

VOLUNTEERS

ANNUAL STRATEGY GUIDE



If we want to be effective as ministry leaders, we need to get really serious about investing in and empowering the volunteers we lead. When we do that, we multiply our influence, increase the capacity of our ministry, and give kids a better shot at building a lifelong faith. So if we want volunteers to invest in kids, it's probably a good idea to invest in our volunteers first. Here's our recommendation: **invest in your volunteers all year long, using seven different tactics.** (The same ones you use to invest in families!)

HERE'S THE PLAN...

1 REVIEW GROW'S 7 WAYS TO LEAD VOLUNTEERS

There are **seven different tactics we recommend including** in your Volunteer Strategy, and Grow provides the resources for all of them. They are...

-  **VOLUNTEER EVENTS:** A major vision-casting opportunity you'd want every volunteer to attend.
-  **VOLUNTEER MEETINGS:** An opportunity to give your volunteers practical training about a very specific topic.
-  **VOLUNTEER DISCUSSION GROUPS:** A gathering with a small group of volunteers for idea-sharing and problem-solving.
-  **VOLUNTEER CONVERSATIONS:** A one-on-one meeting with a volunteer for building relationships and sharing feedback.
-  **VOLUNTEER COMMUNICATION:** Anything you do to connect or share information with your team outside of your weekly program.
-  **VOLUNTEER TOOLS:** Any resource you give volunteers to help them lead kids more effectively.
-  **VOLUNTEER CELEBRATIONS:** Anything that celebrates your team for who they are or for their investment in kids.

2 SCHEDULE YOUR IN-PERSON TRAININGS FOR THE WHOLE TEAM

It might seem scary to have so many volunteer-related to-dos on your annual calendar, but don't worry! There are ways to do this that aren't overwhelming. With the Grow Strategy, **we recommend getting your entire team together in-person every other month. That's 6 team get-togethers total.** To plan it, start with your biggest in-person volunteer training efforts, and then working your way down the list. Like this...

- **1 EVENT:** At the beginning of the school year, build momentum and kick things off with a big vision-casting event for all your volunteers! Grow's [Volunteer Kick-Off Event Guide](#) has you covered.
- **2 CELEBRATIONS:** Plan two parties for your team during the year: a Christmas party and an end-of-the-year party. Grow's [Volunteer & Parent Celebration Guide](#) will show you how!
- **3+ MEETINGS:** So that's three in-person trainings for your whole team so far, which leaves you with three more months where you can schedule in-person get-togethers! In those three remaining months, we recommend scheduling volunteer meetings that train your team on specific practical topics. Grow's [Volunteer Meeting Guides](#) will help!

3 SCHEDULE YOUR SMALLER IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

After your six in-person trainings for the whole team are scheduled, schedule your smaller gatherings with small groups of volunteers and one-on-ones with individual volunteers.

- **2+ DISCUSSION GROUPS:** Plan at least two of these discussions each year—one in the middle of the year and one at the end. Plus leave room to add additional Discussion Groups if needed, like during times of crisis or significant ministry transition. Grow's [Volunteer Discussion Group Guides](#) will help!
- **12+ VOLUNTEER CONVERSATIONS:** Each year, plan to meet with every volunteer at least once. How many volunteers you have will determine how many of these guided one-on-ones you'll need to schedule. Grow's [Volunteer Conversation Guides](#) will help!

4 SCHEDULE EVERYTHING ELSE!

- **WEEKLY COMMUNICATION:** Plan to communicate with your team every week through tools like email, texting, social media, and [Grow Hubs](#). Grow's [Volunteer & Parent Communication Guide](#) will help!
- **MONTHLY & WEEKLY CELEBRATIONS:** Plan to celebrate your team every week (with [thank you cards](#) or [birthday cards](#)) and every month (with fun monthly appreciation campaigns, small gifts, and team bonding). Grow's [Volunteer & Parent Celebration Guide](#) will help!
- **ANNUAL & WEEKLY TOOLS:** Plan to give your team a ton of helpful tools at the beginning of the year (like a Volunteer Handbook, Volunteer Goals, Volunteer Business Cards, an Annual Volunteer Survey, and matching team t-shirts). Then send them small helpful tools year-round through your weekly communication efforts. Grow's [Volunteer Tools](#) will help!

5 CHOOSE THE VOLUNTEER RESOURCES YOU'LL NEED FOR THE YEAR

It's time to [visit the Grow Marketplace](#) and **choose the volunteer resources you'll need for this year.** (Or, of course, you can create your own resources from scratch!)

Some of the Volunteer Strategy resources you'll find in the Grow Marketplace are...

- **A guide for casting vision for the Grow Strategy** to your volunteer team
- **Volunteer Kick-Off event guide**
- **Meeting guides, discussion group guides, and conversations for things like...**
 - On-boarding new volunteers
 - Leading your team through a big ministry transition
 - Navigating a national or local crisis
 - Troubleshooting volunteer issues
 - Off-boarding volunteers
 - Debriefing big events
- **3 years of fun monthly volunteer celebration ideas**
- **Thank you cards and birthday cards**
- **Editable tools like...**
 - Volunteer Handbook
 - Volunteer Goals
 - Annual Volunteer Survey
 - Volunteer Business Cards
 - Volunteer T-Shirt Designs
- **Helpful communication tools**
- **30+ Volunteer Tip Videos**
- **Editable graphics**
- **Flyers**
- **Shopping lists**
- If you're a Grow subscriber, [free access to Grow Hubs](#), a communication tool designed just for ministry leaders
- And lots more!



When you're finished, **put one blue card per volunteer training tactic on your Grow Strategy Calendar!** There should be lots—more than 50!