

**STUDIES IN MINISTRY MINOR**  
**SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST MEETINGS**  
**Between Mentors and Students**

**OVERALL GOALS OF MENTORING:** To listen to the student, to encourage the student to listen to God in Scripture and to bring all things to God in prayer as a daily response to life, to help the student discern gifts, strengths, and callings.

**1. Meet in person.**

- The student has the responsibility of contacting you. (If you have not heard from your student mentee by September 9, please contact the student yourself.)
- You are welcome to meet the student on campus, in a coffee shop, or in your office or home. Others have enjoyed meeting in the “garden level” or atrium of Western Seminary, in the Kletz, and in nooks scattered throughout the Science Center and Martha Miller. Your students should know where some of these spots are if you don’t.

**2. Begin to establish trust and demonstrate hospitality by:**

- Telling your story. Share some of your background, and how you came to faith in Christ. (Did you grow up going to church? When did you first become aware of God’s love for you? What churches, relationships, and events have been important in your faith journey? How has your faith shaped your life decisions?)
- Sharing about your family, a bit of your vocational calling, and your passions. As is appropriate, share your struggles and joys as well. This can be continued in the next several sessions you have together.
- Asking your student questions that will prompt him/her to share about his/her faith journey, background, family, calling, and passions. This can also be continued into the next session(s).

**3. Clarify your mentoring goals and expectations:**

- Identify what is most important to the mentee to learn or experience through the mentoring relationship. Find out if your mentee has been in a mentoring relationship before and what he/she learned from that experience.
- Ask your mentee if he/she has any specific goals or areas he/she would like to explore. See if the mentee has any particular expectations or hopes of you as the mentor. Articulate any expectations or hopes that you have.
- Once you have identified some hopes and goals together, you can explore what you’d like to do to help meet those goals.
  - If, for example, your student would like help in discernment of calling, perhaps reading and discussing a couple chapters of Jerry Sittser’s book *The Will of God as a Way of Life* (chapters 12 and 13) could help you to explore the differences between career and calling. (Please see the “suggested reading list” at the back of the folder for other books on this topic).
  - If establishing a daily time to meet God in Scripture is important, you could use the Lectio Divina style of reading and contemplating Scripture together (please see the “suggested reading list” at the back of the folder).

- If the student would like to explore his/her gifts and strengths, you can read a book together about spiritual gifts or help the student take a personality or spiritual gifts test. (Please see the “suggested reading list” at the back of the folder for books on this topic. The student can do some strengths and personality assessment through Career Services. You can also find tests online at such sites as [www.keirsey.com](http://www.keirsey.com).)
- If you decide to read a book together, discuss if there will be homework. How much will be read? Do you each want to bring questions/topics to discuss?

**4. Spend some time reflecting on which spiritual discipline you would like to practice together.** We are asking you and your mentee to intentionally practice spiritual disciplines throughout your mentoring relationship. We’ve provided guidelines on four spiritual practices and we’d suggest that you incorporate one into your relationship at the start (see additional sheets).

**5. If your student is beginning an internship,** you will want to learn more about the internship and what the student is excited and nervous about as he/she begins this experience. You will also want to make sure to leave some space to talk about the internship each time you meet.

**6. Let your mentee know that your relationship with him/her is confidential.** Emphasizing confidentiality will be important in establishing a safe place for sharing, although you will need to let someone know if the student is in mental or physical danger. Your mentee may also want to know that you are NOT grading him/her.

- If a serious issue arises involving the mental and/or physical health of your mentee, you need to contact Marcia right away so she can be aware of the situation and determine if someone within Hope’s Counseling Center needs to be notified. Marcia: 616 395 7245.
- If you cannot reach Marcia and the situation could be considered a crisis, please call the Hope College operator and you will be connected to the counselor on call: 616 395 7770. Hope has a counselor on call 24 hours a day.

**7. Before you depart, identify a regular time to meet that you can both incorporate into your schedule. Also pick a regular meeting location and discuss what method you will use to communicate with each other.** Our hope is that the two of you will communicate once a week either by email, phone, or in person.

- You may also want to discuss expectations regarding who will pay for food, coffee, etc. when you meet.

**8. Always end each time together in prayer.**

- The student will likely welcome your prayers for him/her and find that especially encouraging. He/she may also want to pray for you.

**9. To continue to get to know each other, at the next session you may want to share more of your life stories from childhood to the present time.** You can each take turns sharing about your childhood and people, places, traditions, and events that were especially formative. Other questions for you each to answer: What events forced you to grow up? Have you had any life changing events? What big decisions have you faced? What has God taught you through these events and relationships? As you have shared these stories with one another, what do you find you have in common with each other?