



31 Ways to Show Gratitude to Volunteers



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We often think about being thankful around Thanksgiving, but it's important to let volunteers know you appreciate them all throughout the year. Keep this list handy and do something every week to show your gratitude for your volunteers.

1. Say “Thank You”

Seems obvious, but sometimes the best thing you can do is simply say “thanks.”

2. Ask for their feedback

Put up a volunteer suggestion box, send out a survey, or provide some way for them to give you input into how to improve your ministry.

3. Treat to a coffee or soda

A great way to show your gratitude for a volunteer's service is to take them out for coffee or soda with no other agenda except to hang out. Make sure you find a time that's convenient for them so you're not adding burden.

4. Cast the vision

People don't serve a need, they serve a vision. To help keep them motivated, as well as show you appreciate them, be sure to continually cast the vision of why they're serving.

5. Ask for a report

When you get a report of how things are going, you show them that you value them which makes them feel appreciated.

6. Send a birthday card

This shows you care more about them as a person rather than just as a volunteer who can do something for you.

7. Public recognition

Find a way to individually recognize and thank your volunteers in public. Ask for a volunteer spotlight in the bulletin. Give the pastor a story about them and ask for a quick mention from the pulpit. Public recognition is super motivating for some people.

8. Provide refreshments

Provide a place where your volunteers can get refreshments while they serve.

9. Plan annual ceremonial/banquet occasions

Aside from the week-to-week gratitude, plan a yearly volunteer banquet to show your appreciation in a more ceremonial format.

10. Invite to staff meetings and involve in planning

People feel appreciated when they know what is going on and when they have the opportunity to contribute with “a seat at the table.”

11. Recognize personal needs and problems

When you try to appropriately help your volunteers with their personal needs outside of their volunteer service, it really shows you're grateful for them as a person.



12. Accommodate personal needs and problems

When you can, work around your volunteers' personal schedules, needs, etc.

13. Be pleasant

It seems obvious, but when you are pleasant instead of bringing your stress and mood into your relationship with the volunteer, you come across as a more grateful person.

14. Provide childcare

Providing childcare for your volunteers while they serve is a great way to show you appreciate them.

15. Respect their wishes

If they need some time off, need a different position, or whatever...respecting the wishes of your volunteer above your ministry's needs is a great way to show you value your volunteer.

16. Send a Thanksgiving Day card to the volunteer's family

Everyone expects to be thanked during the Thanksgiving season. What folks don't expect is for you to thank their family for the family's sacrifice. Makes a big impact.

17. Say "Good Morning"

This is another one that seems obvious, but when folks arrive to serve, take a minute to greet them instead of shuffling them straight into their task.

18. Greet by name

This one goes with the above. People love to hear their name (and to know you know it) and it's meaningful when you greet each volunteer by name.

19. Provide good, ongoing training

Volunteers know they're appreciated when you continually pour into them. Providing ongoing training is a great way to do this.

20. Give additional responsibility

One of the best ways to thank a high-performing volunteer is to give them additional responsibility (if they want it).

21. Respect sensitivities

If you provide snacks, meals, or — even at your banquets — being aware of food allergies, sensitivities, etc. is a great way to show you care and appreciate your volunteers.

22. Communicate regularly

Volunteers feel appreciated when they've been communicated with regularly.

23. Create pleasant surroundings

Make sure that the volunteer workspace is clean, organized, and pleasant to be in.

24. Protect them

Protect your volunteers from other staff, negativity in your area, over-scheduling, etc. Protect their wellbeing at all costs.



25. Be prepared

One way to show volunteers that you value them is to be prepared for them when they show up. Running around last minute doing final preparation as they're showing up to serve is a bad look.

26. Send a Valentine

Find any occasion to send them a "thank-you" note to let them know you appreciate them.

27. Provide scholarships to conferences or workshops

Taking your top volunteers to conferences or workshops with you is a great way to show you appreciate them.

28. Celebrate outstanding projects and achievements

Celebrate their achievements outside serving with you.

29. Praise them to their friends

When you see your volunteers hanging out with their friends (at church or in the community), sing their praises to their friends.

30. Provide the best tools

When you give your volunteers the best tools, you show that you value and appreciate their service.

31. Plan occasional extravaganzas

Take your volunteer groups out for fun outings together. Go bowling, play lazer tag, go to a movie together. Find fun ways to hang out together as just friends.