

Mentor Agreement

As members of the Body of Christ, it is our greatest joy and honor to bring others to Jesus Christ and his Church. Consider the key person(s) in your life who introduced you to the heart of the faith. As a small group mentor, you have the opportunity to become a bridge to the Truth of the Gospel for a small group of high school teenagers. As Jesus invested so deeply in a few who later went out and changed the world, this too is our hope: to set the world on fire for Christ and to form intentional disciples who “Live Jesus” each day well, growing in their love for God and striving for holiness for the rest of their lives.

COMMITMENT TO HOLINESS

- **True Discernment**
 - While we are all called to be disciples of Jesus Christ and bring others to Him, we are called to do so in many different ways. Spiritual mentors for teenagers must prayerfully discern whether they are being called by Christ to serve the church in *this* way at *this* time.
 - Can you practically make this work? (time required for small group gatherings, mentor community gatherings, one on ones, planning, personal discipleship, etc)
 - Do you possess the spiritual charisms to disciple teenagers?
 - How might God be inviting you to further growth in and through this role?
- **Seeking Sainthood**
 - Spiritual mentors are expected to follow Christ with zeal. They should be authentic witnesses to the Catholic faith. Their relationship with God should reach far beyond the Church's Sunday Mass obligation. Every mentor should intentionally make time each day to deepen his or her relationship with Christ, and that may look different for each person. At the same time, while mentors faithfully strive to live a life worth imitating, it's recognized that we are all sinners. Mentors are not expected to be perfect, but rather Saints in the making.
- **Regular Sacramental Participation**
 - Spiritual mentors have a commitment to receive Christ and His graces through the Eucharist as often as they can, as well as the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least twice a year. The more frequently we receive His Grace and Him incarnate, the better our ability to co-partner with Him in the salvation of souls.
- **Catholic Church Teaching**
 - Spiritual mentors accept Catholic Church teaching and agree to teach according to it, especially in regard to human sexuality, sobriety, and sanctity of life. Additionally, it is vital for mentors to continually educate themselves. While no one is expected to have all of the answers, it is important for mentors to have a healthy habit of seeking out guidance from reliable Catholic sources.
- **Guided by the Spirit**
 - As sons and daughters of Christ, we are committed to be led by the guidance of the Spirit of Christ. The salvation of souls is *His* mission. We are blessed to be called to it. Spiritual mentors commit to turn to Him in every step of the journey. This includes...
 - Discerning what to do with group meeting time.
 - Handling situations with group members.
 - Interceding and fasting for each student's growth outside of group time.
 - Giving all the glory to God and not their school, their parish, or themselves.

COMMITMENT TO GROUP MEMBERS

- **Small Group Setting**
 - Every small group is made up of 3-6 teenagers, preferably of the same grade and gender. Mentees are usually already friends before they begin as a small group. Groups will have 1-2 adult mentors. School based groups are recommended to meet once a week between 60-90 minutes. Parish based groups are recommended to meet twice a month for 90-120 minutes at a minimum, and weekly if possible.

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- Small Group Preparation

- Mentors are expected to take intentional time to pray for each group member and be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At a minimum, this should be a scheduled and intentional time of prayer once a week.
- Food and drinks should be offered if the meeting is not at a place where members can purchase their own, like a coffee shop. Radical hospitality is key in creating an environment of trust, transparency, and openness. Members may work out a rotating schedule to provide hospitality as an option. Check with your location's small group coordinator to see if there is any room in the ministry budget to help with this (e.g. \$150 per group per year).

- Small Group Format

- All meetings are organized in the following format: **pray, connect, discuss, commit.**
 - **Pray** - Spend the first 5-15 minutes in prayer. Teach them how to pray like you pray, utilizing the prayers and spirituality that you use in your personal relationship with God.
 - **Connect** - Check in with your group at the beginning of the meeting. Utilize this step to build authentic relationships with them. Ask good "connect" questions. Utilize the Live Jesus Ministries Starter & Going Deeper question lists. Occasionally do a general check in with them: highs(Peaks), lows(Pits), and prayer intentions(Prayers).
 - **Discuss** - Build out content, customized to address the most basic needs of the teenagers in your group. Dive into the Gospels, ask faith based questions, solicit questions from them, listen, practice prayer with them, build virtuous habits, use the Live Jesus Ministries(LJM) resources and curricula, live the Christian lifestyle with them.
 - **Commit** - Look to bring the meeting's discussion into their daily lives and create a commitment together until the next meeting. Let the commitment be small, attainable, and measurable. Break big goals into smaller goals. Make sure there is accountability.
- Never be in haste and practice patience in your responses. Sometimes it's better to wait a couple meetings before responding to something said. Pray in those moments for guidance from the Holy Spirit on what you should do.

- Small Group Discipleship Resources

Each small group should discern beginning by utilizing the Live Jesus Ministries Starter Kit, which is rooted in building up relationships and assessing where you should start with your group. Mentors are to accompany teens as they journey through different thresholds of conversion, while helping them grow in the following four pillars of formation.

