

Oklahoma Youth Ministry Mentor Project

Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the Oklahoma Youth Ministry Mentorship Program is to promote excellence in Oklahoma Youth Ministry by pairing experienced youth ministers (mentors) whose lives and ministries demonstrate evidence of the Holy Spirit's leading with other youth ministers (apprentices) who are seeking to hone their professional skills, improve their leadership abilities, and sharpen their spiritual sensitivity. The mentor program is an extension of and serves to support the *Excellence in Youth Ministry Project*.

Structure

Mentorship Team

Each mentorship team consists of one mentor and one to four apprentices.

Time Requirements

Yearly

Mentorship groups will be formed for a term of one calendar year. Mentorship groups will meet autonomously, once a month, during eight months of the year beginning in January (initial contact and formation of the group will take place in November). Because youth ministry is event-heavy in the summer months, groups will not be required to meet during those months only maintain communication with one another. December will be an optional final meeting. During the month of November at the end of the program, all participants will take part in the evaluation phase.

Monthly

Mentorship groups should meet at regular monthly intervals as determined by the group. (For example: the first Monday of the month, every fourth Tuesday, etc.) Each meeting should last approximately two to three hours, not including driving time. *This will not happen without priority planning. Priority planning is the dedicated act of assigning time for an event or activity, ensuring that it takes place.*

Weekly

Mentors should expect to spend approximately one hour each week in evaluation or preparation for monthly meetings. Gathering information, making contact with apprentices, and praying for the entire mentorship team and process are essential to the success of the mentoring process.

Apprentices should expect to spend an average of an hour or more each week in preparation for monthly meetings. Completion of assignments, implementation of lessons learned, and prayer for the entire mentorship team are all essential to the success of the mentoring process.



Logistics

Monthly mentorship team meetings are to be held at a location to be determined by the mentor. The location should be convenient for him/her, yet take into consideration the length of driving time required by apprentice youth ministers.

Cost

All members of a mentorship team should expect to cover all of their own expenditures, including gas, mileage, food, toll, etc. Each should consider presenting such expenditures for reimbursement to the church where he/she is employed according to the church's individual policy for handling such requests.

Getting Started:

-Sign up for the project on skopos.org/mentorme

Upon sign up you will be sent an information packet and assigned to a mentor group.

-Await contact by your mentor regarding your first meeting.

Mentor groups will begin meeting in January or February.

It is encouraged that all leaders participating in the OKYM Mentor Program also participate in the Excellence in Youth Ministry Project.



The Mentoring Process

Curriculum content

During the course of the one-year commitment, mentorship teams will discuss eight general topic areas related to youth ministry as predetermined by the youth ministry team of the BGCO, stemming from four areas of emphasis (Love, Investment, Proclamation, and Proficiency) in the Oklahoma Youth ministry Excellence Project (see below). Within the parameters of each of the general topic areas, mentors will have the opportunity to choose from several sub-topics for a more specific and in-depth discussion during any given mentorship team meeting. Subtopics should be chosen on the basis of a mentor's expertise and the needs and interests of his/her apprentice(s).

Mentors will choose eight topics from the ten that follow. It is required that the first five topics (*) be covered with every apprentice. The mentor/team can then choose three of the final five options.

*Personal Spiritual Disciplines:

Ministry exists out of a life that worships, has been forgiven and is gifted for the task. However, ministry also drains your worship, your grace and your gifts. How can you minister and still be a growing Christian? How can you express your love for God through your family, your relationships, your rest and your work?

*Planning Youth Ministry:

There is a big difference between babysitting youth and equipping them. If we are not careful, we will fill a calendar, plan a year, and not intentionally reach students or meet their needs.

*Parents:

Parents are not the enemy of youth ministry, they are part of youth ministry. If you see parents as, "in the way" then you are missing a major part of youth ministry. Many students attend church whose parents do not. Some parents assume they are the youth minister and the parent. So what is your plan and what resources are available for helping your students grow in Christ through ministry to their parents?

