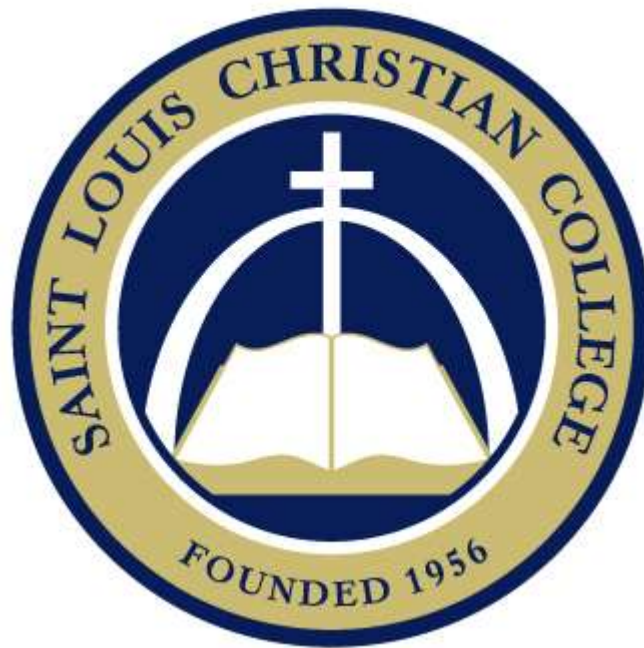


Saint Louis Christian College

1360 Grandview Drive
Florissant, MO 63033
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PMN300 Ministry Practicum Supervisor/Mentor Handbook

SAINT LOUIS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
PMN300 MINISTRY PRACTICUM
Professor Scott Womble

Table of Contents

Welcome	3
The Objectives of the Practicum	4
Practicum “At a Glance”	5
What the Student Needs From You	6
What the College Needs From You	6
Addendum A – Practicum Learning Covenant	7
Addendum B – Field Supervisor Evaluation Form	9
Addendum C – Mentor Evaluation Form	11
Addendum D – Introductory Material to Field Supervisor and Mentors.....	13
Role of the Practicum	13
Expectations of the Field Supervisor and Mentor	13
Qualifications of the Field Supervisor and Mentor	14
General Expectations of the Practicum Student	15
Expectations of the Faculty Director	17
Expectations About Compensation	17
Expectations About Housing	17
Addendum E – Mentoring Articles	18
Do’s and Don’ts With Your Intern	18
Mentoring That Matters	20

Welcome

We are glad that you are interested in investing in the learning and growth of a Saint Louis Christian College (SLCC) Practicum student. As a mentor, you become a partner with SLCC in the education and training of ministry students.

It is important that you understand what the Practicum at SLCC is and what it is not. It is a relationship between God, the mentor, and the college in which we all partner to shape and train a student to be a servant-leader for the kingdom of God. A SLCC Practicum is not a chance for a church to get some cheap ministry help. Additionally, it is not merely hands-on experience for a student. It is a ministry of supervising, coaching, mentoring, and molding young men and women to be servant-leaders for Christ Jesus.

Being a mentor takes a willingness to invest time and energy into the life of a student – leading, providing feedback, coaching, encouraging, correcting, and helping the student become better equipped for becoming an effective servant-leader. Mentoring is a unique opportunity where you can have a tremendous impact on an individual! If you have the time and heart to invest yourself in this way, we invite you to become a partner with us in the endeavor to raise up leadership for the Church of our God.

The Objectives of the Practicum

Unfortunately, many have entered church ministry with little or no experience whatsoever. One common scenario is for the new minister to arrive at their first ministry with a lot of head knowledge and zeal, yet with little direction. Thus, many begin and find themselves saying, “No what?” Our prayer is that the mentoring experience provided during the Practicum will become a significant tool of preparation for those who plan to serve the Church.

Utilization and Fine Tuning of Gifts & Talents

We hope you’ll help our student refine (or even discover) his/her gifts by placing them in meaningful situations which will further their unique gift set.

Character Development

A gifted leader with little integrity will not serve the kingdom of God well. We hope you’ll spend significant time helping the student understand how imperative character development is in the life of the Christian servant.

Learning Through Reflection

We see the Practicum as an extension of the classroom; it is a learning activity. To learn from experience the student needs to ask good questions, seek and pay attention to feedback, and practice self-evaluation. We hope you’ll foster a reflective nature in our student.

Experiencing the Relational Side of Ministry

Ministry happens in relationships, such as: pastoral visits (home, hospital, etc.), counseling sessions (conflict resolution, marital issues, etc.), staff meetings (Board, elders, committees, etc.), and just general interaction with the people in a given context. We hope you’ll expose our student to a variety of situations so that they can understand that ministry does not happen behind their laptop.

