

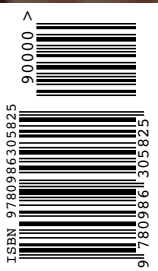
stuff you wish they taught in seminary



VOLUNTEERS

MOBILIZING A TEAM
BEHIND YOUR MISSION

HELPFUL ARTICLES BY RICH BIRCH, VANDERBLOEMEN SEARCH GROUP,
BRIAN DODD, TONY MORGAN, CAREY NIEUWHOF & DEBORAH IKE



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VOLUNTEERS

MOBILIZING A TEAM BEHIND YOUR MISSION

Rich Birch
unSeminary

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Your church is fueled by its volunteers. At the core of what we do is train, release and reward an army of volunteers towards the mission God has called us to. In fact, in a very real way the thing that makes some churches prevailing and others lagging is their ability to release volunteers. Church leaders who get great at giving away the ministry to volunteers are the most effective. It's critically important to the health and vitality of every church, including yours!

In this edition of the unSeminary Magazine we're exploring what it takes to build a thriving core of volunteers. We've included articles that we believe will help you as you lead your team. I'm thankful for Tony Morgan, Carey Nieuwhof, Brian Dodd, Deborah Ike and Vanderbloemen Search Group for submitting incredible resources for this edition. They are all great leaders that you should be following and listening to!

As usual, if you find this magazine helpful I'd ask you to pass it along to your friends in ministry. We produce it so you'll share it!





5 HEART-CHECK QUESTIONS

ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER CULTURE AT YOUR CHURCH

By Rich Birch

If you traveled to most communities around the world, **you'd find a local church fueled by volunteers who are making a difference.** Your church is powered by volunteers who show up week in and week out to serve other people and make ministry happen. I challenge us all to **create compelling volunteer experiences that gather rather than repel** people. Consider the following questions with your team to determine where your volunteer culture could improve:

Are you helping them grow in their relationships with Jesus? // At the end of the day, churches are about seeing people take steps towards Jesus. Core to why we exist is helping people develop their faith. What does spiritual formation look like in your serving environment? How can we infuse conversations about Jesus into these experiences?

If they leave, are you more worried about them or the holes to be filled? // Be honest. When people leave, are you sad to see them go or are you freaked out because you need them to serve on the team? People are more than “service widgets” for your ministry. We need to be concerned primarily with their spiritual development if they step away from volunteering.

Do they feel like a number or do they feel cared for? // Growing churches have systems – and systems are filled with numbers. We need 6 ushers to make the main auditorium work. 12 small group leaders are required to care for 80 kids in our children’s ministry. However, good shepherds know their sheep. [ref] The first step towards ensuring people feel cared for is making sure leaders know their team members’ names. From there, you can encourage them to find out more about what’s happening in people’s lives. Knowing volunteers as individuals is vital for ensuring they are loved and cared for.



Does volunteering with you help them with the rest of their lives? // Volunteering with your church should benefit people in the rest of their lives. There are lots of development opportunities that can help grow your volunteers’ leadership abilities, relational qualities and technical skills. Train people so they can apply what they learn not only when they volunteer at church, but also in daily life.

Has anyone ever connected with them outside of your programming? // We want volunteers to get stuff done for us. Volunteers serve because they want to be connected to the bigger vision and to make new friends. Your culture needs to push towards relationships that go beyond serving together at the church. People connecting outside of what you do is a positive outcome of your ministry. The obvious “first level” of this is you taking interest in people outside of your ministry. Then encourage people to reach out to one another.



33 WAYS TO SHOW APPRECIATION TO VOLUNTEERS AT YOUR CHURCH

Volunteers are the lifeblood of your church. In fact, **your church literally wouldn't exist without them!** Small actions often show your true feelings about your volunteer teams. Why not pick a few things from the list below and try them this weekend at your church? The first step toward building healthy volunteer teams is making sure that your existing team members feel appreciated!

1. At the beginning of every shift, make sure team leaders **cast the vision for why volunteers are critical** to your ministry.
2. Visit every service area that you're responsible for this Sunday and say, **"Thank you!"**
3. Send **birthday cards**.
4. Every time a volunteer serves, send a **"what to expect" email** three or four days in advance.
5. Assign key people to **spend time with new volunteers** on the first weekend they serve with you.
6. Take time during the message to **brag about how amazing your volunteers are**.
7. Get to know what's **happening in your volunteers' personal lives**.
8. Make sure there's enough work for volunteers to do when they arrive ... **don't waste their time!**
9. **Always have food available** before or after they serve.
10. Make it easy for your leaders to **send regular thank-you notes** to their team members.
11. At the end of every shift, **find out what your volunteers think** could be improved for the future.

12. Open up **leadership development opportunities** for volunteers to advance in the church.

13. Don't impose new policies and procedures without **talking them through with your team**.

14. **Throw parties regularly!**

15. Write **letters of reference for students** who volunteer with you.

16. **Show your team the "impact emails"** you get about how great your church is.

17. Create easy off ramps ... **don't lock your team into perpetual service!**

18. Send a **press release to your community paper** celebrating your team when they do something "above and beyond."

19. Make sure your volunteers are the **"first to know"** about **exciting things** happening in the future of your church.

20. Give them a **team t-shirt**.

21. Make sure **everyone gets and wears a name tag**.

22. Use **quotations from your team members** in your annual report or other donor-targeted communications.

23. Calculate how many hours your volunteers have served in that past year and **celebrate it!**

24. **Reinforce regularly with paid staff that our #1 role is to support your volunteers.**

25. Take **photos of your volunteers serving** and post them on social media channels.

26. Make sure your volunteers have the **best equipment you can afford** for them to carry out their work.

27. Create **easy channels for your volunteers to communicate** with the church leadership.

28. Insist that the church **reimburses them for out-of-pocket expenses**.

29. Send volunteers a **hand-signed Christmas card**.

30. Have **good coffee** available when they arrive.

31. Allow core volunteers to **gain influence and take on more responsibilities**.

32. Take at least **one volunteer out every week to thank them** and get to know them better..

33. **Buy 10 books that have impacted you** and give them to 10 outstanding volunteers.

5 ELEMENTS TO AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT & JOB DESCRIPTION

By Vanderbloemen
Search Group



The challenges of leading volunteer teams are many and varied. Building your volunteer base with people who are energized by and aligned with your church's mission – and retaining those volunteers – can take all the hours in your week if not done intentionally and strategically.

