Leader: Loving God, we gather today as the body of Christ in the world. We gather to thank you for the gift of volunteers in our lives and our ministries. We ask you to bless our time together, to open our hearts to whatever message you want us to hear, and to wrap us in your Spirit as we strive to be faithful stewards of the ministry with which you have entrusted us. We ask this with faith and hope in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Listen

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-21

Reflection

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, in his book *The Holy Longing*, points out that Scripture uses the expression the “Body of Christ” to mean three things: Jesus, the historical person who walked the earth for thirty-five years; the Eucharist, which is also the physical presence of God among us; and the body of believers, which is also the real presence. To say the word “Christ” is to refer, at one and the same time, to Jesus, the Eucharist, and the community of faith.

We are quite literally the Body of Christ. To say that the body of believers is the Body of Christ is very scriptural. St. Paul especially emphasizes that the body of believers does not *replace* Christ’s body, nor does it *represent* Christ’s body. It says simply: “We *are* Christ’s body.”

If it is true that we are the Body of Christ, and it is, then God’s presence in the world today depends very much upon us. We have to keep God present in the world in the same way as Jesus did. We have to become, as Teresa of Avila so simply put it, God’s physical hands, feet, mouthpiece, and heart in the world.

Respond

As the Body of Christ, each one of us has gifts to offer, but no one of us has all the gifts needed by our faith community. I invite you to reflect on one gift you have to offer, and one gift which you need someone else to bring to your ministry. After a few moments, share your gift and your need with one other person at your table.

Time for reflection and sharing.....

Leader: It takes courage, humility and compassion to be the Body of Christ here on earth. And so we pray...God, you are present here.

All: Help us to be open to the gifts each one of us possesses.

Leader: You offer us gifts each day.

All: May we be aware of them and willing to receive them.

Leader: You carry out your mission through many people.

All: May we see each other's helping hands as an extension of Jesus himself.

Leader: You have given different gifts to each one of us.

All: May we see this as a strength, not a weakness.

Leader: God, you made us interdependent.

All: Give us the courage to ask you and each other for what we need.

Leader: You invite each of us to be the Body of Christ on earth.

All: May we recognize Christ in one another.

Leader: You count on us to make the world a better place.

All: May we be open to your Spirit's presence in our lives so that we have the wisdom, humility, joy and love we need to do your work.

Send Forth

Leader: As a sign of our faith in the gifts of all members of the Body of Christ, let us conclude our prayer by writing the gift we shared earlier on the ribbon. Then tie the ribbon into a bow and place it over the "volunteer gift wrap" in the middle of your table.

Write your gift on the ribbon. Then as a community let us pray.

Leader: We will end our prayer by proclaiming four times, "We are the body of Christ." The first time, we will emphasize the word *we*, the second time the word *are*, the third time the word *body*, and the last time the word *Christ*. And each time we proclaim it, look into the eyes of that body gathered at your table.

**All: We are the body of Christ.
We *are* the body of Christ.
We are the *body* of Christ.
We are the body of *Christ*. Amen!**

Asking People isn't the First Step

Recruiting people isn't hard when potential volunteers:

- know about your need;
- are attracted to your mission;
- feel confident that their gifts will be well-used.

The problem for most ministers in the church is that they have never been trained as volunteer managers, and therefore can't even see the things that they could do to improve their success as a volunteer manager. Too often church ministers are not intentional about talking about what they are trying to accomplish, how people can help, and then offering parishioners opportunities to make a real difference.

Much has changed over the last two decades in society. This has implications for society, family life, the Church, and the way that people are willing to volunteer. It isn't that people are not willing to volunteer, but the days of unlimited volunteer hours are long gone.

A Portrait of My Volunteers



Number of volunteers I have today: _____

Number of volunteers I would have in the perfect world: _____

Number of new volunteers I gained this year: _____

Number of volunteers I lost over the past year: _____ Do you know why?

Average age of my volunteers (take a guess): _____

Greatest strengths/gifts of my current volunteers:

Missing gifts I need to find in new volunteers:

My greatest strength as a volunteer manager:

For me, getting volunteers is a a) joy; b) burden; c) necessity; d) fact of life.

I do best at this aspect of managing volunteers:

- ___ a. Recruiting them
- ___ b. Training them
- ___ c. Supporting/sustaining them

If I had to guess at the percent of my volunteers who also volunteer in another ministry, I would estimate that it is:

- ___ a. Less than 25%
- ___ b. 26% - 50%
- ___ c. 50%-75%
- ___ d. Almost all

If I had to choose one word or phrase to describe my overall volunteer management, it would be: _____ because _____.

There are enough gifted people in our parishes to cover all of the work which needs to get done. We should have an abundance mentality when we think of volunteers. But to get volunteers today, we need to:

- match people's gifts and interests to positions;
- honor their time;
- trust their abilities;
- treat them like they are worth even more than \$19.52 an hour (which is what appreciation studies say the average volunteer hour in America is worth);
- make volunteering life-giving and enjoyable.