Significant Ministry Responsibility

At some point during the Practicum experience, we want the student to have experience where the outcome depends on their leadership. We hope you’ll give them some responsibility where they have to lead and make it happen!

Practicum “At a Glance”

Our Mission Statement

“Saint Louis Christian College pursues excellence in the Word and develops servant leaders for urban, suburban, rural and global ministry.”

Saint Louis Christian College exists to prepare servant leaders for Christ and His church. As a result, the internship process (which we refer to as “Practicum”) is an important component in the institution's educational process as we seek to produce students who are not just good scribes, but rather who are knowledgeable and capable leaders. The Practicum course is designed to provide students with an intensive ministry experience by which they deepen their commitment to serving Christ, sharpen basic ministry skills, and develop their expertise in a specific ministry area.

Definitions

- The Faculty Director is the Professor of the Practicum course.
- The Field Supervisor is the person overseeing the student’s 200 hours of service.
- The Mentor is the person the student will meet with 8-10 times.

Snapshot of Requirements

- The Field Supervisor will assist the student in writing a learning covenant (Addendum A) which consists of various learning experiences for the student. The learning covenant is ultimately to be approved by the Faculty Director.
- The student must complete 200 hours of service under the Field Supervisor’s direction.
- Once the student completes the 200 hours, the Field Supervisor will complete an evaluation (Addendum B) and mail to:
Saint Louis Christian College
1360 Grandview Drive
Florissant, MO 63033
Attn: Prof. Scott Womble / Practicum
- The Mentor will meet with the student for a minimum of 8-10 sessions.
- The Mentor will assign the student a book for discussion.
- Once the mentoring sessions are completed, the Mentor will complete an evaluation (Addendum C) and mail to the address provided above.

Professor Scott Womble
Faculty Director of Practicum
swomble@slconline.edu
314.837.6777 ext. 1420

What the Student Needs From You

Orientation

It helps the student get up to speed much more quickly if you provide some sort of orientation. A good orientation helps them become part of the team. Introduce them to the history of the church/organization, its mission, vision and core values. Help them get to know co-workers and understand relationships and protocol. Familiarize them with the regular calendar that impacts their schedule. Also, orient them to financial procedures such as: reimbursement for expenses, buying supplies, etc.

Time

The most important thing you can give to your interns is time. We hope you'll meet with them, at least, on a bi-weekly basis. Much of what the student will learn will come from being with you, watching you and picking your brain. In addition to meeting with on the job, we hope you'll take a personal interest in them away from work.

Feedback

Provide honest feedback in your meetings with the intern. Let them know what you've appreciated in their work and tell them what type of growth you have seen. Offer correction and constructive criticism but also remember to be an encourager.

Mentoring

As young men and women strive to be Christ-like, they often long for a mentor to take them under their wing and assist them in becoming the person they long to be. You can be a key caring role model in the life of your intern.

Being an effective mentor often means asking more questions than giving answers. You want to help them think through issues. You want to prod them to wrestle with the unexamined assumptions underlying what they do. It is through this thinking process that their ministry-identity is formed. You serve as a coach and a guide.

What the College Needs From You

Communication

We invite you to communicate with us as often as necessary – to ask questions, to clarify procedures, to seek guidance with issues. This communication is especially necessary if you have concerns about the student. We want you to communicate these to us before they become a crisis, so that we can work together towards a best possible solution.

Evaluation

We need you to evaluate the growth and development of our student. There is both a mid-term and final evaluation for you to complete. We expect that you will discuss these evaluations with the intern and use them as an opportunity for their growth.

Addendum A - Practicum Learning Covenant

Student:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Major:

Field Supervisor:

Name and Position:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Location:

Church/Organization Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email/Website:

Chosen Learning Experiences

- The student must work on 70% of the learning experiences provided in the Student Handbook. The student and the Field Supervisor will work together to decide which learning experiences are appropriate.
- The Field Supervisor may suggest 1-2 learning experiences which are not present in the Student Handbook. We recognize that a mentor brings unique strengths and that each church/ministry offers unique ministry opportunities. We look forward to your input as you help us create a positive practicum experience for the student. If you want to add 1-2 learning experiences, please petition the Faculty Director for approval.

- Below please write the following:

1. MAJOR: _____

2. Learning Experience #'s (e.g., 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10) _____

3. Additional Learning Experiences provided by Field Supervisor:

a. _____

b. _____

Schedule

Dates for Internship:

Beginning Date: _____ Ending Date: _____

PROJECTED MID-TERM DATE: _____

Compensation and Housing

Will the student receive compensation? If so, please describe it below.

