

Tips for Mentors

making your mentoring relationship work

Be in touch with your congregation's mentor coordinators.

They are there to support you as a mentor, and you are accountable to the church through them.

Get to know the parents.

Have a meal together with your family and your youth's family you start the relationship.

Attend an event your youth is performing in and get together with their family and yours afterward.

Check in periodically with the parents, even if you have no agenda.

Share with the parents the positive traits and gifts you see in their youth.

Bring structure to your relationship.

Make it a priority to attend the group activities planned for all mentors and youth.

Decide how often you will get together, being realistic about both your schedules. Now *stick to this plan*; it really communicates to your youth whether s/he is a priority to you.

It's a good idea to keep a record of activities that you also share with the mentor coordinators.

Develop the relationship formally and informally.

Share your faith journey in a way that's appropriate for their age and stage.

Chat at church, send cards, notes, or texts.

When you're involved at church, involve them too.

Attend some of their special events.

When your youth hardly talks

First, realize this is very common. Youth often don't realize that they aren't "doing their part" to carry the conversation. It's okay to do more of the talking, as long as your youth is still interested and comfortable.

Don't try to fill every silence. Give your mentee have a chance to initiate a topic.

Do activities that are hands-on or action-oriented, especially with boys. As a general rule, boys prefer shoulder-to-shoulder over face-to-face interaction.

Do a devotional or prayer practice together.

Do activities with other mentor pairs, with their family or your family.

Discuss a book, movie, news story, Facebook post, sports team, etc. Follow your mentee's sports team or favorite celebrity. Subscribe to a blog s/he likes.

Evaluate yearly at a structured meeting of mentor pairs.

The mentor coordinators should set up a yearly evaluation. Be as honest as possible. We need to teach kids that it is okay to say "This isn't working out." If you sense things aren't going well, talk to the mentor coordinator about what to do. Consider all options including assigning a different mentor. We've got to be big enough to do what's best for the youth.