

Helpful Resource for You...

RECRUITING

YOUTH AND ADULTS

RECRUITING YOUTH

Why would teenagers want to sacrifice time and money to serve people they don't even know? **Good question.** Here's the answer: **Because unconditionally serving others is a life-changing experience where youth personally discover how they can make a difference in the world and live a Jesus-centered life—one that loves God and loves people.**

Convincing kids to attend who have previously been on a mission trip is not usually a difficult task. They already know how much fun—and how much of a spiritually rewarding time—it is. But how do you capture the attention of those who haven't attended, or present the camp idea to your youth group for the first time?

When recruiting youth, it's important not to oversell the benefits...or undersell the hard work. Find a balance in your presentations, let them know they'll have a good time, make new friends, learn new skills, and laugh a lot together and that they'll also be tired at the end of the day (let alone the end of the week). Be upfront about the up side and the down side of serving others, and your youth will not be disappointed.

Try these ideas:

- **Information!**—Prepare a simple brochure describing the camp program, and send it to all youth group members who qualify to attend via mail, email, and the web. Put up posters and sign up sheets. Use kids' favorite method of communicating – texting – to keep your group informed with small tidbits of info, especially about meetings and deadlines for your trip.
- **The Power of Story**—During a regular youth group meeting, have teens who have previously attended a Group trip share memories from their experience. Of course, you'll want to select youth in advance and discuss with them the parameters of what they should share. Remember to include both genders, a variety of ages, and kids with different interests.
- **Make the Call**—In a technology heavy world, personal contact is still one of the best ways to secure participation. Picking up the phone and offering an invitation to attend also allows you to address questions, fears, or objections on the spot. And—it's a great way to build relationships with your kids.
- **Bring in Backup**—If your church hasn't yet experienced a Group mission trip, contact another local church who has, and have the youth leader or (better still) youth group members tell your group about some of their camp experiences.

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- **Visit our Website**—Invite interested teenagers to visit our web site to learn more about the trip experience at GroupWorkcamps.com.
- **Spice up the Trip**—While the focus of the camp is on serving others, it doesn't hurt to have a few side benefits in your back pocket to help those youth who are on the edge about their decision to participate. Sell them on the fun of the trip itself and any side trips you might be making (theme parks, sporting events, etc.)
- **Hangin' with their Friends**—Spending time with friends tops the list for youth. What better way to spend time with friends than on a mission trip? With travel and evening time together, camp can be a great opportunity to form new friendships and strengthen old ones. **NOTE:** Let your youth know that they may not be spending each camp day together due to the fact that crews can be a blend of people from different youth groups.
- **Free T-shirt, anyone?**—Youth like free stuff, right? Maybe the prospect of a free T-shirt will put some over the edge and on the road to camp! (It could happen.) In addition to the t-shirt that each participant receives at camp, many youth groups design their own mission trip t-shirt for everyone to wear when they arrive at camp.
- **Life-Changing Spiritual Growth**—Invite youth to discover a whole new closeness with God by serving others. This is what it's all about.

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Adults are crucial to the success of the mission trip, in fact, you'll need one adult leader for every five youth attending. So how do you get adults as excited about the camp experience as the youth who are already looking forward to the week? See below for ideas to catch adults' interest.

PERSONALLY SELECT GREAT ADULTS

One of the best ways to recruit adult leaders is to hand-select those people you think would be great for the job. Single out the adults in your church who might qualify to be leaders, and take them out for coffee or ice cream. Share the vision of the camp program and the powerful, positive impact it can have on youth (and adults, too). There's no better way to recruit a great team than to go after the people on your "top ten" list, one at a time.

For some adults, going on the mission trip is a highlight of the year. Far from the routine of the typical workday, they discover how to make a lasting, positive impact on the lives of their crewmembers and in the community where they serve.

Encourage adults who have a heart for God, a love for youth, and a desire to make a difference to submit their names for adult leadership consideration.

Try these ideas:

- ❑ **Hand out the FAQs**—Print out the *Frequently Asked Questions* from your online Leader Manual and handout to all adults whose interest is piqued by the mission trip. This handout will answer plenty of their questions and get them excited about the possibility of joining the team.
- ❑ **Creative Announcements**—A well-crafted announcement by youth or a light-hearted skit during a church service can have a major, positive impact on potential adult leaders. Work with youth to create announcements, skits, and advertisements that briefly outline the need but also shows how much the youth really appreciate the adults who'll join them on the trip.
- ❑ **Let Experience Speak**—Been to one of our mission trips before? Allow the past good experiences sell adults on the idea of being sponsors. Have previous adult leaders who've had a good camp experience share a brief "testimony" with the congregation to let other adults know of the great benefits in signing up.
- ❑ **Visit our Website**—Invite interested adults to visit our web site to learn more about the program at GroupWorkcamps.com.

