

[Select Page](#)

Reframe and Rename Volunteering

Jul 7, 2021 | Arkansas United Methodist



Photo by Joel Muniz on Unsplash

By Melinda Shunk

Children's Ministry Coordinator



No matter the size of your church, staff are not hired to do it all! The church is a community of Christ-followers that work together to share and teach God's love.

Many who work at a church call those Christ-following church members volunteers! We may even say to each other we have so many volunteer positions! We may make phone calls to get the list filled and find ourselves putting any person in that slot that says “yes” to the request.

The filled volunteer slot looks great on paper, but sometimes when it comes to fulfilling a request, your volunteers fall short or cancel at the last minute. Ask any person on staff at a church; finding people to teach Sunday School or join a youth outing can be a great source of anxiety and stress. We never want someone to feel “volun-told,” nor do we enjoy being part of a church that causes anxiety and stress.

First, let’s reframe church volunteering to a more proper name. Renaming and reframing it to “Opportunities to Minister” will help people look at it as a ministry, not volunteering to work for free.

Opportunities to Minister should always have a description of the task at hand. Suppose you find the job description to be more than two sentences. In that case, you need to break the Opportunity down into multiple minor tasks. (Yes, that means more people to fill a ministry task. This yields an easier task and an Opportunity for people serving together to create bonds.)

Do not overload one person, or they won’t be back for other Opportunities to Minister, so be sure to include the date and time commitment. A one-month commitment or six or fewer times is best because you will likely get a hard no from someone if it is long-term or there is no end in sight. Also, when you make an effort to describe the tasks in just two sentences, it allows the other person and you to know if their spiritual gifts apply to that area of ministry. Here is a list of quick pointers for Opportunities to Minister.

- Sometimes, you might not find the best match of spiritual gifts to the Opportunity to Minister. Rochelle Grey from Lakewood UMC uses the phrase “shining the light on member’s spiritual gifts” because it gives them a chance to shine. When she discovers that someone doesn’t fit in an Opportunity to Minister, she kindly says that she has a new opportunity to shine and directs them to a ministry area that is a better fit.
- When you ask someone to take part in an Opportunity to Minister, you want to know that person well enough that you can discern if their gifts match the Opportunity. If you ask someone, knowing it is in their realm of spiritual gifts, it will not be out of their comfort zone. It will be a natural place for them to Minister, and it’s less likely that you’ll have an unsuccessful ministry outcome.
- Please do not assume that because a person has children, youth, parents, or grandparents in the program that they should serve in that ministry.
- Don’t rely on your close circle of “yes” people; they will burn out or age out, and you will struggle later on. The way to get that group larger is small, simple, and limited task opportunities.

- If you don't have those who can take on those opportunities to serve, don't do them. Many hands make light work. If one person carries the load, it likely will cause hurt feelings, stress, and resentment toward ministry, which is not the goal.
- If you are reading this and you are the staff or coordinator of ministry opportunities, keep in mind to pray daily for opportunities for the Holy Spirit to connect you relationally to your congregation. congregational connections make all these suggestions easy to carry out and make for a successful ministry.

Share this:

Facebook



Twitter



LinkedIn



Print



Email



English

Archives

[July 2021](#)[June 2021](#)[May 2021](#)[April 2021](#)[March 2021](#)[February 2021](#)[January 2021](#)[December 2020](#)[November 2020](#)[October 2020](#)[September 2020](#)[August 2020](#)[July 2020](#)[June 2020](#)[May 2020](#)