Signatures

Both the student and Field Supervisor have reviewed the Practicum Syllabus, Student Handbook and Supervisor/Mentor Handbook.

The student will not be allowed to log hours for the practicum until the covenant is approved by the Faculty Director and signed by all three parties.

Student _____ Date _____

Field Supervisor _____ Date _____

Faculty Director _____ Date _____

Addendum B – Field Supervisor Evaluation Form

The **student** should complete Section 1, sign the release, and turn it over to the Field Supervisor.

The **Field Supervisor** should complete Section 2 and return it to:

Saint Louis Christian College
1360 Grandview Dr.
Florissant, MO 63033
Prof. Scott Womble / Practicum

Section 1 - to be completed and signed by the student

Name of Practicum Student: _____

Name of Faculty Director: _____

Name of Field Supervisor: _____

___ (check if applicable) I have waived my right of access to the information included on this form.

Student's Signature _____ Date ___/___/___

Section 2 - to be completed by the Field Supervisor

Please rate the intern in the following areas circling the number most appropriate to the performance level (1 = low; 10 = high)

	<u>Low</u>										<u>High</u>									
1. Preparation for assigned tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
2. Personal Positive Attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
3. Punctuality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
4. Dependability (ability to complete a task)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
5. Cooperation (with supervisor(s))	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										

	<u>Low</u>										<u>High</u>
6. Quality of work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
7. Ability to take constructive criticism and respond in an appropriate manner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
8. Evidence of a "servant's heart"	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
9. Potential for vocational leadership ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
10. Awareness of his/her gifts/abilities in the place of ministry in the service of Christ's church	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11. Are there any aspects of the intern's work which merit particular commendation?											

12. Are there any aspects which bring particular concerns?

13. Does the student show evidence of having concern for the lost?

14. If given the opportunity, would you hire this student?

Signature of Evaluator: _____ Date ____/____/____

Please indicate whether it is permissible, or not, for the Faculty Director to give the Practicum Student a copy of this evaluation.

YES

NO

Addendum C –Mentor Evaluation Form

The **student** should complete Section 1, sign the release, and turn it over to the Mentor.

The **Mentor** should complete Section 2 and return it to:

Saint Louis Christian College
1360 Grandview Dr.
Florissant, MO 63033
Prof. Scott Womble / Practicum

Section 1 - to be completed and signed by the student

Name of Practicum Student: _____

Name of Faculty Director: _____

Name of Mentor: _____

____ (check if applicable) I have waived my right of access to the information included on this form.

Student's Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Section 2 - to be completed by the Mentor

Please rate the intern in the following areas circling the number most appropriate to the performance level (1 = low; 10 = high)

	<u>Low</u>										<u>High</u>									
1. Punctuality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
2. Positive attitude toward mentoring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
3. Ability to take advice and/or criticism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
4. Evidence of a "servant's heart"	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
5. Potential for vocational leadership ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
6. Ability to articulate a philosophy of ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										

- | | <u>Low</u> | <u>High</u> |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
| 7. Did student learn from the internship? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| 8. Does student have goals for professional development after the completion of college? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| 9. Did student complete tasks you have asked of him/her? (e.g., read and discuss a book) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| 10. Awareness of his/her gifts/abilities in the place of ministry in the service of Christ's church | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| 11. In what ways does this student impress you? What positive traits does he/she demonstrate? | | |

12. Do you have any concerns about this student?

13. Does the student show evidence of having concern for the lost?

14. If given the opportunity, would you hire this student?

Signature of Evaluator: _____ Date ____/____/____

Please indicate whether it is permissible, or not, for the Faculty Director to give the Practicum Student a copy of this evaluation.

YES

NO

Addendum D – Introductory Material to Field Supervisors & Mentors

The Role of the Practicum

When a student arrives on our campus, we have a plan for him/her. Whether the student knows it or not, he or she is placed in a program that was designed to prepare students for this Practicum. From his/her first semester, each student is required to participate in the Ministry Advancement Program (MAP). As a freshman, the student may help out with youth activities at an area church or work in a food pantry in the city of Saint Louis. At the same time, they are receiving valuable training in class and being challenged spiritually in chapel and in small groups. We expect them to move through the process of helping, doing, and then leading while they are here. Their progress in MAP is carefully monitored. Upper classmen are expected to demonstrate leadership as they near the time of their Practicum. While every student is at a different stage in his or her preparation for ministry, all of them must present themselves as leaders with a potential to succeed. Ministry, as you know, is so much more than knowing how to do things. It is something that a person is, not something that a person does. We do not, however, expect them to be fully prepared leaders. The implicit understanding of an “intern” is that he/she is just that, an intern. If students had all the experiences and skills that they needed, they would not need an internship! This internship, or Practicum as we call it, is one of the final pieces in the student’s preparation for ministry.