Many church volunteers believe in and support the overall church vision, go through a membership or assimilation class, or even take spiritual gifts tests or volunteer training and still come out on the other side without a clear volunteer role in the church. So how can you get volunteers to be actively involved in service within your church and to clearly understand their volunteer role? The answer can actually be quite simple. Create a volunteer agreement and volunteer job descriptions.

Here are the five key elements you should include in a Volunteer Agreement and Volunteer Job Description:



1. CAST THE VISION

Including the mission and vision of the church in your Volunteer Job Descriptions solidifies and unifies your volunteers in their understanding of not only what the church is about, but also how the church intends to carry out their mission. Verbally communicating your vision is great for motivating people, but over time it can become diluted or repetitive. Offering prospective volunteers a written copy of the vision gives it clarity and intentionality. It also offers an opportunity for volunteers to buy into the vision and empowers them to be a part of it.

2. LIST YOUR VALUES

Your church's values shape your church culture – both the staff culture and the volunteer culture. If you want to protect your church from becoming a second-rate or even toxic environment, then you need to rely not only on the leadership and staff but also on your volunteers to uphold the things you all hold dear as a community. For example, if one of your values is “People over performance,” then express that in your Volunteer Job Description and give examples of what that value looks like when it is lived out in your ministry context.

Give your volunteers permission to speak up – in love – to others serving in the church if they see the values being consistently disregarded. Invite them to be Christ-bearers by keeping the culture of your church a welcoming, truth-filled community committed to excellence.

3. OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS TO USE THEIR STRENGTHS

You may already have purposes for each of your volunteer teams (i.e. hospitality team, tech team, facilities team, etc.), but you may not have gone so far as to clearly articulate in writing the goals of those teams and create roles within those teams. Consider developing a handful of roles for each of your teams that focus on

different aspects of or needs within each of the ministries. This way, volunteers can choose what roles play into their natural strengths.

Here's an example for you: if you have a hospitality serve team, create a greeter role, a coffee bar attendant role, and a resource connector role with that team. Someone who is super friendly and outgoing would make an awesome greeter. They don't need to have long conversations or know everything about all areas of the church, so this is a great role for extroverts. A coffee attendant can be more of a behind the scenes leader who can answer questions when necessary, and a resource connector will need to know a lot about the church and be able to have an engaging and possibly lengthy conversation with one person at a time. Each of these is a distinct role that will appeal to a different volunteer. In your job descriptions, explain what each role entails and what it takes to execute their responsibilities, and then let volunteers self-select where they feel their strengths lie.

4. SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Include in the volunteer job descriptions all of the volunteer role's responsibilities, the person that role reports to, the amount of time their role will take on a typical Sunday, and any other expectations. Develop a system that allows volunteers to give their time without getting burnt out, and ensure that they have opportunities to get the rest and spiritual nourishment they need. Many churches have a “serve one, sit one” policy where they recommend that volunteers “sit” in one worship service as a participant and “serve” as a volunteer for the other weekend service. It's also a smart idea to specify how many weeks a month they will be put on their rotation.



Having these very clear expectations in writing not only informs and empowers the volunteer, it also gives permission to both parties to address unmet expectations. Have you ever volunteered somewhere and thought you would be entrusted with responsibility and influence, only to realize you were taking orders and stacking chairs? On the flip side, have you ever tried to manage a volunteer team where the members were chronically late, uninformed, or disengaged? It's disenchanting at best, at worst, it may cause people to stop serving or to leave the church altogether. To stay a healthy, thriving church, you have to be able to address those expectations and make necessary adjustments. Don't just appreciate your volunteers; empower them. Don't just ask them to show up; show you care.

5. Ask for a commitment.

When you give a volunteer a job description, treat it like a job offer. Ask them to take it home, read it, pray about it, and then let you know what they think. If they're ready to accept, you should both sign the job description as an agreement. It may seem too formal, but the point isn't to tie your volunteer down or guilt them into good behavior. The point is to empower, set clear expectations, and prove to your volunteer that what they do matters. If their time and talents are treated seriously, they will feel the gravity of what they are a part of and have more buy in.



The more direct impact on the vision a volunteer feels they have, the more willing they will be to go above and beyond what is asked of them. It's also a great rule of thumb to refer to your volunteer teams by their team names and roles (i.e. Are you on a Serve Team?) and to refer to volunteers and staff in general as "the team." This unites everyone under one common vision and mission. Your congregation will feel empowered as leaders and be thrilled to join something bigger than themselves. Your "team" will never be the same!

**[READ MORE BY
VANDERBLOEMEN
SEARCH GROUP]**

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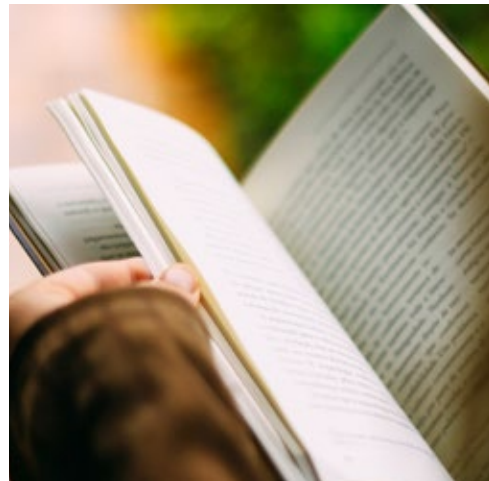
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5 LOW(ER) RISK WAYS TO **RELEASE NEW VOLUNTEER LEADERS IN YOUR CHURCH** THIS WEEKEND

By Rich Birch

“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities.” – Luke 16:10



Finding and releasing volunteer leaders is an essential part of every church leader's role. However, we often feel paralyzed because we don't know if we can trust new leaders. A few summers ago my parents visited a church where the pastor did everything in the service: greeted people at the front door, led the music, did announcements, gave the children's message and the main message. This pastor is limiting the growth of his church because he's bottlenecking everything to go through him. We all need to find ways to release other people into leadership! Here are some basic tasks you could give to a new volunteer leader to "test them out" and see what they can handle.

