

mentoring
**YOUNG
PEOPLE**
a practical resource

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MENTORING YOUNG PEOPLE

Prepared by Phil Trotter, following a request by young people to resource and train adults to be mentors of young people in the Diocese of Christchurch. First released March 2010. This edition March 2016.

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THE PURPOSE OF MENTORING

Mentoring is a most natural thing. Nurturing the next generation is as human as it gets. We are wired for it, and Christianity is built on it. Although we seem to have lost the art in recent times, mentoring is in our DNA. And it's in the Church's DNA. Of all the things you may choose to add into your life this year, mentoring will be among the most natural. Mentoring enables:

- i. Young people to grow personally and as a disciple of Christ.*
- ii. Fellowship to be built across the generations.*
- iii. Identification of mission and ministry in which the young person can participate.*
- iv. Adults to better maintain their integrity as followers of Christ.*

Mentoring relationships are a mutual blessing. The mentor provides guidance, fellowship, teaching and support to facilitate the young person's:

- Learning about Christ and Christianity,*
- Development of healthy spiritual practices,*
- Growth in theological awareness and recognising God in their life,*
- Development of inter-generational relationships in your faith community,*

“What we have heard and known ... we will tell the next generation.”

Psalm 78



- *Identification of the young person's potential ministry strengths,*
- *Personal reflection and self-awareness.*

And in all of this, the mentor's own faith journey becomes stronger, deeper and more real.

THE KEY RESOURCES FOR MENTORING ARE:

- *Jesus Christ as our prime mentoring model*
- *The young person's reflections on their experiences*
- *The mentor's faith and willingness to take an interest in another person*
- *The Bible, including examples of mentors such as Barnabas, Elijah and Elizabeth.*
- *A good set of questions (See **TOOLBOX** pp 18-29)*
- *Meeting regularly - minimum monthly*

"Jesus appointed twelve that they might be with him..." Mark 3:14

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Although the word ‘mentoring’ does not appear in the Bible, the practice is plain to see. In the Old Testament we see it in the relationships of Moses and Joshua; Eli and Samuel; Elijah and Elisha. In the New Testament, Barnabas, Paul and Jesus mentored by walking closely with and investing heavily in a few people. We can also see it in the relationships between Ruth + Naomi, David + Samuel, Lois + Timothy and Elizabeth + Mary.

The Bible shows mentoring to be an *intentional* relationship and a way of sharing not just information, but our whole lives with a young disciple.

QUALITIES OF MENTORS

- *Faith in Christ*
- *Good character*
- *Commitment to teaching the next generation*
- *Trustworthiness and confidentiality*
- *Objectivity and sensitivity. Non-judgemental*
- *Generosity, availability and attentiveness*
- *Prayerfulness*
- *Warm, positive and encouraging.*

“Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well.” 1 Thessalonians 2:8

SKILLS OF MENTORS

- *Reflective Listening*
- *Establishing rapport*
- *Reading Scripture*
- *Discipleship – able to nurture faith in others and ‘show where God is’.*
- *Guidance – offering a wider view, options and possibilities*
- *Coaching – cheering on, reviewing and providing pointers for the way ahead*
- *Sponsoring – opening doors, ideas and opportunities to which a young person might not otherwise have access.*

A mentor is not. . . a parent; a counsellor; a buddy. Nor are they merely a teacher, for rather than simply explaining or passing information to a student, a mentor shows their student through their own example and by letting the young person see them living out their faith. As Paul was able to write to Timothy (see 2 Timothy 3: 10 below).

“You know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings ... continue in what you have learned ... because you know from whom you have learnt it.” 2 Timothy 3: 10, 14

PERSONAL INVITATION

Nothing beats a tap on the shoulder for recruiting mentors. People won't necessarily have confidence that they can relate to young people or be an effective mentor. Yet when a church leader shows confidence in them, it can go a long way to overcoming uncertainty.