Expectations of Field Supervisors and Mentors

You, as the Field Supervisor and/or Mentor, are the key link between the Practicum student and ministry. Your willingness to participate in this process is an indication that you see the bigger, kingdom picture of ministry. In the past, internships sometimes manifested themselves as an inexpensive way to have a youth minister or an education minister. Today, this cannot be the case. Today’s leader-in-training needs real experience under the mentoring of an experienced, godly guide. Thank you for being willing to lead a student through some of the final steps of ministry preparation. I would like to personally invite you to partner with us in the preparation of future leaders in the following ways.

1. **Spend real time with them.** One former student notes that after his mentor went on to receive his reward in heaven, his family found his notes on the conversations that he had with his intern. What he honestly thought were random, unplanned conversations in the car or at the ice cream shop were planned discussions on topics that were essential to the intern’s future ministry. What an impact that made! Realize that you can reach into the future through this student.
2. **Pray regularly for and with the intern.** Mentoring is a very spiritual activity. Part of your role is to model spiritual maturity and to intercede in prayer for your intern. He/She is, at least for a time, your disciple.

3. **Help the student fulfill his or her requirements.** Please take the time to familiarize yourself with all of the material in the student's section of this manual. As the student begins to develop a plan with you concerning his/her activities during the internship, we will expect them to develop a "Learning Covenant." That covenant is fully explained to the student as a part of the orientation process and is found in this manual. While it is the student's responsibility to understand how the covenant should be written and formatted, he or she will need your help in knowing what the major activities of their Practicum will be.
4. **Submit the evaluation forms.** Please submit the evaluation forms, which are included in this manual. The student has signed a release stating that he or she has waived the right to see the evaluation form unless you give your permission. Please ensure that they have completed and signed Section A of the forms that can be filled out by hand and mailed.
5. **Set clear parameters for them.** Can they use the telephone for personal calls? Can they use office equipment for personal use? Do you want them to have a curfew? We counsel students to either use their cell phone or get a phone card for the purpose of making personal calls. Help them to know the guidelines of the household where they are staying and the ministry where they are serving. Many times small issues that arise are aggravated by the student not knowing what is expected of him or her.
6. **Contact the Faculty Director immediately if there is any type of concern.** We seldom have problems with our interns. They cannot participate in an internship if they are not in good academic and social standing with the college. What that means is that they must be good students and behave themselves while they are here on campus. We will not send out any student that is having difficulties behaving himself or herself just because he or she needs an internship to graduate. However, things can happen. Problems can occur. You may want to refer to the "Code of Conduct" that each student has signed prior to going on an internship. We expect each student to completely follow the conduct code. If there is any concern, please contact the Faculty Director immediately (this is usually the professor who teaches the Practicum course in which the student is enrolled). You will be provided with an email address and telephone number where you can contact the Faculty Director. Please do not hesitate to do so. We want to help resolve any situation that may arise. However, we cannot help if we don't know that there is an issue. We require the students to set up an email address to allow us to contact them quickly. We try to be in regular contact with them to keep up with their progress. If we get the impression that there is a situation that needs some attention, we will get in contact with you.

Qualifications of Field Supervisors and Mentors

We do occasionally make exceptions to these guidelines, but only due to unique circumstances.

1. **We like the Field Supervisor and Mentor to have demonstrated strong Christian leadership qualities during his or her ministry.** While this is a subjective issue, we recognize that you are going to have a lasting impact on how the intern understands ministry. The Christ-like lifestyle of the Field Supervisor and Mentor will provide the student with a framework on which to continue to build his or her own spiritual character.
2. **We would like the Field Supervisor and Mentor to have at least five years of experience in the area where the intern is working.** Further, we like the intern to not be the only person in a given area of ministry specialization. For example, we are uncomfortable sending a youth ministry intern to a church that does not already have a youth minister.
3. **We like the Field Supervisor and Mentor to have participated in some type of formal preparation for ministry.** Normally, we ask that the Field Supervisor have at least a bachelor's degree in a ministry related field or another area of study that prepared the mentor for service. Due to the long distances that many of our students travel to serve, we do not require a formal training for our Field Supervisors.