We are asking people to give up their free time. We are competing with a golf game, attending a child's soccer practice, or reading a book. Those who volunteer usually do so because they find enjoyment in what you have asked them to do. Building in fun, community, and challenge will go a long way to helping people make your ministry a priority in their lives.

Before asking someone to help, it is important that you are ready for them.

Step 1: Getting Ready

Theology of Baptism

Pope John Paul II, in *Christifidelis Laici*, wrote:

"...every Christian is called to participate actively and co-responsibly in the Church's mission of salvation in the world..." ...the Holy Spirit pours out gifts which make it possible for every Christian man and woman to assume different ministries and forms of service that complement one another and are for the good of all."

Questions for you to consider in preparing to recruit volunteers include ones which ask how much your parish is ready to support and sustain them. Ask yourself:

- Do you keep the theology of baptism close to your heart when thinking about recruiting volunteers for your ministry?
- Is your parish a vibrant faith community? How are you contributing to making it so?
- Would your potential volunteers see themselves as saying "yes" to their baptismal call when you ask them for help? Ways to help them include:

- ➔ Holding intergenerational faith festivals for the whole parish community on the topic of baptism and baptismal call;
- ➔ Encouraging them to celebrate their baptismal dates at home;
- ➔ Keeping Eucharist central in all you do;
- ➔ Ending your sessions (from youth gatherings to catechetical sessions, from organization meetings to choir practice) at the baptismal font to remind parishioners that they are sent forth;
- ➔ Having a paragraph on the theology of baptism on the Volunteer Page of your parish website or facebook site;
- ➔ Using the language of baptismal call when recruiting volunteers.

Other things to consider include:

- the vibrancy of your ministry's mission statement (is it compelling?);
- how seriously your parish takes stewardship as a way of life for Catholic parishes and parishioners.

Reflect on the following aspects of stewardship as described by Bishop Robert Morneau of Green Bay, Wisconsin, at the Fashion Me A People Conference in Orlando in January of 2012:

1. Stewardship is about receiving God's gifts gratefully (radical gratitude).
2. It means nurturing God's gifts responsibly (a gift not used is a burden to bear).
3. It is sharing justly and sacrificially.
4. It is returning to God five or ten or 100-fold what has been given to us.

Consider what would happen if you asked every adult in the parish to undergo safe environment training, with the implicit understanding that each one of them will volunteer in some capacity over the course of the year – and you want them to be ready!

Why I Need, Want, and Have Volunteers

Pope John Paul II wrote in his encyclical *Christifideles Laici*:

Through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist every Christian is called to participate actively and co-responsibly in the Church's mission of salvation in the world. Moreover, in those same sacraments, the Holy Spirit pours out gifts which make it possible for every Christian man and woman to assume different ministries and forms of service that complement one another and are for the good of all. (no. 20)

My ultimate goal for having volunteers, in one (succinct) sentence, is:

The mission of my ministry, in one sentence, is:

To me, stewardship at its finest means:

Yes or No:

_____ Do I work hard to make our whole parish a more vibrant community of faith?

_____ Do I believe that inviting people to volunteer is inviting them to say yes to their baptismal call?

_____ Do I promote a "theology of baptism" in my ministry, especially when recruiting, training and sustaining my volunteers?

_____ Does my ministry have a shared, compelling vision and mission?

_____ Do I share the mission with others? Does the average parishioner in the pew know the mission/purpose of my ministry?

_____ Do I treat volunteers like they are worth \$19.52 an hour (the average cash value of volunteer work)?

Why Do You Need Volunteers?

As a church community, it is easy to assume that volunteers are necessary, and they are. But why? Is it only because a church could never afford to have paid staff able to do everything? What are the reasons why having volunteers is important to your church and your ministry? Articulating the value of having volunteers (other than as unpaid staff), helps you recruit volunteers. Here are some possible reasons why having volunteers is important:

- Volunteers provide for a diversity of skills, ideas, and experiences that are broader than the paid staff.
- Volunteers come in all ages, sizes, genders, colors, and lifestyles, a diversity that is a benefit to the parish and the ministry.
- Volunteers bring a passion for Church, God, and ministry that compels them to sacrifice their time and energy in service to others.
- Our baptismal call asks each person to contribute to the Church. Engaging volunteers in ministry allows them to live out their baptismal call.

It is important that you and your parish team take the time to name the reasons why involving volunteers is important to you. Write them down. Discuss them. Make sure that everyone agrees. This will help you as you move forward.

Prepare Yourself and Your Ministry

Is your ministry ready to have others involved? Or are you assuming that you need to do everything yourself? If you were to get other members of your community to be involved, would you know what to do with them? Would you be able to share leadership and responsibility? Would everyone get along?

Often the reason we can't get or keep volunteers is that we haven't done our homework to get ready for them.

- We don't know what we want them to do.
- We don't know how much of the job we are willing to give away.
- We make assumptions about other people's commitments so we are only willing to give away the work that doesn't matter that much, assuming that if it doesn't get done we can move forward anyway.