- **Thresholds of Conversion**
 - Initial Trust - Spiritual Curiosity - Spiritual Openness - Spiritual Seeking - Intentional Discipleship
- **Four Pillars of Formation**
 - Human - Spiritual - Intellectual - Pastoral

While utilizing the starter kit or during the relationship building period following, mentors may be able to identify what **Thresholds of Conversion & Pillars of Formation** their teens are at. Once meaningful relationships are built and the thresholds of conversion/pillars of formation are identified in their teens, mentors can begin customizing content based on the lowest Threshold of Conversion and Pillar of Formation identified in the group (e.g Initial Trust & Human Formation). Mentors are to utilize their coordinators to help build appropriate content to disciple their teens, meeting their most basic needs.

- Fellowship / Additional Opportunities

- Groups should look to participate in fellowship opportunities or faith experiences together throughout the year.
 - Examples: Catholic Summer Camp, Retreats, Service Opportunity, Live Jesus Youth Night, Sacraments, works of mercy, praying the rosary, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, etc.

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- Parent / Guardian Contact

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states in article 2225, "Parents have the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children." Mentors must realize that they are working together with parents in forming their children, not taking their place. Transparency is vital.

- Parents must sign a permission form allowing their child to meet for Small Group Discipleship.
- Coordinators & mentors are to send introduction emails and set up a *start up session* with parents before a new small group ever meets.
- Mentors are to send updates to parents after every meeting.
- If a one on one meeting between a teen and adult mentor is necessary, mentors are to communicate to parents in advance, receive their permission in writing, and notify the coordinator of the date, time, and location of the meeting.
- All serious issues should be discussed with parents.

COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

- Safe Environment Training.
 - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) sanctions different courses for the protection of youth. The Diocese of Toledo requires that all volunteers, whose service brings them into contact with children, be trained in a USCCB approved course instructing the prevention of abuse toward children and the execution of steps taken if abuse occurs.
- Background Checks and school or parish specific background checks are mandatory.
- Live Jesus Ministries Mentor Training
- Monthly mentor gatherings with the Coordinator at your location.
- Supplemental Materials
 - Mentor Retreats for Active Mentors via Live Jesus Ministries
- Reading (In This Order)
 - *One Disciple At A Time* - Everett Fritz
 - *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission* - Msgr. James P. Shea
 - *Forming Intentional Disciples* - Sherry A. Weddell
 - *Discipleship Focused Youth Ministry* - Jim Beckman & Eric Gallagher
 - *Word on Fire Bible* - The Gospels

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

- Confidentiality: While small groups are always private and safe, they are never confidential. Small group participants are to make one promise, *to never share a story with those who don't need to know it*. It is important that students know that parents, counselors, and officials will be notified when safety concerns arise. Privacy is crucial. We ask students to trust that nothing said in the group will be repeated to others outside of the group. It is important that we respect that trust. Mentors are not to share any information or concerns about group members with co-workers, friends, family, other students or parents unless they need to know for safety reasons.
- This being said, all information should be shared with the small group coordinator at your location as a means of partnering in the mission together. Mentors should never feel like they can't share something with the coordinator. Together with the coordinator, they will discern the best next step.
- Within your small group, you may hear things that are a concern to you. There are things that must not remain confidential or to which we cannot fail to respond. We will use the following criteria: If someone is being hurt or has been hurt in the past, is hurting someone else or is hurting (or thinking about) hurting themselves, we must act.
 - An informal outline of the process would be:
 - Meet with the student involved.
 - Ask and discern if parents are already aware of the situation.
 - If yes, we have a little more time to respond.

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- If no, we will work with the student to help them arrive at the readiness to share with their parents. The urgency is dependent on how much danger is immediate.
 - As students become ready to share we have several options:
 - Involve a school or parish counselor, who will call parents and provide assistance.
 - Call parents ourselves, with the student present or with the student's permission.
 - Ask the student to share with his/her parents and require that a parent call us so that we know they have been informed. If the parent call is not received in the agreed upon time frame, a call from us to the parents is necessary.
- Student Safety Concern

Any threat of suicide or self-harm should always and will always be taken seriously. When someone talks about, writes about, or even hints about suicide, it must be addressed immediately. Consistent threats are also a cause for concern, regardless of repeated reference. Any mentor who observes or learns about or has concerns about a student directly or indirectly exhibiting any of the following behaviors should contact the small group coordinator at your location immediately.