Invite Someone to Evaluate // A great way to engage someone who you might want to move into leadership is to ask them to evaluate your weekend services. If you already have a regular evaluation meeting, invite them to attend. (If you don't, start one up!) You could also have a quick weekly meeting using a [free conference call](#) service and invite some potential leaders into that. Hearing people's feedback is a great way to build trust with them ... and it's a pathway to start handing them responsibility!



Give Up a Team Huddle // Do your teams meet for a few minutes before each shift to talk about the vision for the day and to pray together? (They should!) Find a leader in the group and ask them to lead the team huddle this weekend. This is a low-risk task to hand over because it's an "insider crowd" who will be supportive of the new leader. Plus, it's a great way to indicate to the rest of the group that you see this individual as a leader among them.

Engage a Research Partner // Invite a potential leader at your church to help you pull together some research for an upcoming message. Ask if they would be interested in doing some research for the topic at hand and then go out for lunch to talk about it. You'll multiply your time and get some new ideas for the message, and they'll feel great when you use some of their content!



Do Some Calling // Ask a potential leader if they would help you call some first-time guests who've attended your church in the last couple of weeks. Put together a basic outline to set the bar for the interaction. Meet before they start the calls and inject some vision into the conversation. Then ask them to report back in a few days with what they learned about the guests!

Scheduling Team Members // Do you manage a roster of volunteers? This is a great ongoing function to pass along to an upcoming leader! Ask them to make sure that the right people serve every weekend for the next few months and request that they report back to you if there are any problems. Make sure to outline what you need them to do in a one-page document so it's clear what sort of interactions you want them to have with the team.



15 REASONS CHURCH VOLUNTEERS BURN OUT



By Brian Dodd

I interviewed a former church volunteer who actually did burn out.

The following are 15 reasons I gleaned from their story.

1. No Return On Investment Volunteers must constantly be reminded what they do matters. He said, "I don't think I'm getting a return on my investment."

2. No Life Change One of the roles of church leadership is to constantly tell stories of life change currently happening as a result of their volunteers. He said, "I don't sense I'm making an eternal impact and I don't know what I'm doing is impactful for today."

3. No Difference He added, "I feel like if I'm there or not it doesn't make any difference."

4. No Desire Do your volunteers look forward to serving. Are they excited about what God can do in and through their lives. My heart sank when he said, "I just feel burnt out. I just want to go sit down."

5. No Breaks 15 years is a long time to serve.



Churches need to be monitoring the emotional health of their volunteers. He said, "It may just be time to take a break. I don't need permission. I'll just tell them I quit."

6. No Attachment To Vision One of the most important things church leadership can do is connect the dots from volunteer positions to the fulfillment of mission and vision. He admitted, "Some of it may be my attitude toward the church's direction and leadership."

7. No Appreciation In some churches, it is simply ministry malpractice how we use our volunteers rather than serve them. Pastors, are you aggressively communicating appreciation for your volunteers? Unbelievably, his shoulders sank and said, "Brian, in 15 years of serving, only one person has told me "Thank You."

8. No Community One of the reasons people volunteer is they are looking for friends. He went on, "Maybe it would be better if we prayed together or something. There is no relational component to what we're doing."

9. No Direction I want to stress this is a Godly man who knows serving in his church is about God's glory and not his personal fulfillment. He points out, "Maybe this is God just moving me on to serving somewhere else."

10. No Urgency As I spoke with this gentleman I realized there was simply no longer a sense of urgency related in his ministry.

11. No Respect In frustration he said, "The departmental head makes me feel valued. He gives them space to do what I want to do. The people don't value what I do." **Note - Senior**

pastors are responsible for owning this. People are a picture of the leader. It should be a core value at a church that their mantra is "This is how much we value volunteers. This is what we think of volunteers. This is what we do for volunteers. This is how we treat volunteers. This is how we serve volunteers...etc" And it starts with the senior pastor.

12. No Future Pastors and church leaders must paint a picture of growth for their volunteers. He said, "It's not a self-esteem issue but I've come to a dead end and I don't know how to extend the road."

13. No Emotional Attachment Some people will tell you, "My heart's just not in this anymore." He said, "Part of me is sad because I've done it for so long but part of it is I'm not even disappointed."

14. No Margin The last six months have been a difficult stretch personally, professionally, financially, and from a health perspective for this individual. Because of these challenges, he will fall through the cracks at many churches. The scary question, though, is how many volunteers in our churches are also at-risk because of similar issues? We must have personal relationships with our volunteers and know what challenges they are facing outside of church.

15. No Chance He concluded, "Two weeks on and two weeks off wouldn't make a difference. It's not that kind of burnout. It's a "I'm done" burnout."

[READ MORE BY BRIAN DODD]





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3 STRATEGIES FOR CHURCH VOLUNTEERS RECRUITMENT

I Don't Have Enough Volunteers!



By Tony Morgan

This time of year can be quite fun as the worship services and other ministry environments fill up again. The challenge, of course, is that it takes people to minister to people. It's right about now that the harsh reality begins to set in—we need more volunteers.

When that happens, the natural reaction may be to blame the congregation. If they started contributing rather than consuming, we would have plenty of volunteers. That's true. Unfortunately, though, our actions often fuel this consumption mindset. In other words, we can become the barrier that prevents people from serving. With that, let me offer these suggestions:

1. STOP DOING MINISTRY TO START BUILDING TEAMS

Something probably needs to stop in order for you to begin investing in people and inviting them to join your team.

When churches are small, the leader is rewarded for the ministry they engage and the lives they directly impact. As the church grows, though, the leader becomes the lid because there are only so many people one person can impact.

There needs to be a shift in how we invest in people. Rather than getting individual people to do ministry, we have to begin building teams who do the ministry. The leader who is passionate about discipleship, can't disciple every person. The leader who pours into students can't minister to every student. The leader who loves kids can't personally invest in every kid. We need to equip others to multiply our influence.



2. STOP PROMOTING TO START INVITING

It's rare for a person to hear an all-church platform announcement asking for volunteers and assume that announcement was specifically for them. Same thing goes for email blasts and bulletin ads. Most people assume the announcement is for someone else.



It's not until you sit across the table from someone that you can make a personal invite. In order to have that opportunity, we have to invest in a relationship first. That relationship positions us to share the vision behind the serving opportunity. We can connect the person's personality, passions and gifts to the requirements of the role. We can ask confidently knowing the person will be a great fit.