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QUALIFY INTERESTED ADULTS

Simply getting adults interested in becoming leaders isn't enough. You'll want to review the qualifications of each interested adult to make sure you're choosing the best possible adult leaders for your youth. Here's how:

- **Pray**—As you begin recruiting, pray that God will lead just the right adults your way. As you screen adults, pray that God will reveal any concerns before you sign them up. And as you embark on the trip, pray that God will bless those who have committed their time and talent to serve and support your youth.
- **Background Check**—For the protection of your youth, be very familiar with anyone you're considering for the role of adult leader. Group requires that each adult have a national background check on file at their church. (*This does not apply to any adults who have applied and been accepted in a Group staff position during camp.*)

The *Verification of Background Check Form* is available in the online Leader Manual. Make copies of this form for each adult attending camp. Your pastor will fill out the form stating that each adult in your group has a national background check on file at the church and has met Group's qualifications. These forms must be returned to Group no later than 30 days before your trip.

- **Explain the Job**—Let adults know from the beginning what they'll be getting into if they're chosen to be leaders.
- **Ask Tough Questions**—The mission trip experience is extremely rewarding, but far from a stay at a five-star hotel. Ask potential volunteers how they feel about sleeping on hard floors (apart from spouse...with teenagers!), keeping long hours, working in the hot sun, and generally finding little time to be alone. If those questions don't scare them away, ask the really tough question: How much do you love teenagers?
- **Discover their Relational Ability**—Anyone who has ever worked with volunteers knows that a "warm body" is often less desirable than no volunteer at all. One of the most important qualities of a great volunteer is the ability to relate well to youth. That's why it's easier to find qualified adult leaders in your list of adults who already are successfully working with youth. But don't neglect adults who have yet to stand up and participate in your youth program. Some of these people relate extremely well to youth—but just can't commit to ongoing service. They may be your best candidates for adult leader roles.

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SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR ADULTS!

Once you have a list of qualified people who are willing to serve, go over the following expectations to make certain that you all are on the same page regarding their role during the camp:

- Adults will provide supervision in either the male or female sleeping quarters.
- Married adults are welcome at the camps, but they cannot stay in the same sleeping room during the week.
- Adults will drive their crew to their designated service project location each day.
- Not all adults will be drivers.
- Assignments for drivers will be made at the camp.
- Adults assume the role of a crewmember, not the leader. Whenever possible, make decisions as a group.
- Adults provide support and encouragement to the crew. At times, adults may need to provide direct guidance and assume leadership of the crew.
- Adults should be able to provide good judgment in emergencies.
- Adults should not condone unacceptable behavior such as using profanity, putting people down, refusing to work as a team, misusing valuable resources (such as food fights), or giving a negative Christian witness to the residents being served.
- Adults must always provide adequate supervision at the service project location. Service project contacts or homeowners do not qualify as a supervising adult.
- Adults should never reprimand a young person in front of the group. Deal with the situation directly but away from the group.
- Adults should avoid compromising situations by always having a third person present when meeting with or driving with a young person.
- Adults are expected to be shining Christian examples that know what it means to serve. Past experience has shown that it's often the adults who cause more trouble than the youth. Make certain this is not true for your group.

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TRAINING YOUR ADULT LEADERS

Now that you have qualified adult leaders signed up, here are a few ideas for training and encouraging them. Take care of these people as you would your own youth—your adult leaders are an integral part of your team.

- Invite Adults to all the Meetings**—Invite adult leaders to attend any fundraising events, team meetings, and the meeting in the spring to complete forms. Ask leaders who don't normally attend youth group meetings to visit during a regular meeting or two before the event. This will help them become familiar with the youth they'll be traveling with. Also make sure you have some training meetings for adults only.
- Have Adults learn about Trip Location**—Encourage adult leaders to research on the community you'll be visiting. Assign them the task of planning something fun to do there during your free time!
- Give them access to the Leader Manual web site**—Invite adults to explore the Leader Manual web site so you are all on the same page about the trip specifics.

APPRECIATING YOUR ADULTS

- Get the Parents Involved**—Pre-address an envelope to each adult leader at the trip lodging address, and give it to the parents of a camper to use for sending an encouraging note to the leader during the week.
- Make Care Packages**—Give adult leaders care packages as they embark on the trip. Include items they can share with youth as well as a few items chosen especially for them. (Ask a spouse or friend for a few ideas on what to include.)
- Plan a “Post-Camp” Party**—Plan a special appreciation dinner or party for all adult leaders after the mission trip. It would be great if the youth (and/or their parents) would plan this.
- Daily Verbal Appreciation**—Give daily words of appreciation to all of your participants, but especially your adult leaders.
- Pray**—Let adult leaders know you're praying for them. Invite church members to join you in daily prayer for leaders to have wisdom, patience, and lots of love.