

Acknowledging Volunteers



Questions and Quotes for Consideration

1. Why do you want to acknowledge volunteers?...to keep them going, you couldn't do it without them, you really appreciate them as people or ...?
2. Think of a good volunteering experience you've had. What did the organisers do to acknowledge you?
3. Volunteers volunteer for a number of reasons. Broadly they include one or more of: making a difference, relationships and self development. What kinds of acknowledgement would be best for each of these sorts of volunteers? Why do you think *your* volunteers offer themselves?
4. "It is important for a volunteers' coordinator to get to know something about each individual volunteer and find out how best to recognise and reward them". Look at the list on the next page. Which of these ways of acknowledging volunteers would work best with your people? (If you're not sure how could you find out?)
5. How could a volunteer's personality, level of education, available time and ethnic background affect how it is best to acknowledge them? Can you think of any other factors that could be important?
6. "Everyone who volunteers... deserves some form of recognition, even if it's a simple thank you for helping out. Rewarding volunteers takes recognition a step further..."
Yet...
 - Some Christians believe that people should wait till heaven for their reward. Some think that only duty, love or commitment are the only worthy motivations for a Christian volunteer.
 - Some churches know each other like families and they can assume members know they are appreciated and loved even though it's never said.

What are some of the beliefs and assumptions that work against your church acknowledging its volunteers?

What impact should our Christian beliefs and practices have on the way we acknowledge volunteers?

Going Further...

www.ausport.gov.au/participating/volunteers (The quotes above come from the documents on this site)
www.volunteeringaustralia.org
www.volunteering.com.au
www.volqld.org.au
www.volunteeringwa.org.au
www.volunteeringvic.org.au

(Lots of) Ways to Acknowledge Volunteers

- Smiling, greeting them and saying thank you
- Getting to scripture early to chat with (and even pray with) the other teachers
- Sending letters when they start, welcoming them to the team and giving them helpful information
- Including them on any lists of rosters/jobs done in the church
- Offering personal praise as appropriate
- Treating their struggles/difficulties seriously and helping them deal with them
- Writing letters and postcards of thanks
- Giving name tags and any other relevant identifying clothing or cards (eg authorisation certificates)
- Acknowledging them in the church newsletter/magazine
- Writing up their stories in the church newsletter/magazine
- Offering to pray for them, sharing their prayer points with others (with their permission)
- Presenting awards at AGM, annual lunch or education week service (these awards can be serious and/or fun)
- Asking them to give input/stories for Church Council or church AGM
- Make sure the church knows who they are and what they do
- Sending birthday, get well and Christmas cards
- Reimbursing out of pocket expenses
- Holding social events in honour of volunteers
- Going out for lunch/coffee once a term ...planned or impromptu
- Farewelling people when they stop volunteering
- Providing support services such as transport
- Listening to volunteers' ideas, criticisms and feedback
- Inviting a 'bigwig' to a team meeting
- Put forward people's names for awards from the denomination or the community
- Provide certificates for length of service, completion of training etc.
- Present certificates during a church service or on another suitable occasion
- Share positive comments and stories you hear from people
- Include the team in planning
- Give them a job description
- Give them access to church resources, eg photocopier, data projector
- Have team meetings
- Pray for each other as a team
- Let them know about training and other events
- Ask them how they are going
- Interview kids/parents/grandparents about what's good about SRE. Alternatively you could ask for comments and construct an article/talk with quotes.
- Use those with more experience or with professional experience to mentor others
- Have team building activities
- Share good news stories and encourage others to share theirs
- Share your own struggles/difficulties and things you are learning