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(8/09)

GUIDE FOR MENTORS

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Most Christians would agree that the most significant times of spiritual growth as believers involved another individual personally investing in them. Most *leaders* would also agree that their greatest impact on others in ministry has occurred when they have taken time to invest personally in the life of another. Doesn't it make sense that the same dynamic is in effect with regard to ministry training? As you will see in the following pages, relational, mentor-based training finds its imperative in Scripture and is desperately needed for effective ministry training. The following materials have been developed (and been developing!) over the course of more than ten years to assist those who are committed to relational ministry training. The bulk of the materials have been time-tested as hundreds of students have been required to be involved in Mentored Ministry training as students at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. I am deeply grateful to them and to their mentors, from whom I continue to learn.

More recently, I was invited by my dear friend, Dr. Mark Sarracino, to write the mentoring materials for a training program for urban leaders in Philadelphia.¹ This gave me the opportunity to expand the materials and contextualize them to this new setting. This new collaboration led to the development of the GLEE (Guided Learning Experience and Evaluation) which is very helpful in providing accountability throughout the mentoring process.² I am deeply appreciative of Dr. Sarracino's heart for training others and for his encouragement to make these materials accessible to a wider audience.

In addition to my former students and their mentors, my gratitude is also extended to the administration of Westminster Seminary who not only granted permission but encouraged me to participate in and share my resources and expertise in the development of these materials. Acknowledgement is due to Jerry McFarland for permission to use his "Spiritual Life" and "Family Life" Inventories. My greatest thanks is due to our Chief Shepherd who has called us and given us the privilege of partnering in the Advance of His Kingdom by equipping others for His service.

*Dr. Tim Witmer
Westminster Theological Seminary
Philadelphia, PA*

¹ Now known as LAMPhilly.

² The GLEE is the accountability tool used in these materials. Feel free to use this or develop your own accountability tool for your context. Dr. Sarracino's sample goals for GLEES (pp. 79ff) are particularly helpful. Special thanks also to Susan Disston for her valuable input particularly in the format of the GLEE Proposals.

How to Access and Use These Materials

The value of these materials to presbyteries and others engaged in ministry training has been recognized by Christian Education and Publications of the Presbyterian Church in America. After considering how best to make them available, it was determined that it would be most effective to provide electronic access. Rather than publishing individual manuals for purchase, in consultation with and permission of the author, a single user fee will provide access to the manuals which can then be reproduced for use in each respective presbytery. The author has also granted permission for the materials to be edited and contextualized to your respective ministry settings (with appropriate credit). For example, timetables for training in this manual reflect a particular approach in a particular place.³ You may choose to use a different timetable. Accountability forms used here (GLEE) may be adjusted to your respective students and ministerial candidates. This can be easily accomplished as you download the documents onto your computer. The electronic availability of these materials will also make forms and worksheets easily accessible to download.

³ Some of the following materials reflect Dr. Sarracino's approach in Philadelphia where GLEES run concurrent and coordinated with classroom training.

I. WHY “MENTOR-BASED” TRAINING?

A. It is Biblical

“And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” 2 Timothy 2:2

One of the greatest responsibilities and privileges of Kingdom leadership is to invest in the training of future leaders. The Apostle Paul was well aware of this responsibility and modeled it in his relationship with Timothy, Titus, and others as well. However, this model didn’t begin with Paul! The Bible gives us the powerful examples of Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and our Lord’s training of the twelve. The advance of faithful ministry from generation to generation is similar to runners in a relay race who pass along the baton from runner to runner. In this case, the baton Paul refers to includes “the things you have heard from me.” This must refer to the entire apostolic testimony from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, to the specific directions given to care for His flock. It includes orthodoxy (right doctrine) and orthopraxy (right practice).

Paul reminds Timothy to “*entrust*” these matters to faithful men . The verb translated *entrust* means “to commit for safekeeping.”¹ Note that his concern extends to four generations: Paul(1), Timothy(2), the “faithful men” Timothy teaches(3), and those taught by them(4). As a ministry leader, *you* are the fruit of generations of those who have faithfully followed this admonition. If you are reading these words, you have probably agreed to serve as a “mentor.” This is one important way of passing along this precious treasure to those “who will be able to teach others also.”

The purpose of the guide is to give you an orientation to your important role as a mentor.

B. It is Holistic

In ministry training, the mentor-trainee *relationship* is central with the focus on training and equipping. This is not to say that the “*classroom*” and dissemination of information are unimportant, but they are not *central*.

The mentor-trainee relationship is central because its focus throughout is not merely on knowledge, but should also be on five pillars of development including *calling, character, competence, content, and credentialing* . This holistic approach is crucial in effective equipping for ministry. For this reason, the most effective ministry training has always been *relational*. It is an *incarnational* approach as the trainee sees the very principles of servant leadership modeled in the life of his mentor. Because of the importance of the ministry of the mentor and his relationship with the trainee, it is crucial that you understand the many facets of your responsibility.

There are many words that could be used to describe the holistic process of training and equipping others. Why choose “mentor?”

1. “MENTOR” is a NOUN

A mentor is “a wise and trusted counselor or teacher.”² This definition highlights three primary attributes of an effective mentor. The godly *wisdom* you have gained from your ministry experience is a key asset as you train others. As you consider how to help a trainee grow, ask yourself the question, “What do I know now about ministry that I wish I had known a lot earlier in my ministry life?” Undoubtedly, many of these things are *wisdom* issues that you learned by experience. They are often the things that are now “second nature” to you but can be quite intimidating to a trainee. Some things can *only* be gained by experience, but there are many others that you can convey in the context of a mentoring process. As a *teacher*, therefore, you will be communicating truth in the context of ministry, not merely in the abstract. As a mentor you are also a “*trusted counselor*.” These words highlight the importance of the *relationship* between you and the student. Hopefully, your mentoring meetings will become more than merely a “check-up” on ministry objectives. Ideally, the student will bring personal struggles and challenging questions to the mentoring meetings.

2. “MENTOR” is a VERB

Teach: As a mentor, you will be *teaching* in the best sense of the word. As indicated above, the mentoring experience is designed to provide holistic equipping for the student who is preparing for Kingdom leadership.

Model: As a mentor, you will be *modeling* not only ministry skills, but attitudes toward His work and His people. In 2 Thessalonians 3:9, Paul described himself as a “model” for the believers to imitate. The word translated “model” (*tu, poj*) originally referred to the “visible impression of a stroke or pressure.”³ The student you mentor will carry much of what is seen in your example into a lifetime of ministry. As such, you are making an “impression” for a lifetime.

Train: One of the most important aspects of mentoring is the *activity* involved. The trainee is not passive in this process but engaged in *training* for ministry. Below (II.B.1) you will find an overview of the mentoring process describing the trainee’s progress from being a mere observer to an actual participant in ministry. This is training and equipping at its best!

Disciple: Ultimately, what you are providing for a trainee is *discipleship* in the context of a ministry setting. As a mentor you are contributing to the trainee’s growth in Christ, ministry skills, and confirmation of gifts and calling. All of these are important elements of what it means for him to follow Christ.