



## 10 Tips for Recognizing Church Volunteers

*ServiceLink would like to share with you some of the ways in which you can recognize those who are involved in your church's ministry programs. How do you say thank you? How do let your volunteers know you appreciate them? Some churches have special events in which they thank and recognize their volunteers, possibly with a celebration service or providing a small gift of appreciation. These are all good, but it's more so the deliberate and intentional ongoing way we engage with our volunteers that reinforces their value to our ministries, letting them know they matter and that what they are doing has an impact.*

*Here are 10 suggestions for recognizing your volunteers and showing appreciation for them.*

1. **Know your volunteers** Look for ways to spend some time with them and learn about who they are and about their lives. Where do they work? Who makes up their family? Ask about vacations. What significant dates are important in their lives? Showing you care about them indicates you're interested in them personally and not just in completing a task.
2. **Ooze with encouragement** either verbally or in writing. Tell your volunteers they did a great job. Share with them the impact they are making in your ministry. Send a card or an email. Let them know you're praying for them.
3. **Care for your volunteers** Caring for your volunteers goes beyond knowing them. What are some of the things that they require in order to do their tasks? How about making sure they have access to workspace, computers and equipment. How about providing snacks for meetings or training events. This helps reduce the formality of meetings and may give people an excuse to come early or stay a bit later to build relationships.
4. **It's all about Jesus!** Every volunteer must see how their ministry connects to the gospel and changed lives – if not they're only doing a task. So tell them! Tell them how their ministry connects to the mission of your church and the building of God's Kingdom.
5. **Show them the ropes** You cannot expect volunteers to deliver quality ministry without some intentional training and team building. Provide the necessary resources in order for volunteers to be effective in their roles, as well as transferring attitudes, competencies and knowledge.

6. **Affirm their gifts** Sometimes people's gifts are so natural to them that they don't recognize them as such. When we highlight volunteers' gifts we acknowledge both their gifts and the Giver of gifts, encouraging them to continue using those gifts to bless others.
7. **Respect their time** Volunteers have busy lives outside of ministry responsibilities. They may already be working long hours or need to arrange babysitters for their children. Lack of time is the most common reason people won't commit to ministry involvement. So be prepared for your meetings, start on time and return calls and emails promptly. By respecting their time, you value them as volunteers.
8. **Keep them in the loop** People want their lives to matter, to know that they are important to the overall mission and vision of your church. So if there are new initiatives in ministry or changes in programs, keep volunteers informed and share the vision so they don't feel awkward when other members may inquire of them.
9. **Cover their costs** Investing in a volunteer's personal growth is a high level of appreciation. Is there a conference that would enhance their gifts and take them to a new level of responsibility? Invite them to participate in growth opportunities and cover their expenses.
10. **Say thanks!** Just as you were taught from early on, saying please and thank you is good manners. Say "thank you" often and mean it.

*These ten appreciation gifts may cost some time and intentional effort, but the reward will be so much greater as volunteers serve longer in their ministry roles knowing they are appreciated and a blessing to the church.*

There are other ways to say thanks and recognize your volunteers. For other suggestions or additional resources on Volunteer Ministry Development, please contact the ServiceLink office [volunteer@crcna.org](mailto:volunteer@crcna.org) or 800-730-3490

