



Full product can be ordered by calling
1-800-333-8300 or by visiting
www.FaithAliveResources.org

show me 

sample

Faith Alive Christian Resources
From CRC Publications

Property of Faith Alive Christian Resources. All rights reserved.

JESSIE SCHUT

MENTOR'S GUIDE

I BELIEVE

GETTING READY
TO PROFESS MY FAITH

JESSIE SCHUT

MENTOR'S GUIDE

I BELIEVE

**GETTING READY
TO PROFESS MY FAITH**



Grand Rapids, Michigan

Unless otherwise indicated the Scripture quotations in this publication are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Faith Alive Christian Resources published by CRC Publications.

I Believe: Getting Ready to Profess My Faith © 2004, CRC Publications, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560. All rights reserved. With the exception of brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher. Printed in the United States of America on recycled paper.

We welcome your comments. Call us at 1-800-333-8300 or e-mail us at editors@faithaliveresources.org.

ISBN 1-56212-919-8

10987654321

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 5 |
| TRY THIS! | |
| TWO ACTIVITIES TO DO BEFORE YOUR FIRST SESSION | 17 |
| SESSION 1 | |
| BEGINNINGS | 21 |
| SESSION 2 | |
| I BELIEVE ... in God..... | 27 |
| SESSION 3 | |
| I BELIEVE ... in Jesus..... | 33 |
| SESSION 4 | |
| I BELIEVE ... in the Holy Spirit..... | 39 |
| SESSION 5 | |
| I BELIEVE ... God Gives Me a New Life to Live | 45 |
| SESSION 6 | |
| I BELIEVE ... the Church Will Help Me Grow..... | 51 |
| SESSION 7 | |
| I BELIEVE ... Holy Habits Will Keep Me Growing | 57 |
| SESSION 8 | |
| I BELIEVE ... I Want to Belong to the Body of Christ | 63 |

**Note: Session 6 focuses on worship and the sacraments. It's designed to be a "floating" session—that is, you can insert it at any point after session 1. It's also designed to take place after you and your mentee have sat together in a worship service where the sacrament of Holy Communion has been celebrated.*

INTRODUCTION

This is a program for mentors and young persons who are considering making their profession of faith. It's designed to be used "one on one"—with mentor and mentee developing a close relationship as they work their way through a study guide. We think this highly personal approach is the best model for helping young people grow in and express their faith.

We recognize, however, that some churches might prefer having a pastor or other leader meet with several young people at a time rather than mentor just one individual. For that reason, we've also included suggestions for adapting *I Believe* for use with small groups of young people who are considering professing their faith. If you are using *I Believe* with a small group, you'll want to look for "Suggestions for Small Groups" at the end of each session.

Perhaps your denomination uses "confirmation" or some other term to describe a young person's public profession of faith. If so, don't worry—you can easily adapt this book to fit your own process. Check with your pastor.

WHAT'S A MENTOR?

So you've agreed to be a mentor! You have agreed to walk alongside a young person who has expressed a desire to profess her faith publicly. You'll be helping this young person review the basics of Christian belief, and you'll be an encourager, affirmer, and cheerleader. Congratulations for taking up this challenge! Be assured God will bless you for doing so.

What is a mentor, exactly?

The first person to be a mentor was . . . Mentor! He appears in Homer's classic *The Odyssey*. Odysseus was heading off to war, so he appointed Mentor to protect and advise his son Telemachus while he was gone. Thus, the word *mentor* has come to mean an experienced and trusted advisor.

The Bible is filled with stories of mentoring, even if that label is never used. Consider Moses and his mentee, Joshua: Joshua spent more than forty years learning about leadership as he apprenticed himself to Moses. Ruth learned at the feet of her mother-in-law Naomi. The twelve disciples were mentored by Christ himself; they accompanied him on road trips, listened to his teachings, watched his miracles, and occasionally received admonishment and correction when they tried to pursue their own agenda. The apostle Paul served as a mentor to many, including young Timothy, whom he called “my true son in the faith.”

The National Mentoring Partnership describes a mentor as “an adult who, along with parents, provides young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and a constructive example. Mentors are good listeners, people who care, people who want to help young people bring out strengths that are already there” (www.mentoring.org).

Sounds like a tall order, doesn't it? And it is. If you're feeling unworthy, that's a good thing. God delights in using people like you, who are willing and who depend on God to give them the wisdom and gifts needed to serve him. You won't be doing this job alone. God is your partner in this venture.

The following pages will provide an orientation to your role in this *I Believe* course. Please read them carefully before you meet your partner so you'll have an idea of what's expected of you. You'll glean useful ideas on how to make this relationship work. Work through the two “Try This!” activities (pp. 17-19) on your own, so you'll be prepared to share your experiences and insights when specific issues arise in your conversations.

And may God's Spirit accompany you as you assume a mentor's mantle in this voyage of discovery and mutual blessings.

PROGRAM GOALS

I Believe is an eight-session program in which mentors will help prepare a young person to make a public profession of faith. The program is aimed at youth in grades 5-8 but is also suitable for use with high school students, especially those in grades 9-10.

Mentors and mentees will use the *I Believe* notebook to provide structure and content for their meetings. By working through the notebook together, both partners will review key biblical teachings and will produce a personal creed of beliefs. At this stage in your young mentee's faith journey, the goal is not to embark on a comprehensive and systematic study of Christian doctrine or of the

doctrinal standards of your church. Rather, the goal is to cover the basics in an age-appropriate way.

- Specifically, those being mentored will
- be affirmed in their faith.
 - be challenged to continue to grow in faith.
 - review basic Reformed Christian beliefs about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the ten commandments, sacraments, personal Christian growth, and responsibilities of church membership.
 - experience the value of being part of the family of God by having a faith model to work with.
 - express their faith through a written, sung, or spoken creed, or through producing a visual representation of their faith.

PROGRAM OUTLINE AND CONTENTS

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

You will be paired with a young person who has expressed an interest in professing faith before the congregation. In preparation for this public profession, we ask that you get together for at least eight “one on one” meetings. During these meetings, you’ll be exploring topics that cover key Christian beliefs. Your job will be not so much teaching as listening, guiding, challenging, and sometimes correcting.

You and your mentee will both need a copy of the *I Believe* notebook. Both of you will answer questions, discuss ideas, do activities as suggested in the notebook, and complete the weekly readings and assignments in each chapter. On pages 40-41, the notebook features a “bulletin board” for keeping notes and recording ideas, questions, and observations to share at your next meeting. It’s important for you to work alongside your mentee, to reflect on and answer the same questions, to complete the same assignments, to model the activities you are expecting your mentee to complete.

This mentor’s guide will help you prepare for each of the eight sessions by providing some background notes on each page in the mentee notebook. Please don’t use this guide as a lesson plan or read from it during your sessions. It’s just for you—use it only to prepare for your meetings. Remember that your role is primarily that of an experienced guide, not a “teacher” in the sense that we normally use that word.

