

Start or revitalize a ministry in your church

QUICK START GUIDE



LITERATURE MINISTRIES



Quick Start Guide for Literature Ministries

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Introduction

Welcome to the life-changing work of literature ministries. Circulating literature containing the Seventh-day Adventist message of hope and wholeness impacts this world in unforeseen ways. There's no limit to the transformative experiences resulting from simply sharing our faith with literature in our hands, smiles on our faces, and the love of Jesus in our hearts.

What if every one of the approximately 21 million Seventh-day Adventists in the world were to share seven gospel books every week? We, as a worldwide church, would distribute over 7.6 billion books in only one year! That's enough for everyone in our global community to have an opportunity to learn about Jesus. Because of this tremendous potential, Ellen White urged the following:

“Let every believer scatter broadcast tracts and leaflets and books containing the message for this time” (*Colporteur Ministry*, page 21).

As your church's literature ministries director, you've been called to look for ways to circulate evangelistic materials in your community and to raise awareness of publications that will enrich the lives of local church members. This involves looking for places and events where church members can pass out literature, acquiring materials for distribution, and recruiting and training volunteers. Your church may also provide support for student and professional literature evangelists.

Meet Your Local Leadership Team

The *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* provides a framework to get your teamwork going.

1. **The Church Board** – According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, “the chief concern [of the board] is having an active discipleship plan in place, which includes both the spiritual nurture of the church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism.” Your voice and vote can help the board focus “its first interests and highest energies to involving every member in proclaiming the good news and making disciples.” When this happens, “most problems are alleviated or prevented, and a strong, positive influence is felt in the spiritual life and growth of members” (page 129).
2. **The Personal Ministries Council** – When you read what the *Church Manual* has to say about personal ministries, you'll notice some areas of overlap and that is one of the blessings of the church's structure. This framework is an opportunity for complementary and collaborative discipleship and outreach. Overlap makes it more difficult for people and tasks to fall between the cracks. What are some of these overlapping opportunities between personal ministries and literature ministries? According to pages 96 and 101 of the *Church Manual*, they both train members for outreach, coordinate literature distribution, nurture church members, and participate in each other's council meetings.
3. **The Literature Ministries Council** – This is referred to as the Publishing Ministries Council in the *Church Manual*, but is known as the Literature Ministries Council within the North American Division. According to page 96, you will serve as the chair of the Literature Ministries Council. A few automatic members on your council are the pastor,



personal ministries director, and personal ministries secretary. Additional members may be added, with board approval. A couple of recommendations would be the communication director and Adventist Youth leader. An effective communicator can help you craft appeals for participation, as well as publicize literature ministry events. Youth leaders will bring energy and innovation to help keep the ministry relevant and bring future leaders on board. Together this team will promote literature outreach, assist other departments with acquiring and sharing missionary literature, and look for ways to involve members in this ministry.

Getting Started

There are three primary approaches to literature outreach: involving volunteers from the local church in distributing free literature, student literature evangelism, and full-time literature evangelism. We recognize that “all cannot go out as canvassers for our larger books, but there is a field of usefulness open before our brethren and sisters in the placing of truth-filled publications in the homes of their neighbors and friends” (*Publishing Ministry*, page 370). That’s why this book starts with ways to involve church members and then moves onto more specialized literature ministries.

Invest in pocket-sized tracts to keep members regularly stocked. Members of every age can circulate tracts in multiple languages: *An Hour with Your Bible*, *El Centinela*, *GLOW*, *Message*, *Pocket Signs*, *Vibrant Life*, and more! You can obtain these resources and more at AdventistBookCenter.com, GlowOnline.org, MessageMagazine.com, and ShareWaves.org.

Coordinate with other leaders to raise funds for bulk purchases of the Adventist Book Center’s Sharing Book of the Year as well as time-tested sharing books like *Steps to Christ* and *Bible Answers*. Don’t underestimate the large impact of small literature. Ellen White wrote, “Some would receive more benefit from papers and tracts than from books. Papers, tracts, and pamphlets that dwell upon Bible lessons...are as little wedges that open the way for larger works” (*Colporteur Ministry*, page 139). Contact your local Adventist Book Center or order online at AdventistBookCenter.com. Members will gladly contribute when you help them see the tremendous savings resulting from collaborative purchases.

