

The Path

'A faith worth living & sharing'
Four Mentoring Sessions

Mentoring Sessions Adapted from the Belonging Kit Adrian Greenwood



Book of Kells - Symbols of the Four Evangelists- Detail of Mark (Folio 129)

Mentor Sessions

Four session adapted from the Belonging Kit

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Mentoring role

Congratulations on being a person whose spirituality is mature enough that a young person wants you as their mentor. This is a great affirmation of your faith and the youths discernment. As part of their confirmation time you are a person to whom they (your minty) feel they could share about spirituality.

The role as a mentor is that of a guide, not a teacher. A guide will have travelled the road before and notices the easy and hard parts of the journey, but will not seek to tell all they know or think the younger traveller should know. A good guide will listen to the journey of the minty and seek to broaden their perspective and understanding. A teacher may be expected to have all the answers but a guide need not have all the answers just their experience. So, enjoy getting to know this youth and their journey with Jesus.

I recommend finding five times in the term to meet with your minty. This may be easiest fortnightly on a set day or it may need various times that fit both your schedules. Seek to understand what the confinee is interested in and would like to gain from your time together. Try to engage these goals each week. ie if the goal is prayer ask about their prayer life or talk about prayer. There are resources for four meetings, the fifth meeting may be a fun activity or a general discussion of confirmation, baptism and topics of interest.



I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you.

Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine, and I am yours.

So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

(as used in the Book of Offices of the British Methodist Church, 1936)

There are four sessions adapted from the various parts of the belonging kit (Uniting Education, 1998) in the following pages. Both the mentor and young person as the minty should have their own copy.

The sessions increase in length hopefully with the depth of your conversations. The sessions are guides to help discuss belonging to the church, believing in God, believing in Jesus and continuing growth with the spirit. These are four crucial areas for spiritual formation in our faith. The resources are not by far the final word of the topics. In fact they are more narrative in nature and create a good starting point for your discussions towards confirmation. So feel free to have conversations outside this resource.

A practical hint. Sometimes it is easier to meet in a coffee shop for a milkshake/coffee rather than your home or theirs. This allows the conversation to be out in the open, away from parents hearing, and not in a strange new home. Also, it connects faith with public life and becomes an occasion with yummy food.

Feel free to chat with the confirmation baptism coordinators about your time together and any books/resources you could use.

Thank you for being willing to take this role and again congratulations.

Adrian Greenwood



Belonging to God's People

With God's help, we will live out our baptism as a loving community in Christ: nurturing one another in faith, upholding one another in prayer, and encouraging one another in service.

Affirmation of Baptism - Said by the Congregation

Reflect On

100 Generations of faith

"I had the experience of going to a church in India. It was an old church with big velvet drapes in the front that separated the sanctuary, the special place where no-one was able to go except the priests of the church. At the front there were granite stairs leading up to this sanctuary and they looked as if they had been carved out beautifully; someone had spent a long time brushing them back and making them into curved steps. Each step had this lovely bend to it. sort of dipped in the middle. A few of us naively asked about this lovely stonework - how extraordinary it was to make these carved a steps. This man translated through the interpreter and said, "I don't think you understand. he stairs were square but over the last fourteen hundred years the Christians who have knelt on them have worn them away into a curve." That's when I remembered and realised that there had been a hundred generations of Christian people who had knelt on those stairs, who had walked those paths...."

There are times when it seems that we are the only Christian, when our church is the only church. It's awe-inspiring to remember that Christians have been meeting together since Jesus walked on earth - to worship Christ, to argue about theology, to look for God in the world, to study the Bible, to hold each other accountable.

We are not alone

Ponder on

What does it mean to you to be part of God's people?

What experiences in your church have been important for you? Why?

Why is it important for you to belong to the church?

What is your prayer for the church?



Believing in God

"Pray as if everything depended upon God, and act as if everything depended on you"

Augustine

Reflect On

What do you believe?