One ongoing assignment is to create a personal creed or statement of beliefs. Traditionally, a creed is a set of statements written down to express a person’s

guiding beliefs. However, a creed can also be expressed in other ways: a song, a poem, a dance, a work of art or a graphic design with an accompanying description of the symbols and their meanings. As you and your mentee develop a relationship, encourage him to use his own unique gifts in this expression of faith and core beliefs. This personal creed may become an important part of your mentee's profession of faith.

Another ongoing assignment is to practice "holy habits" of prayer and Scripture reading. The notebook provides forty short Scripture reading assignments (five per week), which both you and your mentee should complete. The assignments will relate to the discussion topic for the following week.

More important than the material in the notebook, however, is what your mentee will see in you. You are the open book that she will read. You'll be a model of discipleship, sharing your insights, your experiences, your beliefs. Your attitude, acceptance, careful listening, caring, and respect will speak louder than a thousand wise words you may say.

You are engaging in the amazing privilege of growing a disciple. You can't do that unless you have a growing relationship with your Lord and God. Be sure to stay grounded in God's Word and pray often about your relationship. You yourself may wish to look for a mentor—someone who supports you in this work and prays for you, someone you can talk to about your experiences.

Notice, however, that you are not being asked to be a perfect Christian—just a credible one who talks honestly about the joys and struggles of living a Christian life. You are not required to be a learned Bible expert—just be a learner who is constantly growing in grace. You are not responsible for making sure your partner knows it all—just be available when she has questions to explore.

You may be surprised that you will find yourself learning from your mentee as well. Her experiences, the problems she wrestles with and how she solves them, her personal understanding of God and the church will enrich your life. Together, you are learning from each other and being an expression of God's family.

Sharing your faith journey in this mentoring experience is a little like going for a walk with someone along a trail. Although you're on the same path, you and your walking partner may see different things. Since you've been along the trail before, it's your privilege to point out things you've noticed in previous strolls. That enriches your partner's walk. On the other hand, she may be seeing and showing you things you've never noticed before. Such mutual give and take makes for an exciting journey that benefits both of you.

MENTOR'S JOB DESCRIPTION

QUALIFICATIONS

Your basic job is to walk alongside a young person who has expressed a desire to profess his faith publicly. These qualities will help you do that:

- **Godliness:** Mentors love God, trust in Christ for salvation, and are growing in the fruits of the Spirit.
- **Love for children:** Mentors remember their own adolescent and childhood worries and empathize with children's concerns today. They speak up for children and enjoy being with them.
- **Positive attitude:** Mentors affirm, welcome, and accept kids. They exhibit positive body language and enjoy life.
- **Grace:** Mentors are slow to judge and condemn, able to forgive kids if they disappoint and fail them. Mentors are growing in grace themselves.
- **Accessibility:** Mentors commit time and energy to this process. They are dependable.
- **Being real:** Mentors are comfortable with themselves, are aware of their own strengths and shortcomings, and do not need to hide behind a mask.
- **A sense of calling:** Mentors believe that God has asked them to do this job and are responding to that calling.

COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Mentors commit themselves to the person they're mentoring and to his spiritual growth. Mentors pray for the young person they're mentoring and affirm his identity in Christ. They understand that the mentee may seek out the mentor for support after this program is completed. They are willing to encourage the mentee in his ongoing spiritual journey, as one fellow Christian to another.
- Mentors commit themselves to completing the *I Believe* program and to meeting at least eight times with their mentee.
- Mentors offer support, advice, and encouragement as the young person writes his own profession of faith, studies and affirms key Christian beliefs, develops "holy habits" of personal piety, and explores the possibilities of using spiritual gifts in the church.
- Mentors will stand with the mentee before church leadership and the congregation during the profession of faith process. They will offer church leaders an assessment of the mentee's faith commitment.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Ultimately, mentors are accountable to God and depend on God for strength, wisdom, and guidance. They are also accountable to church leaders and are willing to submit to their authority.
- Mentors have read and agree to the church's policies about safety, abuse prevention, and confidentiality.
- Mentors understand that they are in partnership with the congregation, church leaders, and parents in this process. They will depend on them for support.

REWARDS OF MENTORING

Mentors will experience the rewards of

- guiding a child of God on her spiritual journey.
- using their gifts and talents in God's service.
- fulfilling the Great Commission to "go and make disciples."
- learning alongside a young person.
- being affirmed in their spiritual calling.
- knowing that their work may be replicated in the mentee's life.

GETTING STARTED

A little time now spent preparing to be a mentor can make a big difference in getting things off to a good start. Here's what we suggest you do:

- Complete any training or orientation that your church offers for this course. Your church should offer to support you through prayer, through sharing information, and through answering your questions. Your pastor or church leaders can tell you about your congregation's specific profession of faith traditions and practices. An orientation also allows you to meet other mentors, who can be a great support and source of information.
- If you feel you need more background information about mentoring, you could read *So You've Been Asked to Mentor a Young Person*, a pamphlet available from Faith Alive Christian Resources. You could also check out resources from your library and from such organizations as National Mentoring Partnership (www.mentoring.org). This excellent mentoring organization has a free online mentoring course you can take at your own convenience. While not specifically Christian, it covers many of the basics of the mentoring process. Educating yourself will increase your confidence in being an effective mentor.
- Read and understand your church's safety and abuse prevention policies. Some churches require that volunteers undergo a criminal background

check. This is not a reflection on you, but a prudent safety measure put in place to protect both you and the young person you'll be working with. The policies should also include guidelines for working one-on-one with a young person. For instance, you should always work in a public area where other people can see you—a classroom with an open door, a restaurant, a park bench. Be aware of these guidelines and abide by them.

- Contact your mentee by phone or letter to introduce yourself and set up the first meeting. Ask your mentee to take along a photo of himself that you can keep as a prayer reminder for the duration of this course; locate a photo of yourself for your mentee to have.
- Introduce yourself to your mentee's parents or guardians, and invite them to support and pray for the process. Parents can encourage and monitor their child's involvement and remind their child of assignments and meetings. They may even offer their home as a place to meet. In situations where the young person comes from an unchurched home, you will need to proceed with tact and respect, informing the family of what you are doing and inviting parents to support their child on this part of his or her spiritual journey.
- Complete the two "Try This!" activities (pp. 17-19). You will be asked to think about your own mentors and to construct a spiritual timeline of your own walk with God to share with your mentee at the first meeting. Both these exercises will help you understand and empathize with your mentee's spiritual and personal growth.
- Before each session, read through the "preparation notes" found in this guide. Do not, however, use these notes as a lesson plan or read from them to your mentee. They are designed for your personal background information only. Your role is not mainly to impart information but to facilitate transformation. Listening, questioning, affirming, guiding, and encouraging are the operative words, rather than teaching, lecturing, drilling, or informing.

TROUBLE-SHOOTING CHECKLIST

It takes time to build a trusting relationship and to get to the nitty-gritty work you want to accomplish. Don't expect wonders from your first meeting.

Experts identify four stages in the mentoring process:

- **Birth:** At your initial meeting, you will get to know each other. It's an exploratory time, helped along by relationship-building activities, telling stories, and low-key, non-threatening exercises that reveal factual information.