When you get this opportunity to invite someone to take a next step, don't say no for them. Let them pray through it. Give them space to hear from God. If you don't ask, though, you are in effect saying no for them.

By the way, the more people who you have inviting their friends, the more people who will join your team. Encourage the people who are already serving on your team to tap the shoulders of their friends. If they don't have any friends who are not serving, that's the first thing that needs to change.



3. STREAMLINE YOUR CALENDAR TO CREATE SPACE FOR PEOPLE TO SERVE

If your calendar is full with worship services, ministry programs, Bible classes, groups and special events that you are asking people to attend, you crowd out the time people might be willing to serve.

A few years ago, Willow Creek surveyed more than 150,000 church attenders. Among other things, their research confirmed what we probably all intuitively knew to be true: "Increased church activity does not lead to spiritual growth." (*Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal about Spiritual Growth* by Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson)

In other words, less really is more.

Some of you may have influence to streamline the entire church's calendar. If that's not you,

begin with the calendar that you can control—yours. In your sphere of influence, evaluate everything you're doing. Keep the programs and events on the calendar that have the biggest opportunity for producing life change. If it requires a relatively big investment but there's little fruit, STOP DOING IT! One of the biggest things that may have to go is the number of meetings you have.

These are not three easy shortcuts to double the number of volunteers you have overnight. However, these strategies can help you double your volunteers in the long run. It won't be easy, and it'll take time. So start now. Take one step forward. This is your opportunity to expand your influence and your impact.

One more thing, your efforts to recruit more volunteers will mostly likely fail if you don't have a focused vision and clear strategies for ministry. My team at The Unstuck Group can help with that. Learn how our [4-phase planning process](#) helps church focus vision, strategy and action to grow their impact.

[[READ MORE BY TONY MORGAN](#)]



Volunteer teams fuel churches. Imagine what would happen this coming weekend if your entire team didn't show up. Church would really stink.

People gravitate toward where they feel valued. If you aren't taking the time to show and tell your volunteers that you value the contributions they make to the church, they will drift away from serving with you. Unexpressed appreciation isn't felt or understood. You love your team ... find ways to tell them!



6 HIGH-IMPACT TIPS FOR SHOWING APPRECIATION TO CHURCH VOLUNTEERS

By Rich Birch

Thank Significant Others // Rather than writing another thank-you note to a volunteer, write to their spouse or kids. Brag about what an amazing job they do on the team. Thank their significant other for the part they play in allowing this star volunteer to serve.

Food Works // Next time your volunteers get together, make sure there's food available for them. Food is a secret weapon in your appreciation system. It has been proven that [we associate positive emotions](#) with the people providing our meals. I'm convinced the cost of not feeding our volunteers is greater than what we spend on food.

Call Outs // When you get your team together in a huddle, call out a couple volunteers for their amazing contributions to the mission. You'd be amazed how far a little peer recognition goes. Public appreciation translates into private loyalty. Identify what the team member did, have the rest of the team applaud them and then pray for the team member.

Remember Milestones // What would happen if you created a system for remembering people's birthdays, anniversaries and other important dates? The dentist remembers to send patients a birthday card every year ... could we?

Prepare Them Well // Often one of the best ways you can show appreciation for your volunteers is making their serving experience a quality one! Do you let your team know what to expect every time they serve? Could you email your team a few days in advance with information about what's happening this weekend at your church? Looping your team in on where things are going helps them serve better and shows that you respect them!

Social Media Profile // Take some time to brag about your team on your favorite social media channel. Point out specific individuals and the contributions they make. The shareable nature of this sort of appreciation means that not only will the person you're thanking see it so will their social network.

5 HIDDEN AXIOMS OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

By Rich Birch

Effective church leaders are excellent volunteer managers. Managing volunteer teams within your church is a nuanced and mysterious journey. It's not always obvious what it takes to lead them well! Here are 5 truths that I've uncovered, which weren't obvious to me when I started leading in church:

Volunteers are Donors // In a very real way, volunteers are paying us to create a positive service environment for them. Treat volunteers well because they pay your salary!

Strategize for Friendship // We need volunteers to make church happen; however, volunteers often want to build relationships with other people. We are responsible for creating a service environment where friendships blossom.

More Opportunities = More Volunteers // Effective church leaders find ways to create more "spaces" for volunteers. Rather than a scarcity mindset that focuses on not having enough people to fill roles, our job is to create more spots for people to serve.

Release Earlier // Give away the leadership of your volunteers to other volunteers as quickly as possible. Become a leader who leads leaders.

Think Outside the Weekend // There are tasks that you could give to volunteers during the week, which would accelerate your ability to serve people. Pull volunteers into what you do throughout the week!



6 REASONS YOU'RE LOSING HIGH CAPACITY VOLUNTEERS



By Carey Nieuwhof

My guess is you could use a few more high capacity volunteers.

You know the kind of volunteer who:

- Can attract other capable leaders
- Doesn't drop balls
- Loves a challenge
- Constantly overperforms

I mean, who doesn't want more of those people on their team?

But today in many churches, and in many not-for-profits, staff leaders are wondering where the high capacity leaders have gone.

The paradox is they're probably in your organization. They might be attending, and some are helping to fund it.

But so many aren't serving, and even if they step up, far too many high capacity people walk away way too soon.

Why?

I know this is a bit of a tough post. But you need to know I've made every single of of these mistakes over my time in leadership.

So if your response to reading this is "oh no"... just know that if you make some changes you'll find yourself in a very different (and better) place.

There are at least 6 reasons high capacity volunteers never join a team or leave it early.



1. The challenge isn't big enough

It's really quite simple. People with significant leadership gifting respond best to significant challenges.

Under challenge them and they won't stay engaged for long.

So many church staff and non-profit staff I talk to are worried about giving their volunteers too much responsibility. Newsflash: that might be exactly why you don't have enough high capacity volunteers (not to mention a thousand other problems on your team.)

2. Your vision, mission and strategy are fuzzy

People want to serve a cause bigger than themselves. And actually, that's what the church (and most non-profits) are all about: causes bigger than ourselves.

But often our mission, vision and strategy are fuzzy.