People will volunteer if we:

- give them meaningful work;
- honor their time;
- ensure that relationships between people (staff and volunteers) are positive;
- help them see the value of their volunteer work within the overall mission of our ministry.

There are a few people who will do anything you need, but most are looking for something more than stuffing envelopes or babysitting middle schoolers while the paid staff runs the program. Additionally, you may want to think about these questions to help you recognize that your need for volunteers is larger than you might even imagine...

- What are we doing now that we would like to do more of?
- What unmet needs do we have that we can't currently meet?
- What would support the staff in their work?
- What might we do differently if we have more skills or time available to us?

By thinking about these questions, you open yourself up to a greater variety of ways that parishioners could contribute to the ministries of your Church.

Break Jobs Down to Size

Every big activity has a multitude of jobs associated with it. The first step is to break the jobs up into meaningful, yet small, pieces and cluster the tasks into jobs that make sense. For instance, the person who creates the publicity might also help with the program booklet. The person who manages the food might also help with supply shopping. When creating volunteer jobs, you will be more successful if you are flexible, offering a variety of opportunities:

- Continuous or long-term - someone is needed every Sunday morning
- Short-term projects - lots of hours in a three-week period
- One-time projects - a one-day or one-hour commitment
- Things that a group of friends, or a family, could do
- Jobs that can be done off-site and at any hour
- Generalist work - anyone can do it
- Specialist work - someone needs training or specific skills to do it
- Work that is with people
- Behind the scenes work

Use the Leadership Tasks (Worksheet 3) to help break big jobs down to size **Write Job Descriptions**

Every job is made easier when there is a job description; the volunteer can refer to it to find out what is expected, what gifts are needed, and information about dates, times, and expectations. Use -Job Description Template (Worksheet 4) to describe the jobs you are asking people to assume.

Leadership Tasks

Program: _____

Leadership Tasks

Leadership Positions

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

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(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Position: _____

Leadership Tasks: _____
(Indicate numbers from column 1)

Job Description Template

1. **Program** _____
Job Title _____

2. **Leader Tasks to be Performed** (see Leader Tasks worksheet):

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

3. **Abilities Needed** (skills, attitudes, understandings):

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

4. **Length of Commitment**

Start Date: _____ Ending Date: _____

Meetings: _____

Orientation: _____

5. **Support and Supervision**

Who Provides Support: _____

When and Where (one-on-one, meetings): _____

Training and Preparation Offered for this Position (what, how, where, when):

6. **Benefits of the position**

To the volunteer leader: _____

To the community: _____

Completed by _____

Date _____

JOB DESCRIPTION—SOCIAL ACTIVITY LEADER

Program: Community Life Program

Responsibilities: Leader Tasks to be Performed

- Choose or design the community building activities
- Coordinate the practical logistics integral to the activity (e.g., supplies)
- Determine expenses and budget for the program
- Lead the activity
- Evaluate the program or event
- Report regularly to the CYM on the progress of the program

Qualifications: Abilities Needed

- Understanding of the growth and development of adolescents
- Designing and facilitating community building activities that are enjoyable, emphasize collaboration over competition, and allow young people to mix comfortably together
- Working with a team and delegating appropriate tasks with clear directions

Length of Commitment:

Six months to one year. Approximately three commitments (events or planning meetings) each month. All leaders will participate in planning meetings and the actual event. The amount of planning required will vary according to the kind of social activity being planned. Planning for simple events, like a video night or volleyball match, can be accomplished in a couple of meetings. Planning for more complex events, such as a 20-mile bike hike or parent/youth dinner, would demand a greater involvement of time.

Training Required:

For new social activity leaders, a one-session workshop will be offered.

Responsible To:

Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Supervision/Support:

Participation in activity planning meetings; regular contact with the Community Life Coordinator or Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Benefits of the Position to the Volunteer Leader:

Opportunity to relate with youth and adults in a relaxed, fun atmosphere;
Chance to share personal interests and abilities with the parish community;
Opportunity to receive support of other adult leaders.

JOB DESCRIPTION—CATECHIST

Program: Religious Education Program

Responsibilities: Leader Tasks to be Performed

- Teach/facilitate the learning program
- Use and adapt the learning materials provided
- Contact youth who miss sessions
- Evaluate the learning program
- Report to the DRE on the progress of the program

Qualifications: Abilities Needed

- Competence in using the shared Christian praxis learning methodology
- Skills in using multimedia in a learning program
- Willingness and ability to speak with conviction about his or her own experiences and convictions as a Catholic Christian
- Understanding adolescent growth and development, especially faith growth
- Leading a group discussion and facilitating faith sharing activities
- Leading prayer experiences
- Understanding the content of the course

Length of Commitment:

- **Service from:** September 1 to November 15
- **Meetings:** Two planning meetings in September; six teaching sessions (Oct 1-Nov 15); one catechist support meeting; one evaluation meeting
- **Required Training:** For new catechists – two workshops in September

Training Required:

Two planning meetings and two pre-service workshops for new catechists (only) in September; all catechists will diagnose additional needs for learning and develop a learning plan in consultation with the DRE.