TIPS FOR THE YOUNG PERSON BEING MENTORED

- *Take initiative - let your mentor know what you want from mentoring and how you would like sessions to run.*
- *Prepare for each meeting*
 - *Make a list of issues you would like to talk about.*
 - *Read through the set Bible passage.*
 - *Reflect on your goals and ministry strengths*
- *Bring a positive attitude*

God didn't create people to be self-sufficient and move through life alone: we need healthy supportive relationships.

Ruth Hassall

CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY MENTORING

Freedom (without judgement)...

- *To be oneself*
- *To express doubt, anger, frustration*
- *To ask any question*
- *To love and be loved*
- *To take risks*
- *To share opinions or feelings honestly*

Trust...

- *That the mentor has the young person's best interests at heart and will not push their own agenda, be controlling, or to put down, judge or hurt the young person intentionally*
- *That the young person will show respect and trust in the mentor*
- *Self-awareness*
- *Being in touch with one's own feelings and responses*
- *Being sensitive to the feelings and responses of the other*

Mentoring is... a mutual blessing, but allow the needs of the young person to guide the sessions. The young person should set the pace, with the mentor walking alongside (not trying to push ahead with the young person struggling to keep up.)



SAFE PRACTICE IN MENTORING

Parishes should appoint a Mentoring Coordinator. This person helps with recruiting, keeps a record of mentoring matches and their regular time of meeting, ensures safe practice, and is a reference and guide if issues arise.

Your Church will no doubt have its own Safety Policy that would apply to mentoring relationships, encouraging healthy relationships and appropriate boundaries between adults and young people while providing protection for both.

The stern warning of Jesus in Matthew 18:1-14 shows how important it is to God that we avoid anything inappropriate that may “cause these little ones to fall”.

IMPORTANT SAFE PRACTICES TO CONSIDER:

1. Mentors must consent to police vetting.
2. Remove potentially compromising situations that can arise from meeting one on one. Mentoring should occur either in a public place, such as a café, or in a church or home where there are other people around and plenty of windows or an open door - a place where you can be “overseen but not overheard”. In addition, caregivers as well as the Mentoring Coordinator should always be aware of when and where mentoring will occur.
3. While at times deeply personal sharing may be part of mentoring, it should be clear that this is not a counselling session and mentors should never undertake the role of a counsellor. The Mentoring Coordinator should have names of trusted counsellors available for referral.

4. Let the young person know that whatever is shared in mentoring will remain confidential except where there is a concern that someone may be at risk of harm.. When a mentor is compelled to break confidence, first ENCOURAGE the young person to be the one to speak up, or offer to ACCOMPANY them to reporting, or to seeing the person concerned. If being present is too much for the young person, ensure their PERMISSION to follow up the issue. If this permission is not given, be sure that the mentee KNOWS that you nonetheless are compelled to take action under law.
5. Gender matching is advised. It is generally less complicated and more conducive to the role-model dimension of mentoring.
6. In mentoring, a close relationship forms. This is important but should be balanced with care to maintain appropriate boundaries – e.g. avoiding overdependence by the young person on their mentor or the mentor developing inappropriate involvement with friends or family of the young person.

If your church has no Safety Policy, look for Keeping Them Safe on the Anglican Life website of the Diocese of Christchurch or contact your Regional or National Children's or Youth Facilitator.

GETTING STARTED

I. **Matching...**

While most people are able to mentor, not everyone is a good match for anyone. There should be a natural rapport and warmth between the mentor and the young person.

- i.* Start by prayerfully considering adults/young people you already have a relationship with or whom you feel drawn to. Approach your church's Mentoring Coordinator, Youth Leader or Vicar/Pastor/Minister, who can then arrange an initial Getting Acquainted session (see II below).
- ii.* If you don't yet have this rapport, the church can run an event designed to introduce several adults and young people to each other over a short period. See **TOOLBOX**: Appendix I (page 19) for an outline of such an event we like to call "Speed Matching"! The event ends with young people and adults filling in a form naming 2-3 people they met during the evening whom they feel they connected with and from which a good mentoring relationship could form. The Mentoring Coordinator collates these forms and pairs people up for an initial Getting Acquainted session.

