

ONBOARDING YOUR FIRST VOLUNTEER

A Simple Guide to Welcoming Someone into Community Care Ministries

Recruiting a volunteer is only the beginning. A thoughtful onboarding process helps volunteers feel welcomed, prepared and confident before they begin serving.

You don't need weeks of training to get someone started. In one afternoon, you can introduce the heart of Community Care Ministries, explain their role and ensure they understand the responsibilities that come with serving others.

Use this guide as a simple roadmap for your first onboarding conversation.

Before You Meet

Take a few minutes to prepare.

- ✓ Have a volunteer role in mind.
- ✓ Gather any required forms or local documentation.
- ✓ Confirm your corps' safeguarding and screening requirements.
- ✓ Set aside enough time for conversation, not just paperwork.

Remember: onboarding is about helping someone feel part of the ministry, not simply completing a checklist.

Step 1: Share the Vision (15–20 minutes)

Begin with *why*.

Explain that Community Care Ministries exists to help people experience belonging, hope and the love of Christ through caring relationships.

Share a story of someone whose life has been impacted by CCM. Stories inspire people far more than policies.

Invite questions throughout the conversation.

Step 2: Explain Their Role (20 minutes)

Review the volunteer role together.

Talk about:

- what they will actually be doing
- who they will be serving
- who they report to
- what success looks like
- how often they are expected to serve

Be clear that volunteers are never expected to do everything. They are joining a team.

Want more detail?

See **Serving Together: A Guide to Roles in Community Care Ministries** for role descriptions and responsibilities.

Step 3: Cover Safety and Safeguarding (20–30 minutes)

Before serving anyone, every volunteer should understand the expectations that keep both volunteers and participants safe.

Review:

- ✓ Appropriate boundaries
- ✓ Privacy and confidentiality
- ✓ Reporting concerns or safeguarding issues
- ✓ When to refer concerns rather than trying to solve every problem
- ✓ Expectations around communication and professionalism

If your Corps requires screening or police checks, explain where they fit into the onboarding process.

These conversations communicate that safety is part of caring well.

Go deeper with:

- *Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries*
- *Privacy Protocols*
- Your corps' safeguarding policies and procedures.

Step 4: Introduce the Ministry Skills (20 minutes)

A new volunteer does not need to know everything before they begin.

Instead, introduce the core principles that guide every CCM volunteer:

- Be present.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Respect people's dignity.
- Know your role.
- Ask for help when you need it.

Let them know additional learning will continue as they begin serving.

Helpful next resources include:

- *Compassionate Listening as Ministry*
- *Supporting Caregivers*
- *Supporting Vulnerable Populations*

Step 5: Pray and Plan Their First Opportunity (10 minutes)

Before they leave:

- ✓ Agree on their first serving opportunity.
- ✓ Explain who they will serve alongside.
- ✓ Schedule a follow-up conversation after their first experience.

Finish by praying together, asking God to guide, encourage and use them as they begin this ministry.

No volunteer should begin serving feeling like they are on their own.

Your First Afternoon Checklist

- ☐ Shared the vision of CCM.
- ☐ Reviewed their volunteer role.
- ☐ Covered safeguarding and privacy expectations.
- ☐ Introduced the key ministry principles.
- ☐ Answered questions.
- ☐ Planned their first serving opportunity.
- ☐ Prayed together.

Remember

People rarely stay because they received excellent paperwork.

They stay because they felt welcomed, equipped and valued from the very beginning.

A thoughtful first conversation lays the foundation for a healthy, confident volunteer who understands that Community Care Ministries is not simply something they do—it is a way of living out the love of Christ.

Continue the Journey

This guide is designed as a starting point. As volunteers begin serving, encourage them to continue learning through the CCM toolkit, including:

- **Serving Together: A Guide to Roles in Community Care Ministries**
- **CCM Volunteer Training Modules** on Compassionate Listening, Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries, Privacy Protocols, Supporting Caregivers and Supporting Vulnerable Populations.