

Here are eighteen ways that churches have said to their group leaders, “Thanks! You’re doing a great job, and someone is noticing!”

- Begin the education program year with a [commissioning service](#), at which you identify those involved in the year’s program and ask a special blessing upon them for their ministry.
- Send leaders to a Christian education conference or ask another Christian Education Director to lead a workshop for your leaders.
- From time to time, send thank-you notes or e-mail to leaders.
- Ask members of your church to give a brunch or dinner honoring the leaders.
- Relieve leaders of duties that are not related to their leading. Ask a volunteer to take juice to the rooms and to collect and wash the pitchers. Ask someone to provide snacks each month. For large groups, ask one or two adults (grandparents, parents, singles, etc.) to help each week.
- Once a quarter, offer soup and sandwiches at your monthly leader meetings.
- Once a quarter, arrange for substitutes to lead all groups and serve the regular leaders a breakfast.
- Give leaders the summer off. During the summer, plan inter-age sessions or recruit a different team of leaders.
- Send a monthly newsletter to your leaders. Include encouragement, tips, stories, learner artwork and photos of the various groups.
- Express interest. Ask leaders, “How did it go this morning? Anything special that you need?”
- In the rooms where people gather for large events and social time, display artwork and poems created by leaders and their learners.
- Make connections. If church members are helping Habitat for Humanity build a house, skip the regular session one Sunday and take a group to visit the site and discuss how Christians can respond to the homeless. Adopt “grandparents” for each group from among shut-ins in your parish; visit them periodically instead of holding your regular session.
- Write short profiles of each leader for your church newsletter. Here’s a suggested format: — name — birthplace — favorite quote — favorite charity — favorite book — some way the church could contribute to the leader’s group
- List leaders in the Sunday bulletin from time to time and ask congregants to pray for them.
- Give copies of the list of Christian education staff to people who make hospital,

nursing home and shut-in visits, enabling those who can't attend church to continue to play an active role supporting a leader through prayer.

- Make a basket for each leader and put “goodies” in the baskets each week. These might include stickers for young children, seasonal games or books borrowed from a resource center, helpful articles on teaching, or thank-you notes from clergy, staff, parents or learners.
- Subscribe to magazines or periodicals, especially those that provide helpful, practical tips for leaders. Make these available in your resource library.
- Periodically recommend or distribute helpful resources to leaders, including books, videos, audiotapes, Internet newsgroups and websites that can enhance their work.

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*This is adapted from “How to Recruit, Train & Retain Leaders: A Director’s Guide to Living the Good News” (Morehouse Educational Resources, 2006). [Living the Good News](#) is a lectionary-based curriculum for all ages.*