Responsible To:

Director of Religious Education

Supervision/Support:

Catechist support group meeting; weekly contact with DRE

Benefits of the Position to the Volunteer Leader:

Opportunity to share your faith with youth;
Opportunity to guide youth in their growth as Catholic Christians;
Challenge to grow as an adult Catholic;
Opportunity to receive the support of other adult leaders.

JOB DESCRIPTION—DOOR GREETER

Program: Weekly Youth Group

Responsibilities: Leader Tasks to be Performed

- Welcome young people to the youth group meetings
- Learn and remember young people's names and other information about them
- Reach out to new people – acclimate them to the group and introduce them to a peer leader

Qualifications: Abilities Needed

- Good with names
- Deep love and appreciation for youth
- Outgoing and friendly
- Self-confident and able to reach out to others

Length of Commitment:

Weekly commitment on Wednesday nights. Needed from 6:30–7:30 PM each week (but are welcome to stay for entire program). Six month commitment is needed.

Training Required:

An orientation to the Youth Ministry Program; a mentored period with those currently in the role to assist in learning names and information about the young people.

Responsible To:

Youth Group Coordinator

Supervision/Support:

Regular contact with the Youth Group Coordinator; a six month evaluation meeting.

Benefits of the Position to the Volunteer Leader:

Opportunity to know young people and play an important role in their involvement in the Youth Group; opportunity to relate to other adults in the program.

MEAL COORDINATOR

Program: Intergenerational Faith Festival

Responsibilities:

- Work with Lifelong Faith Formation Coordinator to plan meals for all sessions.
- On Core Team, attend planning meetings, contribute to overall design of the Sessions
- Over-see some of the meals during faith festivals – provide help in the set-up, preparation, serving, and clean-up; help train volunteers to serve in this role
- Facilitate the work of the meal team in serving the meals

Qualifications/Abilities Needed:

- Good cook; ability to plan nutritious, inexpensive meals for large groups
- Ability to coordinate the work of volunteers
- Strong organizational skills
- Good group member
- Ability to train and empower other team members to over-see meals

Length of Commitment:

- One-year commitment to Core Team
- Core Team meetings twice prior to each IG Session; additional evaluation meeting at the end of the year (9 meetings)
- Meeting at least once prior to each session with Lifelong Faith Coordinator (4 meetings)
- Participation in at least one day of each Session (4 Sessions)

Training Required:

- Core Team members will receive an orientation to intergenerational faith formation and to the workings of the Core Team from Amy XXX. Amy will work directly with the Meal Coordinator to provide an orientation to the current practice and the resources that are available.
- Protecting God's Children Workshop

Resources Provided:

- Volunteers to help in the preparation, serving, and clean-up of meals

Responsible To:

Amy XXX, Lifelong Faith Formation Coordinator

Supervision/Support:

Core Team will receive regular opportunities for feedback and evaluation at Core Team meetings. The Coordinator will provide individual support.

Benefits of the Position to the Volunteer Leader:

You will have the appreciation of happy and full participants! Core Team Members will have the opportunity to affect the over-all quality of the program and will grow in their own understanding of the Catholic faith. Also, the Core Team is an excellent community – a fun group to work with.

Getting People to Volunteer

A good starting point is your own experience as a volunteer. Reflect on these questions:

- What did you last volunteer to do?
- Why did you volunteer?
- Did you see it as connected to your baptismal call?

Volunteers have many different reasons for giving of their time. Their motivations most often fall into one of these categories:

1. Change the world
2. Looks good on resumé
3. Sense of achievement
4. Challenge
5. Increased responsibility
6. Recognition
7. Sense of growth and development
8. Transferable skills
9. Way to practice stewardship

How to Mobilize Church Volunteers, Marlene Wilson, page 35.

Who are Our Volunteers?

65 and up – Retiring Professional

- Wanted to change the world in the 1960s;
- Still want to contribute in a meaningful way;
- Willing to make a commitment;
- Have time to contribute;
- May not feel like they have something special to share.

45-65

- May be still parenting youth or young adult children and taking on new roles with aging parents;
- Experience in being Boy Scout or Girl Scout leaders, PTA leaders, and coordinators of school fundraisers;
- Time may be opening up from their years of child-raising;
- Skilled at their jobs and have professional experience to share.

30-45

- Single, married, and/or raising children;
- Most likely to be beginning careers, raising families, and otherwise trying to make a place for themselves in the world;
- Most in need of feeling like they can contribute to and are needed by their faith community;
- Time is most likely limited;
- Would like to make a contribution that will be meaningful.

18-30 - Millennial Generation

- Voracious volunteers when given the opportunity to make a difference;
- Looking for a cause and a way to belong;
- Looking for a chance to participate in group projects and to learn through their volunteer experiences.
- Need for creativity in the ways that we tap into their gifts and give them opportunities to do things in their own way and time.

