



Philip and the Ethiopian

"...Do you understand what you are reading," Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" Acts 8:30-31

MENTORING GUIDE

Mentoring is an effective leadership formation practice that is not limited to children and youth. All successful leaders can identify people in their life who have provided wisdom, accountability, experience, support and prayer. Congregations can have intentional Mentoring Programs that are connected to regular gatherings such as Confirmation, Camp Hope or Congregational Council for the purpose of deepening faith and building capacity. This guide is a tool for exploring Mentoring in a Christian environment.

What are the qualifications of a Mentor?

Authentic, Available, Affirming Adults (AAA Adults) who are active in worship and committed to a deepening faith life and personal development make the best mentors.

- Mentors devote time to cultivating an intentional relationship with their Mentee.
- Mentors give positive regard to people whether they earn it or not.
- Mentors see beyond what mentees see in themselves in order to give them what they need.
- Mentors listen and encourage.
- Mentors coach people in solving problems, are thinking partners and hold Mentee's accountable.

How do you match Mentors & Mentees?

Both the Mentor and the Mentee learn from each other in any healthy mentoring relationship. It is helpful if the Mentee can select their own Mentor. When the Mentee is under age 18, this selection is most effective when done from a pre-approved list of Mentors who have had background checks and are open to this commitment. In addition, there are times when people need recommendations on a Mentor with particular skills in the desired area of growth.

How long is a Mentor—Mentee relationship?

In a formal mentoring program it is important to pre-determine the length of the relationship. For example, with Camp Hope Day Camp Ministries, a three month window for mentoring is recommended. This allows time to build a relationship before, during and after the camp experience. However, informal mentoring may go on for years or even throughout someone's life! It is likely that people who are open to mentoring and who seek out mentors will have long-term, multiple mentoring relationships that help grow and develop faith and skills over time.

What are the different types of Mentoring?

There are four recommended models for mentoring:

- One-on-one mentoring that includes a face-to-face relationship.
- Mentoring via Social Media that may not include a face-to-face relationship.
- Peer Mentoring where people in the same age group or same program mentor each other.
- Group Mentoring, where one adult may mentor up to four young people.

Should Mentors be trained?

Informal mentoring relationships may “just happen” as people with shared passions adopt their own patterns for meeting. Formal Mentoring Programs are always best served by trained and supported Mentors. Mentors who will be in a relationship with someone under age 18 should have a background check, be accountable to Safe Haven Guidelines and be part of a larger program that offers support.

How do you start a Mentoring relationship?

Start by setting goals for why this relationship is being formed. Trust and mutual respect are core values of all mentoring relationships. Informal mentoring generally grows out of a desire by the mentee to learn from the mentor. Formal relationships are usually part of a larger vision for growing leaders.

How do you manage awkwardness when mentoring someone you don't know very well?

Relationships take time, trust and transparency. It helps to set reasonable expectations with mentoring relationships by defining the expectations. Why are you and your mentee doing this? Clarity of purpose, like “I want to learn more about X from you” really helps! The Mentor is obligated to come prepared, to have integrity in the relationship, to admit what they don't know and to encourage and/or challenge the Mentee as appropriate. Good Mentor-Mentee relationships include an element of risk in learning new things together.

In formal relationships, especially those that are time-limited, it makes sense to establish a few intentional gatherings between mentors and mentees to assist them in nurturing trust. Depending on the prior relationship between the individuals, this may mean getting to know each other through a series of activities and experiences that involve discussion, serving together and maybe even writing each other using social media. One example for an intentional three month mentoring relationship might be:

1st Month: Set up one face-to-face experience where Mentors and Mentees share in conversation, games and service in a larger group and one face-to-face experience outside of the larger group.

2nd Month: Serving together, problem-solving, planning, etc. for a shared event or experience is a good way to deepen the relationship. It is helpful to set up intentional time for shared work, within Safe Haven Guidelines if people under age 18 are involved.

3rd Month: Reflecting and evaluating together about the shared experience is important. We make meaning out of our life through processing what we have learned. It is especially helpful to do this within a trusted relationship.

What is the recommended frequency of Mentor-Mentee Meetings?

Weekly communication between Mentors and Mentees that takes advantage of face-to-face, group and social media opportunities to connect help build a strong relationship. However, depending on the goals, the frequency may actually be as often as twice a week or as seldom as monthly. The purpose of the relationship will determine the pattern for meeting to establish and maintain credible relationships.