- **Engagement:** You begin to get attached to each other. You'll notice there's more of you invested in this relationship—the process becomes important because you feel a commitment to your mentee's well-being. He or she will decide to trust you and reveal more personal information and questions.
- **Maintenance:** This is where the real work happens. Secure in your relationship, you both dig deeper and reveal more important and personal information. You grow and mature in your spiritual walk.
- **Transition:** Ultimately, you arrive at the end of your time commitment to each other. At that point both of you have to decide whether you will continue to grow in your mentoring relationship or whether it has fulfilled its goals and will change into something else: a supportive friendship, for instance, or a prayer partnership, or the connection you feel for most other congregation members as siblings in Christ. Be realistic when you talk about further involvement; do not set up your mentee for disappointment by promising something you cannot deliver.

After one or two sessions, you may sense that this process is not going as well as you had hoped. Here are some ways to address some of the more common problems in mentoring relationships.

AWKWARDNESS, RELUCTANCE TO BE OPEN AND HONEST, SHALLOWNESS

It's quite normal to experience these patterns of communication in the first session or two. If, however, by the third session you feel as though your mentee is not comfortable with you, ask yourself:

- **Does my mentee come from a background where openness and honesty are discouraged?** It will take longer to build trust and open communication if this person has never experienced its value. Hang in there and be patient. It may take a long time before you make an intimate connection.
- **Am I talking too much?** As the older partner in this relationship, you may fall into teaching patterns that intimidate your young person. Perhaps he doesn't understand that it's OK to be an equal participant in the process. Rather than doing most of the talking, ask open-ended questions; then close your mouth for a while and listen. God made us with two ears and one mouth for a reason!
- **Are we incompatible?** Personalities sometimes do clash. If you feel a strong dislike for your mentee upon first meeting him or her, it may be a good idea to trust your instincts and ask for a change in partner. On the other hand, the body of Christ is made up of many parts; perhaps God is asking you to change your attitude and learn acceptance and love for someone you wouldn't naturally choose as a friend. Pray about this and talk to your supervising coordinator.

MISSED MEETINGS, CHALLENGES TO YOUR COMMITMENT, SUSPICION

Sometimes mentors enter a mentoring partnership with high spirits and great expectations. Then they meet their partner and get deflated. It's not at all what you envisioned it to be. Your mentee is an ordinary young person, subject to the glitches that normally plague youthful human beings. Ask yourself the following questions:

- **Is this normal behavior for a person of this age?** Try to remember what you were like at the age of your mentee. Were you punctual, responsible? Did you ever miss assignments? Realize that learning to be responsible is one of the jobs of young people. They sometimes fail. Be loving, forgiving, and encouraging when the inevitable slip-ups occur. Remind your mentee of your mutual commitments, reschedule to make up for lost time, and move on.
- **Does your mentee really want to be part of the mentoring and profession of faith process?** Sometimes, young people join something because "everyone else is doing it" or because "my mom and dad want me to do it." Confront this issue openly if it appears to you that your mentee is not sincere about wanting to do this program. If she confesses to ulterior motives, consider how best you can encourage her faith walk. Dropping your mentee and the course may not be the best answer. You may want to renegotiate your relationship. Instead of preparing for profession of faith, you might invite your mentee to use this time to explore spiritual questions and just feel free to examine important issues in her life.
- **Are there underlying causes for your mentee's attitude?** Adolescence is a turbulent time, even given a strong family, supportive friends, a good school, and a caring congregation. If any of these supports are faulty, however, your mentee may be feeling overwhelmed. Those pressures may come to the surface in your mentoring sessions. If you sense that more than adolescent rebellion accounts for your mentee's poor attitude, take the time to be a listening friend and guide.

SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN YOUR MENTEE'S LIFE AND/OR FAITH COMMITMENT

Because you are spending time and asking questions that encourage openness and honesty, you may hear things you wish you hadn't heard. If you sense spiritual, emotional, or physical danger in your mentee's life, now is not the time to pussy-foot around and hope that the problem goes away. Tell your mentee that you cannot maintain complete confidentiality in such a situation. You'll have to bring the concern to the attention of trusted persons who can help. You do not have

to bear this burden alone; share your information with appropriate church leadership and determine the next steps together.

TEN GOOD IDEAS FOR BUILDING THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

1. HANG OUT.

Invite your partner to hang out with you while you are doing routine things such as running errands for an elderly relative, shopping for hobby supplies, or going to garage sales. One man's ministry with youth was built around inviting kids to help him in his volunteer job of helping refugees move. Time spent working together and driving around gave the two many opportunities to bond and talk. Your mentee may say more in such an informal situation than in a more formal mentoring session. Do get the consent of his or her parents.

2. USE E-MAIL.

According to a Cornell University study, 63 percent of nine- to seventeen-year-olds prefer web surfing to watching TV. At present rates, today's children will spend more than two years during their lifetimes on e-mail and more than twenty-three years on the Internet (www.news.cornell.edu/releases/Feb00/children-comuters.ssl.html). Sending a quick e-mail note is a great way to confirm meeting times, pass on prayer requests, and offer encouragement and affirmation. It may also be a safe way for your partner to reveal questions she's too shy to express in person.

3. EAT TOGETHER.

Adolescents love to eat. And sharing food is a sign of community—think of how often the Bible mentions Jesus sharing food with his disciples and followers. Consider bringing a snack to your meetings, or schedule some meetings over a burger and fries, or go out afterwards for a soda. It's an investment in relationship.

4. PRAY FOR EACH OTHER.

Use your partner's picture as a bookmark in your Bible so you'll remember to pray about your relationship. Or mount the picture in a prominent place in your office or on the fridge. But don't do all the praying—invite your mentee to share in your life by praying for your needs too.

5. TELL AND LISTEN TO STORIES.

Stories are a powerful means to reach other people. Sharing stories about childhood or everyday things helps you and your mentee know and trust

each other. Stories about your own spiritual journey illustrate what it means to be a Christian. Stories to illustrate spiritual truths help your mentee get a new perspective on important beliefs. Feel free to refer back to the timeline in session 1 as a story starter whenever appropriate.

6. RESPECT EACH OTHER.

While kids are often told to respect their elders, respect is a two-way street. You can show respect for your mentee by asking and thanking rather than ordering; by inviting your mentee's input into meeting plans; by being punctual and reliable; by keeping confidences; and generally by living out the golden rule of treating others as you would like to be treated yourself. In turn, expect this from your mentee as well.

7. LAUGH TOGETHER!

Humor is a great leveller. Sharing jokes, riddles, funny stories, cartoons, gag gifts, humorous greeting cards, mind benders, and games can add another dimension to your meetings and humanize your relationship.

8. BE LIBERAL WITH AFFIRMATION.

Affirmation is not just a series of nice things you say. It's an attitude as well. Imagine what would happen if "young people grew up in a world where they were wanted....What if they grew up in a sea of expectation where they were saturated with hopes and visions and possibilities? What if [someone] around them was eager to listen, eager to teach, eager to spend time, eager to converse, eager to contribute to their character?" (*Developing Spiritual Growth in Junior High Students*, Ray Johnson, quoting Mike Yaconelli of Youth Specialties, p. 32).

