

Tips for Mentors

making your mentoring relationship work

Use *One-on-One: Making the Most of Your Mentoring Relationship* by Steve Ropp; Faith & Life Resources. Most congregations have at least one copy. Recently, Mennonite Publishing Network revised and updated it and made it available as a download at <http://store.mpn.net>.

Get to know the parents.

Meet with parents and youth together as you start the relationship.
(Read page 21 of *One-on-One* for good suggestions.)

Bring structure to your relationship.

A group activity for all mentors and youth is very helpful.
Write a covenant that clarifies expectations for both parties. (Page 35 & 36)
Good idea: keep a record of activities that you also share with the coordinator(s).

Develop the relationship formally and informally. Some ideas:

“Hi” at church, cards, notes
Activities you both enjoy
When you’re involved at church, involve them too
Attend some of their special events
“Take them along” when it’s convenient
Chapter 5, “Nuts and Bolts of Mentoring” is an excellent resource for you.

Participate in the church’s structured activities for mentor pairs

Provides support and accountability for you as mentor
Helps open up new, deeper topics through activities such as sharing faith stories or using “share sheets.” (Appendix E) *Regarding the use of Share Sheets: Remember that the mentor is not the teacher.* *Share Sheets will not advance the relationship unless you do them together as near-equals.*

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; but don’t try to fill every silence.
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 activities with one or two other mentor pairs.
Invite your mentee to do something with your whole family.
Attend an event your youth participates in. A few days afterward, take them out for a snack and talk about it together.
Use Share Sheets (from *One-on-One*).
Discuss a book or article.
Do a devotional or prayer practice together.

Evaluate yearly at a structured meeting of mentor pairs.

Use the evaluation sheet on page 89. 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.