General Expectations of the Practicum Student

While the expectations that the college has for the intern are fully described in the student section of this manual, below is a general summary of what we expect.

1. **Each student understands that we expect him or her to be a Christ-like example** to all with whom he or she comes into contact with during the internship. Each intern must sign a "Conduct Code" prior to being allowed participation in an internship. A copy of the code is contained in this document. Saint Louis Christian College holds its interns to the highest standards of godliness and holy living.
2. **Each student is to be a blessing to the ministry where he or she serves.** This concept includes small, but important, issues like appropriate dress and punctuality. It also includes larger issues like a strong, cooperative work ethic and a desire to serve.
3. **Each student is to be a good guest.** This includes keeping his or her living area clean and not forgetting the kindness of the host ministry to open up their ministry, homes, and lives to the student.
4. **Each student is expected to have a real, measurable learning experience while he or she is there.** The Learning Covenant will be measured against the student's Log and Reflective Essay. That is one of the motivations to having an hour-based program. The students must complete the correct amount of hours in order to receive credit for the Practicum (200 hours).

Expectations of the Faculty Director

Under normal circumstances, the Practicum professor serves as the Faculty Director for students participating in a Practicum at Saint Louis Christian College. If time constraints do not permit this to be the case, another faculty member will fulfill the role of Faculty Director.

1. **The Faculty Director is expected to orient the student** to the parameters and requirements of the Practicum Program. This is normally accomplished during a formal orientation program.
2. **The Faculty Director is also required to orient the Field Supervisor and Mentor** to the parameters and requirements of the Practicum Program. This is normally accomplished through this manual, communication directly with the Field Mentor, communication through the student, and supplying resources and information to the Field Mentor.
3. **The Faculty Director is expected to communicate regularly** with the student, the Field Supervisor, and the Mentor. Email will be the primary means this is accomplished.
4. **The Faculty Director is expected to play an intermediary role in resolving any conflict** involving the intern and the ministry. As is described earlier in this document, we want to play a role in the resolving of any issues that arise. We do not want either the Field Supervisor, the Mentor or the student to feel that he or she needs to deal with any issue on his or her own.
5. **The Faculty Director serves as the representative of the Faculty.** It is his or her job to ensure that all of the requirements are being met as the student progresses through the internship. It is also his or her job to assess all of the student's work and assign a grade for the Practicum. Your evaluation of the student will be much appreciated and taken into account when the student is assigned a grade for the Practicum. The grading parameters are fully explained on the Final Evaluation form.

Expectations About Compensation

We deeply appreciate your ministry being willing to host an intern from Saint Louis Christian College. Many of you are serving in ministries that cannot possibly give financial help to the student. As a matter of fact, the student might have had to raise support to work with you. We are very comfortable with that as long as everyone involved understands that up front.

However, we are often asked how much a student intern should be given as a "love offering" or a "stipend." We, along with the students, appreciate any help that your ministry might be able to give the student to help him/her cover the expenses of the internship and the cost of his or her education. How much to give a student is hard to determine and the cost that each student incurs varies according to his or her situation. However, if you are able to help your intern financially, a good starting place is to ask the

student to calculate the amount that it will cost him/her for a semester of college if the intern will be with you for a period less than six months. You should ask them to calculate the cost for two semesters of college if you will host the intern for over six months. If you need any more information or have any questions, please feel free to consult with the Faculty Director.

Expectations About Housing

We realize that housing is possibly one of the more difficult issues for some ministries to deal with when they are considering hosting an intern. We also realize that it may be necessary to ask the intern to reside at more than one place during the period of his or her internship. The students understand that and are willing to be flexible and cooperative.

However, it is our recommendation that the intern's housing be organized, if possible, within the following guidelines. We would like the intern to be able to stay in one place for as long as possible, for the entire period of the internship if that is an option. We would also like the housing to be in a safe setting that is reasonably close to where most of his or her activities will take place. We would like the intern to be able to enjoy a little privacy to allow for some time alone to read or relax. In short, we would like them to have a living space that would be acceptable to you if your son or daughter planned to live there.

Early communication concerning housing plans and living arrangements will help everything to go smoothly upon the intern's arrival. If you need any more information or have any questions, please feel free to consult with the Faculty Director.

Addendum E – Mentoring Articles

Do's and Don'ts With Your Intern

By Kenneth Gosnell

Christian Standard, Vol.134, # 5, January 31, 1999

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As summer approaches, many churches prepare to bring an intern on staff. My summer internships were delightful experiences that helped me to achieve a deeper understanding of the church and ministry. I found some activities very helpful, but I found others very discouraging. With most Bible colleges requiring internships for students to graduate, it is essential that churches and ministers know how to make these internships as effective as possible. I would like to suggest some guidelines to follow.