*"In my naivety as a mere seventeen year old lassie, having only accomplished about one-eighth of what I hope to achieve in life, when asked what it is I believe in, I find **the answer doesn't exactly come to mind** as easily as preconceived knowledge might.*

*So I had to think about it... I mean sure, I believe in the sun, moon and stars, I believe in love, I believe in this beautiful planet, I believe most things I'm taught... I believe in the human race, but I also believe that **people can change and that beliefs can change...***

*So here I am in my teenage years believing passionately in the world and all its charms, knowing that I'm a luck kid and that **there probably is a God in heaven**. Believing within myself that I am invincible and that no one close to me will ever come to any harm, believing that only a happy future lies ahead, full of success... yet knowing full well that there will be failures, that **some days the sun won't shine and the car won't start...***

*Maybe 'belief' is too strong a word for the questioning, the sceptical and midly radical mind of a young adult. there are just gut reactions that I have and think about a lot, base my values and morals on and live my life 17 year old, Coco-Cola, rock and roll, pizza shop, Mickey Mouse, glow-in-the-dark, Year 12 in a coastal town life by. I like to think that **one day I'll believe in things** by questioning/straying thoughts. Maybe when I'm all grown up and worldly, hopefully happy and successful, I won't even have to think about what I believe in, I'll just know - **it'll be a part of me**. That would be nice.*

Luci Craig in John Masden (ed.0, This I believe, Random House Australia, Sydney 1996)

Ponder on

If someone asked you the question, 'What do you really believe?' how would you respond?

What things about God are the important to you?

How does what you believe in God change your every day life?

How would you describe your relationship with God?

What things can make it better?



Believing in Jesus

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." C.S Lewis

Reflect On

To believe in Jesus means we must make choices. We must think, intentionally, about the things we say and do, think and say. No longer can we think what will be best for me; rather we must think about what will be best for God's world.

'Jesus stood up to read, "The Spirit of God is upon me. because God has appointed me to bring good news to the poor, and God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of God's favour." And Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Jesus, who began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:16,18-21

*Christ has no body on Earth but ours,
no hands but ours,
no feet but ours,
Ours are eyes through which
the compassion of Christ must look out on the world.
Ours are the feet with which
he is to go about doing good.
Ours are the hands with which
he is to bless his people.*

St Thérèse of Lisieux

Ponder on

What are your images or perspectives of Jesus?

What images of Jesus makes you uncomfortable?

What images of Jesus do you relate to?

What images of Jesus do you want to follow?

Following ...

We know from reading historical texts that the person of Jesus existed. These texts tell us that there was a person by his name who lived from around 6BC to 27 AD. But knowing that Jesus lived, and actually committing your life to him are very different things. Living the way of Jesus is to think and do, in every situation, what Jesus would do. It's to change your attitude from 'what things would suit me best' to 'what things would bring about the type of world that Jesus dreamed of and worked towards'. It is to be the presence of Christ in the world.

How is Jesus present in my life?

Our lives are made up of complex relationship and activities. Often these are things we do not choose - for many years we don't get to choose whether we go to school; we don't get to choose our families; where we live, up to a certain age, is often determined for us. Other things we do get to choose - what career will we work towards; how will we spend our money; what will we do for recreation. In all the things that we do, whether we choose to do them or not, we can choose how we will respond, how we will participate, what our attitude and commitment will be.

🕒 Write a list of all the things which you are planning to do with your time over the next two weeks. It will include things like study and work, sport, church, family, friends, going to the movies, reading watching TV, cleaning, cooking etc. Be very specific in this list.

🕒 Reading through the list, take some time to think seriously about what is written, and how you believe you can follow Jesus in each of these things. Write a statement next to each activity about the type of person you believe Jesus would want you to be in that situation.

🕒 When you have finished, read through what you have written. Were your attitudes or priorities challenged? How easy was it for you to think about what Jesus wanted you to be like?



Where is Jesus in my community?

Spend some time walking around your community. Make a mental note as you do about the things that you believe that Jesus would appreciate, the things which would make him uncomfortable, the things which would make him angry.

Reflect on practical ways that you think you could be the presence of Jesus in your community. How could you get involved and express either your anger or your appreciation for the things that you see?

For example, you could become involved as a volunteer in the local community centre; you could write letters to your Member of Parliament about the lack of funding given to education in your area; you could offer to babysit, free, for a single mother who isn't able to get out into the community.

