

Time to Get Discipling!

I took my teens to a fantastic event that gave me the shove I needed to get serious about intentional mentor/discipling relationships for my youth. NMI has been talking about discipling and mentoring a lot lately. That's because it's biblical, Christologically faithful, and relevant for younger generations. Plus, who understands the call to "Go and make disciples" better than NMI!

We all know we need to develop intentional discipling relationships, and our teens are great targets for mentees. But there are so many questions:

- How do we get started?
- What if we end up staring blankly at each other over a Starbucks table in awkward silence?
- Is there a format I should use?
- What if I ask a teen if I can mentor her/him and he looks at me like I am from Mars?

Back to the summer event I mentioned earlier. Our teens attended a session all about mentor relationships. To my surprise, the teens were wild about the idea; and many set out to find adults to mentor them. Here are the most helpful things I picked about mentor relationships with teenagers:

1. Let teens know about the importance and benefits of being disciplined or mentored by someone who has been in the faith longer than they have. Especially if they sense a call to the mission field, they need to be disciplined. Encourage them, and let them pick a mentor with the counsel of their youth pastor or parent.
2. The teen should choose a mentor based on the answers to these two questions:
 - a. What Christian characteristics do I need to develop?
 - b. Who do I see demonstrating that characteristic with strength and grace?A teen called to missions might choose one of the five characteristics in the "Developing Tomorrow's Missionaries" page on the NMI Web site (www.nazarenemissions.org/10208/story.aspx)
3. Once the teen has chosen a mentor, asked that person to mentor him/her, and the potential mentor has agreed, let the mentor relationship flow out of those two questions. Keep the conversation specific to the area or characteristic where the teen wants to grow. This prevents you from trying to cover anything, everything, and nothing at all.
4. Set a timeline for the relationship. Start by meeting twice a month for six months. After that, the teen might want to continue with the same mentor or select a different characteristic to work on and, therefore, find a new mentor.



These tips have given my youth group a solid foundation to get discipling. I hope it helps the youth in your church as well!

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