

## Recruiting with the Gardening Approach

Volunteers are like vegetables (sort of). When we grow a vegetable garden, we don't do it by telling the seed what we need, and then expect it to turn into a pumpkin overnight. We take time to plant, germinate, and then harvest it when it's ready. Volunteers need leaders to show this same kind of patience and care too. When we change our approach to recruiting, good things grow.

### 1. Planting Seeds

The first step to recruiting is by planting seeds ahead of time. A good way to do this is by working with your church leadership on a plan about how best to reach your congregation with your serving opportunities. Instead of asking if you can approach the congregation from the stage only once, ask if you can do it twice. This is important because each time you speak, your objective will be different. The first time will be to share a personal story that shows the impact the ministry can have on real people. Invite the congregation into the vision and ask them to be praying with you for the ministry. Let them know that there will be opportunities for them to join in the mission, and that you will be back in a few weeks with an update. The objective here is not to leave people with a lot of information, but to leave people with a lot of feeling.

### 2. Germinating Phase

After introducing the ministry vision to the congregation, take a few weeks to allow people to think and pray about the ministry. During this time, make sure that you keep the vision in front of people by sharing on social media, in church bulletins, or word of mouth. This gives the idea of joining your team time to germinate.

### 3. Harvest Time

Your harvest time will actually begin during those weeks between speaking to the congregation. This is when you will begin making personal asks. Be sure you have a list of skills and competencies for each role, then invite people who match those to be part of the team. Do this until all of your vital roles are filled. Then - approach the congregation for the second time. This time give them an update on your ministry and make a final churchwide ask for volunteers. Now is the time when you will want to give information about how people can sign up. This way you won't miss anyone who may be a great fit. Then, sit back and enjoy the harvest.

### One More Thing...

Remember to keep inviting God into the process. He grows all of the good things in our lives. Take some time each day to remember and be thankful for the beautiful things he has grown in your life.

## Sample Disability Ministry Job Descriptions

Each ministry is unique, so roles and competencies will vary. However, the job descriptions below may be a good place to start when recruiting for your disability ministry initiative.

### DISABILITY MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS

**1. Administrative Leader** - This person will create and enforce policies, ministry structure and budgets. Can help set goals, make decisions, lead recruiting and handle scheduling volunteers.

**Competencies:** Organizational skills, follow through, analytical thinking.

**Look For:** People who love details, are respected, work well with others, and live by a checklist.

**2. Positive Behavior Support Leader** - Assesses student needs and creates plans to set them up for success. Also in charge of volunteer training.

**Competencies:** Relational, understands what motivates others, often has experience with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and is interested in learning more.

**Look For:** People who are often approached for parenting advice by others. People who have personal or professional experience with disabilities or special education.

### DISABILITY INCLUSION TEAM MEMBERS

**3. Buddy** - Serves one-on-one or one-on-two with student(s) who need additional support in their regular classroom. Usually paired with the same student(s) each week to develop a successful relationship.

**Competencies:** Calm, warm, and firm on boundaries. Buddies do not have to have previous experience to be successful serving children who have disabilities. If they are naturally calm, warm and engaging, and understand how to set and enforce boundaries, then they can learn the rest of the skills they need through ongoing training.

**Look For:** People who make you feel calmer and happier after you have spent time with them.

**4. Invisible Buddy** - The Invisible Buddy is not paired with a particular student. They will float around the classroom and look for any students who may be struggling that day. The Invisible Buddy will assist any child as needed.

**Competencies:** Same as the Buddy, but feels comfortable working with a variety of kids. Having a general knowledge of different types of disabilities or a background in education is a plus.

**Look For:** People who have experience with behavior differences such as ADHD, anxiety, or high functioning autism.

## Sample Disability Ministry Job Descriptions Cont'd

### DISABILITY MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS CONT'D

**5. Point Person-** The Point Person checks in with the scheduled team at the beginning of each service. If a Buddy has called off at the last minute, or a visitor who needs extra support has arrived unexpectedly, the Point Person will stay and serve. If no one is needed, as is often the case, then the Point Person may either go on to service or serve elsewhere.

**Competencies:** Calm, warm, and firm with boundaries. Has a broad understanding of disabilities and is comfortable serving with any child without preparation.

**Look For:** People who have experience with disabilities, and who want to support the ministry, but don't want to serve in it on a regular basis. This is often people such as parents of children who have disabilities or those who work in the disability field professionally.

**6. Break Room Attendant** - This person's job is to sit in the break room throughout the entire service. This allows Buddies to come and go with children as needed, while enforcing safety policies, such as never allowing a volunteer be alone with a child.

**Competencies:** Calm and warm.

**Look For:** People who love children but who don't want to be on their feet all service. Older adults are a great fit for this role. Or look for people who want to learn more about the ministry before volunteering to be a Buddy.

### DISABILITY MINISTRY CLASSROOM TEACHING TEAM MEMBERS

**7. Classroom Teacher-** This person will lead a special education class in a group setting. They will teach adapted curriculum and be able to connect with students and draw them into the lesson.

**Competencies:** Great communicator, fun and engaging, understands different learning styles, has a basic understanding of disabilities.

**Look For:** People who are engaging to talk to and have positive energy. Personal or professional experience with disabilities, such as Autism or other developmental disabilities, is a big plus.

**8. Classroom Helper-** This person's role is to assist the lead teacher wherever needed.

**Competencies:** Relational and reliable.

**Look For:** People who love to serve behind the scenes or those who enjoy performing tasks more than coming up with the plans.