

Leading with Vitality Council Reflection: Mentors

How to use the Leading with Vitality Council Reflection: Share this document with the Council members prior to the Council meeting and add 15 minutes to the beginning of the agenda for shared reflection. Prior to the meeting, invite one member of the Council to lead the discussion. Here's a simple outline for how the shared reflection might go.

First, the reflection leader reads the scripture passage aloud. Second, the reflection leader highlights one idea from the reflection that the reflection leader found meaningful or challenging. Third, the reflection leader uses one or more of the reflection questions below to encourage discussion. When the discussion draws to a close, the reflection leader closes the time with the prayer using the prayer below or another prayer they create.

Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NRSV)

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Mentors

I am not sure what I was expecting to happen when I said 'yes' to being a mentor, but my 'yes' opened the door to a wonderful relationship filled with mutual learning and growth.

Traditionally, to be a mentor means

- **modeling** a roll, behavior, or activity,
- **sharing** your experience in a roll, behavior, or activity, and
- **accompanying** another person as they learn a roll, behavior, or activity.

Over time as a mentor, I shared my experience with ministry. I provided samples of bulletins, letters, and agendas. I served as a sounding board to work through situations and generally offered a listening ear. The mentor relationship, however, was not simply one way. Through the relationship, I encountered new voices in theology. I saw a different perspective on congregational ministry and discovered the priorities, passions, and concerns of a younger generation. At times it was hard to tell who was mentoring whom.

While we don't always use the term 'mentor' in congregational life, modeling helpful practices and accompanying individuals along the way can play a powerful role in cultivating congregational vitality both for the mentor and the mentee.

Here are a few places where mentoring relationships could be developed and prove beneficial for everyone involved.

- **Faith Formation Ministries** – Pairing someone new to the faith with someone who has a history with the faith provides both individuals a new perspective.

- **Music Ministries** – The language of faith is often translated into music. Pairing someone who knows church music with someone who is learning can create a wonderful new melody.
- **Leadership** – Instead of electing someone or recruiting someone to a position and wishing them the best of luck, imagine the power of having an existing leader share what they have learned with a future leader.
- **Helping Ministries** – Effective helping ministries are often grounded in relationship. Walking with someone in their time of need instead of assuming you know the appropriate next step creates better outcomes.
- **Generational/Life Stage** – Pairing individuals from different generations/stages of life can create opportunities for genuine growth and development.

Reflection by Pastor John Wertz, Jr.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How have mentors helped you learn and grow in your life?
2. What opportunities do you see for mentoring in your congregation?
3. What is the first step to creating at least one mentoring relationship in the congregation?

Prayer:

Loving God, we give you thanks for all those who have gone before us in the faith and for the ways they have shared your Word and your love through their lives. Give us opportunities to accompany others on their journey through faith and life and help us to encounter people of faith who will walk with us as we seek to be your hearts, hands, and voices in the world. Amen.