II. **Getting Acquainted...**

An initial Getting Acquainted session is held, after which a final decision by both parties is made as to whether this is a good match. Both parties understand that this is a one-off session that may or may not lead to an ongoing mentoring relationship, with no hard feelings if not. To get better acquainted, both parties share their:

- i. life story - naming significant people or events along the way.*
- ii. interests, work/study, hobbies, and what they enjoy in life/do for fun.*
- iii. goals for the future.*
- iv. spend some dedicated time sharing each other's faith journey.*

Sharing should always be at a level that feels comfortable. How the mentor in particular handles this sacred time will build the basis for trust and openness in the relationship. In particular they should show attentiveness, be non-judgemental and tune in to how the young person feels about the things they are sharing.

III. First Mentoring Session. . .

If both parties agree that this is a suitable match, the Mentoring Coordinator arranges for the pair to meet. The pair meets and openly shares with each other their hopes for the mentoring relationship. In particular, the mentor should listen carefully to what the young person expects from mentoring. Go through The Mentoring Session outline (see the next section) and establish a commitment to these four aspects. Discuss where the initiative will lie for leading each part of the session. Discuss the regularity (weekly, fortnightly or monthly), the time of the week and the venue for mentoring. All these factors should work to minimise potential interruptions (e.g. timetable clashes) to either party making each session. Report these details to your Mentoring Coordinator.

IV. Commissioning. . .

It is important that your parish formally recognises the mentoring relationships. This may be as elaborate as a formal service installing all mentors into their role, or as simple as an introduction and prayer of dedication during a regular service of worship.

THE MENTORING SESSION

QUESTIONS & LISTENING

Without doubt, the top two tools in mentoring are Good Questions and Listening.

Questions help us get into listening mode rather than talking too much. Questions help get the young person thinking for themselves. Questions keep young people as the pace-setters and agenda-setters. They build their confidence and feelings of worth as they realise they have an active rather than a passive role in the session. **TOOLBOX:** Appendix II (page 21) has a good range of sample questions to select from for each step of a mentoring session.

FOUR STEPS

The mentoring session itself has four steps:

- I. **How are things?** (15-20 mins) Discuss as honestly as possible how things have been in regular life and how things have been spiritually since the last session, e.g. ask about:
 - i. *highlights and low points*
 - ii. *anything that has concerned the young person; gone well for them; raised questions or doubts; led to some new insight*
 - iii. *their handling of new or difficult situations*
 - iv. *relationships with friends, family, teachers/bosses, peers, parishioners*
 - v. *meeting any goals set at the previous session*

During this sharing, the mentor focuses on how the young person is feeling generally. Ask yourself: “Do they seem generally happy? sad? scared? angry?”

From there, explore where God is in the young person’s experiences. Remember to let LISTENING be your main tool. No need to try and resolve or fix anything.

II. Bible Reading. Select a passage of Scripture to read together (25-30 mins). There is great value in working steadily through a book of the Bible, however if the young person has little Biblical knowledge it would be good to start with selected chapters e.g. Matthew 5, 6 and 7, James 1, Proverbs 1-3, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 13, Psalms 1, 23, 51, 139, Genesis 1, Isaiah 40, Ephesians 2, Phillipians 2:1-18, Colossians 1-3 and John 1.

Bible Studies should be based around questions that explore: **i.** what the text actually says, **ii.** what it means and **iii.** what the application points are about Christ and about Christian living.

Bible study tools are available from **RESOURCED!** at resourced.org.nz

Other tools include: *The Student Guide to the Bible* by Stephen Miller and the *Serendipity Bible*. See **TOOLBOX:** Appendix III (page 26) for a simple Bible study format - the Six Symbol Method.

