



Volunteers, part 2 of 2—

# Keeping Your Volunteers

by Joey Ellis

In the previous article, we focused on effectively recruiting leaders. In this second part, we will deal with the challenge of keeping those volunteers.

## Affirm, Affirm, Affirm

Words of praise go farther than you think. People want to know if they are doing a good job. Tell them. If they aren't, gently correct them. Always remember this about relating to people: praise them in public; correct them in private. Catch them doing something good, and pour on the praise!

## Send notes of thanks and encouragement.

While serving as a children's pastor, I would send handwritten notes of thanks twice each year to each of my workers. They were handwritten because I wanted the workers to know I cared enough to take time to write them a note instead of allowing them to feel like I told my secretary to type them a note. Often your volunteers will keep your notes as reminders of why they are doing what they are doing.

## Recognize them in front of your congregation.

How many times do children's workers get recognized publicly?

Hardly ever! This recognition lets them feel the appreciation of the entire church body.

Give your workers gifts of appreciation. If your budget allows, give your leaders tangible tokens of your esteem for them. Creative ideas are endless, but here are a few suggestions: a



dinner in their honor, a nice pen with your ministry name engraved on the side, plaques for special ministry awards, certificates for their faithfulness, a tote bag with your ministry logo silk-screened on the side.

## Make Their Ministry as Easy as Possible

### Provide assistant teachers to handle minor classroom responsibilities.

This can be accomplished by

having parents rotate through your classrooms. Many hands make light work. Some people enjoy volunteering to simply take the class role, help with refreshments, assist with crafts, or any other assistant's role.

### Provide ministry supply request forms that allow them to get the supplies they need quickly and easily.

Nothing frustrates teachers more than being out of basic supplies and having to spend their own money to provide for the needs of their classrooms.

### Provide quality children's ministry training for the leaders.

Teach them how to do what you have asked them to do. Read books together as a team. Send them to children's workers conferences, seminars, or conventions.

### Listen to their complaints and concerns.

Life and ministry are full of concerns. Your volunteers will have issues with which they need your help. Never give the appearance of being unconcerned. At times it may feel like problems are everywhere, but you need to stop and listen to your leaders.

Take appropriate steps to

