

ESL TEACHERS

Who is allowed to volunteer?

Only Christians should be allowed to volunteer. Remember, this is a ministry with the main goal of sharing Jesus. You need to screen your teachers with a volunteer application to insure this.

The Director should be a member of your church, but your teachers might come from your church or others in your area. However, you need to get approval from your session (church leadership) before recruiting outside of your church membership.

How to recruit teachers:

The most effective recruiting method is personal touch. In other words, people are more likely to volunteer if you ask them personally. Other ways to recruit are:

- Announcements on Sunday Mornings from the Pulpit
- Church Bulletin Announcements
- Speaking in adult Sunday School classes
- Skit
- Missions Conference Displays
- Speaking at other events, such as Womens Ministry Event

If your ESL School is already up and running, invite all interested people to come and observe your classes. If your school is just starting, try to find a local church-based ESL School that you could take people to observe. Once they see that the classes are fun and interactive and not at all like a high school grammar class their fear of volunteering will go down.

A great recruiting tool is the 10-minute Introductory Video that is on our website: www.pcamna.org/esl. It shows actual classroom time from four different fluency levels. You can send people the link and ask them to watch it or you could even show the video during the announcement portion of your worship service or during a Sunday School Class or Bible Study. Hard copies are available. Contact the MNA ESL Director for those.

Make sure that potential volunteers know that they do not need to be professional teachers and they don't need to speak a foreign language. All they need to do is speak English and love Jesus and we can teach them the rest.

When someone has expressed an interest in volunteering to be a teacher, send them a letter with a job description and application form.

Initial Training

Training is not optional. Someone can assist in your ESL School without having training, but only trained teachers should be teaching. You as the Director need to be aware of what training is available in your area and when .

Please note that even professional ESL teachers need to take this training. Teaching ESL as a ministry is different from teaching at a public school. There is also a specific lesson planning format that your teachers will need to use because of the open enrollment policy that you will have.

The training that MNA ESL recommends is the ESL Teacher Training created by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. There are Baptist trainers in most states. In addition, there are now 5 certified PCA ESL Trainers. When a Baptist trainer does the training it is usually 14 ½ hours long and is done on two consecutive Saturdays or a Thursday night, Friday night and all day Saturday format. Baptist trainers usually only train close to their hometown. PCA Trainers do a slightly shorter version of the training on a long Friday night and all day Saturday format. PCA Trainers are available to travel to churches across the nation when needed. See the instructions for scheduling a training for more detailed information.

To set up training for your church, please contact the MNA ESL Director. Initially she will check to see if there is a training already scheduled in your area. If not, she will coordinate a training for you with the closest geographical trainer available. However, you are always welcome to request a PCA Trainer so that it can be done in the shorter format.

If an ESL Training is already scheduled in your area, you can usually attend for about \$25 to \$50 per person. This price includes the training manual.

If there is no ESL Training already scheduled, your church can host an ESL Training. In order to host a training, the trainer usually wants you to have at least 6 to 8 people lined up to take the training. The trainer will expect an honorarium of about \$250 to \$300 and reimbursement of any traveling expenses. All trainers are volunteers. Some churches cover this cost out of their own budget and others charge a fee per participant to cover it. I would encourage you to invite other churches in your area to send people to your training.

Enrichment Training

Enrichment training through out the year will help your teachers to stay enthusiastic and excited about teaching. Here a few things you can do for enrichment training:

Encourage teachers to attend the 14 ½ hour ESL Workshop as alumni. The first time you take it is like taking a drink from a fire hydrant. Every time you repeat the course you will learn something new. It is usually free to go as an alumni.

Include a short time for enrichment training in all of your team meetings (you should have team meetings at least twice a semester). Research some good enrichment books and do a few of the activities with your teachers as if they were your students.

Find special enrichment trainings in your area. Your state should have a professional TESOL organization. Just google it on the internet. You can join these as a volunteer organization and send your teachers to their one-day seminars. Usually lots of ESL Publishers are at these events showing you all their materials (and hopefully giving you some free stuff). Also the Southern Baptist have wonderful 2 and 3 day conferences in some states which offer the most wonderful workshops for ESL teachers.

MNA ESL is also available to come to an area to do a one-day enrichment conference if enough churches are interested. Contact the MNA ESL Director for more information.

Placement

Initially you try to place teachers where they want to be placed (fluency level wise – i.e. they want to teach beginners). Then as your program grows, you place them where you need them. Eventually you will get a sense of who are your stronger teachers. Ideally you would place a weaker teacher or a newer teacher with a stronger teacher. It is best to have at least two teachers per classroom so that you are not in a crisis if someone has to be absent. Try not to place married couples together in the same class. When they go on vacation, they tend to go together and then you are faced with having to find a substitute.

Right away, you need to identify one of your teachers as your Co-Director. This person will be in charge if you are absent.

How to Keep Teachers

The best way to keep teachers is to make sure that they have a sense of “ownership” of the ministry. This is why I recommend the team approach. When they

know that their contributions are important and that they have influence in the decisions that are made, they will feel a better sense of “ownership.” Together your team should decide what the goals and vision for your ESL ministry are.

Training will help you keep teachers. If you allow people to teach without the proper training, they will quickly get burned out.

Good organization will help you keep your teachers. When your teachers know that when they arrive for class that everything is set-up and ready to go, they will feel better. When forms and resources and supplies are easily located, it makes their jobs much easier. Knowing that you are available to help them before, during and after class will make them feel more supported.

Always encourage your teachers and show them appreciation regularly. If possible, send them a weekly e-mail that not only contains prayer requests and instructions/information for the week, but also an encouraging note about how what they are doing is important and really matters. Send them special notes through out the year and make sure that you acknowledge them publicly at special parties. Christmas and end-of-the-year gifts are good. Handing out candy at teachers meetings is good too. You can give out snack size \$100,000 candy bars and let them know this is their paycheck for the week.

Teacher Absences

The best way to handle teacher absences is to have at least two teachers in each classroom. At the beginning of the year, ask teachers to list any of their known upcoming absences. Set the standard that they should work together as a classroom team to make sure that at least one of them is there each week. They always need to let you know if they are going to be absent.

Note: This is not an every other week job. All teachers should be present when possible.

Know who in your congregation is capable of subbing and ask them if you could call them when needed.

Have emergency lesson plans ready. Have each teacher make an emergency lesson plan for their class from the picture dictionary. Keep these on file in the building.

If all else fails, the Director is the substitute for that night or you can combine classes.