Organize church members for distributing tracts and small books. Start in the community surrounding the church. Use the methods learned in this setting to send smaller groups to cover the neighborhoods surrounding each member’s residence. Try gift wrapping literature for distribution at holidays such as Christmas, New Year’s, Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, and Thanksgiving. Thoughtful presentation promotes excitement and appreciation.

GENERAL CONFERENCE PUBLISHING MINISTRIES

The General Conference’s Publishing Ministries website includes information and training resources for volunteer and professional literature evangelists, along with students in the Magabook program. Visit Publishing.Adventist.org for more information.



Prepare welcome baskets for new neighbors. Why not provide a warm welcome for new neighbors? You can share literature like *Steps to Christ* and *Message* magazine. Buy a basket and fill it with physical and spiritual food for people with different tastes. If you're unsure about giving food items, consider decorative gifts. Your thoughtfulness will be appreciated either way. When it comes to the literature, include a small, yet varied selection of books on family, health, and prayer. Make sure to include something for the children, if applicable. Reading with children promotes family bonds. Children will learn the importance of reading from their parents and guardians.

8 Ideas for Preparation and Follow-Up

1. **Stamp or label all of your church's literature.** You want to have a point of contact for interested people. You're also creating awareness of your church. Evangelism is easier when people are familiar with your church's name. Make sure that all of your literature includes the church's name, address, phone number, and website. You could also include an email address and social media information.
2. **Plan a short, energetic service whenever leading the church into the field.** Don't skip the essentials of prayer, praise, and giving, because true worship leads to service (Matt. 4:10). Let the congregation know ahead of time that the plan is to transition from worship service to witness service. Get people moving before they get tired or hungry, thus losing conviction and desire.
3. **Church-wide outreach events should be one hour in length.** Then bring everyone back to turn in their leads. Encourage them to stay for a fellowship meal and share testimonies. Give people an opportunity to sign up for a mass outreach venture, along with getting volunteers for various forms of follow-up. Ask those who demonstrate the most enthusiasm if they would like to volunteer outside of the mass distribution events.
4. **Vary the types of follow-up and recruit leaders for each area.**
 - **Mailing ministry** – Find volunteers dedicated to sending postcards, emails, and other correspondence to your contacts once or twice a month. Let them know that you're praying for them and keeping them informed about special events on the church calendar.
 - **Phone ministry** – This is especially good for involving members with limited mobility. They can dedicate a certain amount of time per week for calling to ask people how they're doing, pray with them, ask if they'd like a pastoral visit, and inform them of special events on the church calendar. Provide scripts or talking points to assist with calls.
 - **Personal visitation** – When returning to the people's homes, make the material the conversation piece. Ask them simple questions to open up dialogue: How did you like it? Did you learn anything new? Did you find it helpful? What was your favorite part? Do you know anyone else who would appreciate this material? Always give them another piece of material to show goodwill and so you have a reason to return. Keep visits short (no matter how long they seem to want you to stay) and end with prayer.



- **Magazine subscriptions** – Challenge yourself and the church to send a *Message*, *Signs*, *El Centinela*, or *Vibrant Life* subscription to every contact. The magazine will provide a continual witness and reach others in the home.
5. **Map out the area for outreach and give each leader their piece of the map.** Record the homes where no one answered the door and attempt again in the future. You haven't truly covered an area if half the people weren't home at the time. Praise God for the half who were at home and answered, but we need to give the other half a chance to respond. Be mindful that people with a cold response one day may have a warm response another day.
 6. **Always scout ahead before entering into new territory.** This should include some basic demographic information from sites like **city-data.com**. Learning the community's religious preferences, ethnic and linguistic groups, educational levels, and median age can provide insight to your neighbors' lives. These insights should inform but not define your initial approach.
 7. **Reserve portions of the prayer service, Sabbath School program, and worship service for testimonies from the field.** Concise testimonies that end on a positive note will inspire people to get involved and stay consistent with this type of outreach.
 8. **Equip volunteers with current, high quality literature.** Many members feel inadequate to become soul-winners. Keep things simple and relieve their burdens by empowering them with resources that will do much of the work. Their primary role is providing a relational bridge to Christ and His church. Their confidence will grow with experience.