Choose an activity to do, and commit yourself to spending time over the next few weeks in that activity.

What is Jesus doing in the world?

Read the newspaper each day of the next week. As you do so, make a note of the places and issues in the world which are particularly tense and difficult.

🕒 Find out as much information about these situations as you can - through books, talking to people, the internet, etc. Think about how people in those situations, and also people like you a long way away from them, can represent Jesus in those situations. You might like to take some action, like writing letters, donating to a charity, talking to your friends about what is happening else where.

🕒 Pray for these situations, How do you think Jesus could be present in them? What do you think that Jesus would want for that situation - Justice? Peace? Reconciliation? Pray for the people who are trying to live the way of Jesus in that situation.



Reflect

With your minister or elder, talk about your responses to each of the three activities, in particular how doing these things has changed the way you think about your priorities, your attitudes or your actions. Talk about the question 'What does it mean to believe in Jesus?'

Reflect on the Stories you've heard and the experiences you've had throughout the unit. Decide which of these would best reflect what you believe about what it means to believe in Jesus.



Growing in the Spirit

"For centuries, contemplatives have opened their day with the prayer:

"Thank you, O God, for waking me this morning; you didn't have to".

Most poor communities in the third world believe this more deeply than those of us do in the west.

Bryant Myers

When the disciples admitted that they wanted some help in their prayer life, Jesus didn't laugh at them, or move into a theological treatise about what prayer is. He simply taught them a prayer which they could use.

Read through this prayer, and make it yours by writing or drawing your response to each part of the prayer. Do this slowly, and allow some space to think about what this prayer means to you, and how it can change you.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

*"We have heard about you, God of all power.
You made the world out of kindness,
creating order out of confusion;
you made each one of us in your image;
your fingerprint is on every soul.
So we praise you."*

Iona Community, "We have heard about you," in A Wee Worship Book, Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1989

your kingdom come

"Blessed be the works of your hands,
O Holy One.

Blessed be these hands that have touched life.
Blessed be these hands that have nurtured creativity.
Blessed be these hands that have held pain.
Blessed be these hands that have embraced with passion.
Blessed be these hands that have tended gardens.
Blessed be these hands that have closed anger.
Blessed be these hands that have planted new seeds.

Blessed be these hands that have harvested ripe fields.

Blessed be these hands that have cleaned, washed,
mopped, scrubbed.

Blessed be these hands that have become knotty with
age.

Blessed be these hands that are wrinkled and scarred
from doing justice.

Blessed be these hands that have reached out and been
received.

Blessed be these hands that hold the promise of the
future.

Blessed be the work of your hands.
O Holy One."

Diann Neu, "In Praise of Hands: A hand Blessing," "Waterwheel 2, no. 1 (Winter 1989), Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual: Silver Spring USA

your will be done, on earth, as in heaven

"Pray that the Lord may soften the hardness of your
soul.

Pray that the Lord may forgive the sins you confess to
him.

Don't pray that what you want may come to pass.
It does not necessarily coincide with the will of God.

Pray rather as you have been taught, saying:
'your will be done in me!'

Pray that the will of God may be done in everything,
He in fact, wants what is good and useful for your soul,
while you are not always seeking that and only that"

Evagrius, 'Sentences on Prayer' in Thomas Spidlik, Drinking from the patristic Fountain, New City Press: London 1992



Give us today our daily bread

"If you have two loaves of bread,
sell one and buy a hyacinth."
Hungarian Proverb

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin
against us**

"Only on petition in the Lord's Prayer
has any condition attached to it: it is
the petition for forgiveness."

William Temple

Save us from the time of trial

"We raise our eyes in prayer through
bars, darkly.

Together with a thousand prisoner in
their cells
and with many more thousands in
the larger prison of our country.
We pray for freedom and even more
urgently, for life.

As nameless executioners salvage
those whom they used to merely
torture and detain
and both children and parents slowly
but surely die
of sickness that has many names
and only one name.

We ask for faith
to see that death and prison
are not forever
that life and freedom will prevail.

We ask for faith to celebrate even
while we mourn
knowing that death and prison
are already signs of a people's
struggle for freedom and life.