Children-18

- Many ways that youth and children can contribute in meaningful ways to the parish community;
- Need to feel trusted with more than just the jobs that no one else wants;
- Often have mandatory volunteer hours for school (or confirmation) to contribute.

Families

- Important to offer volunteer opportunities to families;
- Teaches children that service is part of lifelong discipleship.

Ask yourself:

1. Have you consciously looked at all age groups as potential volunteers?
2. Which age group do you tap the most for volunteering?
3. Which age group intrigues you as potential volunteers?

“Sins” in Volunteer Recruitment

1. **Expect announcements to get volunteers.** Make announcements, put things in the bulletin and newsletters, but do not expect people to call you.
2. **Go it alone.** You only know so many people so you need a team to help you recruit. It is not who you know, it is who they know.
3. **Recruit only volunteers who can make a long-term commitment.** Variety is essential if you want to attract a lot of people. Short-term commitments provide an opportunity for a volunteer to check out your ministry and leadership style and allows you to check out the volunteer as well. People will be afraid to say yes if they think that they will have to hold this job for the next ten years.
4. **Assume that “no” means “never.”** Lots of people will say no the first time you ask, but usually that just means that you caught them at a bad time or asked them for a job in which they are not interested. Use a “no” as an opportunity to get to know the person better and what might turn a “no” into a “yes”.
5. **Recruit anyone.** If you are willing to take just anyone for a job, why would someone want to be involved? Be selective in getting the right people for the right jobs and over time people will experience your invitation as a compliment.
6. **Ask busy people to do busywork.** Ask people to do things that are important and in their areas of interest. Don’t ask them to do meaningless jobs.
7. **Lead with a negative.** Why would anyone say “yes” if you make the volunteer position sound dreadful?
8. **“Guilt” people into saying yes.** Instead, give people the opportunity to pray about it and discern if this is where God is calling them.
9. **Not following up when people do volunteer.** It is vital that you follow up in a timely way when people fill out a form (when they register in the parish, during Stewardship Sunday, etc.) and offer their services.

(Adapted from *The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer* by Jonathan McKee and Thomas W. McKee, pp. 34-47)

Instead of “sinning” in recruiting volunteers, remember that inviting people to share their gifts with the faith community is a genuine opportunity for evangelization. You are bringing the Good News of Jesus into their lives by asking them to contribute. And your attitude should be one of joy!

Step 2: Inviting Leaders

Strategies for Recruitment

- ➔ **General Recruitment**
General recruitment can be done at the start of a religious education year, a youth ministry launch program, new parishioner packets, stewardship Sunday events, and any other time that you broadly invite parishioners (young and older) to fill out forms and state that they are willing and able to volunteer for ministry.

- ➔ **Specific Recruitment**
Specific recruitment is done after you have organized and scheduled specific programs, activities, and events. Specific recruitment includes putting information in newsletters, bulletins, and other strategies to recruit leaders for the positions needed for those programs.

- ➔ **Targeted Recruitment**
In a survey of church members about volunteering, a majority said that they would say “yes” to being involved in a ministry program. When asked why they were not involved, the overwhelming response was “because I haven’t been asked.” In targeted recruitment, we call people, stop them after Mass, or otherwise invite them to help – in a specific, gift-based invitation to make a difference in the ministry.

Dating vs. Marriage

When asking people to volunteer, perhaps we should ask them out on a “first date,” instead of asking them to marry us. Too often we try to get people to say yes to being a catechist, a youth ministry volunteer, a member of the choir, a parish council member, or a million other jobs before they even know what their yes means.

- **First Date:** have a conversation, listen to their hearts, share stories;
- **Second Date:** Ask them to come and see what you are all about; give them an interesting job or someone fun to shadow; include them and make them feel welcome; observe how they do; talk to them about their experience;
- **Commitment:** Don’t propose “marriage” until you are sure that the person is a good fit to your ministry.

Assess Your Current Recruitment Efforts

Reflect on how you currently recruit volunteers for your ministry, using Worksheet 9 to do so.

My Volunteer Recruitment

1. I usually recruit volunteers:
 1. Right before I need them.
 2. Seasonally.
 3. I am always recruiting new people, even when I don't need them immediately.

2. My favorite method of recruitment is:
 1. Personal conversation and invitation.
 2. Phone calls.
 3. Email.
 4. Bulletin announcements.
 5. Posting on parish website and facebook.
 6. Other _____

3. I would say that my volunteer recruitment efforts are:
 1. Very effective.
 2. Moderately effective.
 3. In need of major overhaul.

4. I identify the gifts needed before I recruit volunteers who have those gifts:
 1. All of the time.
 2. Usually.
 3. Occasionally.
 4. I've never done that.

5. The gifts most needed for volunteers in my ministry include:

6. I would say that with regard to ethnicity, age, and type of gifts they bring, my volunteers are:
 1. Very diverse.
 2. Somewhat diverse.
 3. Too homogeneous.

Utilize the Jesus Method

Jesus recruited volunteers through:

- Personal invitation;
- A compelling mission;
- Honesty;
- Great benefits (think of the call of the 70 disciples).