Things to Do

1. Do pray for and with your intern every day
2. Do give your intern responsibility and authority that fits his job.
3. Do get your intern in front of the congregation as soon as possible. (This gives the congregation a chance to see the person and get to know him or her more quickly).
4. Do get your intern in front of the church as often as possible.
5. Do have a schedule of responsibilities to send to the intern a month or two before the arrangement begins.
6. Do give your intern goals to accomplish.
7. Do give your intern time off.
8. Do treat your intern as an equal in ministry.
9. Do give the intern some office hours to keep.
10. Do ask your intern to evaluate the programs of the church.
11. Do read and ask questions about the evaluation.
12. Do have an office ready when the intern arrives. (Ideally with desk, computer, office supplies, bookshelves, etc).
13. Do have a schedule of all meals for your intern.
14. Do give your intern a covenant and reasonable pay. (Remember he or she is paying for college).
15. Do develop a relationship with your intern. (Spend time together).

Things Not to Do

1. Don't just give your intern jobs that no one else wants to do.
2. Don't hide the problems of the church from your intern.
3. Don't make your intern pay for meals required on trips.
4. Don't move your intern from house to house. Instead find a family with the gift of hospitality and the space to house the person.
5. Don't take your intern for granted or have unreasonable expectations.
6. Don't stick your intern with just one group in the church.

7. Don't volunteer your intern for jobs without asking him or her.
8. Don't neglect getting your intern out with people. (Make sure that at least Sunday afternoon meals are with different families in the church).
9. Don't be negative about the church to the intern.
10. Don't be afraid to share your evaluation of the intern with the intern.
11. Don't forget to teach the intern various aspects of the ministry.
12. Don't forget to show your intern how to use office equipment and work with the secretary.
13. Don't forget to encourage the intern to finish school and go into the ministry.
14. Don't keep the intern just to your church. (Let the person share with some of the other churches in the area).
15. Don't forget to learn from the intern what is new and being taught in college.

Mentoring that Matters

Reviving an ancient teaching method that adds life to ministry

By Fred Smith

Leadership, Vol. 20, # 1, Winter 1999

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Mentoring may seem new, but actually it is one of the oldest and best methods of learning. In times before degrees were mandatory, the mentoring system was the accepted one, not only in manual skills but in the professions, such as medicine and law.

Ray Stedman, who pastored Peninsula Bible Church in California for many years, believed in and practiced the apprentice method. He always had a few young men on staff who would travel with him; together they would study, observe, and delineate the scriptural principles of life. These mentorees saw how the work was done and how to apply their learning in practical ways.

As we look at Scripture, we immediately think of Paul and Timothy. From the text I don't know how much technical skill Paul gave him as a missionary, but we do know Paul was an excellent role model and sponsor. He let Timothy observe him at work. Paul promoted him to the churches.

The responsibility of the mentor is to be open, real, and personify consistently who he is so the young person receives a clear, consistent signal. The real responsibility is on the young person to absorb and to observe correctly.

Increasingly churches are starting mentoring programs. A common mistake is that older men visit with younger men without an agenda, eventually simply becoming Bible study or prayer times. There are excellent activities, but they are not mentoring.

Mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between a mentor and mentoree for the specific and definable development of a skill or an art. One of my favorite mentoring stories is the young pianist who came to Leonard Bernstein and asked to be mentored by him. Bernstein said, "Tell me what you want to do and I will tell you whether or not you're doing it."

When you analyze this, you realize Bernstein's deep understanding of mentoring. The young man initiated the contact, he had a specific request, and he made the request of an authority-not that he might get as rich as a concert pianist or famous like Bernstein, but that he might become a better pianist.

Bernstein essentially said to the young man, "You're responsible for your playing and your practice. The one thing you can't do is hear yourself as a great pianist hears you. That I can do and will do for you."

The study of mentoring can be organized but not the application. Effective mentoring has no set formula. It's a living relationship and progresses in fits and starts.

Making a Good Match

It is not difficult to make a list of desired characteristics in a mentor. However, like characteristics of a leader, they are in combination and mix, not equally balanced qualities. Each of these ingredients, however, in some degree should be in a mentor:

1. Mentor and mentoree must share a compatible philosophy. Our goals and methods are really an expression of our philosophy. If the goal is to be Christian, then the philosophy must be built on divine principles. To me, wisdom is the knowledge and application of scriptural principles, not the citing of verse or telling of stories, but the application of the principles.