We raise our voices in prayer
through bars, boldly
believing there will be an answer
as our people awaken.
Amen

*Edicio de la Torre, the Philippines, in Masao
Tokenaka and Ron O'Grady, The Bible
through Asian Eyes, Pace Publishing:
Auckland 1991*

and deliver us from evil

"Precious Lord, take my hand,
lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
through the storm, through the night,
lead me on to the light'
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead
me home."

*Thomas A Dorsey, "Precious Lord", in United
Methodist Hymnal, Unichappell Music
Milwaukee*

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours**

"You are a fire, ever burning and
never consumed
You are a light, ever shining and
never fading
You are goodness beyond all
goodness,
beauty beyond all beauty,
wisdom beyond all wisdom"

*Catherine of Siena, "Sea light, fire," from the
Dialogue, in Robery Van de Weyer (ed) The
HarperCollins book of Prayer, Harper San
Francisco: San Francisco, 1993*

now and forever. Amen

So be it

Prayer ...

For many people, prayer is one of the most difficult parts of Christianity - does God listen? What should we pray for? Are we trying to change God's mind? Some people have quiet times with God every day, but others find that frustrating and difficult. When we get prayer right, though, our faith takes on a much richer dimension. Growing in the spirit isn't easy, but it's exciting and worthwhile! These activities will help you to think about what does prayer mean to your life, and to explore the best ways that you can pray.



Disciplined Prayer.

Sometimes we fall into the trap of thinking that prayer is working when we see results, or we 'feel good'. Another way of looking at prayer is to think of it as a way of maintaining a relationship with God. Somebody once said that "I don't say anything to God. I just sit and look at him and let him look at me." There is a time when we should be talking to God, but often out prayer should simply be opening ourselves to being with God. This takes patience, discipline and commitment.

Commit yourself to a pattern of prayer for the next two weeks. Decide when and where you think prayer will work best, and set aside at least fifteen minutes a day.

Some people find that prayer works best for them, with a daily devotional guide. Others like to read a chapter out of the Bible and then to reflect on that. Some people write a journal. Others read hymns or songs. Some people 'pray the news' by reading the newspaper and praying for each difficult situation. You may want to experiment with each of these, or just to be quiet. Even if it doesn't feel like it's working, commit yourself to continuing. What you feel isn't as important as what you are actually doing. At the end of the two weeks, think about what has happened over that time. When did it work for you? Have you noticed a change in your relationship with God? Have you seen changes in your own life, or in the world around?



Active Prayer.

Prayer isn't always talking and listening. Sometimes we discover new depths to our relationship with God when we express our thoughts in forms other than words. Even for people who aren't particularly creative, taking a risk and moving into an area which is different can often help them to see new things in their faith.

Before you begin, decide whether you would like to use drawing, painting or clay, and find the appropriate materials.

Open yourself to God, and then draw, paint or create a representation of your life from birth to the present time. Think of important events which have helped to make you who you are today. You may like to represent God in your creation as well - what you imagine God to be like, and where you imagine God to be in your life. When you have finished, reflect on what you've made. Think about these Questions:

- 🕒 What does this say about the sort of person I have grown to be?
- 🕒 What are some of the crucial points in my life journey? How do I think that those time have helped to 'shape' me?
- 🕒 Where can I see evidence of God's action in this history of mine?

How do we pray?

Spend some time thinking about the way you pray (remember, this isn't a guilt trip! If you find prayer difficult, or it seems to be a waste of time, be really honest about that. It's good to remember that Jesus' disciples also needed help with their prayer life!.)

🕒 Write down times when you have felt very comfortable praying, and have known that your relationship with God was growing through your prayer. Be specific as possible about the details of those times.

🕒 Think about these questions: Where were you? Did you use words or silence? How did you grow or change as a result of praying?

🕒 Ask two other people you know to do the same thing, and then to show you what they have written.

🕒 Think about what has been written. How would you 'define' good prayer for yourself?

Reflect

With your minister or elder, think back over the activities that you have done throughout this unit. Talk together about what prayer means to your faith, and how you would like to develop prayer in the future. If you have found these activities difficult, then talk together about some options for different types of prayer, and encourage each other in what you are doing.

N O T E S P A C E