

Mentoring Session #1

MQ: "Getting to Know You" statements

(adapted from the book *Make A World of Difference*)

Here are some good questions to use as an icebreaker when you meet with your mentee for the first few times. It is best if you both answer the same question and talk about your answers. You don't need to answer all of them. They are just a way to get conversation started.

1. When I have some free time, I like to ...
2. My favorite time of the year is ...
3. At Christmas time I ...
4. Some things I enjoy doing with friends are ...
5. Being rich means ...
6. Being poor means ...
7. A talent that I have is ...
8. The most important thing that we need to teach children today is ...
9. My favorite food to cook/bake or eat is ...
10. The world problem that I am most concerned about is ...
11. The last book I read was ...
12. Older people ...
13. Young people ...
14. In my church, I share my time and talents by ...
15. If I had to give up everything but one thing that I own, the one thing I would keep would be ...
16. I think the most difficult thing that Christ told us to do is ...
17. My favorite music to listen to is ...
18. A poor person is someone who ...
19. A rich person is someone who ...
20. I think the church is ...
21. Something my church or community is doing to help those in need is ...
22. Something that I enjoy doing by myself is ...
23. Something I enjoy doing with others is ...
24. My favorite recreational activity is ...

Sharing Your Faith Journey Mentoring Session #2

The intent of this session is to share about your respective faith journeys. The focus should be on the faith journey of the mentee, but mentors are welcome to share out of their own journey as it is appropriate. Find a comfortable setting in which to meet for this session. Choose from among the following questions to get the session started.

- 1) Have both mentee and mentor choose one question he/she would like to answer to get the session started.
- 2) Then have the mentee choose one question to ask the mentor and vice versa.
- 3) From there, let the session emerge as it will asking the Holy Spirit to guide you.

What is your earliest memory of church? Of Sunday school?

What is the most memorable experience of church? Of Sunday school?

What is the most painful memory of church? Of Sunday school?

How was your family involved or not involved with church?

Where and how often, if at all, did you attend church growing up?

What are some of the things you have learned about God?

Describe your current understanding of God. What words would you use to describe God?

When did you first believe in God and Jesus? How has that belief changed with time?

How have you experienced God in your life?

How have the church, your family, friends, society, world events, etc. influenced and shaped your faith?

Who has had the greatest impact on your faith development?

Share one event that has had the most impact on your faith.

In the last while, has your relationship with Jesus changed? How?

In what areas of your Christian walk do you feel most challenged?

In what area of spiritual discipline (e.g. scripture reading and study, prayer, silence or solitude, worship, Christian fellowship) are you growing the most? Why?

Seven Spiritual Sharing Questions

1. When did you first begin to realize that God loves you, if ever?
2. When, if ever, did God become more than a word for you? When, if ever, did God become a living Being for you?
3. What are your strongest convictions about God?
4. If you could hear God say one thing to you, what do you think God would say? If you could say one thing to God, what would you say?
5. What single question do you most want God to answer for you?
6. Describe the person you have known who you felt knew God most intimately?
7. How would you describe your "life-story" or "faith journey"?

--taken from Kirkpatrick, Small Groups in the Church (1995)

Mentoring Session #3

In session #3 the mentor should ask and the mentee should be prepared to answer the following three questions:

- 1) What area in my spiritual life needs to grow or change in some way?
- 2) What ministry or service skill would I like to try out or use in the next several months?
- 3) What is a burning question about life and faith that I have right now?

After the mentee has answered each of these three questions, brainstorm together how the mentee might work at growth in each of these areas. Have fun and be honest as you work at these three areas. May God bless you as you grow together in the Lord.

Mentoring Session #4

Understanding God's Call on My Life

One of the challenging questions we all face as Christians is "What is God calling me to be and do in life?" I invite you to begin this mentoring session by reading the following two Scriptures: Matthew 6:33-34 and James 4:13-15. These two Scriptures focus not so much on the "what" of God's call, but rather the "spirit and attitude" in which we listen for God's call on our lives. God wants us to be willing followers. It is important to open our lives to listen to God's call.