More than anything else, Jesus used the one-on-one personal invitation to invite people into apostleship.

Other Avenues for Invitation

When developing your recruitment plan, consider the following avenues to invite involvement:

➔ **Want Ads**

Create “want ads” and post descriptions of “Opportunities to Serve” or “Avenues for Action” in the Sunday bulletin, parish newsletter, at the Church entrance, and in the parish social hall.

➔ **Presentations to Parish Organizations**

Ask for fifteen minutes on the agenda with each organization in your parish. Briefly share the vision and purposes of your ministry. Provide examples for ways that the organization could support your ministry and how individual members could become involved.

➔ **Recruitment Teams**

Gather people who can help you to invite others into ministry positions. These people should be friendly, outgoing, and well-connected.

➔ **Personal Recommendations**

Ask everyone on staff to recommend good people. Ask the young people you know, their parents, members of RCIA, the seniors groups, and anyone else to help you get to know the talents of the people of your parish.

➔ **New Parishioner Packet**

Include information about your ministry in a new parishioner welcome packet. Make sure you have a way to get information from whoever collects and processes these packets so that you will know who expresses an interest in your ministry. Contact new families to welcome them to the parish. Offer support in their transition to a new community, and invite their involvement in your current efforts.

- **Stewardship Sunday/Ministry Fair**
On Stewardship Sunday, have a booth in which your ministry is celebrated and described. Have written job descriptions for all of the volunteer positions which you have – even those which don't need filling at the present moment.
- **Gifts Discernment Workshop/Retreat**
Hold a workshop or retreat in which you help parishioners discern their gifts for ministry. Some potential resources include:
 - www.spiritgivingifts.com
 - *Strength Finders*
 - Catherine of Siena Institute <http://www.siena.org/Called-Gifted/called-a-gifted>

Interview Questions

Every perspective volunteer should be interviewed. The following questions can help in the process of the interview. The goal is to find out what the person likes to do and what gifts they have to share. Then, and only then, can you place them well within your ministry (or another parish ministry).

- What were some of the things you liked about your last volunteer job?
- What skills would you most like to use in your volunteer work?
- Are you comfortable in leadership roles?
- Do you enjoy serving on committees?
- What do you dislike doing?
- What work settings appeal to you?
- How much time would you like to donate?
- What do you need from the parish (or me as the ministry leader) to be successful as a volunteer?

No matter what recruitment methods you use, always be open in sharing your passion for your ministry!

Step 3: Preparing/Training Leaders

Balancing Training and Formation

When you plan your training, always remember to include formation as well as information. Balance the two, but never look at them as separate entities. Weave formation into all of your training efforts through things like:

- Prayer and theological reflection;
- Faith-sharing in each training session;
- Ongoing spiritual support.

Orientation

Orientation provides:

- an overview of the entire program or ministry in which the volunteer will be working – the BIG picture;
- how individual roles function in relation to the larger organization;
- clarification of policy, procedures, roles, lines of communication, and boundaries of authority.

One way to provide orientation is to develop a volunteer manual which outlines the mission and goals of the ministry, the leadership structure, and general policy and procedures. The manual may include names and phone numbers for key contact people within the organization.

Androgogy

Important understandings about adult learning were developed by Dr. Malcolm Knowles, who coined the term *androgogy* to describe a teaching methodology for adults. Dr. Knowles challenges the common assumption about education – that if we simply pour enough knowledge into people:

- 1) they will turn out to be good people;
- 2) they will know how to make use of their knowledge.

We must define the mission of education as producing competent people – people who are able to apply their knowledge under changing conditions...

Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education – From Pedagogy to Androgogy*, (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Cambridge Adult Education, 1988), pages 18-19.

Using the principles of androgogy in training, we can:

- direct learning to close the gap between what the learners now know and what they need to know in order to do what they want to be able to do;
- help adults engage in learning projects all the time;
- create a cadre of self-motivated learners because learning is connected to their commitments and roles;
- help adults see themselves as lifelong faith learners because they see the connections between learning and their contributions.

Mentoring

Most good ministers have learned on the job. For many, that means that they had someone who mentored them. Mentoring is the most popular method of providing training to volunteers. We figure out what they already know how to do, and then teach them the rest, in the midst of the program or event we are doing.

Good mentors are good coaches. Good coaches have these values as part of the way they interact with volunteers:

1. Clarity – a strong sense of direction and purpose.
2. Supportiveness – a commitment to stand with the person and the team.
3. Confidence Building – a commitment to build and sustain the self-image of each team member.
4. Mutuality – a true partnership orientation.
5. Perspective – An unflappable focus on the overall ministry and how each piece fits together.
6. Risk – the encouragement of effort that reduces punishment for mistakes and encourages learning in all things.
7. Patience – a view of time and performance that equitably balances learning and ministry demands.
8. Involvement – a genuine commitment to allow team members to control their work.
9. Confidentiality – the ability to keep confidences.
10. Respect – a commitment to value and see the treasure in all people.

