



Section for Diaconal Mentors

Note:

- Additional online resources, including outlines and readings for mentoring sessions, can be found on the CCS website – www.ccsonline.ca
- <http://ccsonline.ca/resources/student-resources/field-kit/>

Expectations for Diaconal/Vocational Mentor

Role of the Diaconal/Vocational Mentor

to assist with diaconal identity formation for the student as related to educational ministry

- to provide a diaconal model of ministry in the area of integrating educational ministry
- to support the student in reflection on vocational and theological issues in the field placement
- to encourage intentional reflection, questions, analysis and the development of diaconal perspective
- to assist the student in identifying her/his learnings from experience in the field
- to be supportive of the student in their field placement particularly in relation to issues of team ministry, gender issues, and understanding of ministry while respecting the role of the learning facilitator

Expectations of the Diaconal/Vocational Mentor

- a face to face meeting once per month, if possible, for 2-4 hours; recognizing that some of this time might be in the form of telephone and/or email conversations between meetings (about 8 or 9 meetings a year)
- participation in fall CCS staff-led orientation session
- a minimum of a one year commitment during the field placement phase with the possibility of extending the relationship if both people agree that this would be beneficial
- willingness to offer reflections to the staff of the Centre for Christian Studies at least twice yearly regarding the learning and the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship
- facilitating a) the mid term review and b) the final review and assessment at the field site with the facilitator, representative from the local committee and student (see the accountability section of this resource)

Qualities Needed in the Diaconal/Vocational Mentor

- clarity about diaconal/vocational identity (role, style, perspective)
- graduate from a diaconal preparation program or familiar with and supportive of diaconal ministry
- willingness to work collaboratively with the Centre for Christian Studies
- good listening skills
- ability to challenge appropriately and also to offer support and affirmation
- ability to engage in theological reflection and in deepening the spiritual life of the student and the spiritual dimensions of the mentoring relationship
- hopeful about ministry without denying negative experiences
- able to facilitate identification of learnings from experience

Introductory Session for Mentors and Students Working Together for the First Time

Introduction to the Mentoring Process

The diaconal mentoring aspect of the Centre for Christian Studies Field Placement is intended to contribute to the development and nurture of diaconal identity for students involved in diaconal ministry. By diaconal identity, we mean a sense of self-understanding in ministry that is shaped by:

- knowledge and appreciation of, and identification with, the history of diaconal ministry,
- a perspective on ministry that is grounded in the historic and current experience of people engaged in ministries of education, service, and pastoral care.

The mentoring process is designed to offer an opportunity for shared reflection on diaconal identity, on issues in ministry and their particular significance for people in diaconal ministry. We hope that this process will be of value to both people involved - the student and the mentor - and that the opportunities for learning will be mutual. At the same time we recognize that the process is a requirement of the program for the student and is a volunteer contribution for the mentor. There will be times in the process where the conversation will appropriately focus specifically on the needs of the student; there will be other times when a greater degree of mutuality may be possible. It will be important to maintain clarity that while there may be mutual benefit, the intent is to meet the needs of the student. We hope that the mentoring process will encourage honest searching and reflective conversations.

There will be a different process for each year of mentoring - recognizing that for those entering their first year of theme studies or beginning with a new mentor, there will need to be some initial time to build trust with each other. This kit includes an introductory session for those people entering into a new relationship with their mentor.

Session 1: Getting Acquainted

1. Introduce yourselves; talk about the ways in which you have been involved in the life of the church and what gives you energy and hope in this work. Reflect on how it feels to be part of/connected with the Centre for Christian Studies Program.
2. Decide when, where, how often you will meet and discuss a format for your meetings. Determine the focus for your next meeting. Set up an agreement or covenant that will guide your work.
3. What does the word "mentor" mean to each of you? How does your past experience influence the expectations that you bring to the role?
4. Discuss what you mean by the word "reflection." What do you understand "theological reflection" to mean to each of you? How are these words related?

In order to generate discussion you may want to consider these interpretations:

Reflection: taking time to think back over experience, interpret what happened, compare it to the theories you know, identify learnings.

Theological Reflection: making meaning, relating issues or events to your understanding of God or life's purpose, identifying what gives life, finding God's presence or finding our role in acting with God; "Faith seeking understanding"(St. Anselm).

Questions could include:

- who are we?: the nature of humanity (theological anthropology, sin, evil, place in creation, image of

- God, etc.)
- what is our task?: our vocation (missiology (nature of mission), ecclesiology (role of the church), eschatology (understanding of the realm of God), ministry, etc.)
- who is God?: our perspectives on the divine (images, Christology, Pneumenology (Spirit), Sophia (Wisdom), spirituality, etc.)

Next Sessions

A document of mentoring sessions for the theme year is posted on the CCS website. The mentoring sessions are found on the ["Field Kit"](#) page (under "Resources" → "For Students") under a heading called "Diaconal Mentor Resources". There are also posted readings for the mentoring sessions

In the document for each theme year, an order of discussion topics is suggested. However, the order is not prescriptive nor are the questions intended to be limiting. Please structure your time together in ways that suit your particular circumstances. We believe that all of the topics are important but understand that covering a few in a thorough fashion is better than covering them all in a perfunctory way. Some might be continuing in the role of diaconal mentor for subsequent years with the same student.

As indicated above, it is not our intent that you necessarily cover each of the suggested sessions or cover them in the proposed order; they are here as resources only. It may be important to focus on a particular theme at a particular time in response to an issue that has surfaced in the field placement. You may want to combine two of the themes. Use your own discernment about what approaches will work most effectively in your context.