9. LISTEN!

Your mentee will be watching to decide if you are really listening to what he says. First she'll check your body language. Are you maintaining eye contact? Leaning toward or away from him? Arms crossed or relaxed? Are you tapping a pencil or showing other signs of impatience? Then she'll note your tone of voice when you respond. Are you engaged or disinterested? Angry or thoughtful? Curious or dictatorial? Finally she'll listen to your words. But realize that your words are only 7 percent of what you are really saying. Good listening means no interruptions; it means asking good questions to clarify what you don't understand and focusing on your mentee rather than on yourself.

10. BE TEACHABLE.

Mentoring is a mutual relationship. Sure, you're sharing your important ideas and thoughts with your mentee; but in turn, she's doing the same. Be

prepared for a joyful journey where both of you will grow and learn from each other.

After reading all this, you may be wondering if you're the right person for this job. If so, consider Christopher Columbus:

He didn't know where he was going when he left. He didn't know where he was when he got there. When he got home, he didn't know where he had been. And, the place was never the same after he left.

You and your partner will be embarking on a journey of exploration. You don't know the terrain, but you're going on faith. And you'll both never be the same again after the journey is over. God's blessings on you both!

TRY THIS!

The two activities that follow are meant to prepare you for mentoring. Your program coordinator may include them in your orientation session. If not, complete them before you meet with your mentee for the first time. They will help you understand the mentoring process, and you can refer to them throughout the course.

ACTIVITY 1: REMEMBER . . .

You have likely been mentored by other godly persons who walked alongside you in your faith journey. Search your memory and call to mind people who were instrumental in helping you become who you are now. Write down their names and what kinds of things you may have learned from them.

Uncle Jim helped me sort out my career path in college. From him, I learned that I can trust God to provide for my needs if I commit my ways to him.

- What characteristics about your mentors were most helpful? Which would you like to emulate in your relationship with your mentee?

Uncle Jim was a great listener, and he only gave advice when I asked.

ACTIVITY 2: SPIRITUAL TIMELINE

Construct a timeline of your faith journey thus far. The questions below may help you pinpoint specific events in your life that were important factors in your spiritual development. Do not feel that you need to add the answers to all the questions to your timeline—only those that have some real significance, that help you understand your faith journey thus far.

- What is your earliest memory of God? Is it a good memory? What setting or event triggered this memory?
- Was there a time when you were scared and needed God's help? Did you pray? How did God answer your plea for help?
- Was there a time when you felt deserted or abandoned by God? What event or situation led to this feeling? How was it resolved?
- Did you have a mountaintop spiritual experience, a time when you felt very close to God?
- When did you first consciously commit your life to God and decide for yourself to follow him?
- When did you become a confessing member of the church? How did that feel?
- Where in your life have you had a spiritual growth spurt, a time when you learned a great deal? What or who contributed to this growth?
- How do you use your spiritual gifts for God? Are these good experiences? How do they help you in your spiritual journey?
- What do you hope for the future?

Here's a sample timeline to get you thinking:

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|-------------|---|-------------|
| born into a loving Christian family. | bike accident—scary, broken leg; prayed and felt peace. | public profession of faith: knew I had to take a stand for Jesus. | Dad died—miss him so! Taught me a lot. | | | | |
| 1968 | 1972 | 1979 | 1986 | 1987 | 1992 | 1998 | 2001 |
| kneeling for bedtime prayers, Dad's arm around me. Felt happy. | | bad time in college—felt alone and depressed; found comfort in Bible. | | married; high spiritual feeling of gratitude, hopefulness. | | involvement in Friendship ministry to persons with disabilities—learned much about myself and about Christian love. | |

Constructing a spiritual timeline will remind you of specific times in your life that were important. This may be helpful when you and your mentee talk about spiritual growth. You and your mentee will begin doing a similar exercise in session 1, and then add to it during the remainder of the course.

PRE-SESSION PRAYER

This first meeting will mark the birth of your mentoring relationship. Begin praying now for

- the young person you'll be meeting.
- for your mentee's home, family, and friends.
- for your relationship—that you'll be able to make a good connection.
- for the process—that your mentee and you will grow in faith and assurance.

A GUIDE TO THE NOTEBOOK

Please use the following brief notes as part of your preparation for your meeting with the young person you'll be mentoring. Don't use these comments as a lesson plan that you will teach from. Remember that your role is that of a "walk-along" guide on a spiritual journey. The notebook will provide some structure for your sessions as you complete it together. (You and your mentee will each need your own copy.)

Also remember to complete the two "Try This!" activities on pages 17-19 of this guide (listing your own mentors and completing your spiritual timeline).

Finally, take time for some small talk before plunging into the notebook stuff with your mentee. If you're nervous about all this, be candid and admit it. And give your partner a chance to ask questions about the mentoring process. You may want to refer to the FAQ section of the notebook when you respond. Invite your mentee to read through "Stuff You Really Need to Know" on pages 5-11 of the notebook (this can be done later at home).

Take a quick look together at the goals of this initial session (p. 13).

BULLETIN BOARD (PAGES 40-41)

These two pages in the center of the notebook can be used to jot down questions, comments, and observations you want to share with your mentee. In this first session, at some point encourage your mentee to start jotting down questions she would like to have answered during this eight-week course. Your mentee can also jot notes on the bulletin board about other things—things that happened at school during the week, prayer concerns, thoughts about the Scripture passage, issues she'd like to talk about with you, and so on.

PERSONALITY PLUS (PAGES 14-15)

Think of these pages as a scrapbook of interesting facts about you and your mentee. It includes a personality quiz, notes about likes and dislikes, recreational choices, family background, musical taste, and so on. Use this page as a conversation starter to get to know each other better. Understand that you are not wasting time when you focus on these “surface” issues: your mentee needs time to know you before you can expect her to reveal deeper questions and doubts.

WORLD AND PERSONAL TIMELINES (PAGES 16-18)

Around the edge of these two pages you'll notice a timeline of significant events that occurred from 1930-2003. You and your mentee might want to use some of the questions in the box to talk casually about what was happening in the world when you were born, what significant world events have affected you since then, and what was “reality” when your parents and grandparents were kids.

Next, the two of you should individually take a few minutes to fill in personally significant events *above* the personal timeline—date of birth, arrival of siblings, moves, arrival of pets, graduations, achieving goals in sports, music, school, and on. Compare your two graphs, noting similarities and differences.

Use the space below the personal timeline to chronicle significant spiritual milestones. If your mentee begins to share such information now, that's great! Have her record it. If not, briefly explain that in the next eight weeks you will be filling in this space together with information about your personal faith journey.

COVENANT (PAGE 19)

The covenant details the purpose of your meetings, your mutual commitments, and a good time and place for meetings. If possible, try to schedule your meetings for the same time and place every week. That way it will be easier to stick to your commitments. Be sure both you and your mentee understand the goals of this mentoring relationship. Take time to add any unique goals that you'd like to

incorporate into your mentoring sessions. Then sign these pages in each other's notebooks.

