



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

show me 

sample

Faith Alive Christian Resources

Property of Faith Alive Christian Resources. All rights reserved.

So **you**'ve been asked to . . .

Mentor a Young Person



J E F F S T A M

Acknowledgments

Jeff Stam is pastor of Friendship Chapel Christian Reformed Church, Jenison, Michigan.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Scripture quotations in this publication are from the Holy Bible, Today's New International Version, © 2001, 2005 by International Bible Society. All rights reserved worldwide. Used by permission.

So You've Been Asked To . . . Mentor a Young Person. © 1998, 2008 by Faith Alive Christian Resources, 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.

1-800-333-8300

ISBN 978-1-56212-378-9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

We often hear it said that the future of our church is its youth. While that may be true, we must not forget that the “present” of our church is also very much influenced by its youth. Today’s young person plays an important role in the tomorrow of your congregation; he or she also plays an important role *now*.

Because our young people are so important to the life of the body—both today and tomorrow—we must invest ourselves in them. There are certainly many ways to do that, but one of the most effective is by modeling the Christian life. Jesus “walked the walk” with his disciples. He was at their side, applying his teaching through real-life situations. He was their Mentor.

So . . . You’ve Been Asked to Be a Mentor

Before we go further, allow me—on behalf of the young people, their parents, and the congregation—to thank you for assuming the important role of mentor. Thank you for making a personal, hands-on investment of your time and yourself in a young person’s life. Thank you too for the risk you are taking.

The very thought of developing a meaningful relationship with someone who is so different from you in so many ways can be daunting, causing even the most stouthearted adult to tremble. But you already have an unbreakable “tie that binds” in Jesus Christ. You will find that the blessings of your new relationship far outweigh the potential risks and discomforts. Welcome—may God richly bless and keep the two of you.

Let me paint a picture of a scene I witnessed recently at a morning worship service. The worship center was packed, extra chairs had been set up to accommodate the large number of visitors, and excitement and anticipation were in the air. Sixteen young people from ages fourteen to nineteen were making profession of faith. During the previous two months, each young person had developed a relationship with an adult mentor—someone who had committed him or herself to preparing the young person for this moment. These mentoring relationships became much closer than many of the teens had anticipated.

Early in the service the entire congregation read in unison a creedal statement prepared by the young people. (They had combined their personal statements of faith, which their mentors had helped them

express in writing.) Then the young people all stood and answered questions about their faith and their walk with God. Their mentors had helped them to think through their personal testimonies and to see how God had worked in their lives. They were able to state clearly what it meant to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Afterward, each mentor presented his or her young person with a liturgical stole that the pair had worked on together. On one side of the stole were handmade symbols representing the young person's beliefs; on the other side were symbols representing the spiritual gifts that he or she had discovered in the mentoring process and could now offer in service to God. It was moving to watch each young person receive a stole and explain the meaning of the symbols. They then celebrated communion with the rest of the body. It was an inspiring service.

I had the privilege of mentoring one of those young people. He was a high school senior and had lots of questions. He took his profession of faith very seriously and wanted to make sure he was well prepared for the commitment he was about to make. As I write, he's in his second year of college, and we still talk occasionally over coffee. Ours has been a meaningful relationship.

What Is a Mentor?

Good question! The answer is best given by explaining "who" is a mentor or, more correctly still, who *was* Mentor. Mentor was the tutor of Telemachus, the son of *Odysseus* in the Greek epic *The Odyssey*. From these roots we get our definition of a mentor: a wise counselor. But Mentor did much more than help Telemachus with his Roman numerals a few hours each week. He was a trainer, a disciplinarian, and a constant companion who was fully responsible for young Telemachus's health and well-being. The relationship became a close friendship in which the older, wiser man guided the younger man in the ways of life.

The name *mentor* is used today for those who share themselves in a one-on-one teaching relationship (in the context of the church we often call this *discipleship*). The apostle Paul and young Timothy had this kind of relationship. In addition to sharing his knowledge and experience, Paul poured his heart into Timothy. The relationship went far beyond any