



RECRUITING ADULT LEADERS

Effective adult leaders are crucial to the success of your mission trip. Recruiting the right adults to lead your students will play a big part in your group's overall experience. This resource will give you ideas of what you're looking for, where to look and how to ask adult leaders to sign on to the mission trip.

WHERE TO LOOK

Your youth staff. If you already have a team of volunteers or youth staff, they are an obvious first choice. Bring people who are already in relationship with your students.

Your church staff. You may have a pool of people who have a passion for ministry at your church. Although youth missions might be a step outside their normal ministry path, invite in pastors, elders, administrators and others.

Parents. Serving alongside a child can be a great blessing to parents and allow them to more fully buy in to the youth ministry.

Your congregation. It might be a young couple or a 70-year-old retiree... or anyone in between. Don't be bashful. You might be surprised at who says yes.

Past students. Check in with your graduates who are at least 20. Consider past students who have the required maturity and responsibility.

Youth picks. Ask your students what adults they would like as leaders. They will choose adults who are already investing in their lives. You may just draft some incredible leaders this way.

Future volunteers. Who are the people you want to volunteer with the youth ministry? Going on a mission trip might get their feet wet, ignite their passion and build meaningful relationships, which will keep that person in ministry with your students. Ask them for a week, then invite them for more consistent involvement.

Youth workers. If you know other youth workers in town who are considering summer mission trips, invite them to come sample the trip you've planned. You'll gain a leader and they'll gain an experience that could impact the future of their youth ministry.

ADULT LEADER PROFILE

YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WHO IS....

Safe. This is a non-negotiable. Leaders who are risk-takers or have bad judgment about safety issues are a liability to your students. Having trust in the area of safety is a must, so make this qualification a prerequisite for any adult.

An Example. A title does not make someone a leader. Seek adults who are truly leaders by the example they set, particularly in their relationship with Jesus. Give students leaders worth following.

Responsible. Following directions, staying on schedule, keeping track of students – these are just a few roles of Adult Leaders. Look for leaders who will shoulder the added responsibility well.

Relational. Relationships are at the core of a healthy mission trip experience. Relational leaders will connect with youth and help connect youth to communities in incredible ways.

Known. It is a great benefit to have leaders who are already in relationship with your youth. Look for leaders who are currently involved in your students' lives.

Flexible. Unexpected circumstances are to be expected in youth ministry... and that's part of the adventure! So look for leaders who can bend without breaking and serve your students, and a community, through adaptability.

On Board. It's hard to steer a ship when your crew keeps jumping overboard. Pick leaders who will buy into the vision of the mission trip and support your leadership. Cast the vision and ask for commitment.

Different. Than you, that is. Think about how you'll diversify your leadership team in areas of gender, age, experience and personality type. Picking leaders who are different than you will complement your leadership style and offer a better chance that youth will find a leader to connect with.

In Process. Just as it is for your youth, the mission trip can challenge and grow your adult leaders. Without sacrificing your leadership standards, seek ways to stretch and develop adults as you give them new responsibility.

GOOD PRACTICES

Pick strategically. If you are choosing from a large pool of potential leaders, critically think about whom you'll ask. Consider what students are going and what leaders will best connect with those students.

Limit adult numbers. At YouthWorks, we ask senior high groups to bring one adult for every seven students and middle school groups to bring one adult for every five students. That's because it's a youth mission trip, and bringing too many adults changes the dynamic and minimizes opportunities for youth to step out in leadership. Pick adults who will be effective leaders, and gracefully limit your adult leader count.

Pay for leaders. Paying for your leaders is one way to let them know they're appreciated. Work the cost of adult leaders into students' fundraising. That doesn't mean adults shouldn't contribute to fundraising efforts, but knowing they are worth paying for sends a positive message about the value you place on their leadership.

Engage adults. Just as youth need to be engaged in the trip beforehand, so do leaders. Require their attendance at mission trip team meetings – this will help them build relationships with students and share healthy expectations for the trip. Hold a couple adult leader meetings and hand out resources to read through. Being an effective adult leader requires preparation, and you can help your leaders prepare well.

Share responsibility. The best way to get buy-in from your fellow leaders is to involve them in the planning process. Give away responsibility, even if it's something as simple as printing maps for the route or helping at a fundraiser.

Vision cast. Missions is all about loving deeply, serving humbly, building relationships and learning from community you enter. Some adults will "get it" right away. Others will need some guidance. Walk with adults before the trip and paint a picture of what their role is.

Communicate details. Don't keep all the details to yourself. Tell other leaders what's coming up so they can support you and share ownership of the trip. Provide copies of the Adult Leader Guide to all your leaders well in advance so they have time to ask questions about the details.

Encourage. Pay close attention to leaders who are stepping out of their comfort zone with this experience. Uplift them with affirmation. You will strengthen your team and build their confidence.

Say thank you. Don't save all your gratitude for the end. Make sure to thank your volunteers often, privately and publicly. Great leaders are crucial to a great mission trip – let them hear that you know that. And when the trip is over, say thank you in a meaningful way.

Invite continued involvement. If you have leaders on the trip who are not already part of your ministry, consider whether they would make good additions to your team. Maybe the trip has ignited a passion for students. If it's a good fit, invite their continued involvement in the student ministry.

HOW TO ASK

Invite. Don't plead. Let them know that they are being offered something incredible and you would love for them to take part.

One-on-one. Most people would rather say yes to a personal invitation. Asking the entire congregation might feel productive, but consider who might say yes. How many of them really fit the Adult Leader Profile on the previous page? Take the time and intentionality to target specific people.

Give deadlines. Give potential leaders time to consider and pray about joining the trip, but in doing so, give them a deadline. Let them know you'll check back with them on a specific date – then keep that deadline and follow up. If they say no, you'll be set to pursue another lead.

Get commitments. Once a leader says yes, give them something to sign (like the Adult Leader Covenant) or provide some other way to make it official. It could be as simple as having them put their name on a list. Celebrate their commitment.