

# Developing Volunteer Leaders for Youth Ministry

## Purpose:

This workshop will assist parish leaders in recruiting, training, and supporting adults and youth for volunteer leadership in youth ministry. Included in this workshop are the tools necessary to create the roles descriptions that will assist these volunteers in knowing what they are being asked to do and will help parish leaders in recruiting volunteers based on interests and gifts.

Before you invite volunteers, you must know what tasks are needed to accomplish the program/activity/event. See Example: pre-planned spaghetti dinner tasks:

## Dividing Jobs

- Every program involves a variety of tasks to be done. If we separate these tasks, we should be able to figure out a variety of different jobs that can be taken on by a variety of different people.
- Example: Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser—an evening out (a dress-up, bring a date, or friends type of parish event). There are a variety of tasks that need to be done in order to make this Spaghetti Dinner happen.
- What are the tasks involved in hosting a Spaghetti Dinner?
- Show them the list that is in the PowerPoint slide and see how their list matches up with “yours.” Further descriptions are located on page 13 in the participant’s handouts.
- All of these tasks need to be done by someone—but some tasks need a few people to do them, and others can be combined with other tasks to make up a job for one person.
- Ask participants to name some of the tasks on the list that might need more than one person (e.g., servers, cooks) and some things that might be combined to make a job (e.g., publicity and bulletin announcements, ticket sellers and ticket collectors) and then show them how you have combined those jobs in the next PowerPoint slide. *(PP Slide)*
- Sometimes you have a “super volunteer” who is capable of handling many different tasks, but it is better to keep them in manageable chunks and ask the “super volunteer” to do more than one of the jobs you have created. People will say “yes” to a job that seems manageable.
- By writing these tasks down, it might make it look bigger than you have been thinking about it, but all of these jobs need to get done whether you write them down or not.

## tasks

Over-all Coordinator - Publicity - Secure Date/Place - Ticket Sales - Creating Tickets - Food Buyers - Donations (food, decorations, desserts) - Set-up - Clean-up - Decorating - Entertainment – Cooks - Salad Preparation - Filling Plates - Servers - Drink Servers - Table Cleaners – Greeters - Ticket Collectors - Bulletin Announcements - Thank you notes

Now that we know the tasks we can look at the different (ministry) job descriptions.

## Writing Job Descriptions

The next step in the process is to write some job descriptions. Job descriptions should include the following:

- Tasks to be performed
- Abilities needed
- Length of commitment (number of days, times, how many hours, meetings)
- Support and supervision
- Benefits to the person and the community

## Inviting Volunteers

Three levels of recruitment:

- **General Recruitment**—ongoing efforts to create a leadership pool (e.g., new parishioner packets, surveys to parents, invitations to parish organizations)
- **Specific Recruitment**—ongoing efforts to advertise your need for volunteers (e.g., want ads in bulletin, newsletter notices, etc.)
- **Targeted Recruitment**—personal invitations to individuals to help with specific programs

Highlight the following:

- Most people don't volunteer because no one asks them. Personal invitations are the only way to be really successful.
- To target people, consider the following process:
  - Identify some criteria for involving leaders (practicing Catholics, an appreciation for youth, holy, etc.)
  - Gather people (outside of youth ministry) to brainstorm parishioners who could help with youth ministry. Use parish lists, rosters, ask staff, long-time parishioners, youth, etc. Explain how important it is to go outside their own personal experience by drawing on lots of other people to help them brainstorm or else it will always come back to the same people being invited to do everything.
  - Call them up or visit them to discuss your interest in their involvement. (You can also host a meeting, but you may lose lots of people who opt out.)
  - Explain the leadership positions available and invite the person to consider how they would like to be involved.
- If people will be involved directly with youth, they will need to fill out an application and go through Safe Environment training.
- Be open to the fact that in talking to people you may uncover a gift, talent, or interest for which you currently don't have a job available. Write that information down and ask the person if they would be willing to contribute that gift at a later time.
- Most parishes don't do a great job of inviting in volunteers and supporting them. It is a constant and on-going challenge at every parish.
- It is possible to set up a structure that will help you invite adults and youth into leadership and keep volunteers because they feel supported, are learning, and growing into a role that helps them connect with the best within themselves.
- This type of system takes some work—but it is worth the effort.

## **Training**

There are many different ways that people can be trained for their leadership roles, including:

- Diocesan certification programs (Youth Ministry Certification Program and others)
- Diocesan/regional training programs
- Parish-level youth ministry training
- Online training (YouthMinistryAccess.org offers parishes online training) and video training (YMTV is a 12 video training program. It is available through CMD)
- Books and articles
- On-the-job training for specific jobs (Most youth ministry volunteers learn this way—it is effective but over-utilized, at times)
- Group evaluation and feedback
- Every person needs to feel good about their contribution, and that won't happen if they aren't able to do a good job because they lack the skills, knowledge, or experience to achieve.
- Most volunteers lack particular information that would make their job easier. Don't be afraid to tell people what to do and how to do it. They would rather learn from your experience than fail because of lack of knowledge. We don't have to micromanage how they do their job, but we should tell them what they need to know.
- If you lack the information to tell people what they might need to know, be sure to acknowledge that and support them in their efforts to figure it out on their own.

### **Formation:**

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

- faith sharing
- praying together
- community building
- socializing
- sharing stories about our experiences with youth.

The focusing question for formation of youth ministry volunteers is: “Who and what are we about as people of faith ministering with youth?”

### **Support:**

Support includes:

- Affirmation and acknowledgement—letting people know that their service is valued
- Supportive assistance—doing things that help a person volunteer, such as paying for training, providing baby-sitting (or welcoming kids at your meetings), attending to personal struggles and tragedies, etc.
- Feedback and evaluation—letting people know what they are doing well and how they can continue to grow in their role.

### **Training and Support Example:**

The most effective way to do this is to orient the participants to a program. This is an example for an activity to take the teen bowling:

*Welcome! Thanks so much for helping us out tonight by driving the young people to bowling. Your help is greatly appreciated! A couple of things that I want you to know:*

- *I am handing out a sheet of paper. On it are the directions to the bowling alley (just in case!), my cell phone number, and the list of young people in your car.*
- *We always separate the young people so that car rides can be places to meet new people, but because of that, conversation can be a little strained, at times. You will notice that there are a few discussion questions on the page as well, in case conversation drags.*
- *It is the policy of our youth ministry program that we don't play the radio or CDs in the cars on short trips so that people won't fight about music choices and people have the chance to talk.*
- *Please make sure that everyone is in a seat belt before leaving the parish and that you follow the speed limit. Young people are watching your driving habits and will soon be on the road with you!*
- *You are welcome to join us for bowling (at our expense) but if you aren't staying, please be back at 8:30 PM. We will be done by 8:45 PM at the latest.*
- *When you get back to the parish, please wait with the young people in your car until either they are all picked up, or I get back to the parish. I don't want anyone left alone. I should be back within minutes of you.*
- *Lastly, we always want youth ministry to be a safe and comfortable place for the young people, so please pay attention to what young people are saying, and discourage them from gossiping or being mean to each other or others not in your car. If something happens that you think needs to be addressed, please let me know, and I will speak with the young people myself.*

*Thanks again for all your help! Any questions?*

**components of an orientation:**

- Guidelines of the youth ministry program (being nice to each other, no pairing off, etc.)
- Specific rules of the event
- Expectations of the adults
- Any information needed (phone numbers, times, places, etc.)
- Information to do their job well (background information, traditions, etc.)

The longer the volunteer commitment, the longer the orientation should be. Catechists usually have a few hours, drivers for bowling need 5 minutes.