III. Goal-setting. (5-10mins) Ask the young person if the session has been helpful and in what way. From this feedback, set one or two personal, spiritual or ministry goals for the coming week/fortnight. Take care that goals are drawn from what the young person shares and is interested in and motivated to achieve. We believe that true discipleship happens the more we have to rely on God, and setting goals that challenge and stretch the young person will help them to do so. While you may have to build slowly into this, do keep it in mind as you set goals over time.

IV. Prayer. Offer thanks for the time, praise to God and commit the goals to the Lord.

EVALUATION / CLOSURE

After a set period of time it is worth pausing to evaluate how the mentoring relationship is going (usually after six months and before the end of a year).

Some helpful evaluation questions for the young person are:

- i. How has mentoring been helpful?*
- ii. What sticks in your mind the most?*
- iii. How have you grown spiritually?*
- iv. How have you grown personally?*
- v. Have you developed in an area of ministry?*
- vi. Do you feel more connected with your church family?*
- vii. Is there value in continuing to meet?*

If the answer to the last question is ‘yes’, review the format (meeting times etc...) and plan to continue. If the answer is “no”, plan a final get together where you can thank each other for the time spent together, commit all you have learnt and shared together into God’s hands and receive a blessing or prayer (e.g. from your Vicar/Minister or Mentoring Coordinator) for your ongoing growth and fellowship as members of the church. Both mentor and young person should then feel free to pursue another mentoring relationship if they wish.

RESOURCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Hassall, Ruth: Growing Young Leaders – A Practical Guide to Mentoring Teens, Bible Reading Fellowship, UK, 2009. Foreword by Dr. John Sentamu, Archbishop of York.

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Mallison, John: Mentoring to Develop Disciples and Leaders, Scripture Union, Australia, 1998

Miller, Stephen: The Student's Guide to the Bible, Barbour Publishing, United States, 2008

Resourced! Tried and True Resources for Anglican Youth Ministries in NZ: www.resourced.org.nz

TOOLBOX

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APPENDIX I

Matching Party / Getting Acquainted Questions

Run an evening of interactive sharing activities that help young people and adults informally work out who they connect easily with. Commit this event to prayer. Invite all those who have shown an interest or been shoulder tapped for mentoring.

The main event can be a Speed Dating type activity – which itself should add an element of fun to the evening! Set out a line of tables with all adults seated on one side and the young people in seats opposite. Have one line for males, another for females. A set of questions like the ones below are set out for all to see. Each pair has 4 minutes to in turn answer one question. After 4 minutes, a bell sounds and the adults move one seat to the left. The process simply repeats until each adult has had a ‘date’ with each young person of the same gender. Having a short period of time and designated questions quickly dissolves any awkwardness in the ‘date’.

Sample questions are below. Make a list of 11 questions, number them 2-12, print them off for each table and use two dice to pick the questions for each ‘date’.

The point of this event is two-fold. Most important is to identify people with whom there is a natural rapport and warmth. At a secondary level it may help to discover areas of common interests.

Sample Questions

- I. *If I could pick a major event (e.g. sporting, musical etc...) anywhere in the world, I would go to...*
- II. *My best day off would involve...*

- III. *A book/film/youtube clip I've enjoyed recently is ...*
- IV. *My favourite music (artist, band or genre) is ...*
- V. *If I could pick someone to sit next to on a long plane ride I would pick ...*
- VI. *(Apart from Biblical characters) I think one of the greatest human beings that ever lived was/is ...*
- VII. *My dream holiday would be ...*
- VIII. *A TV programme I try not to miss is ...*
- IX. *One thing that kind of bugs me is ...*
- X. *A favourite hobby of mine is ...*
- XI. *The extreme (adrenalin rush) activity I would most like to do is ..*
- XII. *My ideal dream job would be ...*

Pad out the evening with group mingling activities (see **RESOURCED!** at resourced.org.nz for ideas) and food. The event ends with young people and adults filling in a form naming 2-3 people they met during the evening whom they feel they connected with and could form a good mentoring relationship with. The Mentoring Coordinator collates these forms and pairs people up for an initial Getting Acquainted session (outlined on pages 11-12) after which parties decide whether to continue meeting for mentoring.