The GAP Method for Visitation

Visitation is one way to accomplish the first step of Christ's method: mingling. You don't have to try to accomplish everything in one visit. In fact, the primary goal in the first visit is to obtain permission for a second visit. This may seem too simple until you think of how often your neighbor seems receptive on the first visit, yet elusive on the second visit. Often this is because the first visit was too long or seemed too invasive.

If you want to get the best results from first visits, keep them short and simple with GAP. When followed, you usually shouldn't need more than about 90 – 120 seconds at the door.

So, what does GAP stand for?

Gift

Acquaintance

Permission (to return)

How does it work? Here's a sample script:

Hello, my name is _____ from the Anytown Seventh-day Adventist Church and we have a gift for you today. [Outstretch hand with literature.]

We believe this will be a blessing for your home and would like to check back and see how you enjoyed it. Would that be okay?



Great, what's the best number where we can reach you? When is the best time? Thanks. We'll be in touch. Have a good day. [Address should be written down as you approach the home so you don't have to ask.]

This method and script will help prepare members for mobilizing in the community as they pass out literature door to door.

Choose Locations for Sharing Literature

In addition to distributing tracts door to door, try looking for events and public places where church members can share large quantities of literature. Here are some suggestions:

Public events – Whether it's the Super Bowl, World Series, March Madness, NASCAR races, rodeos, marathons, or local high school games, sporting events bring lots of people together on neutral ground. Also check the news for concerts, festivals, parades, and public holiday celebrations, such as New Year's, St. Patrick's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Independence Day, Juneteenth, and Cinco De Mayo. Talk to your ABC manager or conference publishing or literature ministries director for ideas on the most relevant literature for the types of events in your area.

Shopping areas – Another way of reaching people that skips getting them to open their front doors is by sharing literature at the entrances of stores and other businesses. Get permission from the management to set up a table with free, inspirational gifts. To make it interesting, you can register people for a drawing for even bigger gifts. Have the drawing take place at a church event and arrange it so that no matter how many people come, they'll all leave winners. You can also set up a carnival-like game that allows them to win something on the spot. Just remember, the first step of persuasion is getting people's attention. Use your imagination to create fun, tasteful excitement that draws people into your space. Greet them with a smile and a gift. You can even offer them a short prayer, as long as you're not disturbing the flow of foot traffic to and from the business graciously sharing their real estate with you. These public venues are especially valuable for reaching people in sparsely populated areas.

Waiting rooms – Every business with a waiting area is a witnessing opportunity. Think of the thousands of customers fighting boredom or frustration as they bide their time at the mechanic shop, barber shop, nail salon, or dental office. If you are a business owner, you can provide inspirational reading material for your customers. Simply mix in inspirational books and magazines with the sports, food, health, and fashion magazines that are common in those spaces. If you aren't a business owner, offer to sponsor such literature to keep clients in a positive frame of mind as they wait. This can be done by gifting them a subscription to one or more outreach periodicals, such as *El Centinela*, *Liberty*, *Message*, *Ministry*, *Vibrant Life*, or *Signs of the Times*. You can also sponsor a countertop rack to display tracts, books, and magazines.

Magazine subscriptions – This is a systematic way of keeping fresh Christian content before your audience. This can be especially helpful for reaching people in businesses, government offices, or homes. Periodicals might also be the best way to influence family members who aren't open to a religious conversation or personal Bible study at this point in their lives.



Signs box ministry - *Signs of the Times* is a magazine with a special emphasis on prophecy. It also includes articles on prayer, health, family, and more. In addition to sponsoring *Signs* subscriptions for individuals, you can witness to a larger audience by sponsoring a *Signs* box. This ministry involves strategically placing a newspaper box in an area with lots of foot traffic so people can walk by and pick up a free copy of *Signs of the Times*. Of course, we know that nothing is truly free. In order for our neighbors to freely receive, we must freely give. Fortunately, many members have been freely giving, as is evidenced by the 5,000 *Signs* boxes placed at street corners and in front of retail stores across the North American Division. Those 5,000 boxes are dispensing 50,000 magazines and generating 5,000 Bible study interests per year! Contact your conference or union Literature Ministry or Publishing Director for more information on how you can sponsor a *Signs* box.

