

Onboarding Process



Once someone has expressed interest in being a volunteer leader in your student ministry, what process do you take them through? Here is an example of an onboarding process:

1. Application & background check

The substantive and formal nature of this application is an intentional way to communicate the seriousness of serving in student ministry. It also provides documented due diligence. The application should at the minimum include: one's personal testimony, one's reason for serving, references and a background check. You will know what questions best fit your context.

2. Interview

During the interview you want to follow up on the information you received from the application. The interview will help you best set up this volunteer to succeed. Like all interviews, don't just ask them questions. This is a time for you to answer questions from the volunteer. Use this interview as an opportunity to create clarity and talk about the expectations you have for a volunteer.

3. Follow-up on references & background check

Don't just submit the background check, but also make sure it passes. Call their references and hear what they have to say about the applicant.

4. Shadowing

For the next month, have your volunteer shadow a current leader during your program. It is crucial that you have them shadow one of your best leaders. Make sure your leader being shadowed knows it is their responsibility to show the potential leader the ropes.

5. Training content

Have your leaders complete content-based training. These trainings can be videos or readings. You can include good resources made by other people, but only you will be able to train to your context. Here is the content worth covering:

- Vision of Student Ministry
- Communication and Engagement with Students and Families
- Curriculum Preparation and Best Practices
- Dealing with Difficult Students/Situations
- Church's Safety Policy & Reporting Guidelines

6. Halfway check-in

You should schedule a 1-2 minute phone call to follow up with the candidate. The candidate should have questions from shadowing or reviewing the training. It is an opportunity for informal coaching based on what you have observed during the first 4 weeks of the shadow.

7. Placement

If student ministry is not a good fit, help them find another avenue in the church to use their gifts. If both parties agree, it is a good fit.

Fully welcome the volunteer to the team. You can do so by recognizing them in your leader huddle, acknowledging them in your program or giving them their official student ministry t-shirt and name tag. It is important that the adults clearly recognize they are shifting from being a shadow to a leader. By this point, you should know exactly which students they will lead. No one is ever truly ready; being willing is more important.

Here is an [Onboarding Tracker](#) you can use to keep track of all your leaders.