APPENDIX II

Sample Questions for Mentoring Sessions³

³Some of these questions have been taken or developed from Mallison (1998)

Keep the tone warm and friendly, open, non-judging. Allow the young person to choose the depth of sharing they are comfortable with. (See “Characteristics of Healthy Mentoring,” page 8.)

STARTING OFF

Ask 3-4 questions from sections 1-3 below to spark general conversation from which the young person can share how things are for them. (NB: If they ask you about yourself – feel free to share, but this may not happen, at least not at first).

I. How they are...

- i. *How are you? How are things?*
- ii. *On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate how things are for you? (or: ... how you are? ... how you are feeling? ... how your week has gone?)*
- iii. *How are things at home? School? Youth group?*
- iv. *What has made you smile or caught your interest recently?*

- v. *How are you feeling? (NB: Generally feelings sit along the scales of either sad, mad, scared or glad)*
- vi. *Do you want to talk about it? (Don't assume they will want to. Look relaxed if they don't, that's okay. If they do, see 'Working Through Issues', page 24)*

II. **Gathering Information...**

- i. *Tell me about a highlight and a low point from your last week.*
- ii. *Has anything concerned or bothered you recently? or raised any questions or even doubts? (If an issue is raised – see the set of questions under Working Through Issues, page 24.)*
- iii. *Has anything gone particularly well for you recently? Or led to some new insight?*
- iv. *How did you go in (test; sporting activity; family gathering etc...) this week? (Always take note of important events in their lives and ask after them.)*
- v. *What have you done for fun? relaxation? hobbies? interests? sports?*
- vi. *Have you faced any new or difficult situations?*
 - *How did that go?*
 - *How could you have handled that differently?*

III. **Relationships...**

- i. *How are your friendships going?*
- ii. *How are you maintaining your friendships?*

- iii. *Tell me about your other relationships.*
- iv. *How are things at home?*
- v. *On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your relationships with e.g. friends, family, teachers/bosses, other students/workmates, parishioners?*

MAKING THE FAITH LINK

This may or may not follow naturally out of the first set of questions. Either way, always ask one or two questions that link faith with life and where God is in their lives.

- i. *How are things with God?*
- ii. *How do you feel about your relationship with God?*
- iii. *Describe a real positive about your relationship with God.*
- iv. *What experiences of prayer and worship have you had this week?*
- v. *How have you been developing your relationship with God?*
- vi. *What are you doing to improve your knowledge of God?*
- vii. *What questions, doubts, difficulties or frustrations about God have come up for you recently? (Avoid any temptation to come up with theological quick fixes. As you will know, a mature faith is not the one without questions, but the one that is able to hold on through uncertainty.)*
- viii. *What new understanding of God have you become aware of lately?*

LINKING WITH ISSUES, GOALS, HOPES AND DREAMS

- i. *Could you see God (Father, Son or Holy Spirit) at work in this situation?*
- ii. *What do you think Jesus would do in a similar situation?*
- iii. *Where does God fit in here?*
- iv. *What does the Bible have to say about this? (A quick reference guide can be helpful here – e.g. the Student Guide to the Bible or a Bible with a topical index.)*
- v. *What understanding of God do you have that applies here?*
- vi. *Whom could you ask to pray for you (about this)?*

WORKING THROUGH ISSUES

- i. *Tell me what happened.*
- ii. *Looking back, what would you do differently?*
- iii. *What outcome would you like to see from this? How would you like things to work out from here?*
- iv. *What do you think you could do about this?*
- v. *What are your options? (Brainstorm if necessary)*
- vi. *What option seems best? (Explore why – especially if you see potential risk in it)*
- vii. *What will success look like? How will you know it's gone well?*

Remember, a mentor is not a counsellor. If deep issues are present, talk with the young person and Mentoring Coordinator about seeing a counsellor.