From Coaching, Mentoring, and Managing: Breakthrough Strategies to Solve Performance Problems and Build Winning Teams by William Hendricks (editor), pp. 2-29.

Training

Current studies tell us that adults want just-in-time training, not training for something they may (or may not) do in the distant future. Training can help volunteers learn missing skills or insights, and develop their overall understanding of your ministry, Church teaching, leadership skills, etc. Training can be achieved in a variety of ways:

1. National and diocesan programs.
2. Workshops at the parish.
3. Training events in the midst of program planning.
4. Online training.
5. Resources for at-home learning (in print or podcasts).
6. Retreats or prayer services.

Formation

Formation involves the spiritual and relational aspect of leadership development. It includes time for such things as:

- Faith-sharing
- Community building
- Communal prayer

The focus is on deepening one's identity as a person of faith in ministry, developing positive working relationships, and creating a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the ministry. It may also provide ongoing reflection on the mission and goals of the program. The focusing question may be, "Who and what are we about as people of faith ministering within the parish?"

Training Volunteers

1. What training are you currently providing to your volunteers?

- a. Online _____

- b. Workshops _____

- c. Mentoring/Shadowing _____

- d. Reading _____

- e. Formation _____

- f. Other _____

2. What training would you like to incorporate into your volunteer management?

3. What formation would you like to add to your training?

Step 4: Nurturing Volunteers

“We can’t give what we don’t have.” This old saying is true, and it reminds us that our volunteers can’t continue to give if they aren’t being fed and supported themselves. We don’t want a situation like that of a bucket with a hole on the bottom!

Your Experience

When thinking about how to nurture your volunteers, remember what kept you going when you volunteered. Reflect on the following:

- What was/is the best volunteer experience you’ve had?
- What sustained/fed/kept you going in that experience?

Leadership Needed

Situational Leadership Theory teaches us that there are four basic styles of leadership:

1. Directive
2. Supportive
3. Coaching
4. Delegating

Each person has a preferred style of leading, and no one is “better” than the others. But to keep your volunteers, it’s important to assess the type of leadership they need at any given time in their tenure as volunteers. The style needs to match the volunteers’ need for support and the amount of commitment and competence they have. For example, directive leading is appropriate for rookies, but may insult and offend long-term volunteers. A delegating style, on the other hand, would leave rookies feeling lost and confused.

Supporting and Sustaining Volunteers

Supporting and sustaining your volunteers includes the following:

- **Affirmation of their work.** This should happen, not just once a year, but often.
- **Increase their responsibility.** As they become more competent and committed, give them more responsibility. It worked for the Ford Motor Company. When they gave assembly line workers in New Jersey the opportunity to stop the assembly line at any time, mistakes went down 97%!
- **Add fun to everyone’s work.** If you – and others – are not having fun doing what you are doing, chances are you are not doing your best. We are not talking

about a laugh-a-minute party, but the overall experience should be fun. Most people who succeed in leadership acknowledge that without the fun and the pleasure that they experience with one another on the team, they would not have been able to sustain the level of intensity and hard work required.

- **Be the first to trust.** In order to create a climate of trust – be the first to trust. Building trust is a process that begins when one party is willing to risk being the first to open up, being the first to show vulnerability, and being the first to let go of control. Going first requires considerable self-confidence. Trust is contagious. And distrust is equally contagious. Being willing to actively seek out, listen to, understand, and use other people’s perspectives builds trust.
- **Take a lot of human moments.** We all need “human moments” – face-to-face conversations – in our lives. The two prerequisites to a human moment are physical presence and attention. The most genuine way to demonstrate that you care and are concerned about other people as human beings is to spend time with them. This time should not be yet another business meeting; instead, plan on unstructured time to joke and laugh and learn more about each other as parents, athletes, musicians, artists, or volunteers. Five or ten minutes at a time is sufficient, if done regularly.
- **Schedule celebrations.** As a leader, put celebrations on your calendar so that people come to expect that they will be getting together to share in the values and the victories. Celebrations always serve a dual purpose: one is to honor a principle or an achievement, and the other is to create a spirit of community. You can celebrate at any time, anywhere. So do it! Give courage, spread joy, and communicate your care for people. Think of food, folks, fun – and faith.
- **Be a cheerleader – your way.** You can cheer for your group better than anyone else – but you have to do it your own way. Use your imagination – and most important, be authentic. As the leader, your job is to create a culture of celebrations, but you don’t have to be the one to do all the organizing and cheering. Make it easy for everyone to find ways to celebrate success that are informal, inclusive, and fun.
- **Give feedback.** This is especially vital for postmoderns (those born after 1960). The focus and extent of feedback will vary, depending on the leadership position and the nature of the involvement. However, even those helping one time at an event as chaperones or kitchen assistants deserve feedback on their involvement. Feedback in this case would most likely be informal and highlight specific positive contributions and benefits. Some ways to give feedback include:

- Creating a learning climate.
- Passing on positive gossip.
- Giving improvement tips.
- Holding volunteers accountable.

