

## **Building an Effective Team—Placing People According to their Gifts**

**By Jason Noble**

A key to volunteer recruitment is placing people according to their gifts. If we can place people in positions where they are going to excel and feel like they are really making a difference, we will see longevity and quality teams. When you highlight people's strengths and help them build on those strengths, you will see people succeed at the jobs they are given. Let's face it, we all have weaknesses. Chances are, no matter how hard we try to turn our weaknesses into strengths, they will still be weaknesses. When people are placed in positions of ministry that highlight their weaknesses, more than likely they will burn out and quit.

So how do we place people according to their strengths and weaknesses? How do we place people in positions that help them to realize their giftings and build upon their strengths? Below I have listed some ideas that I believe will help us accomplish this.

1. People are more important than the program.
  - a. Too many times we place people in the moment of need rather than really evaluating who they are and how they fit into the position in which they are placed.
  - b. Our need for volunteers should never trump the need to place people according to their gifts.
  - c. This type of strategy will help you keep your volunteers.
  
2. Get to know the people that you have recruited.
  - a. Build into your interview process a time to get to know who your volunteers are, and what their gifts and strengths are.
  - b. Have them take a spiritual gifts test.
    1. Resources for spiritual gifts tests:
      - a. [www.churchgrowth.org](http://www.churchgrowth.org)  
-free spiritual gifts analysis that is done online.
  - c. Build relationships with your volunteers.
  - d. Follow-up with your volunteers throughout the year to see how they are doing in their positions.
  
3. Identify what gifts and strengths are needed for the positions you are recruiting for.
  - a. Get a clear picture of the spiritual gifts and strengths needed for each position in your children's ministry.
  - b. Include these gifts on your Ministry Descriptions for each position.
  - c. Be up front with the strengths and gifts needed in these positions. This allows new volunteers to have input on where they feel they will fit best.
  
4. What happens when someone is placed in the wrong position?

- a. When a volunteer is placed in a position, I would ask for a two-month initial commitment period. At the end of this period, we can sit down and reevaluate how the volunteer is doing.
  - b. If I don't feel like the volunteer is succeeding, or they don't feel like the position is a good fit, we can look at placing them in a different position that would fit them better.
  - c. Sometimes people realize that children's ministry isn't for them. In that case, help place them in another ministry of the church that fits them better.
  - d. Many times when a volunteer is placed in another ministry, it can be a win for us, a win for the volunteer, and a win for the church as a whole. This will free up resources and people to help with other ministries.
  - e. Sometimes the volunteer may not see that he/she isn't a good fit, even though you do. In these cases, gently work with the volunteer and move him/her to a different position that is a better fit.
  - f. Misplacing volunteers can hurt your program, your team, and the volunteer. If you feel like you need to make a change for your team's sake, don't be afraid to do it. Here are a few keys that will help when you need to make a change.
    - 1. Don't wait. The longer you wait, the messier it gets.
    - 2. Pray that God will help you.
    - 3. Help the volunteer feel like it's a win rather than a demotion.
    - 4. Realize that more than likely the volunteer is not succeeding because he/she is placed in the wrong position.
5. Weaknesses that need to be worked on.
- a. Our job is to help our volunteers grow and become better people and followers of Christ.
  - b. There are some weaknesses that volunteers will have that can and have to be dealt with.
  - c. Helping people work through these weaknesses will also be a key to building a strong team.
  - d. For instance, is someone is always late? That's a weakness. It's probably a weakness that affects many areas of his/her life. We have to care about our volunteers enough to bring it to their attention and help them deal with it.
  - e. Another example would be if a volunteer has a character flaw that keeps surfacing. We have to care about our volunteers enough to help our volunteers work through this type of issue in their lives.

Helping people excel in the gifts that God has blessed them with is one of the most rewarding things that we do as children's pastors. Helping them succeed is good for them, it's good for the team, and it's good for the leader. Please email your thoughts and ideas on Placing Volunteers to [jnoble@ag.org](mailto:jnoble@ag.org).