

Thinking **WIN-WIN** with your volunteers



In Jesus' public ministry, He not did not just want to share the Good News. He wanted to empower His followers, especially His Apostles, to do the same. And though He desired all of humanity to hear His voice, He spent most of His time with twelve men, and even more of His time with three.

I have called you friends

This goes against every piece of advice that contemporary experts on marketing and media would propose. Were Jesus alive today, they would position Him at peak times of social networking and make videos that were sure to go 'viral'. They'd get Him a billion followers on Twitter and even more on Facebook. He would do a world tour that would visit every continent and country, but only for a short time.

Though Jesus didn't have those media opportunities two thousand years ago, I have the feeling that even if He had He probably wouldn't have changed His strategy very much. Instead of spreading Himself thin to reach the masses He would still invest most of His time in a few people who would know Him well and could replicate what He did.

All of us in ministry need to follow this pedagogy. We need to spend our energy not just evangelizing and catechizing youth and young adults but also spend time forming and discipling adults who can participate in that ministry.

Attracting adult volunteers

'But how can I get adult volunteers?' you may ask. Attracting volunteers to your ministry is a daunting challenge, but it can be done. One way of doing that is to think 'Win-Win.'

In 1989, Steven Covey came out with a ground-breaking book titled, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. As the title would suggest, the book discusses seven key attitudes or 'habits' that makes a person successful. One of those habits is called 'Win-Win.'

'Win-Win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win-Win means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial, mutually satisfying.'¹ Covey's habit of Win-Win means that I am concerned not only for how the volunteer might help the youth ministry program but also how they would be blessed by being a part of it.

Perhaps Win-Win can be best understood by describing what it is not. A 'Win' attitude cares only that you get what is best and is unconcerned with the other party. A 'Win-Lose' is the competitive model: I succeed by your failing. A 'Lose-Lose' mentality says that if I can't get what I want then neither can you. A 'Lose-Win' attitude thinks that if I sacrifice myself for the betterment of someone else then that is a good thing.

That last attitude is very prevalent among Christians. We see Jesus on the cross and think that we that we need to suffer, especially when it comes to serving the Church. But it is this very attitude that keeps volunteers away in droves.

There is another way. A ministry that is as concerned with the positive experience of its volunteer as it is with it's ministry to young people becomes a dynamic and enticing environment that attracts both youth and adults alike.

Benefiting volunteers

Ask yourself the question, 'How does a volunteer benefit from being a part of this ministry?' You might be tempted to think that ministering to young people should be its own reward and perhaps, for you and a few others, it is. But that

can be a 'Win-Lose' attitude (volunteers suffer for the sake of the ministry) and would only attract a 'Lose-Win' personality. Lose-Win people are usually driven by guilt and aren't always the most joyful in helping out.

Here are a few ideas that can help your youth or young adult ministry be a Win-Win for your volunteers:

Have clear expectations. It should be established from the beginning what you hope they can do for the ministry and what the ministry will provide for them.

Focus on their spiritual growth. We are all hungry to know Jesus more. Do a Bible study, lead a 'spiritual book club,' even take them on a retreat. It doesn't have to be into ministering to young people at all, just do things that will help them grow closer to Christ.

Build a strong community. Have a barbecue; go to dinner together, or invite everyone attends some concert, talk, or presentation that is happening nearby. Do fun things together. What works for young people often works for adults!

And finally, **don't treat them as a means to the end.** We can get so caught up in ministering to youth and young adults that we forget that adults need to be ministered to as well. Treat your volunteers with the same respect and dignity as you would with a young person in your program. Let them know that they are loved by God and have unique gifts to offer in building His kingdom on earth. Provide a place where they are encouraged and empowered to not only help others but also to grow closer to the Lord. 🙏

Notes

1. Covey, Stephen R. *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*. Kindle edition, location 3293.

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