

3 Secrets Of An Effective #KidMin Volunteer Strategy

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For years, my family has been on the hunt for the greatest chocolate chip cookie recipe. It seems as though we've tried everything under the sun. We've suffered through flat cookies, hard as rock cookies, cake cookies, and everything else you could imagine.

Finally, after years of experimenting and tweaking the recipe, my oldest daughter broke the code and discovered the ingredients to what my family considers the best ever...unless you'd like to challenge me by emailing your favorite recipe.

My time in ministry taught me a similar lesson – there are key ingredients in working with volunteers, and it often takes years of experimenting and tweaking to get them right.

Being a Children's Pastor is hard enough, but without key volunteers, you'll continue to struggle to rise above mediocrity.

So if volunteers are so important to Children's Ministry, how do we recruit more of them, train the ones we have, and keep them around long-term?

It takes a unique person to recruit at a high level, but anyone can learn the few basic foundations of building an effective volunteer recruitment strategy.

1. You must step outside of your comfort zone.

It's easy to hide behind the veil of personality types or focus on what you're not good at (i.e. Moses in Exodus, chapter 3). However, in order to recruit beyond your needs in children's ministry, you have to be willing to be vocal and ask parents and other church members to make the sacrifice of time.

You will be rejected more often than not, and you have to be ok with that. Don't let the fear of rejection stand in the way of building a great team.

You can expect to be surprised as well. You'll quickly find that many people you never thought would join you just needed an invitation.

2. Intentionally train your volunteer leaders.

If you ask people to sacrifice their valuable time, you'd better have somewhere to put them and a legitimate role for them to play. Otherwise, they'll find a better use of their time.

People are generally willing to help if they feel that their role is significant and they are taught what to do.

The worst thing you can do to your volunteer momentum is recruit a ton of people only to have them leave frustrated three weeks later because you failed to teach them how to lead a small group or how to manage a crowd or even how to recognize a third grader that needs a friend.

Remember, its not just about getting people in place, it's about getting quality people trained up and excited about doing life with you in children's ministry on a consistent basis.

3. Make retaining your volunteers a top priority.

Many people make the mistake of recruiting people out of desperation. "Please come serve in our kids ministry, because we need more _____."

You can fill the blank with anything from small group leaders, actors, praise team members, etc. No matter what your volunteer need is, you'll still be missing the mark if you're recruiting out of desperation.

Recruiting simply for need is a worthy cause, but what high-level businessperson is attracted to that? How many schoolteachers want to continue teaching when the weekend comes? What are people truly longing for?

RELATIONSHIP!

If you're in ministry, you value relationships. There's no better place than ministry to do life with people.

Recruit those that you want to get to know, have coffee with, and invite into your home (1 Thessalonians 2:8 NIV). Your need may or may not get people in the door, but an intentional relationship with them will keep them connected for the long haul.

Finding the right mix of strategies, ideas, and people for your children's ministry is difficult. Like a cookie recipe, it may even take some experimenting to see what works best for you.

Regardless of your situation, consistent recruiting, quality volunteer training and intentionally retaining the team God gives you are the essentials to building a world-class children's ministry volunteer strategy.

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