

Interviewing Church Volunteers



Suggested steps in an interview

1. Introduction – Welcome the applicant and help him/her feel comfortable.
2. Get acquainted – Ask applicant to share their church and family background.
3. Discussion of applicant's interest in volunteering – Use open-ended questions to lead the applicant to discuss personal spiritual journey.
4. Discuss training, education and concerns raised on the application – Encourage applicant to discuss any training or education that might be valuable for the ministry opportunity being considered. Using open-ended questions, say, "Tell me about" Make comments general in nature, such as, "Tell me about your church experience" or "Tell me about your crime."
5. Present the opportunity – Provide a description of the volunteer need and review the responsibilities with the candidate.
6. Discuss training and resources to support the position – Present how the leader will be trained; who the immediate supervisor would be; what literature, supplies and budget are available; and other related issues concerning the position.
7. Closing – Conclude the interview on an optimistic note and close seeking God's direction and leadership in prayer. Set a follow-up date or deadline.

Federal and state laws apply to volunteer interviews in California

Under California law there is no distinction between interviewing a potential employee or a potential volunteer. The following suggestions can help with effective and appropriate interviews.

Do's ... Things you can discuss during an interview

- A person's knowledge, skill, education and experience related to the job.
- Characteristics required by the job ... up late with youth groups, driver's licenses, weekly commitment and background check.
- Questions concerning religion ... normally this question is not permitted but applying for a church-related position makes the question acceptable and relevant.

Don'ts ... Things you cannot discuss during an interview

- A person's personality ... such as an "outgoing" or "introverted."
- A person's aptitude ... the ability to learn skills and acquire knowledge easily.
- A person's general knowledge ... on subjects beyond the scope of the job.
- A person's intelligence or judgment.
- Assessment of a person's leadership ability ... if there are specific concerns, ask specific questions related to job requirements. The applicant cannot be asked to rate or validate leadership ability.
- Number of years of education or experience.
- Questions regarding a person's race, color, national origin, height, weight, marital status, military record, age, economic status or medical condition.
- Questions concerning gender ... unless the position requires a specific gender – girl's chaperone.
- Questions concerning arrests ... you can say, "Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Tell me about it."

Some fruitful questions/statements to consider using in the interview

- Tell me about your family.
- How would you describe your spiritual growth?
- What would you say you like best or least about your previous teaching/ministry? Why?
- If you could have changed things at your last church, what would you have changed? Why?
- Tell me why you think you would like this teaching/ministry position.
- Tell me about education and/or experience that you believe would be beneficial for teaching/ministry.
- How are you best motivated?
- Do you prefer to work alone or with others? Why?