

## Selecting Volunteers to Help

Chris Andreas

A good practice for Directors is to continuously work to attract new people to this ministry. Often it will be necessary to utilize additional assistance. There will be those occasions when people are simply prevented from performing their scheduled responsibilities. This may occur with or without ample notification. Directors have a duty to fill these voids immediately or face the consequences of not having lessons taught or tasks fulfilled. Therefore, insofar as teachers and aides are concerned, Directors should attempt to build as large a staff as possible even if people's names have to be put onto a waiting list. An emergency list could conceivably be prepared with these names so that in a time of urgency (illness, inclement weather, resignations, etc.) prospects can be called to serve.

There are a number of ways that a potential Sunday Church school teacher can be brought to the attention of a Director or his/her recruiting staff should one exist.

One effective method is to solicit prospects through the use of a survey flyer, such as the one on the next page. Many different areas are touched upon, and the Director or recruiting staff may wish to add or delete a few. This flyer could be sent to all members of the parish. It could also be placed onto an Sunday Church school table set-up on Sunday mornings for anyone to take at the end of services or during the period of Registration. Another method is to have existing faculty members bring in colleagues, as well as having parents bring in people they know.

One way of making volunteering more appealing to a potential volunteer is to keep the tasks well defined and when possible limited in scope. For example, one person might be responsible for decorating the bulletin board a few times a year that everyone sees when entering the classroom area. Another way is to ask someone to volunteer for a specific period of time, say for one year, at the end of which the volunteer and Director will discuss the future (sometimes people say no because the commitment just seems like it will last for a lifetime!). Ask a potential volunteer to do one thing for the program (who could say no to helping out just a little?). Limiting the task or the time someone is giving in this way can also help the Director because if a volunteer did a poor job, the Director can thank the volunteer for their services because their term is up or they were only asked to help with a very specific task, which is now complete. Also, if a volunteer does a good job, they can be asked if she/he can continue to serve. Often lives change and people feel guilty about continuing even though they cannot really do a good job. This allows people to gracefully step out of a role.

While it might dissuade a potential volunteer, the parish should require every teacher and assistant in the program (in fact all volunteers dealing with minors in the parish) to agree to submit to a criminal background check. Keeping our children safe is a critical dimension of all church programs. Predators and abusers will usually back away from getting involved if they know they will be asked to submit to this kind of scrutiny. For more about this, see the *Youth Protection Manual* of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

It is important to remember that a well-run organization needs as many dedicated workers for Christ as possible.

Chris Andreas is a former administrator from the Department of Stewardship Ministry at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. His background also includes research in areas such as Finance and Business, Church Management, Ministry and Growth.