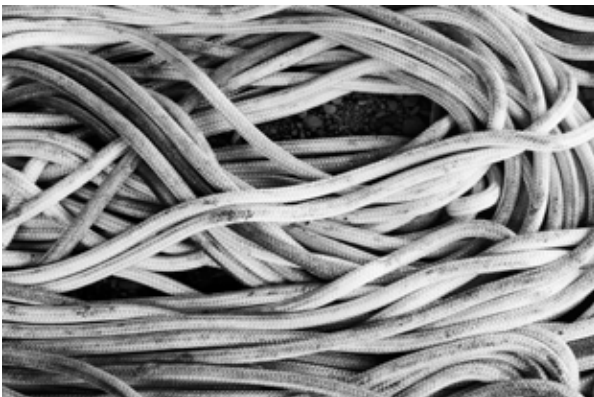
MISSION IS THE WHAT.
VISION IS THE WHY.
STRATEGY IS THE HOW.

Even if they're written on a piece of paper most people functionally can't tell you what they are.

That's a tragedy. The motivation for volunteers IS the vision. It's the why behind the what.

And—get this—the church has the best vision and mission on planet earth. So why on earth do we hide it?

Quite seriously, helping people discover the God who created them and the Saviour is the most rewarding work volunteers will do in their lives, regardless of what they get paid to do their day jobs.



3. You're disorganized

Few things are more demotivating than giving up your time as a volunteer only to discover the staff person responsible didn't set you up to succeed.

The tools they need to do the job are missing or incomplete. The rest of the team is late.



Or maybe—worse—they're not even 100% sure what they are supposed to do or how they are supposed to do it.

You can always find people who will put up with disorganization, but many more will simply give up.

And high capacity people will make a beeline for the door.



4. You let people off the hook too easily

I know I know.

They're volunteers. And you can't hold a volunteer accountable can you?

Wrong. You most certainly can. And should. For everyone's sake.

If a volunteer is late, it's really no different than if a staff member is late. Sure, you want to address it kindly, but you need to address it.

Again, few things are more disheartening for a motivated volunteer than if they did their homework and showed up early only to find

that others didn't, and then, to top it all off, have a staff person excuse the behaviour of the people who didn't pull their weight with lines like "it's okay, we're just glad you're here".

The high capacity leader dies a thousand deaths every time he or she hears a staff person utter those words. And then, almost 100% of the time, the organized, highly motivated exactly-the-kind-of-leader-you-were-hoping-to-keep will leave, and the slackers will stay.

oping your best leaders.

And before you think that's completely unfair, just know your entire team will thank you for it because you'll end up with a strong team.

By the way, Jesus did this too. He had crowds of disciples, but then a group of 72, an inner group of 12, an inner circle of 3 and placed his greatest investment in 1 (Peter).



5. You're not giving them enough personal attention

Another big challenge for church leaders and non-profit staff is the innate desire most of us feel to treat all people 'equally'.

You don't want to play favourites, so everyone should be treated the same.

Again, wrong.

The church should always be a loving organization. But certain people require more of your time and attention.

Unless you're intentional, you'll end up spending most of your time with your most problematic people and the least amount of time with your highest performing people.

Flip that.

Cut ties with the low performers and spend most of your time walking alongside and devel-

6. You don't have enough other high capacity volunteers around them

It's never fun to lead alone.

As soon as you find a high capacity volunteer, your next step should be to recruit more and move others alongside them.

Nurture this team. Build into them. Take them for lunch. Take them with you when you travel. Do life with them (again, I think Jesus modeled this pattern).

Sadly, many leaders don't do this, and high capacity leaders once again walk away, demotivated.

Those are 6 reasons I see in the church and organizations around me. For an additional resource on this topic, check out [Lasting Impact: 7 Powerful Conversations That Can Help Your Church Grow](#)

**[READ MORE BY
CAREY NIEUWHOF]**

5 REASONS LEADING CHURCHES **USE T-SHIRTS AS A MINISTRY TOOL**

(PLUS 12 FREE DESIGNS FOR YOU!)

By Rich Birch

Over the years as I've interacted with some of the fastest growing churches in the country, I've discovered an interesting common thread running through them ... they all spend a lot of money on t-shirts. In fact, the topic of "t-shirt strategy" often pops up in conversation with the leaders of these churches.

About two years ago, I had the privilege of sitting in on the leadership team meeting of one of the largest and fastest-growing churches

in the country. **The conversation turned to t-shirts because the Lead Pastor wanted to give away a free shirt to everyone who attended on an upcoming weekend while the budget folks weren't so sure.** It was such a funny conversation to listen in on because I've had the exact same one at my church!

So why do leading churches use t-shirts as a ministry tool? Here are some of the reasons why a well-designed t-shirt is helpful:





Welcomes Guests // When we switched our “new here” guest gift to a t-shirt, our responses on connection cards immediately jumped. It’s hard to follow up with guests if we don’t have their contact information. Giving away a t-shirt gets us the information we need! We [did a study on “guest gifts”](#) and we found that t-shirts are among the most popular items with this group of people. In fact, [many churches are using t-shirts](#) as a free giveaway on “big days” to help drive invitations to their weekend services.

Helps Newcomers // When people arrive at your church they are confronted with a myriad of decisions about where to go and what to do. Having your guest services team wear the same shirt helps people identify who can help them. It creates an invitation to approach a stranger and ask questions. Of course, your team is ready to help visitors but sometimes your guests need a little nudge in the right direction.

“I’m a part of the tribe!” // Teams wear uniforms. By giving people a t-shirt, you’re inviting them onto a team! It is a way to show appreciation to the people who make your church happen every week. [Church leaders are always looking for ways to show appreciation](#) and t-shirts are a quick way to do it!

Perceived Value // There is no doubt that t-shirts cost a little more than some other giveaways but their perceived value is much higher. It’s cheaper to make t-shirts than the people

who receive them realize. People love getting a free, well-designed t-shirt ... leverage this fact.

Walking Advertising // We have created some designs over the years that people actually wear in “normal life.” This creates a walking advertisement for our church. T-shirts are a natural tool to help people start conversations and invite their friends to church.





Our friends at [Design Pickle](#) have pulled together a dozen great t-shirt designs for you to use in your church. [\[Click here to receive t-shirt designs in your inbox instantly.\]](#) Take the designs, pass them along to a t-shirt printer and you're

good to go. We've also provided the "source files" so a designer can modify the designs to fit your church. Of course, you could also use [Design Pickle's flat rate, unlimited revision service](#) to modify these designs to fit your needs.