Mass transit - If you travel by bus, train, or plane, provide some hope to place in the hands of other travelers on their journey. Try striking up a conversation with your seatmate and offering them a free book or magazine.

Hotels and restaurants - One of the simplest things on the list is to leave a generous tip, along with a piece of literature. Taking a moment to write a personal expression of appreciation in the front of the book makes it more likely to be read rather than discarded. DO NOT leave tracts as a substitute for a tip.

Evangelistic meetings - Many people would love to access books that will help them better understand the distinctive subjects presented at evangelistic meetings. This is especially the case if the preacher quotes from books like *Desire of Ages*, *Steps to Christ*, and *The Great Controversy*. People will appreciate strategically placed, attractive displays.

PACIFIC PRESS'S
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Pacific Press Publishing Association needs you! Sign up for their Ambassador Program and make money for your church. Ambassadors keep local church members informed of the fine reading material available to them offered by the Adventist Book Centers.



Here's how it works. Once a quarter Pacific Press will send a packet with material to share with the congregation on specific books. Inside the packet are the tools you will need, including bulletin inserts and talking points. As an Ambassador, you will need to make a public presentation once a month. This is not a time for selling, but a time to create awareness of the available materials.

Pacific Press also offers a financial incentive for churches utilizing the Ambassador Program. They will assign your church a specific code for use by all members when making **AdventistBookCenter.com** purchases. Your church will receive an annual cash donation from Pacific Press for 10% of those orders. The code can be used on any purchase, although the 10% incentive doesn't apply to Sabbath School lessons. To learn more, visit **PacificPress.com** or email **ambassadors@pacificpress.com**.



7 Ways to Increase Missionary Magazine Subscriptions

The Seventh-day Adventist Church produces a variety of outreach magazines that equip you to reach people with the gospel in their homes and businesses. Each has its own niche, recognizing the simple truth that one size doesn't fit all. With over one million Adventists in North America, it's reasonable that we should have three or four million combined subscriptions for *El Centinela*, *Liberty*, *Message*, *Ministry*, *Signs of the Times*, and *Vibrant Life*. Here are some simple ways of accomplishing that goal – and then some!

1. **Subscribe yourself** – It's hard to be enthusiastic about sponsoring a product for family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers when you aren't familiar with the content.
2. **Subscribe your neighbors** – Outreach magazines will prepare your neighbors for conversations about faith and your heart will be warmed as well.
3. **Subscribe inactive members** – Even if they've moved outside your church's area, subscribe them. They might not come back to your local congregation, but your effort may bring them back into the worldwide church family.
4. **Subscribe people who have signed up for Bible studies or attended an evangelistic event** – This can be part of your church's follow-up plans.
5. **Subscribe public centers of influence** – How many places with waiting rooms can be found in your community? How many people do they serve per day? For a small investment, you can provide some inspirational reading material.
6. **Subscribe civic organizations** – Add a Seventh-day Adventist perspective to the discussions at community organizations and help people see the benefits of the church's understanding of the Bible and God's character.
7. **Subscribe prisons** – Work with your church or conference prison ministries coordinator or local prison chaplain to send literature to prisons. Literature will not reach inmates unless it is sent through specific channels, so it's important to collaborate with a prison ministries coordinator or chaplain to ensure delivery. They can also let you know what types of literature are most needed.

LITERATURE
EVANGELISM
PATHFINDER
HONOR

Teaching Pathfinders about the blessings and opportunities of literature evangelism is a great way to train the next generation of leaders. Download the requirements for the literature evangelism honor at AdventSource.org and talk with your church's Pathfinder Club director about including this honor in the club's schedule.



Student Literature Evangelism

Student literature evangelism has the goal of empowering students to share the gospel as they seek funds for school. Your church may wish to help provide support for students involved with this ministry.

What are the benefits of this ministry?

- Young Adventists better understand their faith as they read the books they are selling.
- Students learn to prayerfully trust God's promises as they depend on Him to open doors for them.
- Thousands of people receive the gospel into their homes, planting seeds for local church evangelism.
- Adventist schools receive hundreds of thousands of dollars from the community to help with the bottom line.
- Students assist in worship services at churches in the areas they canvass, energizing the congregations with their examples and testimonies.
- Canvassing helps the youth build confidence and find a sense of purpose within the church.
- Canvassing helps the youth develop interpersonal skills needed in the workplace and in the church.

