

# **MENTORING STUDENTS**

## **Introduction:**

There are no doubt a multitude of ways to administrate a mentoring program. Ours may not be the same as others, but we believe it is the most effective way we've found to invest in young people, within the context of our culture and local church.

However mentoring is executed, the purpose is always the same – to invest experience into someone without it. In our case in the body of Christ, we desire to impart spiritual growth into young people, along with a few life skills and experiences. Our two greatest tools in mentoring are: relationship and the word of God.

## **Definition**

**Mentor:** a trusted counselor or guide

## **How Does Mentoring Work?**

We take a spiritually mature Christian adult and pair them up with a student of the same gender, to meet frequently and be held accountable to their spiritual growth. The relationship begins slowly, getting to know each other, but then progresses through 2 phases, with indicating markers along the way.

## **What Is the Goal of Mentoring?**

The difference in mentoring and a friendship is that mentoring has a goal. The relationship may develop into a friendship, but during the mentoring process it should be devoted to the investment of the mentee. So what is the goal of Grounded's mentoring program?

**Goal:** To Invest Spiritual Maturity Into Young People

Along the way of the relationship it may include things like the investment of life skill or personal counseling, and those are all fine things, but our end result isn't just to help people, it is to enable them to stand on their own two-feet, spiritually.

The overall goal of successful mentoring is accomplished when the 4 indicating markers are accomplished.

## **What Are the Markers of Successful Mentoring?**

While we hope the mentoring relationship is enjoyable and beneficial to both parties, we do have some goals we'd like to accomplish in the mentee. We would love to

establish these 4 principles in the lives of the students we invest in. They are the 4 indicating markers along the way of the relationship, and build upon one another, therefore cannot be “skipped”.

- **Faithfulness** – Having faith and being consistent
- **Virtue** – Having integrity and loving others
- **Knowledge** – Knowing the word and growing thereby
- **Service** – Being connected to the local church

### **What Is Our Philosophy for Mentoring?**

We’ve developed *a phased approach to mentoring*, based upon our time and experience investing in high school students. Relationships are great! And we want to connect with students, but we also want to help them grow in their faith and follow Jesus Christ on their own. We do not know where they will be one day (off to college?), so our desire is to equip them to serve the Lord wherever He takes them.

The two phases align with our student ministry vision, which we will be asking mentees to be faithful to.

- **LOVE** - to develop character and faithfulness, loving God and others, and doing what is right.
- **GROW** - to deep our relationship with God through the word and service to the local church.

Each phase builds upon the other, meaning that a mentoring relationship cannot develop into GROW, without having some evidence of accomplishing the goals in LOVE. That doesn’t mean the relationship ends, but that its focus remains on establishing the markers identified in the phase they are currently in before progressing. It can, however, with a lack of faithfulness on part of the mentee, end prematurely.

#### **Phase 1 - LOVE**

The beginning stages of a mentoring relationship focus on the first part of our vision for Grounded Student Ministry: Love. Our desire in this phase is to establish the mentee in faithfulness to the Lord and the body of Christ (church). Before we can ever get to “knowledge”, we need to first build the foundation of “virtue”, according to the process of spiritual growth in 2 Peter 1:5.

#### **Marker 1 - Faithfulness**

To begin a mentoring relationship, we have no requirement at all, except that a person is willing to meet with a mentor and engage with them. We are willing to meet with anyone! What does it hurt to get one cup of coffee with another person to minister to them – who knows where the relationship will go.

It's possible that one visit is all we get! And that's ok. We don't want that, of course, but before the relationship can develop any further, we need to establish the foundation of "faith" and faithfulness.

Faithfulness is critical to a person's spiritual growth. In fact, according to 2 Peter 1:5, we cannot get to virtue (which is our second marker for phase 1) without faith. In order to establish the mentee as faithful, they should be responsive in two ways:

**A. Faith** – having saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot get much further without that! We can continue to meet with lost students and minister the gospel to them or counsel them, but the markers really cannot be completed by a lost person.

*Amos 3:3*

*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

**B. Faithful** – consistent to the student ministry and local church. This means we won't be mentoring "anyone" long term, except that they attend Oakland Heights with some consistency.

**Note:** a good rule of thumb for faithfulness in attendance – be present more than you are absent. We cannot expect 100%! But we should encourage consistency.

## **Marker 2 - Virtue**

This is the very first thing we add to our faith! Before we can learn a bunch, or serve in a super cool capacity, we must have a moral and biblical character of integrity. This doesn't mean that we have reached perfection, but that we are attempting to do what is right with some evidence in our lives.

## **Definition**

**Virtue:** conformity to a standard of right

Our desire in the virtue phase is to establish students in doing the right thing with what they already know, or are seeing/hearing from bible reading or church services. If they are not applying what's in front of them, then we do not want to give them more truth.

At the same time, it is the job of the mentor to help them see and apply what's in front of them. We cannot MAKE anyone apply what God says, that is His job – He works in the heart. The mentor just holds the student accountable to do the right thing and celebrate their success.

## **Phase 2 – GROW (The Roots Booklet)**

Spiritual growth! That's what this whole thing is all about, right? The answer is yes. But the journey is just as important as the destination. The direction we are pointing students in is spiritual growth, but how we get there is a long process of trial and error, grace and truth, patience and kindness.