Note: you'll be agreeing to create a personal "I believe" statement. You'll find more information about that in session 2.

HOLY HABITS (PAGE 20)

Christians need to incorporate "holy habits" into their personal life. This eight-week period gives you the awesome opportunity to reinforce (or plant) the discipline of prayer and Scripture reading. Scripture readings are short and focus on passages that reinforce the theme of each meeting. Reading them will also help your mentee formulate her "I believe" statement.

Because God created us all different, each session will include a box on prayer "styles" you might wish to try. Today's prayer pattern is ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Explain these words to your mentee and make sure she understands each word. Urge her to try to use this formula in daily prayer this week.

Please note the suggestion that you and your mentee pray for each other during the "supplication" part of your prayers. We suggest that you do this throughout the course. Be sure to exchange pictures to serve as prayer reminders. As you get to know each other better, you can include specific requests in your prayers for each other.

Let your mentee know that you are looking forward to your next meeting. Invite her to read the "Stuff You Really Should Know" section (pp. 5-11) of the notebook, but be clear that she need *not* read session 2. You'll do that together at your next meeting.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

While we believe that one-on-one mentoring is an excellent way to prepare young people to profess their faith, we recognize that some churches might choose to have a pastor or other leader meet with several young people at a time. This material may be adapted for use by a leader and a small group.

Because of the personal nature of professing one's faith, you'll want to keep the group small—half a dozen persons or less. That will be large enough to promote interaction and support but small enough to give participants a sense of personal involvement and attention.

We also suggest you retain the notebook as the basic tool of the course, allowing time during your session to complete it and discuss it together. As leader

(rather than mentor), you will want to complete your own notebook as well. You can also pick up some tips by reading through the “Guide to the Notebook” section above.

Though you will not be a mentor, your role can still be that of a spiritual guide rather than a “teacher.” Make it plain from the start that this is the way you’re approaching this course. Your kids will appreciate seeing you as a colearner (especially if you are a pastor or elder!). Hosting the group in your home or another informal setting will help set the nonacademic mood you want for these sessions.

When you distribute the notebook during your first session, be sure to explain that it was written for a one-on-one mentor/mentee situation. You may want to talk about why your church decided to go with small groups rather than with mentors and mentees. Point out that while the mentor/mentee language of the notebook doesn’t apply to your situation, you and the group will be doing most of the activities in the notebook.

BULLETIN BOARD (PAGES 40-41)

Encourage the group to use these pages to jot down questions, comments, and observations as they work through the course and the home assignments of Bible reading and prayer. If you wish, in future sessions set up a large bulletin board at your meeting site (a sheet or two of newsprint and an easel will do nicely). When kids arrive, they can jot down their questions/comments on the newsprint, and you can talk about them briefly as you open your session.

PERSONALITY PLUS (PAGES 14-15)

Have kids take a few minutes to complete these pages. Then ask each person to give a quick report on the “personality type” the activity showed him or her to be. If your kids already know each other pretty well, you could have them guess what “personality type” each person turned out to be.

Have them pick two of the “Which Would You Rather Do?” and two of the “My Favorite . . .” items to share with the others. Do the same yourself.

WORLD AND PERSONAL TIMELINES (PAGES 16-18)

Have the group scan the world timeline and each pick out one event that influenced their lives. Share the results. If they were to pick an event that probably influenced their parents’ lives, what would that be? Again, share the results.

Give everyone time to complete their personal timeline, using the questions on page 18 as a guide. Take time to share one “important event” each person entered above the timeline and one spiritual milestone each person entered below the timeline. If kids can’t think of any spiritual milestones to enter, tell them

that deciding to join this group was just one such milestone! And they will have the chance to add to their spiritual timelines during the remainder of the course.

COVENANT (PAGE 19)

Though you're not in a mentoring situation, making a covenant will impress on your kids the importance of this part of their spiritual journey. The covenant can be made between you and the individual group members. Instead of the words "my partner," have the kids write your name. And add a blank for your own name at the bottom of the covenant. Be sure to make any other changes you think are needed.

Ask each person to sign the agreement and then go around and sign each person's covenant yourself.

We suggest that you have group members pair off with an accountability partner who will help them keep the covenant they've made by way of a weekly phone call or other contact. Accountability partners can also pray for each other throughout the course.

Perhaps you will want to suggest who should partner with whom. If you have an odd number of students, you can serve as a partner.

HOLY HABITS (PAGE 20)

You'll want to encourage your group members to complete this section at home each week. Introduce the ACTS pattern of prayer. Ask accountability partners to pray for each other each day (supplication). Also tell group members that you will be praying for each of them during the week.

You may want to have kids bring a picture of themselves to your next meeting. They can use it to give to the person who's praying for them that week.

For closing today's session, you could have kids pair up with their accountability partner (if you're not using accountability partners, just have them pair off with the person next to them). Have each make a prayer list with several personal concerns they would like their partner to pray for (sick family member, upcoming test, problem at school, and so on). Then have partners exchange prayer lists, stand together with their hands on each other's shoulders, and pray aloud for their partner's needs. They may also take the lists home and pray for their partner's needs during the "supplication" part of their ACTS prayers (or simply as a substitute for the ACTS prayers). At your next meeting the partners can talk about their experiences and thank God for answered prayers.

JESSIE SCHUT

I BELIEVE

GETTING READY
TO PROFESS MY FAITH

JESSIE SCHUT

I BELIEVE

**GETTING READY
TO PROFESS MY FAITH**



Grand Rapids, Michigan

Unless otherwise indicated the Scripture quotations in this publication are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL READER'S VERSION, © 1994, 1996 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Faith Alive Christian Resources published by CRC Publications.

I Believe: Getting Ready to Profess My Faith © 2004, CRC Publications, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560. All rights reserved. With the exception of brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher. Printed in the United States of America on recycled paper.

We welcome your comments. Call us at 1-800-333-8300 or e-mail us at editors@faithaliveresources.org.

ISBN 1-56212-978-3

10987654321

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| STUFF YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW | 5 |
| SESSION 1 | |
| BEGINNINGS | 13 |
| SESSION 2 | |
| I BELIEVE ... in God | 21 |
| SESSION 3 | |
| I BELIEVE ... in Jesus | 29 |
| SESSION 4 | |
| I BELIEVE ... in the Holy Spirit | 35 |
| SESSION 5 | |
| I BELIEVE ... God Gives Me a New Life to Live | 47 |
| SESSION 6 | |
| I BELIEVE ... the Church Will Help Me Grow | 57 |
| SESSION 7 | |
| I BELIEVE ... Holy Habits Will Keep Me Growing | 65 |
| SESSION 8 | |
| I BELIEVE ... I Want to Belong to the Body of Christ | 73 |

STUFF YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW

You've read the Bible, heard the stories, been part of a congregation. You've prayed and confessed your sins to Jesus. You believe in your heart that he is your Savior and Lord. Then one day you decided you wanted to tell the world: I believe! You asked your church leaders about professing your faith, and they've asked you to take this course called *I Believe*. What's it all about?