BIG SMALL STUFF //

VOLUNTEER MEALS

By Rich Birch

Liquid Church's team did an incredible job hosting Camp Rock, a two-week arts and media camp held in two locations. I'm letting you in on some "small" stuff that made a big difference!



Take a look at this photo: Meg (far left) and some of her team are getting ready to serve lunch to our volunteers.

It's a small thing, right? Providing a meal for the team of people who make an event like this possible is a logical choice.

But Meg did so much more than ordering some pizzas for the team. She crafted an incredibly welcoming environment for them! Some of the details that I love include:

Variety //

Every day for two weeks ... something new!

Great Presentation //

For example, during the breakfast shift the cereal was presented in huge glass jars that made it look like candy!

Smiling Faces //

The team did more than "put out food." They made sure people felt welcome and happy. They mixed, mingled and chatted up folks!

Afternoon Tea //

I loved the afternoon snack time. There's nothing like a huge brownie to end the day! (Meg is Australian, and I loved that she called it afternoon tea!)

Surprise and Delight //

As a special treat, this team provided an amazing cake that would have made the Cake Boss happy.

Every church would love to provide volunteer appreciation like this because it really does set the right tone. Here are a few tips for making volunteer meals work for your church:

Fund It //

12% of our Camp Rock budget went to this team. That's more than we spent renting the facilities for two weeks!

Think Volunteers //

There is something magical about volunteers running an area that thanks volunteers. This team was 100% volunteer-led and staffed.

The Velvet Rope //

Years ago, I toured a church and they gave us access to every space in their facility (backstage, offices, all kids areas), except their volunteer lounge. Restricted access makes people with access feel more special. Don't let just anybody in.





HOW TO “FIRE” A CHURCH VOLUNTEER



By Deborah Ike

One question I frequently receive when talking about recruiting and retaining church volunteers is what to do about a volunteer who isn't working out. In other words, how do you “fire” a volunteer? This is obviously a delicate situation and needs to be handled with great care. This individual is donating his time and efforts; he's part of your congregation and a brother in Christ. You don't want to offend him or damage the relationship, but his performance in the volunteer role is hurting the team. So, what to do?

First off, any issues that involve breaking the law, overt sin or safety concerns must be dealt with immediately. As soon as you see or are made aware of the problem, take appropriate action. However, assuming that this is a matter of the volunteer not meeting expectations, having a poor attitude or not doing the work as needed, then here are a few options for you to consider.



IS THIS PERSON IN THE WRONG ROLE?

How do you assign new volunteers? Do you simply match up a warm body with a spot you need to fill? Do you let new volunteers choose whatever role they want regardless of skill set or personality factors? That might be the real issue. Your poor-performing, hard-to-get-along-with volunteer may be a square peg trying to fit into a round hole.



In this situation, establish a process for all volunteers (current and new) to guide them into a role that will align with their skills, interests and personality. Part of this process should include a spiritual gifting and personality test (i.e. DiSC, Myers-Briggs).

Also, develop job descriptions for each volunteer role and include which spiritual gifting and personality types would be best for each. Once your volunteers complete these tests, see if each person's results line up with their current role. If not, talk with those volunteers about what role(s) might be a better fit and suggest they try a different one.

DOES THIS PERSON KNOW WHAT YOU EXPECT?

Have you provided this volunteer with documented instructions, a training session and periodic reminders of what you need him to do? If not, do that before you decide he has to go. You can't reasonably expect a volunteer to perform with excellence without knowing what a win looks like. Set your team up for success.



DO YOU NEED TO CONFRONT HIM ABOUT HIS BEHAVIOR?

Does this volunteer have a dreadful attitude and is consistently gossiping about church leaders? If so, you need to clearly, yet kindly, confront him about his behavior. It's probably best to not do this alone, so have one other leader present for the discussion.

A few pointers for this discussion:

- Let your volunteer know that you appreciate his willingness to serve.
- Clearly state the undesirable behavior without immediately putting him on the defensive: "It seems to me that you might be upset with how we've handled ..." or "I'm wondering if you have some suggestions for how to do this process more effectively."
- Listen to his response and repeat back what you thought you heard him say. This communicates that you value his input.
- Ask, "Going forward, please come straight to me with your concerns. It can sound like gossip if you're mentioning these to people who can't fix them, and I doubt that's your true intent."

Try something along these lines for the first confrontation. If you're still noticing issues, then a more direct approach may be necessary.

The first step is to pray and seek God's direction.





WHAT IF YOU'VE TRIED ALL OF THE ABOVE AND THINGS STILL AREN'T WORKING OUT?

You may not realize that there's a difficult family drama or other issue going on in this person's life right now. Perhaps he's had a bad experience at another church and that's impacting his response, etc. Pray for him and ask God to give you the right words.

Next, set up a time to talk with your volunteer (do this with another leader at least around, if not directly involved). Never do this via email or over the phone. This is too personal of a discussion; you need to do everything you can to make sure the volunteer's relationship with the church remains intact.

Start off the conversation on a positive note by honestly complimenting and stating how much you appreciate him serving at the church. Ask how he's feeling about his volunteer role. Mention that you like to check in with volunteers on occasion to see if they're happy where they're at, if they want to take a break from serving, or if they'd like to be reassigned to a different role.

See where that takes the conversation. Perhaps he's uncomfortable in that role but didn't know how to approach the issue. Give him an easy, face-saving way out.

If that's not working, then remind him of prior discussions you've had to correct his behavior and/or offer a change in roles. State that you haven't noticed any changes and that you need him to take some time off from serving. Reiterate that you value him as a brother in Christ and as a member of the church.

This is about making sure that the standards put in place for volunteers are consistent and that this isn't a good fit at this time. Ask for his thoughts and if he has any questions. Close out the meeting in prayer and follow up with him within the next week to see how he's doing.

REMEMBER, YOU HAVE THREE KEY PRIORITIES IN THIS SITUATION:

- Maintain a strong volunteer team that will treat the other members of your congregation and visitors with excellence.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to serve using the talents God has entrusted to them.
- Protect your volunteer's relationship with God and with the church by handling these situations with grace and direction from the Holy Spirit.

