

Clarity Is Kind

Part one in a three-step process for you to grow in your ability to lead leaders.

1. **Clarity is kind**
2. **Walk alongside**
3. **Inspect what you expect**

As the student ministry leader, you need to decide what your expectations are for leaders under your supervision — whether that be student disciple-makers, small group leaders or other volunteer leaders who look to you for direction.

During each leader's onboarding and interview process, you should communicate what is expected of them. As the leader, it is your job to set them up to succeed. Clear communication is key. When volunteer leaders fail in their role, we should look to ourselves first, identifying where we failed in the communication and development process.

Creating clarity

In the context of your ministry, create a job description for your volunteer leaders. You can create this job description using these three categories.

1. **Qualifications:** (growing relationship with Jesus, church member, etc.)
2. **Commitment:** (75% program attendance, review small group guide before small group, build relationships with students outside programs, etc.)
3. **Dreams:** (go on a mission trip with your students, attend camp, serve outside the church together, etc.)

Leaders are required to meet your qualifications and commitments, while dreams are aspirations but not requirements.

High bar vs. low bar

You do not want to set an unrealistic expectation of what it takes to be a volunteer. People should be able to love their family, work a job, have personal time and still lead well. Good leaders do not push people to burn out. Good leaders always care about the person more than the ministry.

You don't want students to be overly dependent on your leaders ("If my leader is not going, neither am I"). Lowering the bar for leadership does more harm than help. Everyone is tempted to lower the bar because of the need for more volunteers.

High-capacity leaders are looking to make a difference, not fill a spot. When you tell them, "This is easy; anybody can do it," high-capacity leaders run. If your volunteer culture is focused on getting people to volunteer so you can meet ratios or fill spots, you will not retain high-capacity leaders. These leaders value their time and their skills, and they need to know that they are making an impact by giving themselves to your ministry. High-capacity leaders desire to be developed and challenged.

Leaders of leaders

- Poor leaders' expectations require little faith or sacrifice. Poor leaders do not communicate with their volunteer leaders about how they can succeed.
- Good leaders create expectations that are clear, challenging and sustainable.