This is a program where you and one other person will sit down for eight sessions to figure out what you do believe and what it will mean for the rest of your life. (If you're taking this course as part of a small group or class, ignore the comments about mentoring that follow.) This other person, an adult, is a mentor. You are called a mentee—OK, it's a weird name but there really isn't any other word for it!

Mentors and mentees have been around a long time. The first mentor was a person named Mentor! He is mentioned in a book written by Homer thousands of years ago. In the story, Odysseus, a Greek warrior, is heading off to war, and he appoints a guy named Mentor to watch over his son Telemachus while he is gone, to be his teacher, guide, and friend.

So a mentor is someone who agrees to walk alongside another person as that person learns and grows. A mentor is someone who will listen and answer questions, who will be a friend and support you as you figure things out for yourself.

Here are some FAQs to help you learn more about *I Believe*:

1. WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS COURSE?

- You'll meet with your mentor once a week for eight weeks.
- You'll talk about the topic of the week and work through questions about it in this notebook.
- You'll work on your own "holy habits:" daily Bible reading and prayer.
- You'll create a personal expression of what you believe: something that will tell your congregation about your faith. It could be a written statement, a

song, a piece of art, a dance. It will be your own—nobody else can do this for you.

- You'll decide whether you wish to make profession of faith. If you do, you and your mentor will meet with your church leaders to tell them so. Then you'll participate in a ceremony to celebrate your profession.
- Other things might also happen. You might sit together with your mentor in church and discuss the service afterward. You might get together with your mentor on a social visit. You might decide to do a service project together. Those are all decisions you and your mentor can talk about once you've gotten together.

2. WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO IN THIS COURSE?

You will be asked to commit to

- meeting with your mentor for eight sessions.
- completing the work in this *I Believe* notebook.
- creating your own personal expression of faith.
- being sincere about exploring and thinking about your faith.
- being honest with your mentor.

At your first meeting, you and your mentor will talk about these commitments, and you and your mentor will both sign a covenant—a promise that tells what you have agreed to do.

3. WHAT'S MY MENTOR'S JOB?

Your mentor will commit to

- meeting with you for eight sessions.
- completing the work in his or her copy of this notebook.
- creating a personal statement of faith.
- being sincere about helping you explore your faith.
- praying for you regularly.
- being the best kind of mentor God has given him or her the gifts to be.

As you can see, a mentor is learning and growing along with you. You may ask your mentor questions, share concerns and problems, talk about your doubts and fears, and ask for advice.

4. WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T GET ALONG WITH MY MENTOR?

Remember, mentors are volunteers who sincerely want to be your friend. Your church wants to make this a great experience for you, so they've tried their best to match you with someone they think will be a good fit.

But sometimes, especially if you and your mentor are complete strangers to each other, you just don't click. There are a number of things you can do if you aren't connecting:

First, pray about it. Ask the Lord to give you ideas about how to improve the relationship. Second, if there is something specific that your mentor is doing that bothers you, talk about it. You might say something like, "When I tell you something, you sometimes interrupt me," or, "It seems to me you don't think my problems are very important." It takes a lot of courage to do this; sometimes, writing down your concerns in an e-mail may be easier than saying it in person. Third, discuss the situation with a parent or other adult you trust, asking for advice. Sometimes they may be able to help you see a different side of the problem.

Last, talk to your church leadership (pastor, youth leader), asking if they will step in and help. They may hook you up with a different mentor.

5. I'M REALLY, REALLY BUSY ALL THE TIME. I MIGHT NOT HAVE TIME TO READ THE BIBLE OR PRAY, OR CREATE MY PERSONAL STATEMENT OF FAITH. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I CAN'T FIND TIME TO DO THE ASSIGNMENTS?

Life can be crazy busy, it's true—homework, sports, music lessons, friends, chores, school projects, part-time jobs, youth group outings, TV, the Internet, and video games all take time. And now, with *I Believe*, you've got a new commitment. Can you do it all?

Maybe not. You have to decide what's most important in your life. If you believe it is important to spend time on your walk with God, you will have to make time for it. Maybe you will have to drop something else that's less important, like TV or video games. Maybe you'll have to spend a little less time with your friends, or listening to your favorite music.

When you really think about it, is there anything more important than God and your relationship with him? Make time—you'll be glad you did.

6. CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME IDEAS ABOUT HOW I SHOULD CREATE MY PERSONAL "I BELIEVE" STATEMENT?

A statement of beliefs is called a "creed." For many years, the church has recited the Apostles' Creed. It's a statement of what the church believes, composed of words, sentences, and ideas. That's one kind of creed—spoken and written. You may wish to write your own series of statements about your beliefs about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the church, and so on. This notebook

has an “I Believe” section (starting with session 2) that will help you write your own statement of faith.

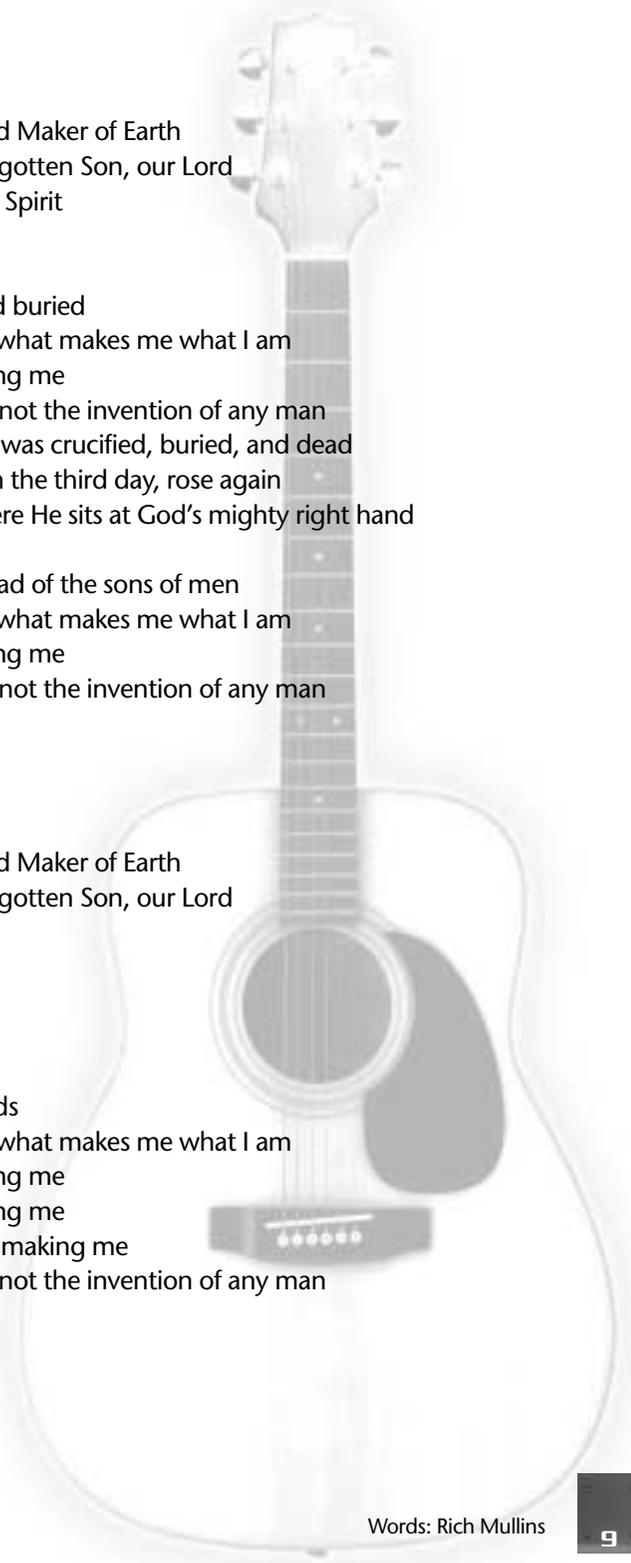
There are also songs that express a creed. Your church’s hymnal may have such songs. A singer named Rich Mullins wrote a song based on the Apostles’ Creed called “Creed.” (You can hear it on the CD *Offerings II* by Third Day—see the words on the next page.) Other singers have done their own songs, each of them thinking about what they believe and writing it down in a song. So writing your own song is another way of expressing your beliefs.