 - The student must remain in sight of the mentor at all times until transferred to the counselor, parent/guardian, or nurse until the screening is completed.
 - Anytime a call is made to law enforcement requesting a welfare check(if the teen is not in your presence), notify an administrator at your location with details.
 - Warning Signs:
 - Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
 - Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
 - Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
 - Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
 - Talking about being a burden to others
 - Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
 - Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
 - Sleeping too little or too much
 - Withdrawing or isolating themselves
 - Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
 - Gifting people their personal belongings
 - **If the warning sign occurs during the school day and the student is with you....**
 - Stay with the student and do not allow them out of your sight.
 - Contact the student's counselor/a counselor in the building, walk with the student to the counselor, or call their parent/guardian and ask them to come. Please communicate to the counselor or parent you have a safety concern, and share as many details as you are able.
 - Counselor will assess student's risk of suicide and contact parents. The counselor will stay with the student until parents arrive and the student is released to parental care.
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 - Free and Confidential Service
 - **If the warning sign occurs outside of school hours and the student is with you...**
 - In the case of immediate danger, call 911 - Report the student's first and last name and your location. If not in immediate danger, contact the student's parents while maintaining supervision of the student. (Be direct and factual.)
 - Keep the student safe and calm until help arrives. If there is no immediate danger, release the student to parental care only. Never leave a student with a safety concern unsupervised. If the parent is unavailable, call 911.
 - Notify the small group coordinator at your location of the situation. The coordinator will contact the principal or pastor to communicate the situation and notify the student's counselor through email if there is one.
 - **If the warning sign occurs outside of school hours and the student is NOT with you...**

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- Call 911 and request a welfare check on the student - Please have the student's first name, last name, and address. If you are unable to access the address, contact your small group coordinator.
 - Once you obtain the information - you should call 911 and report to dispatch that you have a safety concern about a student and share as many details as you can with the dispatcher.
 - Mentors should have access to the Non-emergency line for the city where the student is located as well.
- The coordinator should be notified after calling 911 followed by the appropriate administrators at your location.
- The coordinator will also notify the student's counselor AFTER he or she has made a connection with 911. The coordinator can email the counselor or speak with him/her first thing the next school day.
- Physical Contact
 - Physical contact should be in an open environment and preferably with the permission of the young person. Contact should never be done in a way that could be misinterpreted as being anything other than friendly and appropriate adult-child support.
- Public vs. Private
 - Mentoring relationships are close relationships. Nevertheless, mentors must eliminate any situations that could put group members at risk.
 - Meeting Locations
 - Groups are strongly recommended to meet at their primary location(school or parish).
 - Groups are, however, allowed to meet in other approved public places, including but not limited to coffee shops, restaurants, etc (find a list of approved off-site locations from your coordinator). If a group meets off-site, mentors need to fill out an off-site form and collect consent from parents.
 - Groups are not allowed to meet in private locations like homes.
 - The small group location should stay as consistent as possible.
 - The meeting location should ALWAYS be communicated to parents.
 - One-on-one
 - When necessary, mentors may meet one-on-one with students for check-ins. However, one-on-ones should happen in a reserved/designated space at the school, parish or a public location(e.g. coffee shop, diner) with another adult nearby or in the vicinity.
 - Mentors are to communicate to parents in advance, receive their permission, and notify the coordinator of the meeting.
 - Texting/Messaging
 - Group messaging for both parents and teens is the recommended form of communication.
 - Messaging with teens should solely be used for accountability, logistics, and reminders.
 - Utilizing group text messaging, GroupMe, Flocknote, or the Called App are the primary means of communication.
 - Another trained adult should be included in all group messages.
 - If a teen sends a one on one text message to a mentor for an accountability check in, logistic, or reminder, the mentor may respond with a very brief reply.
 - Mentors should rarely initiate a one on one text conversation. The location coordinator, parent, or another trained adult should be included in any initiated conversations. (the small group coordinator at your location is committed to being available in this way).
 - Any technologies that allow messages to disappear are not allowed, including but not limited to Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook. If a student ever sends something that could put the student or another person at risk, the mentor should screenshot it immediately to prevent the history from being deleted and send it to their coordinator.

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- Keep a professional relationship with students in these communications.
- Transportation
 - Mentors are not allowed to give rides to group members.
- Social Media
 - Groups are not allowed to create social media pages for their groups.
 - Mentors may not post anything to their private social media accounts about their small group members.
 - Mentors may not “friend” group members on social media or accept student “friend” invitations until after they graduate from high school and are 18 years of age. At that point mentors may do so at their own discretion.
- Remember that by doing these things we ensure the safety of our students and reduce our own professional liability, keeping the ministry above reproach.

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATION

- To Parents/Guardians
 - Mentors are to send an email or text update to parents after every small group gathering.
 - Mentors are to communicate any important information to parents about their child.
- To Group Member
 - Remind group members of meetings, additional youth or campus ministry opportunities at your location, and any other group fellowship opportunities.
- To Your Location Coordinator(s)
 - Mentors are to meet several times a year with their location coordinator to pray and discuss the guiding direction of the group, as well as any needs and updates. During the summer, the discussion should center around discerning whether or not the mentor is feeling called to continue serving for another year.
 - It is also expected that adult mentors will make phone calls to the coordinator if specific challenges need to be addressed, especially in urgent situations.

PLEASE CHECK THE FOLLOWING FOR WHICH YOU AGREE

- _____ I am committed to **holiness**.
- _____ I am committed to **group members**.
- _____ I am committed to **training**.
- _____ I am committed to **safety**.
- _____ I am committed to **communication**.

By signing my name below, I state that I have read, understand, and agree to the above information. Any questions concerning these policies have been discussed. I acknowledge that breaking any of these policies could result in my dismissal as an active spiritual mentor for the small group discipleship ministry at my school/parish.

Signature: _____ Date: _____