How can your local church strengthen and expand student literature missions?

- Encourage your church to host a student canvassing campaign. Some churches choose to house a group of students in their church building. Other congregations have members with large homes that can accommodate the students. Still others may contribute to renting accommodations for the group. Contact your conference or union for more details.
- Show videos from the student literature evangelism mission field. Showing these videos during Sabbath School or the worship service may inspire other young people to join, as well as encourage members to host a group.
- Ask members to provide financial sponsorship for student literature evangelism. There are a lot of little expenses that can chip away at the funds students are able to apply to their schooling: transportation to and from the campaign, transportation while on the campaign, food and water, canvassing bags, air mattresses and other furnishings, cleaning supplies, umbrellas and rain coats, and more. Just as missionaries overseas need sponsors for their work to thrive, so do our student literature missionaries in North America.
- Stay in touch with students that come to your territory. One of the most powerful motivators for student canvassers is knowing they have a place and a purpose in the church. Call them. Text them. Send them an old-fashioned greeting card. Send them some money for their expenses. Pray for and with them. Tutor them. Mentor them.



See how they're doing in school. Encourage them to keep studying. Show that they are part of the worldwide Adventist community. Help them know that church is not just about believing – it's also about belonging.

The Local Church and Full-time Literature Evangelists

Full-time literature evangelism is a call that takes a special kind of person to fulfill. Although you may not personally make full-time literature sales your profession, you can help facilitate that mission in your community. If you know a literature evangelist (also known as a colporteur) in your area, you can help boost their morale and inspire your members in a few simple ways:

- Be a prayer partner for your area literature evangelist. Prayer is the master key for opening doors for literature evangelists to make presentations inside the home. Pray with literature evangelists on the phone, as well as in person when you can. Accompany them in their work once in a while and pray silently as they converse with their prospects.
- Talk to your pastor and elders about providing time for literature evangelists to share their testimonies during the Sabbath School program, midweek prayer meeting, or the Sabbath morning worship service.
- Coordinate with the personal ministries leader to allow area literature evangelists to teach field-tested soul-winning principles to the members of the Personal Ministries Council. Since their livelihood depends on perfecting the art of tactful, spiritual persuasion, they have a wealth of insight to offer.
- Help the personal ministries leader, interest coordinator, and literature evangelist share community contact information. As the literature evangelist makes presentations in the homes of their prospects, they learn of opportunities for other members of the church to minister.
- Contact your conference or union publishing director or literature ministries director to schedule a Literature Evangelism Rally Day at your church. This is when a church invites literature evangelists and their families from across the conference or union to a special worship service and fellowship dinner to celebrate literature evangelism. This will help generate even more enthusiasm for whatever kind of literature outreach is active in your church.

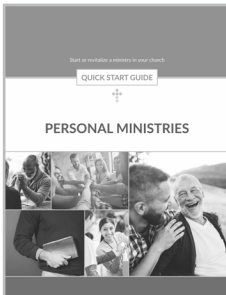
Conclusion

Thank you for volunteering for this important ministry. As a literature ministries coordinator for your church, you can help spread the Gospel in your community by sharing evangelistic literature.



Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource. Visit AdventSource.org or call 402.486.8800 for a complete list.

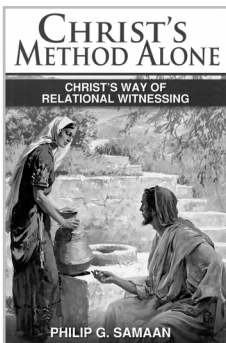


Personal Ministries Quick Start Guide

Prepared by the North American Division

This Quick Start Guide is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry. It contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, recommended resources, and more.

Product #420535

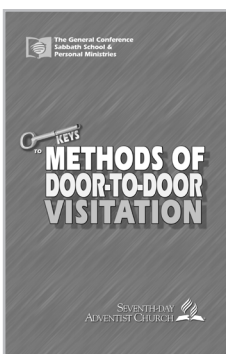


Christ's Method Alone

By Philip G. Samaan

Find the joy, spontaneity, and success that come from a vibrant relationship with Jesus and genuinely loving people. Living out Christ's method will help you impact your family, church, and community for the Lord.