At no time at all is it acceptable to cease applying what they've learned in phase 1. Being in the growth phase implies that they are still faithful and have or are working on virtue (markers 1 & 2).

In the Growth phase, our markers are stepped up to the next level. Now that we have a foundation to work with, we can expect a few things out of our mentees. This phase is more like the “discipleship” process for adults, but still simplified for students.

### **Marker 3 - Knowledge**

This is a double-edged sword. Knowledge is critical to spiritual growth, which knowledge comes from the word of God, but it is also a weapon that, without virtue, can be wielded and swung to great damage. This is why establishing phase 1 is so important.

The knowledge marker is aided by a predetermined set of lessons that are geared for students. Each lesson has questions to answer and bible verses to memorize. It is imperative that the mentor transition to “teacher” in this phase if they haven't already.

If we want our students to be successful in the faith and grow to serve the Lord, then they need to KNOW the word of God, or at least be comfortable with reading it and understanding it for themselves.

Hebrews says that when we are grown, we can digest the deeper things of God, which in turn helps us exercise our knowledge to discern good and evil. That means it's imperative that our students know the word! How else do we know right from wrong?

*Hebrews 5:14*

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

#### **Marker 4 - Service**

The last marker is service to the ministry and the local church. One of the goals of Grounded Student Ministry is to establish students in the local church. The growth phase of mentoring should help do exactly that!

More than 50% of students today fall away from their faith after they graduate. Being plugged into the church, and not just the "youth group", will hopefully enable our students to transition from high schooler to young person, without having a spiritual identity crisis after graduation.

Ideally, students should start serving wherever their mentor does, so long as it is appropriate. They can serve in Grounded, but again, we want them in the church with other people too.

**Examples:** VBS, Jr Church, Preschool, Events (4th of July, Disciple Conf, etc.), Meals, Praise Team, Tech Team, Greeter, etc.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

##### **When to Transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2?**

Transitioning from Phase 1 to Phase 2 is a pivotal moment in the mentoring relationship. If done too early, the student will get head knowledge without having a right heart, and if done too late, the student will have been missing out on the opportunity for further growth and development.

Here are some guidelines for when to transition out of Phase 1.

- Meeting for 3-4 months minimum
- Meet at least 10-12 times
- Student is saved\*
- Student is reading the bible frequently
- Student is accountable and willing to change
- Student is faithfully attending the student ministry
- Both parties feel comfortable in the relationship

\*Each relationship is unique, and to transition into phase 2 we'd like students to be "saved", however it is possible that the first 2 lessons of the ROOTS booklet could aid in this cause, they cover the word of God & salvation. If necessary, you can use these two lessons as tools to point the student to Christ, but you cannot go any further in the book until they are born again.

### **How Can Students Sign Up?**

We have an application for students to fill out to begin their mentoring journey. Once completed it should be turned into the Student Pastor or the church office.

An important element to mentoring is notifying the parents of their student's desire to be invested in by another adult. For this reason, the application briefly describes our program and asks for a parent signature when submitted.

### **Who Can Be a Mentor?**

We don't want just anyone hanging out with students, we want the best! Just like in discipleship, we are only able to reproduce 'ourselves', meaning that if we aren't mature, we can't pass on maturity. Therefore, we want to make sure that our mentors are qualified and spiritually mature.

- At least 21 years old
- Member of Oakland Heights Baptist Church
- Faithful to church and small group
- Discipled through adult material
- Recommended by discipler
- Approved by OHBC's Child Protection System

### **What Should You Be Doing During Mentoring?**

If you've not mentored before, this is a good question to ask! Most importantly, spend some time with your mentee and be intentional while you are doing it. You will need to rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance to discern if the student needs to vent or be counseled, or to spend time in the word.

### **During Phase 1**

There are lots of things to do together! You could go out for coffee, run an errand, have them over for dinner, take them to an event, serve in a ministry together, or plan a fun activity.

The whole point is to be together and be intentional with your time. So long as you are asking some good questions and building your relationship, you don't always have to sit down at a table across from each other.

### **During Phase 2**

Once you transition into the ROOTS booklet, it is way more important to be spending most of your time in the lesson. Especially if you have a senior – we don't want to mentor past graduation, so calculate your time and finish the book before the spring semester is over.

It is recommended to have more intentional teaching time during Phase 2. You can still go out for coffee, ice cream, dinner, etc. just bring your books and bibles and spend some time in the word as well.

### **What Should You Talk About?**

- How things are going at home or school
- Who do they want to be when they grow up
- What do they think God is doing in their lives
- Weekly bible reading
- What are they getting out of the messages at church or small group

### **What Is The Target Audience For Mentoring?**

We are aiming for 10-11 grade students to be paired up with a mentor, at their will. The transition from Middle School to Freshman year is so dramatic that we want our freshman to jump into our High School ministry and settle in before taking too much on. Also for seniors, the school year is too short to cram in a new relationship. It is possible, but not ideal.

For seniors, we are willing to work with them however we can most especially if they are going away to school. Our desire in our student ministry is to “establish students in the faith”, and we absolutely WANT them to have that foundation before college – even if it means a faster paced mentoring relationship.