REPORTING BACK & GOAL SETTING

- i. How did you get on with the goals we set last time?*
- ii. What can we celebrate?*
- iii. What made it difficult? Why do you think that was so?*
- iv. How are you feeling about it?*
- v. What help might you need?*
- vi. Do we need to revise the goal?*
- vii. What could you work on between now and our next meeting?*
- viii. What might prevent you / get in the way of you achieving this?*
- ix. How could you deal with this?*
- x. What or whom do you think could help with this?*

APPENDIX III

Bible Study - The Six Symbol Method

The Six Symbol method brings young people to Bible Study in an interesting and engaging way. It gives them a tool to explore a Bible passage and develops the skills of looking for meaning, understanding and application in Scripture.

THE METHOD

- I. Read the chosen bible passage aloud.
- II. Both take a sheet of paper and write the Six Symbols described over-page, down the left hand side of the paper.
- III. As you each read through the Bible passage a second time, begin to write (next to the appropriate Symbol) what you find in the passage.
- IV. After 5-10 minutes of individual work, share your findings with one another.
- V. Finish with a summary of what you have discovered, then close with a prayer about acting on those discoveries.

THE SYMBOLS



ARROW POINTING UP

Write something these verses tell us about God (Jesus/Father/Holy Spirit).



ARROW POINTING DOWN

Write something these verses tell us about human nature (positive or negative).



A LIGHT BULB

Write down any new discovery you have made reading these verses.



AN EXCLAMATION MARK!

Write down the most exciting or stand out idea in your opinion and why.



QUESTION MARK?

Write down anything you don't understand, or that you want to ask about.



ARROW POINTING TO SIDE

Write down something these verses say we should do.

APPENDIX IV

The Next Step: Mentoring for Ministry Development

The first priority in mentoring is discipleship. As a young person becomes established as a disciple of Christ, they are likely to develop an area of ministry. Below are questions mentors can use to help young people begin to explore and develop an area of ministry, and/or leadership.

FINDING YOUR CALLING AND PASSION

1. *Where do you see God at work and feel drawn to be involved?*
2. *How do you respond to the needy or marginalised within your community?*
3. *Is there a group of people that you enjoy working with particularly? e.g. children, elderly, youth, disabled, marginalised...*
4. *Can you recognise something that you have done recently that went particularly well?*
- Anything that did not go well?
5. *What has been the most satisfying 'ministry experience' in the last month?*
6. *Where do you believe your talents / gifts / strengths lie?*

SUSTAINING YOUR MINISTRY

1. *Where might there be a temptation to please people rather than serve God?*
2. *How would you rate your pastoral concern for others? Is love for those you minister among your primary motivation?*
3. *How do you keep Christ central in your ministry?*
4. *Where do you sense a gap in your ability?*
5. *How well do you work with others? How can you be a better team player?*
6. *What do you see as your current training and personal development needs?*
7. *What aspects of your character need honing so you can better serve?*
8. *What is your greatest challenge?*
 - *What are you doing to meet it? (See Working Through Issues, page 24)*
9. *What tensions / conflicts have you faced?*
 - *How does that make you feel?*
 - *How are you dealing with it?*
10. *How is your time management / goal-setting / prioritising / life-balance going?*
11. *How have you been nurturing your relationship with God?*
12. *What is your most effective way to unwind / process tension?*
 - *How could it be improved?*
13. *Are you regularly allowing time for reflection and prayer ; bible reading and study?*
14. *In what ways are you satisfying your need for: Friendship? Intellectual stimulation? Intimacy? Fun?*

GOALS

1. *What ministry development goal are you working toward/would like to set for yourself?*

NOTES

