

# MENTORING

## Fact Sheet



**GrowMinistries**

LCA CHILD YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Guiding Principles for  
Effective Child, Youth &  
Family Ministry

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE #4

children  
and young  
people have  
multiple  
adult  
mentors of  
vital faith.



If you look back over your life, can you remember an adult that took the time to walk alongside you? Someone who took an interest in you? Maybe it was a youth leader or someone else in your congregation that encouraged you?

#### THE VALUE OF MENTORING

Mentoring is important. At the most basic level it guarantees that a young person has someone who cares about them. They are not alone in dealing with their day-to-day challenges. Little things that may seem easy or straight-forward to us may be a major issue for a young person with little or no experience. Mentors can be an experienced friend who is there to help and guide them through life.

#### CREATING COMMUNITY

Mentoring creates relationships which in turn help create community within a congregation. It is a way of inviting people to share their lives, their stories and their faith together. It leads to growth in faith in both younger and older people, as well as creating relationships that will enhance the life of the church. It's one way that every congregation can be involved in youth ministry in an enriching and substantial way.

#### FACTS:

- Mentors help improve a young person's self-esteem
- Mentors can help a young person grow in faith
- Mentors teach young people how to relate well to all kinds of people and help them strengthen communication skills
- Adults who invest in the lives of young people with patience and unconditional love become bearers of God presence
- Young people learn about God and discipleship from their experience with seasoned Christians
- Young people with mentors are less likely to turn to drugs and alcohol
- Mentors help keep students at school
- A recent study conducted amongst higher risk youth showed that there was a reduction in depressive symptoms – a particularly noteworthy finding considering one in every five adolescents are likely to experience a diagnosable depressive episode by the age of 18. ([headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au))

As iron sharpens iron so one person sharpens another.

PROVERBS 27:17

#### THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY

There are many styles of mentoring; it could be one-on-one, or small groups. Whatever your strengths, resources or opportunities, you can use them to build into the lives of young people in your community in **intentional** ways.

#### YOU NEED TO BE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

Mentoring is most effective if it is a long term consistent relationship. The longer the relationship continues the more influential it is in the life of the young person. Meeting on a regular basis (twice a month) for at least a year is a great place to start. This gives an opportunity for the young person to develop **trust**, which is most important at this stage of their life. This also shows the young person that you are serious about having a real and **transformative** relationship.

#### MENTORS AND YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO BE WELL MATCHED

It's really important that mentors are matched well with the young person for the **relationship** to be effective. There needs to be a common interest, whether that is a shared interest in sport, movies, or maybe the mentor works in a field the young person is interested in. This allows a starting point for the relationship to allow for easy conversation or activity while the relationship grows and develops naturally.

#### WHO IS MENTORING YOU?

Finally, it's really important that you are involved in a mentoring relationship of your own. Who fills you up and encourages you in your faith walk? Caring for young people can be emotionally exhausting and as parents or ministry workers it is vital that you are being **nourished** too. At the very least your relationship with God needs to be strong. Walk with God daily, through prayer, worship and the reading of His word. Regular filling is required!!

#### REFERENCES:

- <http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/articles/five-keys-for-effective-mentoring>
- [http://www.mentoring.org/about\\_mentor/value\\_of\\_mentoring](http://www.mentoring.org/about_mentor/value_of_mentoring)
- <http://www.headspace.org.au/what-works/research-information/depression>
- The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry*—Martinson, Black and Roberto

# SEVEN SIMPLE STEPS TO START MENTORING...

A mentoring relationship can begin for a special purpose such as a confirmation mentor, youth leader mentor or for a new member to your congregation. Mentoring can be a relationship that happens naturally – intentionally taking interest in a young person over time and slowly the relationship builds into something very special. It can be for a set period of time such as 8 weeks, 1 year, or for a lifetime, depending on the purpose.

*"Mentoring is a very significant role every Christian disciple can fulfil... irrespective of age or experience. It is not restricted to 'giants of faith'. The basic requirement is a living relationship with God and an ability to listen and respond sensitively, and to encourage. If this is true of you, you can be God's agent in enriching another person's life."* JOHN MALLISON

## 1. START WITH ONE MEETING

Sit down together, pray, discuss what the relationship might look like and what each of you hopes to see happen from this. Set the boundaries, when and how often will you meet? How much time are you willing to give? Agree to pray about it, and then set a time for a call, text or meeting to follow up. No expectations beyond that.

## 2. FOLLOW UP

At the time and in the way decided. Touch base and see how each of you is feeling. If you both feel good about it, move forward and schedule your next meeting.

## 3. CREATE A PLAN

Some mentoring relationships are highly intentional about spending time together multiple times a week. Others only meet once a week or only once a month. You decide what works best for both of you, there's no set answer.

## 4. BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE OFFERING

Many people confuse mentoring with counselling or with being a best friend for life. Mentoring has small elements of counselling and friendship, but the purpose is to help someone grow in their faith and life. It's a partnership where each party is giving something.

## 5. DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO TOGETHER

Some mentoring relationships spend time reading and discussing a book or study. Others are focused on prayer. Service projects are also an option, or finding activities you both enjoy. It's important to develop a plan; otherwise the relationship will devolve to you being the other person's counsellor. Do not default to "God will just lead us each time." God is leading you ahead of time. Get a plan in place and ensure you think about your next meeting before it happens.

## 6. SET AN END DATE

How many times will you meet? We recommend 6-8 weeks at first, then renegotiating the relationship. You can always extend it longer after your last meeting, but this keeps either of you from being trapped if it turns out not to be the best long-term fit for either of you.

## 7. FOCUS ON THE BIBLE AND PRAYER

Use all of the other resources you can, but always come down to scripture and prayer in your mentee's life. The time they spend there will be the foundation for anything else you do or study.

This should be enough to get you started, and from there things will begin to happen. It's okay to take a while. Don't feel pressured to jump in too deeply too soon. When we have a basic process like this that gives us plenty of room to listen to God, and plenty of outs if needed, we can reduce the anxiety and get started!

Sourced from: <http://stickyfaith.org/blog/seven-simple-steps-to-start-mentoring-a-teenager>  
Mentoring, to develop disciples and leaders by John Mallison.

If you would like explore some more ideas and resources about mentoring check out these two great websites!

<http://www.johnmallison.com>

<http://stickyfaith.org>