

# **12 Tips for Recruiting, Equipping, & Retaining **Church** **Volunteers****

**We don't need to remind you that your church would not be the same without the dedication and passion of your volunteers.** Volunteers are an essential asset to every church. From welcoming new faces at the front door to helping kids learn about God's love, volunteers are the heartbeat of every church.

The challenge of consistently finding the volunteers your church needs is real, and we're here to help make it easier.

Each summer at WinShape Camps, we have the privilege of equipping over 4,000+ high school students and adults. Through every step—from recruiting to training to retention—we've learned a lot about what it takes to create a meaningful and sustainable volunteer experience. Now, we're excited to share twelve practical tips to help you and the volunteers at your church make a bigger impact!



# Tips for Recruiting Volunteers

## 1. Pray First

In busy seasons, pausing to pray can sometimes be overlooked, but this should always be the first step. Prayer aligns our hearts with God, our Provider, and reminds us why we seek to grow our volunteer team in the first place.

## 2. Provide Options

From the outside looking in, volunteering can seem intimidating. Offering a variety of roles, flexible times, and different commitment levels can make it much easier for first-timers to get involved.

## 3. Set Up an Info Desk

Having a visible and staffed information desk is an easy way to help potential volunteers find information and discuss volunteer opportunities.

## 4. Train Advocates

Your church's current volunteers are your most valuable advocates for recruiting new volunteers. They understand why they signed up, what the experience is like, and the impact it's had on them. Encourage and train them to be intentional in personally inviting others to join them in volunteering.

## 5. Shout it from the Rooftops

Alright, maybe don't actually shout it from the rooftop of your church (although that might work). Instead, think of the physical places where you can let people know there is a need for volunteers. Consider making an announcement from the main stage on Sunday morning, passing out flyers to small groups, or hosting an informational session with free food after service. Finding visible, high-traffic spots to share your volunteer needs can make all the difference .



# Tips for Equipping Volunteers

## 6. Set Clear Expectations

When new volunteers sign up, they may not know exactly what to expect. You can help them prepare by sharing answers to common questions, potential challenges, and any other helpful information they should know ahead of time.

## 7. Provide Tools, Tips, and Information

For volunteers to succeed in their role, they need to feel prepared. One way we do this at WinShape Camps is by training our summer staff in six core elements that we hope guide how they think and interact with campers. These elements spell RECIPE:

**R** - Resource Stewardship

**E** - Environmental Excellence

**C** - Christ-centered Truths

**I** - Intentional Culture

**P** - People First

**E** - Engaging Fun

## 8. Host Trainings and Check-ins

So, you found volunteers, trained them, and now you're done forever, right? Not quite! The next step is to continue pouring into them and ensuring they stay well-equipped for their role. This can be as simple as hosting two training sessions a year and quarterly one-on-one check-ins.

## 9. Be Present

Try to ensure that a church staff member or volunteer leader is consistently available to answer questions and offer support to volunteers. When questions arise or volunteers are unsure how to handle a situation, having someone available to lend a hand will go a long way in making them feel supported.



# Tips for Retaining Volunteers

## 10. Be Flexible

To retain volunteers over a long period of time, offering flexibility is key. Encourage them to take occasional Sundays off so they don't feel the pressure of always having to serve. Also, set realistic expectations for yourself; last-minute cancellations and no-shows are inevitable. While we want to avoid them, it's important to be prepared and understand they will happen from time to time.

## 11. Check-in with Volunteers

Everyone wants to feel seen and heard. Make space and time to check in with your volunteers, ask for their thoughts and feedback, and implement changes based on their input whenever you can.

## 12. Celebrate Often

Who doesn't love being celebrated? Recognizing your volunteers is important, both as a group and individually. This could be as simple as hosting a monthly breakfast or writing individual notes of encouragement for volunteers. Plus, if you create a culture of fun and celebration for volunteers, others will hear about it and be eager to join in!

