

Getting Started

So, what should you do next if the student indicates interest?

Meet the Parents

The purpose of this meeting is to get their permission and to let them know what they can expect from this relationship with their teenager. We recommend including the student in this meeting so there won't be any misunderstanding about the relationship. It also gives the parent and teenager a chance to discuss issues and ask questions together.

Meet at the church office or on the church campus. At this meeting, a parental permission form can be reviewed and signed, and you can give the parents a letter discussing expectations. This is also a good time to figure out the best days and times for you and the student to meet. Exchange contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses, and set the first time you will meet with the student.

Hang Out Together

The first time you meet with the student, choose a place where you can have easy conversation (in other words, not a movie or concert or motocross event). This is when you can find out what issues the student would like help with and set some goals for personal or spiritual growth. Or maybe you'll find out the student has absolutely no goals and wants no help. That's OK—at least you have a place to start.

This is the time to introduce a mentoring agreement. This form will serve as a reminder of the anniversary date of when you and the student started the mentor relationship. It also will open the door for talking about the commitment each of you is making.

Don't worry if the student isn't overly helpful with this at first. It takes some students time to really open up. Trust is a big issue, and as your student gets to know you, he or she will be more comfortable talking about things.

Be Consistent

Now that you have started, make sure to meet weekly with your student; we recommend meeting for at least an hour. If either of you has a conflict with an upcoming date, make sure you communicate and reschedule.

Emails, text messages, and notes can help you stay in touch. The important thing is to be consistent. You may have to really pursue the student because some teenagers will be unsure about this new venture. It may take patience and persistence on your part. Just make sure to call, text, or email if you need to reschedule for a particular week.

Possibly keep a journal to record your activities, prayer requests, and praises. This will help you remain focused on all the things God is doing in your student's life. It's also a great long-term resource that you will treasure as your mentoring relationship grows and matures.

Stay Connected to the Family

Contact your student's family as a courtesy to see how they view the mentor relationship, and let them know of your continued commitment. Remember, your job isn't to replace a parent; it's to come alongside the student's family and become a friend and role model and source of support. Anything that strengthens the parents and the family ultimately will strengthen the student, too.