For instance, one biblical principle is “God will not do for you what you can do for yourself, nor will he let you do for yourself what only he can do.”

It’s wrong to pray for a miracle when God has given us the mentality, opportunity, and facilities to accomplish what we should do. To ask for a miracle is to ask God to be redundant. But he will not let us do for ourselves what only he can do. For example, he will not let us gain our salvation by works; it is by his grace.

On the other hand, if the goal is based on humanistic values, then it will be cultural, not Christian. Human philosophy often exploits our greed and selfishness. Human philosophy promotes self-love and self-aggrandizement. Recently a young man came to me asking that I help him “make a million dollars.” That was his life’s goal. He has a materialistic, humanistic philosophy.

I told him that we did not agree on philosophy; therefore I would not be a good mentor for him.

2. The mentor should be knowledgeable in the subject and objective in his criticism. The mentor who says what the other wants to hear is irresponsible. He should not counsel in matters in which he is not expert or pass judgment in subjects beyond his limitation.

It is important the mentor on occasion say, “I don’t know. I’ve had no experience with that.” It is good when he has a broad network of knowledgeable friends who might be helpful on such an occasion.

Once a young, brash president of a growing corporation was being dangerously extravagant. Though I was on the board, he wasn’t accepting my authority on the subject. I got him an appointment with the CEO of a major corporation, who successfully warned him and possibly saved the company.

3. The mentor must genuinely believe in the potential of the mentoree A mentor cannot do serious thinking about the needs of the learner or spend the necessary time without believing in that person’s potential. A mentor isn’t doing what he’s doing to be a nice guy. There may be times when the learner loses confidence in himself, particularly after a failure, and he will need the mentor to restore his confidence.

I had breakfast with a young executive in Dallas, and I asked him to tell me his story. He said, “Until early in my twenties. I amounted to nothing. I think that was due to the fact I was raised in a family that believed it was wrong to say anything good about anyone that might stir up their pride. I felt there was nothing special about me until my Sunday school teacher put his arm around my shoulders and said, ‘I believe in you.’”

Gradually this young man began to believe in himself. From that time, he started to climb the executive ladder.

4. *A good mentor helps define the vision, the goal, and the plan.* So many young people I talk to have several options for their life, and they are not equipped to choose the one. They hesitate at the thought of giving up the others.

Recently I had lunch with a young man who graduated from a prestigious European university with high marks and told me he had been “tested genius in thirteen areas.” Yet he had done nothing, though in his early thirties. I was talking to another man in the same general circumstances, and I said, “You could have married six or eight young women but you chose one. You will have to do the same with your goal.”

Choosing a specific goal is the key to doing many other activities. The goal defines the discipline, creates the energy, and gives the measure of progress.

Clarifying the goal is a crucial step. It controls so many other elements. I try to find whether the individual’s goal is formed by outside influences or internal. Is his accomplishment to please or impress others or to satisfy himself? The image of success has become so prevalent in our society, I want to know what gives him his deepest satisfaction. What, to him, has meaning? What does he do easily? What does he learn quickly and remember clearly? Is the goal realistic, considering his talent, opportunities, and facilities?

Sometimes a person will say, “I know where I want to go, but I don’t know how to get there.” I have found it much easier to work out the map once you know the destination. Be sure the plan is as simple as it can be. Elaborate plans seldom get carried out. Too often, complicated plans are a subconscious attempt to avoid doing.

Paul J. Meyer, creator of Sales Motivation Institute, spent the day with me when he was a young salesman going over the four-step program he had for his life. I was so impressed I asked him for a copy, and he gave me the original, written on a piece of yellow paper, which I still have. In our original conversation, he said that after you set the specific goal, you work the plan, then forget the goal, and develop enthusiasm for the plan, knowing if you work the plan you will reach the goal.

5. The chemistry must be good. The first evidence of this is clear communication. Each must clearly and easily understand the other. Before I start to work with someone, I will check this by talking a few minutes and then ask the person to repeat what I've said. Sometimes I'm amazed at what I hear. It's difficult to work well together unless each communicates well with the other.

Intuition, a feeling of the spirit of each other, is also important. When our spirits are in harmony, then we can work until our communications are clear. We won't jump to conclusions or get carried off into prejudices. I find this particularly true in working between races.

Communication, to me, is understanding, not agreement. I hear people say that the problem is a lack of communication when it may be genuine difference of opinion. No amount of communication will change that.

6. The mentor needs the experience and originality to develop options rather than decisions. Some individuals with whom I work initially become frustrated that I will not give them advice but, rather, options from which they can choose.