*Sunday School/ Small Groups:

For most churches, the backbone of weekly ministry is Sunday school. It is also the toughest time and place for youth ministry in most communities. How can you design Sunday school (or small group ministry) so that it meets the goals of the ministry, rather than being the goal of the ministry? How can you use Sunday school (or small groups) as the primary strategy to connect students to Jesus, His truth, His community, and His mission?

*Evangelism:

Evangelism is a scary word to most people, but especially to most students. If you take a look at all the students who go to church in your town on a typical Sunday and all the students in the schools in your town, how many students are still left to reach for Christ? How is that going to happen?

-Staff Relationships:

Ministry would be easy, if it did not include people. Following would be easy, if it did not include leaders leading. No person in the church is perfect and no pastor or fellow staff member is perfect. Can you learn to serve with joy and develop great working relationships when you do not always agree with every staff member?

-Being a Role Model:

When you are a minister to students, they watch every area of your life to see what is “in bounds” and what is “out of bounds.” You are not just a minister on Sunday and Wednesday. How are you keeping yourself qualified to minister and challenging students to follow you in these areas of influence?

-Taking the Core Deeper:

In every group, there are a few students that have incredible interest in growing in Christ. The core group of students may attend for social reasons or spiritual reasons, but if you help them grow in their faith, they have incredible potential for the kingdom. How can you push them deeper and still bring the others along?

-Missions:

Missions is not just something you do, it is who we are as Christians. It is international and it is local. But, for some youth ministries, the missions focus is local and only an occasional project. What can be done to help open the eyes of your students to their purpose in sharing the love of God with the world?

-Camp / Retreats:

Youth ministers are not travel agents, but we do seem to take a lot of trips. Planning a successful camp or retreat is more than securing a bus and good housing. If the group is taking a trip, there should be a goal, and the whole experience should be designed to accomplish that goal.

Anatomy of a Meeting

Each mentorship team meeting should last approximately three hours.

The initial portion of this time should be spent catching up with one another’s lives and in accountability for personal spiritual development. The second portion of this time should be spent in review of the previous month’s lesson/assignment. At this time, apprentices will present their completed assignments to the group, sharing verbally any new insights that they have gained and asking any questions that the assignment may have raised. Mentors should respond appropriately, answering questions and making initial observations about the completed homework assignments.

The last portion of time should be spent addressing the topic chosen for that meeting by the mentor. Mentors should discuss the topic and allow apprentices to ask any questions that they have and attempt to answer those questions thoughtfully and comprehensively.

At the end of each mentorship team meeting, mentors will assign topic-related homework to the apprentices to be completed before the next scheduled mentorship team meeting.

Mentors should then provide information on the topic of discussion for the next mentorship meeting. Apprentices should study this information during the next month in order to facilitate good discussion the topic at the next meeting.

Apprentice Youth Minister Responsibilities

Apprentice

An apprentice is any youth minister, regardless of experience level, who feels that he/she could benefit from having a relationship with a mentor and meets the following criteria:

- Has responded to the call of God to vocational ministry.
- Is a practicing youth minister (paid, full-time, bi-vo, or volunteer).
- Has a desire to grow and mature both personally and professionally.
- Is whole-heartedly seeking God's direction in his/her personal and professional life.
- Is open to encouragement and constructive criticism.
- Is able to keep a confidence and to commit to intercessory prayer.
- Will take a professional approach to the mentoring process. Apprentices should approach the mentoring process as an opportunity to better themselves personally and professionally, be involved in the mentoring process, arriving on time to meetings, coming to meetings spiritually, mentally, and physically prepared (required materials in hand), and carrying out the remainder of their responsibilities "as unto the Lord."
(Col. 3:23)
- Will be an active learner. Apprentices should approach this learning opportunity with a teachable spirit, accepting all lessons prepared and presented by the mentors with an open mind, prayerfully discerning what it is that God wants them to glean from each lesson. Apprentices should be willing to share freely and honestly, laying themselves open to loving and constructive criticism, and should always complete assignments to the very best of their ability, making a sincere effort to improve in areas of difficulty.
- Will pray for the members of their mentorship team and the mentoring process.