Other people with God’s gift of creative arts have expressed their creed in beautiful artworks that tell the world about their beliefs about God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. If you enjoy drawing or sculpting, you could express your beliefs by creating a piece of art. Or if you enjoy movement, liturgical dance is another way you could express your faith.

Often, symbols can express big ideas. For instance, the cross is a symbol of Christ’s salvation; the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit; and the light of a candle can symbolize Christ as the light of the world. Your personal creed could be a banner that uses symbols to express what you believe. If you choose this to express your faith, you could write an explanation of your banner to accompany it.

There are many ways to create your own creed. Talk it over with your mentor at the first session. Do a little at a time and work on it week by week—you’ll be using your gifts. You may also be asked to share your creed with the church during your profession of faith. That’s a good thing—your gifts will help God’s people to grow and celebrate.

CREED



I believe in God the Father
Almighty Maker of Heaven and Maker of Earth
And in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, our Lord
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
Born of the virgin Mary
Suffered under Pontius Pilate
He was crucified and dead and buried
And I believe what I believe is what makes me what I am
I did not make it, no it is making me
It is the very truth of God and not the invention of any man
I believe that He who suffered was crucified, buried, and dead
He descended into hell and on the third day, rose again
He ascended into Heaven where He sits at God's mighty right hand
I believe that He's returning
To judge the quick and the dead of the sons of men
And I believe what I believe is what makes me what I am
I did not make it, no it is making me
It is the very truth of God and not the invention of any man
I believe it, I believe it
I believe it
I believe it, I believe it
I believe in God the Father
Almighty Maker of Heaven and Maker of Earth
And in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, our Lord
I believe in the Holy Spirit
One Holy Church
The communion of Saints
The forgiveness of sin
I believe in the resurrection
I believe in a life that never ends
And I believe what I believe is what makes me what I am
I did not make it, no it is making me
I did not make it, no it is making me
I said I did not make it, no it is making me
It is the very truth of God and not the invention of any man
I believe it, I believe
I believe it, I believe
I believe it, I believe it
I believe it, I believe it
I believe it, I believe it
I believe it

7. CAN I “FAIL” THIS COURSE?

There is no test at the end of this course to see if you have “passed” your profession of faith. You won’t get graded or have a report card to show your family. Church leaders will not check your notebook to make sure you know all the right stuff. So no, you can’t “fail” this course.

If you are sincere about professing your faith, understand what it means, do your best to complete the assignments, and keep your appointments for meetings (unless you have a good reason for missing and let your mentor know ahead of time) your church will joyfully invite you to meet with its leaders to share your personal testimony, and welcome you to a celebration of your profession of faith.

However, it’s also possible that these things might happen:

- You might say, “I would like more time to think and pray and study before I make profession of faith.” That’s not failing. That’s admitting you are not yet ready to take this step.
- On rare occasions your mentor might say, “I’m not sure that my mentee really understands what she believes. I hope she’ll spend a little more time thinking about this before she does profession of faith.” And that’s not failing either. Someone who cares about you and wants the best for you is helping you not settle for second best.

Anyone who takes the time to study God’s Word and to think about their faith and their place in God’s world is loved and accepted in God’s eyes.

8. WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THIS COURSE?

Your church leaders will meet with you and you will participate in a ceremony to profess your faith.

Every church has different traditions for this celebration. Perhaps your mentor and your parents will be asked to participate in the ceremony. Perhaps you will have a chance to share and talk about your personal statement of faith. Perhaps the church leaders will present you with a devotional book or invite you to make a public commitment to a ministry in the church. Whatever happens, it will be a great celebration.

However, just because you have made profession of faith does not mean that you are all done learning about your faith, the Bible, and the church. Christians never stop growing. You should continue to attend church education classes, worship with your congregation, and get involved in serving God. All of these things help you grow in your faith.

And someday, hopefully, someone may ask you to become a mentor. You'll remember how your mentor helped you better understand what faith was all about. And we hope you'll say, "I believe . . . and I'd love to help others grow too." That's what this course is all about!

DO . . .

- be honest with your mentor.
- keep your appointments for your meetings (or let your mentor know if you have a good reason for not keeping it).
- complete your assignments.
- be willing to grow and change.
- share your experiences with your parents and friends.
- ask questions (no question is a stupid question!).
- pray for your mentor, yourself, and your church.
- be yourself.
- think about and express what you—not your parents, teachers, friends, siblings or anyone else—believe.
- be a good listener.

DON'T . . .

- be afraid . . . remember, you're walking with God.
- keep your doubts inside.
- try to cram your assignments into one evening's work.

That's it! Be sure to ask your mentor if you have other questions we haven't answered. And enjoy your time together.

GOALS

- Get acquainted with my mentor and this program.
- Begin a personal timeline.
- Commit to completing this course with my mentor.
- Begin practicing “holy habits” at home this week.

I BELIEVE

PERSONALITY PLUS

Circle five words in each column that best describe you.

Strengths

- Outgoing
- Calm
- Loyal
- Confident
- Productive
- Sensitive
- Talkative
- Strong-willed
- Gifted
- Carefree
- Perfectionist
- Humorous
- Warm
- Practical
- Dependable
- Leader
- Easygoing
- Idealistic
- Enthusiastic
- Independent

Weaknesses

- Restless
- Selfish
- Inconsiderate
- Negative
- Stingy
- Weak-willed
- Bossy
- Impractical
- Slow
- Hot-tempered
- Loud
- Self-Centered
- Teaser
- Cruel
- Impulsive
- Critical
- Proud
- Exaggerates
- Stubborn
- Lazy

Count up your scores:

:

x:

:

:

This simple personality test can't begin to tell everything about you, so don't take it too seriously. However, you will likely score more highly in one category than in the other three. Here's what your highest score suggests about you:

- ⚡: You are fun-loving, enjoy being with people, enthusiastic, and energetic.
- x: You are quick to act, determined, practical, and like to organize things.
- 👁️: You are easygoing, like to please others, consistent, and a good listener.
- 👉: You are creative, faithful to your friends, dependable, and don't like to be in the limelight.