My own belief is that God has any number of things which are pleasing to God in terms of what I do with my life. My goal is to find something within that list of things which is both pleasing to God and meets my sense of who God wants me to be. Frederick Buechner speaks about finding "the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deepest need."

As you discuss together the call of God on the mentee, use the following ideas to begin to help the mentee find a focus in terms of God's call. The goal of this session is not necessarily to come up with a very specific understanding of God's call for the mentee, but rather to take steps towards finding that sense of call.

- 1) passion/dream--What is the mentee's dream for his/her life? What energizes the mentee? What interests the mentee in terms of the future? How might God's call be found in these dreams, energies, and passions?
- 2) focus or center--What is at the center of the mentee's hope for the future? Could the mentee name that center or focus in one sentence or phrase? Currently my focus statement in life is "to be a seeker and mentor in the way of Jesus"?
- 3) resources of the Christian tradition--Invite the mentee to use Scripture, reason, and experience to listen for the Holy Spirit's voice. In addition to the two scriptures listed above, look at Jeremiah 29:10-14; Psalm 139; Micah 6:8; and John 15:4-5.
- 4) the faith community--What does the mentee's church, family members, youth group, etc. believe the mentee is gifted to do and be?
- 5) mentors--As a mentor, share your own perspective of the mentee's gifts and abilities. How might God want to use those gifts and abilities? Resist the temptation to tell the mentee exactly what God's will is for him/her, but do provide feedback which will give some guidance.

Finally, remember that this topic of God's call for our lives is an ongoing, life-long journey. Listen carefully for God's call at this point in time and be open into the future for God's ongoing voice and direction.

Mentoring Session #5-Vocation: How Call Gets Translated into Life

In Mentoring Session #5 I invite you to discuss the topic of vocation as mentor and mentee. By vocation, I mean "how one translates God's call into real life decisions and daily living". In this session, feel free to choose from among the following questions:

- 1) What do I dream about doing with my life?
- 2) What will I do after high school?
 - If I go on for further education, what will I study? Where will I go to school and why? How will I find the financial resources to make this possible?
 - Will I be involved in some kind of immediate service or mission? If so, do I know how to contact service/mission agencies to explore options?
 - Will I get a full-time job? If so, what will I do? Do I need any special training or education to work in that job?
- 3) Who do I want to help me make decisions about my vocation?
- 4) any other questions which come to mind

Mentors may want to share a bit about how they ended up doing what they are doing today. For many of us adults that has involved trying a number of different jobs or careers. Share the both the joys and challenges that you have experienced in figuring out how God wants you to live your life.

Mentoring Session #6-Music Makes the World Go Round

In mentoring session #6 the focus is on music. Music plays a crucial role for all human beings. We all have our own personal likes and dislikes when it comes to music. Culture is also an important factor when it comes to music. For most of us, our cultural experience has influenced and continues to influence the kind of music we listen to and are moved by. Choose from among the following questions around the topic of music:

- 1) What is my favorite kind of music and why?
- 2) Is the music I listen to healthy (good for me) or do I find it to be problematic in some way?
- 3) How does the music I listen to impact my faith? Is it supportive of my faith or does it challenge my faith in some way?
- 4) How do I decide what music I listen to?
- 5) On a scale of 1-10, how important is music in my life?
- 6) Has my interest in certain types of music changed recently? If so, why?

In our fall mentor/mentee retreat, we talked in one session about generational differences, especially when it comes to communication and values. Music is a case in point. I have observed that different generations have different interests and styles of music. What observations do you have about how generational differences influence music choices?