Evaluation and Terms of Completion

The formal mentoring process as outlined in this document is to be completed within one calendar year, beginning in August with an initial contact of apprentices by their mentors and ending in August of the following year with the completion of formal evaluations of mentors and apprentices and of formal self-evaluations by all team members.

Evaluation

Apprentices. The evaluation of apprentices is to be approached as an ongoing process, beginning with an initial self-evaluation by the apprentice and ending with an evaluation by the assigned mentor.

- Initial self-evaluation. The initial self-evaluation is to be completed by apprentices using eiym.org. This initial self-evaluation is to be made available to the mentor.

This self-evaluation will serve as a beginning point from which to evaluate and chart the progress and personal growth of apprentices throughout the mentoring process.

- Monthly evaluation. Mentors should always record their thoughts concerning an apprentice in anticipation of or in response to monthly mentorship team meetings, keeping track of questions asked, insights gained, growth demonstrated, or struggles had by apprentices along with any other notes which a mentor deems worthy of recording. The purpose of keeping a monthly record of an apprentice's progress is to help mentors better prepare effective lessons for their apprentices, to highlight areas in which mentors might encourage apprentices, and to aid in the year-end evaluation of an apprentice.
- Year-end evaluation by mentor. In November, mentors will carefully and prayerfully complete a year-end evaluation of the growth and performance of each apprentice that was assigned to him/her. This evaluation will be used to determine whether or not an apprentice has completed the Oklahoma Youth Ministry Mentorship Program.

Documentation

Upon the successful completion of the Oklahoma Youth Ministry Mentorship Program, each mentor and apprentice will receive written verification of his/her very significant achievement. Such achievement is worthy of professional documentation.

Both the Mentor Project & Leadership Communities will kick off in January. Yearly promotion, enlistment, & training will culminate at OKYM Forum in November.



The Excellence in Youth Ministry (EIYM) Project

The ***Excellence in Youth Ministry*** (EIYM) project is designed to unite youth pastors around a set of shared values and to help these youth pastors lead their church's youth ministry with excellence. There are three components to the project:

1 Statement of Values

This is a list of personal and ministerial values developed around Jesus' commandment to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Mark 12:30). Our desire is that every youth pastor in Oklahoma will commit to participate in EIYM. The EIYM webpage on skopos.org will populate a list of youth pastors/leaders that will be available for all to see. As the list of youth pastors grows, hopefully others will be encouraged to join in as well.

BIBLICAL COMMAND

Love God with all your **Heart**

Love God with all your **Soul**

Love God with all your **Mind**

Love God with all your **Strength**

PERSONAL/MINISTERIAL VALUE

To **LOVE** well

Seek and provide **INVESTMENT**

Faithfully **PROCLAIM** the word of God

Demonstrate **PROFICIENCY** in work

2 Personal Evaluation

This is an evaluation tool to be used by a youth pastor to annually assess his or her areas of excellence and of needed growth. It is critical, once committing to a plan of action, to evaluate one's progress in that commitment. The EIYM Personal Evaluation is a series of questions related to the nineteen value statements that comprise EIYM. A copy of the Personal Evaluation is located in this booklet. It can also be accessed online for convenient personal use or as a part of the Staff Investment Plan.

3 Staff Investment Plan – Each participant in EIYM will also be given the option online to participate in the Staff Investment Plan. This investment plan is an opportunity for a senior pastor or supervisor to evaluate the ministry of the youth pastor, via the following:

- Encouragement in areas of ministry success
- Exhortation in areas of needed improvement
- Investment in varied ministry responsibilities.

For more information on ***Excellence in Youth Ministry*** visit eiy.org