Ministry is messy, and this is a perfect example of the mess church leaders must be willing to dive into with their volunteers. However, when these moments are handled well, the outcomes can be pretty amazing.

Hang in there, pray for wisdom and seek Godly counsel. God placed you in this leadership role for a reason, and He will equip you for these moments. Trust that He'll lead you to do what's best for your volunteer and for the congregation as a whole.

[\[READ MORE BY DEBORAH IKE\]](#)

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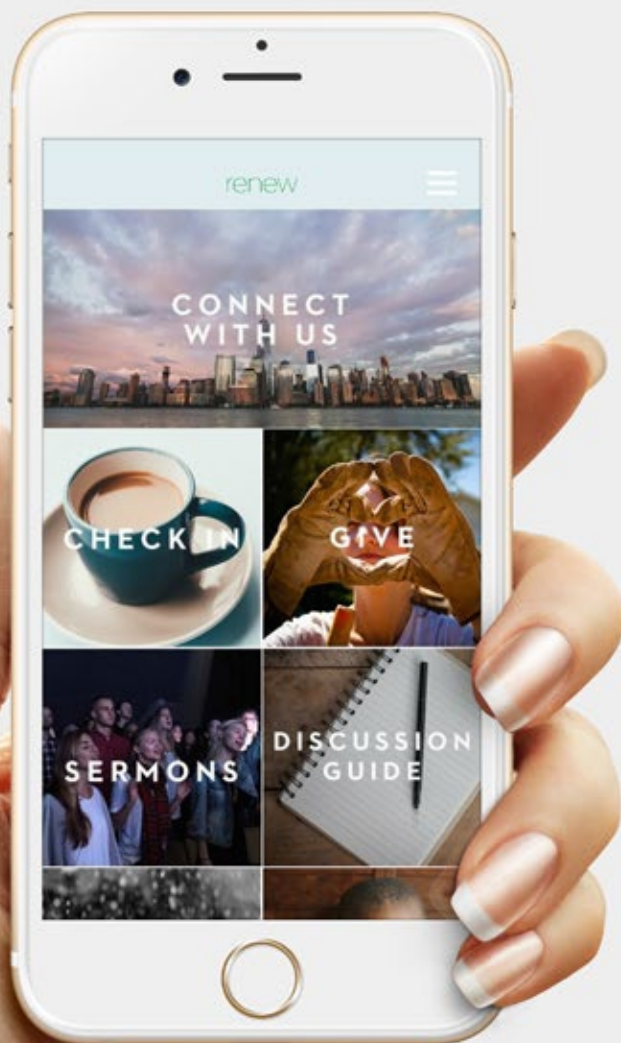
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3 SPIRITUAL GIFT ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR YOUR CHURCH

By Rich Birch

Recently in the [unSeminary Premium](#) private Facebook group, there was a discussion about the best Spiritual Gift Assessment tools for church use. When people serve within their area of gifting rather than just in your area of need, they experience more freedom and joy. Thriving churches focus on releasing people in their area of gifting!

Here are three inventories that help people understand their God-given spiritual gifts:

SpiritualGiftsTest.com // Cost: Free or \$99 // This is a simple and straightforward 98-question test. It has people respond on a scale of 1 to 5 whether they agree or disagree that the statements apply to them. There are also free videos available on the site that discuss spiritual gifts. The paid option gives you the opportunity to integrate the test with your church's website. One great feature of this site is that it provides both "adult" and "youth" versions of the Spiritual Gifts Inventory.

ARC Spiritual Gifts & DISC Profile // Cost: Free // The Association of Related Churches offers a free spiritual gifts inventory that asks 92 questions and also provides a [DISC personality assessment](#). Once you start the test, it asks users to rate statements about themselves.

The DISC assessment included with this test provides a great conversation starter, because people can reflect on how their personalities impact how they use the spiritual gifts that God has given them.

PeopleKeys Spiritual Gifts & DISC Assessment // Cost: \$15 // PeopleKeys provides a wide variety of personality and aptitude testing. Their version of the spiritual gifts test also includes a DISC assessment. The advantage of this tool is that you can set up a license as a church. After someone completes the test, a report is emailed to both the church and the test taker. We use this tool with new leaders in our church as well as in our hiring process. It's simple to use and the report is very robust!

9 Ways to Use Spiritual Gift Tests in Your Church:

Include them as part of the onboarding process for volunteers.

Email them to everyone when you teach on spiritual gifts in your main service.

During a retreat, have students do the tests on their phones and then talk about it.

Encourage small groups to bring their laptops, do the test together, and then discuss it.

Integrate them into a staff training event.

Offer them on your website as a "free tool" in exchange for people's email addresses to build your list.

Send them to everyone currently volunteering in your church. Ask them if where they are serving matches their gifts.

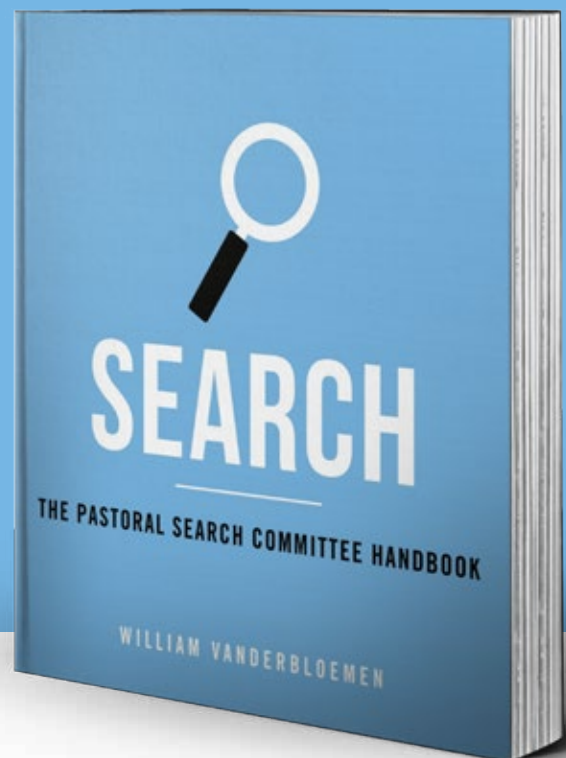
Post a link on Facebook to one of the free tests. Encourage people to take the test and share the results on that post.