—adapted from *Successful Youth Mentoring*, Group Publishing, Inc.

© 1998, pages 32-33.

WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER DO?

If you had two choices, which of these would you rather do? Circle your choice, then compare with your partner. Are you more alike or different?

- A. read a good book **OR** go for a run
- B. get together with your friends **OR** watch a video at home
- C. have a hamburger and fries **OR** have a veggie stir fry with rice
- D. play video games **OR** play a sport
- E. sing **OR** paint
- F. go camping **OR** stay in a fancy hotel

MY FAVORITE . . .

Music: _____

Book: _____

Movie: _____

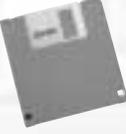
Game: _____

Color: _____

If I could be any animal I wanted to be, I would be a _____
because _____

WORLD AND PERSONAL TIMELINES

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|---|------|------|---|---|------|---|------|--|------|---|------|------|---------------------|------|
| 1924 | 1927 | 1930 | 1934 | 1939 | 1940 | 1941 | 1945 | 1950 | 1955 | 1960 | 1965 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 |
| First movie with sound. | | Donald Duck created; Monopoly invented. | | | Germany defeats Denmark, Belgium, Holland, France; England declares war on Germany. |  First atomic bomb falls, ending World War II; first digital computer invented. | | Rosa Parks arrested for sitting in bus seat reserved for whites; polio vaccine discovered; Disneyland opens in Los Angeles. | | Martin Luther King jailed for civil rights march; Russian astronaut takes first walk in space; first snowboard invented. | |  First man on the moon. | | | End of Vietnam War. | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|--|------|------|---|------|--|------|---|------|---|------|----------------------------|------|------|---|
| 1924 | 1927 | 1930 | 1934 | 1939 | 1940 | 1941 | 1945 | 1950 | 1955 | 1960 | 1965 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 |
| Celluwipes—now known as Kleenex—hit the market. | | | | | Hitler invades Poland and Czechoslovakia. | | Japan bombs Pearl Harbor—U.S. enters the war. | | Korean War begins; first transcontinental TV broadcast; first jet service from London to Paris. | | | | Martin Luther King killed. | | | IBM markets first personal computer. |
| | | Plastic invented; first analog computer. | | | | |  | | | | First felt-tip pen sold; JFK becomes youngest president of U.S. | | | | |  |

PERSONAL TIMELINE

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|------|------|--|------|---|------|--|---|------|---|------|------|--|------|
| 1981 | 1985 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
| Mount St. Helens erupts in Washington; <i>Empire Strikes Back</i> hits big screen; AIDS is diagnosed. | Soviet Union collapses; Iraq loses Gulf War; typhoon kills 139,000 people in Bangladesh—10 million homeless. | Nuclear catastrophe at Chernobyl. | | | First World Trade Center bombing; <i>Jurassic Park</i> makes most money ever; war in Bosnia. | | Earthquake in Kobe, Japan, kills 2,700 people; <i>ER</i> top TV show. | |  Princess Diana dies in a car crash; Mother Teresa dies; <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i> published. |  Michael Jordan retires for the second time; <i>Who Wants to Be a Millionaire</i> is top TV show. | |  September 11: terrorists destroy World Trade Center Towers and part of Pentagon, over 3,000 die; U.S. and allies invade Afghanistan. | | | U.S. invades Iraq; space shuttle Columbia explodes, killing 7; massive power blackout hits major eastern U.S. and Canadian cities. | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|----------------------------|------|--|------|------|--|------|--|--|------|--|------|------|---|--|
| 1981 | 1985 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
| | | AIDS declared an epidemic. | |  Hubble space telescope launched into space; Iraq invades Kuwait; Nintendo creates Game Boy. | | | Los Angeles race riots; first UN Earth Summit meets in Rio de Janeiro. | | Nelson Mandela becomes first black president of South Africa; tunnel opens between England and France; slaughter in Rwanda kills millions of people; Cal Ripkin sets record of 2,130 baseball games. |  Fossil dinosaur bones bigger than Tyrannosaurus Rex found in Sahara Desert; 100th Olympic Games held in Atlanta, Georgia. | |  Hurricane Mitch kills 10,000 people in Central America. | | | New millennium! Y2K computer bug fails to cause predicted wipeouts. | al Qaeda hunted in Afghanistan caves; Bin Laden escapes. |

- What was happening in the world when you were born?
- What was happening in the world when your parents were born? Your grandparents?
- What world events have had an impact on your life?
- On your personal timeline, mark important events in your life. Label them in the space **above** the line. For instance: the date of your birth; arrival of siblings; moves from one home to another; arrival of pets; graduations; achieving goals in sports, music, school.
- The space **below** the personal timeline is for important milestones on your faith journey. If you can fill in some of those, do so now. For instance: when you were baptized; when you first remember thinking about God; a special time when God answered your prayer or you felt very close to God; a hard time when you wondered why something happened or you doubted your faith; when you decided you would like to make profession of faith.

COVENANT

This *I Believe* course asks you to make a commitment to get ready for making profession of faith. Read through this covenant (promise) and sign it to show that you understand what your commitment is.

A covenant of commitment
between _____ and _____.

We promise to

- meet together once a week for eight weeks.
- complete the work in the *I Believe* notebook.
- be sincere about exploring and thinking about our faith.
- pray for one another regularly.

We will try to meet at a regular time and place:
_____.

If an unexpected event interferes with this plan, we will tell each other and make plans for another date. I can contact my partner at:
_____.

Together, we will try to reach these goals:

Other details:

Signed: _____

and _____

Date: _____

HOLY HABITS

BIBLE READING FOR THE WEEK

“Holy habits” help Christians grow. Prayer and Bible reading are two very important holy habits. Choose five days out of the next seven to read a Bible passage; answer the question after each passage, or just write down your own ideas, then pray.

Day 1: Read Luke 2:41-52.

Jesus grew in wisdom and stature. In what ways would you like to grow?

Day 2: Read 1 Timothy 4:8-12.

How does your church show (or not show) that it values your faith?

Day 3: Read Psalm 119:97-105.

How can God’s Word help keep you on the right path?

Day 4: Read Colossians 3:12-17.

How can God’s people help keep you on the right path?

Day 5: Read 1 Corinthians 13.

How does love keep you on the right path?

PRAYER PATTERNS

For your prayer time each day this week, try using a style called ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Many Christians find that praying this way helps them focus.

- **Adoration** (I worship you, Lord, for . . .)
- **Confession** (I’m sorry, Lord, for . . .)
- **Thanksgiving** (Thank you, Lord, for . . .)
- **Supplication** (I ask you, Lord, for . . .)

In the “supplication” part of your prayer, please pray for your mentor (as he or she will pray for you), and pray that God will bless the time you spend together. Believe that God will honor your request and use your relationship with your mentor to prepare you for professing your faith.