If I give advice, then I'm taking over their responsibility for their decision-making, and that is not my function. Furthermore, how a decision is carried out is as important as the decision, and the mentor can't control the carrying out.

The mentor must never take over the decision-making responsibility for the individual. A good mentor is not a quick-fix artist.

7. The mentor must be able to commit to a person and to a situation. Once I was involved in a land development requiring large amounts of money from a New England bank. The loan officer was careful in exploring all the details. He explained, "Don't think I'm being too careful. I don't want to get you halfway across the river." When we commit to be a mentor, we commit to taking the person all the way across. That will take time and thinking. I must be willing to take a phone call any time it comes from a mentoree in stress.

8. The mentor must be given permission to hold the mentoree accountable. The mentoree must give this responsibility to the mentor. This helps keep the mentoree from becoming resentful or quietly rebellious or hostile.

I tell one of my mentorees that accountability is like a tail on the kite-it keeps things from darting around. Accountability is not control. In mentoring it is pointing out objectively what is happening and asking if that is what the mentoree wants. At no time should the mentor take over control of the other's life. The mentor is a counselor, not a boss.

Recently I stopped working with a young man because he had been dishonest about his financial situation. He admitted he was in debt but said that was his wife's fault, which he couldn't control. I couldn't condone his rationalizing.

A Lifelong Joy

My favorite title is "mentor." Zig Ziglar flattered me, after years of publicly referring to me as his mentor, by dedicating his book *Over the Top* to me. I shouldn't repeat it, but since I'm over the hill rather than over the top, here is what he wrote:

"To my friend and mentor Fred Smith, Sr., who is fun and inspiring. He is also the wisest and most effective teacher I've ever had."

I hope you sense the seriousness and joy I feel in mentoring.

What's a Protégé to Do?

Great teachers want to find great students. With my mentors I tried to be a good student. That entailed several things:

Admit your ignorance. I never tried to impress a mentor with my knowledge. I always exposed my ignorance. To hide ignorance from a teacher is as foolish as hiding your sickness from a doctor. The wise person is always more aware of his ignorance than his knowledge.

Dr. Walter Hearn, a biochemist at Yale University, surprised me once by saying, "Fred, every night when you go to bed you ought to be more ignorant than you were when you woke up." I took this as facetious until he explained that if I considered my knowledge as a balloon and every day that balloon increased in size, it touched more and more ignorance on the periphery.

Therefore, my knowledge brought me into contact with my greater ignorance. The arrogant are proud of their knowledge; the humble are acquainted with their ignorance.

Work to ask the right questions. Right questions come from thought, analysis, and discernment. Idle or careless questions are demeaning to the mentor. There's power in a good question.

Recently a young professor told me how he asked a prominent man two questions following an award program, and the man disregarded all those trying to shake his hand and concentrated on answering only those two questions.

Do your homework. With my two mentors, I never called them unless I had written down what I wanted to talk to them about. Writing out your questions beforehand is helpful to minimize verbiage.

When we met I had organized my questions; I knew it was not a social situation. If we later wanted to spend some social time, that would be up to them, not to me. I never walked into their office and sat down until I was invited to sit down. They had to know I was not going to waste their time.

Never try to "use" your mentor. A person with a well-known mentor can be tempted to refer to him in ways that really use him, particularly in quoting him out of context. A mentor is for progress, not ego satisfaction.

A good student grows. Progress is the pay the student gives the mentor. Currently I spend at least 50 percent of my time mentoring the talented individuals. I make no charge. But I get amply paid by the vicarious accomplishment of these individuals.

—Fred Smith

Signs of Fruitful Mentoring

To measure a mentoring relationship, look for these characteristics:

Trust and confidence. All the cards are on the table. Anything given in confidence should be held in confidence.

Unvarnished truth. We should come to the place in the relationship where we can be direct. My two great mentors never had to preface the truth or hedge their statements with me.

Climbs and plateaus. We progress by climbing, then plateauing for assimilation, then climbing again, plateauing again—repeating the process as long as we live. Don't stop when you reach a comfortable plateau.

Character development. The mentor teaches, but the Spirit changes character. Although I've been mentoring actively for over 40 years, I cannot claim any success in improving character in adults. Character improves only through spiritual experience.

Mentoree initiation. The mentoree is responsible for all contact. He controls the continuation of the relationship. Sometimes a mentoring relationship becomes non-productive and should end. I accept this as normal.

Joy in the doing. A mentor has accomplished great good when he has taught the individual joy of accomplishment. That has become so much a part of my life that when I get low, I immediately start to do something that I feel will be worthwhile. The joy of living returns.

—Fred Smith