Product #420492



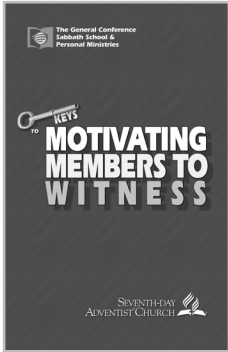
Methods of Door-to-Door Visitation

Prepared by the General Conference

Many people today turn away from door-to-door witnessing. However, Ellen White wrote that it is "the most essential work that can be done." If you want to witness door-to-door but don't know how to begin, this book is for you.

Product #554310



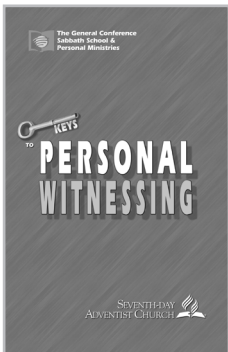


Motivating Members to Witness

Prepared by the General Conference

Do you want to motivate your members for outreach? This book presents field-tested strategies that work! It includes 21 secrets for motivation.

Product #554309



Personal Witnessing

This book covers aspects of personal witnessing including questions for a non-Christian, witnessing to a variety of temperaments, witnessing without fear, and more. Learn how you can reach out to everyone you meet.

Product #554302

Websites

Sharing Books and Tracts

- GlowOnline.org
- MessageMagazine.com/shop
- ShareWaves.org

North American Division Literature Ministries Department

- NADadventist.org/departments/literature-ministries

Southern Union Conference Publishing Ministries Department

- BlastOfHope.com

North American Division Publishers

- AdventSource.org
- PacificPress.com
- SeminarsUnlimited.org



Adventist Book Center

- AdventistBookCenter.com

Student Literature Evangelism Programs

- CanadaYouthChallenge.com
- FHESsales.com/youth-excel.html
- SoulsWest.org
- TXSDALiteratureMin.com
- VisitAEC.org/publishing
- YouthRush.AdventistFaith.org
- YouthSummit.info

Full-time Literature Evangelism Support

- FamilyHomeChristianBooks.com
- LifestyleCanada.org
- Publishing.Adventist.org



Literature Ministries Coordinator Ministry Description

Introduction

Literature Ministries Coordinators are called to go and share the gospel of Jesus' second coming, just as lay evangelists preached the gospel during Jesus' time on earth (Luke 10:1-17). In our modern setting, literature ministry reaches people who may have never set foot in a Seventh-day Adventist Church.

You are called to act as a catalyst for your church's evangelism efforts in the community. When you become a spiritual catalyst, you too will be consumed by "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Jesus, in His last words before ascending to Heaven, gave the commission to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..." (Matt. 28:19). For the Literature Ministries Coordinator, the target audience is the world, beginning at the doorstep of his or her home.

Duties of the Literature Ministries Coordinator

The Literature Ministries Coordinator's duties include the following:

- 1. Collaborate with your conference or union.** Plan and promote literature evangelism in conjunction with your conference or union's publishing department.
- 2. Acquire and promote missionary literature.** Assist other local church departments with the promotion, sale, and distribution of subscription magazines and other missionary literature. Purchase and distribute tracts for sharing.
- 3. Recruit volunteers.** Help your team develop a growing, caring fellowship and an excellent learning environment.
- 4. Organize outreach events.** Coordinate mass distribution efforts in the community and at public events.
- 5. Plan follow-up.** Work with your church's Personal Ministries Leader to coordinate visitation and Bible studies with people who have indicated an interest in your church as a result of literature they received.
- 6. Support student and professional literature evangelists.** Offer them lodging, food, transportation, and insight into your community. Provide a time for them to share stories from their ministry with the congregation. Pray for their ministry.
- 7. Share results.** Work with your pastor to schedule times for periodically sharing results and testimonies from literature ministry with the congregation.

Permission to copy for local church use.



Literature Ministries

This Quick Start Guide for Literature Ministry Coordinators is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or a seasoned volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series:

- Personal Ministries
- Elder
- Church Board Member

For a complete list of Quick Start Guide titles visit AdventSource.org



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