Mentoring Session #7-Media: Powerful Forces

In mentoring session #7 the focus is intended to be on that of media. Shane Hipps, in his extremely helpful book "The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture," defines media as "extensions of our humanity." In other words, all media extend something about what it means to be human. For example, the invention of the telephone extended the human voice. Media which have a powerful influence in our lives today include TV, movies, the cell phone, the internet, and the World Wide Web. Once again, a generational difference may be at play between mentor and mentee. Mentees are more likely to be comfortable in using the internet, the cell phone, and aspects of the internet like social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook. Hipps, in his book, argues that any given media begins as something neutral. It is how we use it that determines its positive or negative value. Finally, Marshall McLuhan's mantra that "the medium is the message" is relevant. Any given medium shapes the way we think and communicate with one another. One of the current debates is about the relative merits of "virtual communication" and "virtual community." This discussion is an important one given the predominant use of the internet as a way of communication.

In your mentoring session, I invite you to discuss from among the following questions:

- 1) What media do you use the most?
- 2) What media do you most like to use?
- 3) How does your use of media influence your faith journey? In what ways does it contribute to a stronger faith? In what ways is it a liability to your faith?
- 4) How does your use of media shape the way you think?
- 5) How does your use of media shape the way you communicate with others?
- 6) What spiritual forces (both positive and negative) do you see at work in the media that you use?
- 7) What specific change or changes would you like to make to be a better and more faithful consumer of media?

Have a great session interacting around the topic of media. It is a powerful force in all of our lives.

Mentoring Session #8-Dating and Other Forms of Relating

Notice in my title for this mentoring session I say "Dating and Other Forms of Relating." Dating is not the only way we relate to one another, especially across gender lines, but it has been and continues to be a powerful form of relationship. Dating takes different forms, e.g. individual couple dating and group dating for two, in different times and different subcultures.

God has created us a sexual beings. A big part of that sexual reality is that we long to connect with another human being in a deeply intimate way. Most of us are socialized to believe that we will one day find that perfect other person and marry him/her. Dating is a way to test out those relationships. In the teen years, there is often significant focus and energy on developing and maintaining such dating relationships. The realities surrounding dating can lead to both some of the most high experiences of adolescence, but also some of the most low experiences as well.

In some Christian circles, courtship has been put forth as an alternative to dating. In this approach, one reserves that special relationship before marriage for the one that one eventually plans to marry.

In some other cultures parents and extended family play a big role in choosing the person one will eventually marry. Finally, some of us are destined to be single for all or most of our adult years. It is important to talk about what that means for our life and faith whether we choose that state of single life or whether it is thrust upon us against our wishes.

In this mentoring session, you may choose from among the following questions or others that you would like to discuss>\:

- 1) What is my experience with dating? (Mentors are encouraged to share their own journeys during the teen years.)
- 2) What are the joys and hurts that I have experienced around relating to members of the opposite sex?
- 3) What are my deepest desires when it comes to relating to the opposite sex?
- 4) Is dating a good thing or not? If it is, at what age should one be allowed to date and what should be the conditions associated with that dating?
- 5) Do my relationships with the opposite sex strengthen my faith or interfere with it in some way?
- 6) What does healthy and wholesome dating look like?

Note: This mentoring session may inevitably move over into a discussion of human sexuality. It is okay to discuss this aspect of relating, but we will be coming back to sexuality in the 12th and final mentoring session. Have a great time discussing relationships at this stage in your life. God created us as social beings and desires that we have healthy and whole relationships with one another.

Mentoring Session #9-Relating to Peers

Last month one of our foci was on dating relationships. In this mentoring session, we broaden the scope to include all relationships with one's peers. For most youth, relationships with peers is a significant reality. When these relationships are healthy and strong, youth are aided in navigating through the teen years. But when peer relationships are challenged in some way, it can be quite painful for youth. Common settings for peer relationships in the teen years are: school, church, neighborhood, and the work setting if the young person has a full or part-time job. In this session engage the following questions or others which you believe are more relevant to your setting:

- 1) How do you feel about the friendships that you currently have?
- 2) Are these friendships good for you?
- 3) Do these friendships help or hinder your spiritual life?
- 4) What is the most gratifying friendship that you have and why?
- 5) What is the most challenging friendship that you have and why?
- 6) Do you have friendships which limit your development and growth in some way?
- 7) If you could change one thing about your friendships, what would it be?

