

Adult Mentors

According to Dr. Roland Martinson, only 10 percent of youth who grow up in the church will remain active in the church without ever leaving. Of those 10 percent, one common factor is having five or more mentors of vital faith in addition to their parents.

Mentors are a part of a community of adults who reinforce Camp Hope values that help young people achieve their potential and discover their strengths well beyond serving at summer camp staff. Mentoring provides an assurance that young people will have a support system of adults who care about them and help them through day-to-day situations. Without immediate intervention by caring adults, they could make choices that not only undermine their future but, ultimately, the social and economic well-being of others.

The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus shepherding his small group of disciples and equipping them to carry on Christ's work after his death and resurrection. In the New Testament, Paul writes to the Thessalonians:

"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us."
- 1 Thessalonians 2:8

The Body of Christ is charged with loving God and loving neighbors. This happens through cross-generational, personal, trusted relationships, most often at home!

A mentor is a caring, adult friend who devotes time to a young person. Mentors can be just a little older than the youth or they can be senior citizens. The main goal is to match students and adults according to their interests in order to facilitate healthy relationships striving to nurture and support youth on their faith journey. Mentoring ministries that are cross-generational honor and share the gifts of the whole community.

Congregations are encouraged to identify two key leaders who will take the responsibility of recruiting and equipping adults to be mentors as part of their service on the Ministry Team.



Generally, what do mentors do?

Mentors devote time to cultivating an intentional relationship with a young person.

Mentors are AAA adults** (Available, Affirming & Authentic) loving the younger generations into Christian maturity.

Mentors overlook what people deserve in order to give them what they need.

Mentors give positive regard to younger people whether they earn it or not.

Mentors listen.

Mentors encourage

Mentors coach young people in solving problems.



Camp Hope congregations are encouraged to choose two adults who will oversee the mentoring ministry. These adults are called Connectors. They should be volunteers who are not the youth and family minister of a congregation. It is essential that the Connectors are respected by both youth and adults in the congregation. Camp Hope encourages these ministry team leaders to be part of a larger ministry team that supports their role and oversees communication between Connectors and congregational leadership.

Qualifications for Connectors and Mentors

- Known as AAA Adult with student and adult leaders in congregation
- Be at least 21 years old
- Are actively involved in congregational life, including worship and prayer
- Have communication and relational gifts
- Meet Safe Haven Guidelines per the congregation
- Minimum of 6 weeks, a maximum of 1 year time commitment

Responsibilities

- Identify adult mentors within congregation (with the support of congregational leadership)
- Train mentors using the appendix resource for this chapter.
- Match student leaders with adult mentors (It is best when ministry team leaders invite others in the congregation to serve as mentors.)
- Check in with mentors and student leaders on a regular basis before, during and after Camp Hope
- Be in conversation with congregational staff and Camp Hope Ministry Team for support
- Meet with the youth before Camp Hope begins to help them prepare for serving. This might include shopping for supplies, organizing room, etc.
- Check in with youth almost daily during camp to problem solve, encourage and pray together.
- Celebrate Camp Hope and follow up after camp ends.

People Support What They Help Create!

Build a solid foundation through congregational ownership by involving people from the beginning of the Camp Hope planning cycle—but it's never too late to ask people to help.

10 essentials for successfully involving volunteer leadership:

1. Pray for your people, for the ministry and for the opportunity to share leadership.
2. Know your people. Sit with them, one on one, listening to their hopes, dreams, passions, concerns, etc.
3. Discover the gifts of the people in your congregation.
4. Identify the needs you are trying to fill.
5. Communicate clear expectations regarding time and length of commitment.
6. Align the needs with the gifts.
7. Coach leaders as they take on responsibility.
8. Care for leaders as they serve.
9. Evaluate with leaders after they serve.
10. Thank leaders after serving.