

MIDDLE SCHOOL

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT GUIDE

Middle School small group leaders are a unique kind of people. I mean, what kind of person gives up their free time to volunteer with a group of students so wildly different than themselves? What kind of person chooses to engage in small group conversations about Jesus one minute, then the next talking about the weird food Kevin ate yesterday. What kind of person can balance the spiritual weight of the job with an appreciation for the kind of chaos, silliness, drama, and fun that only middle schoolers can create?

Answer: The **BEST** kind of people.

Finding this kind of person may feel like an impossible task. But they're out there! We promise. They attend your church. They park next to you in the parking lot. And right now, they're looking for an opportunity to get more involved. This is where YOU come in.

When it comes to recruiting middle school volunteers, the conversations are SO important. This is your chance to communicate vision and need. This is your chance to determine whether that person could be a great fit for your ministry.

Looking for some help or some tips to get you started?

5 THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN MIDDLE SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

1. Encourager
2. Confidence
3. Fun personality
4. Energy
5. Flexibility

BEFORE YOU START

- We suggest mapping out all of the important upcoming ministry dates on a calendar—any camps, retreats, special services, parties, parent meetings, scheduled silly string fights, etc. That way, you can be upfront about the time commitment.
 - Secure a handful of current volunteers who would be willing to talk to potential volunteers. These people could be a good resource if potential volunteers want to get a more practical sense of what the job requires. Make sure these volunteers are going to give honest—and also positive—opinions.
 - Before you sit with potential volunteers, make sure you know where or who to direct them to. This might be a volunteer to shadow, a background check to complete, an application to fill out, or a service to observe. At the very least, always ask for a follow-up conversation after they've had time to think and pray about it!
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WHAT TO SAY:

- **Lead with compliments.** If there's a reason that person stood out to you, let them know:
 - » "You're good at asking questions. I love that because . . ."
 - » "You are so approachable and easy to talk to which is really important when it comes to interacting with middle schoolers because . . ."
- **In the middle school world, personality is a BIG DEAL.** So don't be afraid to make that a qualifier for potential volunteers.
 - » "You are so confident in who you are, and I think that's so important for middle schoolers to see modeled."
 - » "Middle schoolers need encouragement in their lives. They're insecure because everything in them and around them is changing. You're so encouraging, and I think you'd be a rock star in our ministry."
- **Debunk myths about the middle school phase, and speak to their fears.**
 - » "You might think _____ about middle schoolers, but . . ."
 - » "Here's what I love about middle schoolers . . ."
 - » "We don't need theologians. We need people who will be real with middle schoolers, and I think that's you."
 - » "You won't have to have the 'hard conversations' alone. That's what I'm there for."
 - » "Middle schoolers don't only need loud, crazy, extroverted people in their life. They need all different personalities and temperaments because they need to see that whoever they really are inside, is acceptable and awesome."
- **Ask questions!** Give the potential volunteer PLENTY of opportunity to be heard.
 - » "What are you passionate about and why?"
 - » "What do you think about middle schoolers?"
 - » "What interests you about serving?"
 - » "Why is middle school important to you?"
 - » "Did you have mentors when you were in middle school? If you did/didn't, why was that important?"
 - » "What makes you the most nervous about middle schoolers?"

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- **Don't tell your worst stories:**
 - » "Let me tell you about this one time. It was crazy! I almost quit that day."
 - » Don't be dramatic because as that can put a lot of pressure on potential volunteers.
 - » "We lost three volunteers recently, and we're desperate. We need you."
- **Don't overhype and misrepresent.**
 - » "This is the easiest job in the world. Middle schoolers are easy."
 - » "This will for sure be the best thing you ever do."
- **Don't come to this conversation unprepared!** This communicates laziness or that the job really isn't that important. And it can be a waste of that person's time.
- **Don't be stingy!** In the end, they might not be right for *your* ministry, but they could be perfect in someone else's. And that's alright. **A win for one of us is a win for all of us!**