Mentoring Session #10-School, Academics, and Extracurriculars

This mentoring session provides the opportunity to focus on the mentee's experience of school. For most youth, more waking hours are spent in school or with school-related activities than any other activities. Youth receive significant feedback from teachers and administrators which impact their self-understanding and self-esteem. Classes are experienced in quite different ways by different youth. Some youth are energized by school while others dread the thought of another day of school. It is also true that a youth's perspective on school can change from day to day and minute to minute depending on what has just happened in the youth's life. Use the following questions as a springboard to talk about school:

- 1) In general, how do you experience school?
- 2) What is most energizing about your school experience?
- 3) What is most challenging about your school experience?
- 4) Do you have a favorite subject or favorite teacher?
- 5) Do you have a class or teacher that you find especially challenging?
- 6) As you think about the possibility of college, how does what you are doing now contribute or take away from that possibility?
- 7) Are you involved in any extracurricular activities, e.g. sports, music, drama, clubs, etc.? If so, what is positive about this involvement and what is challenging?
- 8) Do you feel like the workload and time involvement around school and school activities is too much, too little, or just about right?

Mentoring Session #11-Crime

The topic for this session is one which might surprise some of us. It is often not found in books on youth ministry and youth development. And yet it is a reality that more and more youth face in a daily way. The word "crime" is associated with violence, theft, robbery, and other variations which are too numerous to name. Most youth have to think about crime when they go to school every day. More and more of the violent acts in our society are perpetuated in our schools. Columbine and Virginia Tech are associated with violent, criminal acts. We remember them because they involved multiple victims. But there are many more such acts which play out in the schools our youth attend.

In addition to the school setting, many youth must deal with crime in their immediate neighborhoods. Gangs, drug deals, hate crimes, and bullying are 21st century realities. In this mentoring session, the following questions serve as discussion starters:

- 1) What kinds of crime do you experience in your school?
- 2) Do you live with any fears about violent crime in your school?
- 3) What kinds of crime do you experience in your neighborhood?
- 4) What is the most immediate experience of crime that you are aware of? How do you respond to it?
- 5) How is your faith a resource as you deal with the reality of crime?
- 6) Are you tempted or involved in any way in activities which are not legal?

Use this session to discuss the reality of crime and violence in our lives where we live.

Mentoring Session #12-Sexuality

For the final mentoring session in this series we will focus on the topic of sexuality. God created each of us as sexual beings. In Genesis we learn that God created us male and female and that we are created for each other. All of us have a built-in longing for relationship and intimacy. Our sexuality is powerful. It can be expressed in very good and healthy ways and it can be expressed in ways which are bad and unhealthy. Adolescence is a time when we explore what it means to be sexual beings.

Unfortunately, there are lots of negative understandings of and influences from sexuality in our culture. Media and music often portray unhealthy images and understandings of sexuality. It is our task as Christians to understand God's desire for us sexually and to live that out in our daily lives.

A number of authors have noted the connection between sexuality and spirituality. Both are powerful realities in our lives. Both draw on fundamental and strong energies which reside in our beings. Our challenge as Christians is to intergrate our faith and our sexuality in meaningful and faithful ways.

In this final session explore sexuality together with the following questions:

- 1) What has influenced my current understandings about who I am as a sexual being? Think about your life story, relationships, and experiences up until the present.
- 2) Do I see sexuality as a healthy and good reality which is a gift from God?
- 3) What are my current challenges when it comes to my sexuality?
- 4) Do I have a safe place to talk with someone about the sexual realities I am dealing with?
- 5) How does my faith interact with my sexuality?
- 6) How do I wish my faith with interact with my sexuality?
- 7) What commitments do I want to make related to my sexuality based on my Christian faith?