

# 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 question to lead the applicant to discuss personal spiritual journey.
4. Discuss training, education, and concerns raised on the application – Encourage the 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 are provided to help conduct 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.
- Question's 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 personality."
- A person's aptitude ... the ability to learn skills and acquire knowledge more easily.
- A person's general knowledge ... knowledge a person has 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, then ask specific questions related to the requirement of the job. The applicant cannot be asked to rate or validate the 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 question/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?