Use them in your pre-marriage counseling, so people can talk through their differences and how they may serve together within the church.

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Churches across the country have discovered that **summer is the perfect time for getting people plugged into the community through service.** What could a Summer Serve Campaign look like in your church?



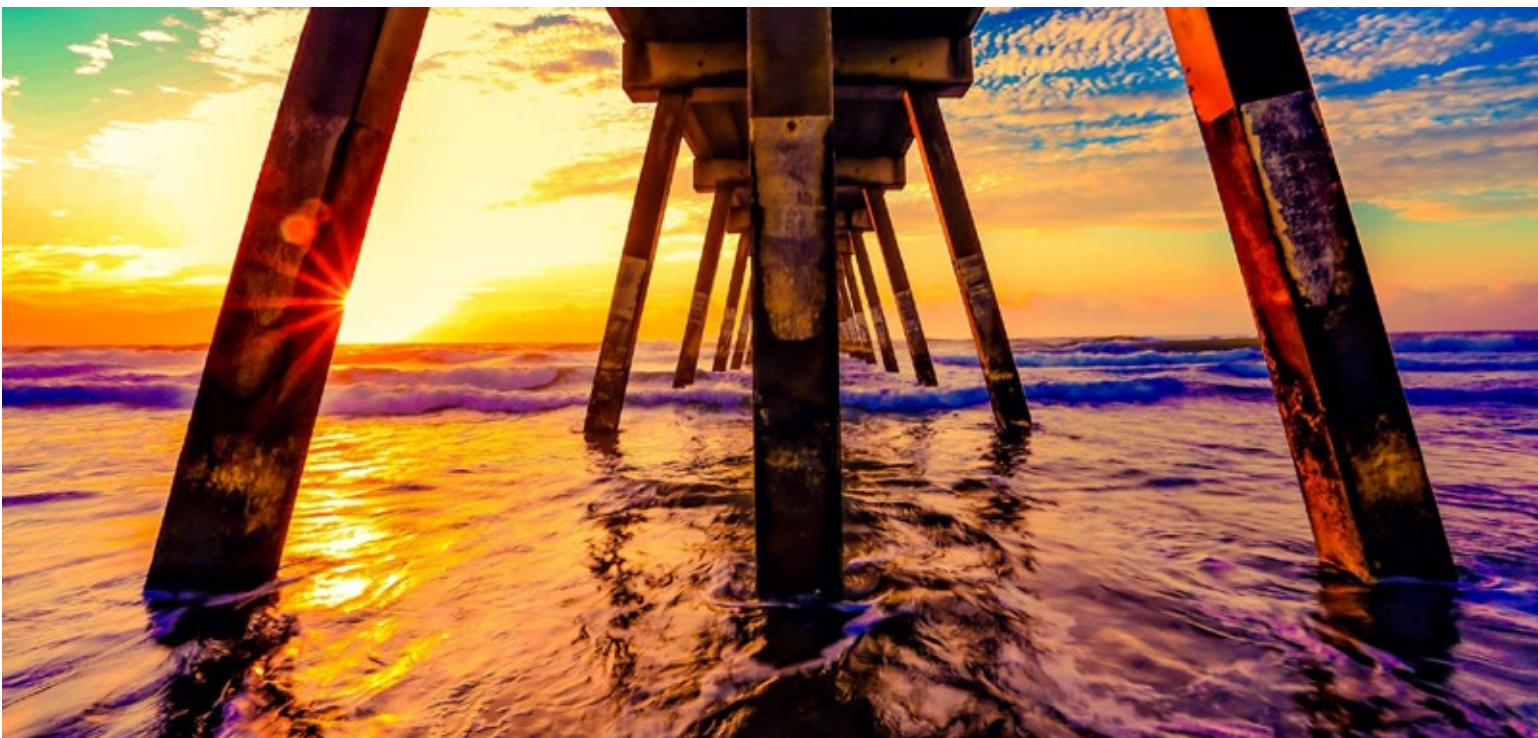
SUMMER SERVE // A CHANCE TO GET PEOPLE CONNECTED!

By Rich Birch

Keeping a church running on the same schedule 52 weeks a year is difficult to do. People's **lives ebb and flow throughout the year** and we need to work with those changes rather than against them.

I first heard about Summer Serve as a way to **give children's ministry workers time off over the summer.** The basic logic went like this: "Our

kids ministry people serve for 9 months of the year for your children. We want to give them some time off. Can you jump in and help this summer in children's ministry?" You can find all kinds of churches that use Summer Serve in this way. [[Abundant Life Christian Fellowship](#)] [[Arvada Covenant Church](#)] [[City Church](#)] [[True North Church](#)]



I've encouraged churches to go beyond children's ministry and **use Summer Serve as a way to get people plugged into a wide variety of service opportunities** within the church. The basic "ask" is simple:

- **Get out of the stands and onto the field!** Serving is more fun than passively consuming the church experience.
- Sign up to join a team for **one Sunday in the months of June, July and August.**
- No training is required! **Sign up and show up!** Our team will show you how to serve in your chosen area.

Although the obvious benefit of Summer Serve is filling in teams over the typically sparse summer months, if it's executed well, it's a huge opportunity to see new volunteers get plugged into the community for the fall. It's really a jumpstart on fall volunteer planning!



Here are some overarching principles that will help Summer Serve go well at your church:

Make it Fun! Use surprise and delight to communicate about Summer Serve and to craft volunteer experiences.

Think Follow Up. Before you begin, work out exactly how you're going to follow up with each participant. The goal is to help people get plugged into the community.

Keep the Ask Simple. Take the complexity out of what you ask people to do. Simplify. Simplify. Simplify. If you give people too many options, they will opt out.

Build a Culture. Particularly if you are just starting Summer Serve, remember that you are attempting to build an expectation that everyone serves for one Sunday a month throughout the summer.

Change Your Ministry. You need to change up your ministry to make room for new volunteers. You're probably going to need to ask some long-time volunteers to step into coaching roles for these Summer Serve volunteers.

Think Systems. If this works, you are going to have a significant influx of new volunteers into your ministry. You are going to need a systematic approach to getting them plugged in and feeling happy!

Make it Fun! Did I mention this already? It's summertime ... people are looking for a good time! Let's make volunteering fun!



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