



**Archdiocese of Regina**

## **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION, RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT**

Volunteers are the lifelines of parishes. Without the time, effort and gifts of volunteers, the Church would not be able to fulfill its ministry to help those in need. It is important to recognize and show appreciation for the contributions of volunteers.

One way to let the volunteers know they have made a difference is to show appreciation for the work they have done. Even the most unassuming volunteer wants to know that he or she makes a difference. Recognition activities provide a motivation for continuing commitment from parish volunteers. Recognition may be both formal and informal with events supported by the parish, as well as personal notes and communication from the parish team and/or the ministry leaders. Listening to volunteers, encouraging creativity and asking for feedback helps the volunteers to know they are valued for their ideas as well as their hard work.

### **Ideas to recognize and show appreciation to volunteers:**

- Know the volunteers by name.
- Thank volunteers individually and publicly
- Send a thank you card. (Send one to the families too!)
- Phone them just to talk or to thank them.
- Smile.
- Give volunteers the necessary training to perform well and comfortably.
- Give volunteers tasks suited to their gifts and talents.
- Plan a volunteer celebration, a social, or a retreat.
- Offer volunteers opportunities for professional development.
- Create a yearbook and/or photo album for each volunteer.
- Produce a video of the work done by volunteers.
- Recognize the volunteers on the parish website, in the parish bulletin or newsletter.
- Celebrate anniversaries of a volunteer's years of service.
- Provide the volunteers with coffee and/or treats while working.
- Ask volunteers for feedback.
- Give volunteers feedback.

- Commissioning Ceremony

Section Two Page 49

## **Volunteer Support**

Supporting volunteers demonstrates the value and respect that parishes have for them. Parishes acknowledge their volunteers as individuals, each with unique talents and gifts by placing them in matching volunteer positions.

Volunteers also have their own lives. Be sure they are not overwhelmed with their home life and other responsibilities. Should they appear to be suffering or in difficulty, they are to be treated with compassion and concern.

Ask volunteers if they feel supported in the performance of their ministry duties. It should not be assumed that a parish volunteer wants to take on additional responsibilities or that he or she wants to stay in the same ministry. Check to ensure that the volunteer is not bored with his or her duties. The volunteer might like a change.

Take the time to talk to volunteers, but more importantly, take the time to listen. It will help volunteers serve God with enthusiasm and love, if we try to do the best to serve volunteers in their ministry with care and compassion.

### **Volunteer support involves a variety of activities including but not limited to:**

- Communication among volunteers and between the Pastor, staff and volunteers.
- Debriefing and talking about the ministry and the work involved.
- Acknowledging and using volunteer input.
- Recognizing ‘burnout’ or when a volunteer is experiencing stress either from volunteering or personal matters.
- Keeping in touch through meetings, workshops, newsletters, and celebrations.