For more extensive leadership positions such as program leaders and members of the coordinating team, a more structured format (quarterly or biannually) for feedback is appropriate. An evaluation process is:

- An opportunity for affirmation.
- Assessment by the volunteers of their involvement; sharing how they feel about their contributions.
- Discussion of areas where the volunteer can improve and grow.
- Sharing any concerns you have.
- Dialogue regarding future learning needs.
- Discussion of possible further opportunities for involvement.

Never forget that feedback is mutual. Invite your volunteers to tell you how well you are doing as a volunteer manager. Ask them:

- Were the expectations clear?
- Was the preparation adequate?
- Did the volunteer feel supported?
- What could I have done differently to make it a better experience for you?

Discuss how the invitation, preparation, and support process might be improved for other leaders.

- **Send volunteers to conferences.** This is challenging with today's limited budgets, but it sends a powerful message to volunteers about how much they are appreciated and valued.
- **Do on-the-job training.** Continue to help volunteers improve their skills and confidence in the work they are doing. Even if they've been volunteering for you for several years, there are always new techniques and tips to learn.
- **Give tangible incentives.** Gift coupons, logo wear, and recommended reading or DVDs can provide a much-needed boost to your volunteers.
- **Do spontaneous huddles.** If you happen to see some of your volunteers in the grocery store or at the soccer game, spend a few minutes with them. This acknowledges that you value them beyond the work they are doing for you.

- **Send spiritual messages.** If you come across a prayer or poem that moves you, pass it on via email or the parish website or as a facebook posting.

- **Show your gratitude!**
 1. Thank the families of your volunteers.
 2. Create Wordles (www.wordle.net).
 3. Share great volunteer stories on facebook.
 4. Have a “Volunteer of the Month”; post a picture in the gathering space at church and on your website.
 5. Have a gratitude chart on your wall (see Worksheet 11).
 6. Give gifts (but only ones that match your mission)!

- **Be available.** This is crucial. Your volunteers need to know that you are accessible, that their questions aren’t an annoyance. They need to know the best way to contact you, as well as the best times.

(Several ideas taken from *The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer* by Jonathan McKee and Thomas W. McKee, pp 67-79)

Gratitude Chart—Bless Our Volunteers

	Appreciation Action	Person Responsible	Who is Being Honored
1. January	_____	_____	_____
2. February	_____	_____	_____
3. March	_____	_____	_____
4. April	_____	_____	_____
5. May	_____	_____	_____
6. June	_____	_____	_____
7. July	_____	_____	_____
8. August	_____	_____	_____
9. September	_____	_____	_____
10. October	_____	_____	_____
11. November	_____	_____	_____
12. December	_____	_____	_____

Sustaining and Celebrating Volunteers

1. How do you keep up the morale and the joy of volunteering with your ministers?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. How do you recognize and honor them?

a. Initially when they begin their ministry

b. Annually

c. When they “retire” from their volunteer work

3. What would you like to add to your volunteer management plan to keep and celebrate your volunteers?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Firing Volunteers

One of the most painful decisions you may have to make as a manager of volunteers is letting go of people whose gifts do not match the needs of the position they are filling. While it is hard to “fire” a volunteer, it made be vital to the survival of whatever program they are part of. A holy and compassionate process for letting them go could include the following steps:

- Pray about what you will say and how you will support the volunteer.
- Begin with affirmation, naming the person’s gifts.
- Point out the challenges and difficulties this person has had, along with the challenges to others affected.
- Acknowledge your own responsibility for the issue--failing to match this person’s gifts with the right type of service.
- Offer different opportunities to serve.
- End by praying together.

Closing Reflection

In the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus did not act alone – he acted in concert with others and evoked the abundance of community. Ultimately the body of Christ, so central to incarnational theology, is not the physical body of Jesus but the corporate body of those who gather around the Spirit, wherever it is found. Jesus exercises the only kind of leadership that can evoke authentic community – a leadership that risks failure (and even crucifixion) by making space for others people to act. When a leader takes up all the space and preempts all the action, he or she may make something happen, but that something is not community. Nor is it abundance, because the leader is only one person and one person’s resources invariably run out. But when a leader is willing to trust the abundance that people have and can generate together, willing to take the risk of inviting people to share from that abundance, then and only then may true community emerge.

The Active Life: Wisdom from Work, Creativity, and Caring by Parker Palmer, pp. 136-138.

Through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist, every Christian is called to participate actively and co-responsibly in the Church’s mission of salvation in the world. Moreover, in those same sacraments, the Holy Spirit pours out gifts which make it possible for every Christian man and woman to assume different ministries and forms of service that complement one another and are for the good of all...Everyone has a responsibility to answer the call to mission and to develop the gifts she or he has been given by sharing them in the family, the workplace, the civic community, and the parish or diocese. A parallel responsibility exists within the Church’s leadership “to acknowledge and foster the ministries, the offices, and the roles of lay faithful that find

their foundation in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, indeed, for a good many of them, in the sacrament of matrimony.” (Christifideles Laici, no. 20, 23)

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