



C R E S C E N D O

Lives of Lasting Purpose

MENTORING SMALL GROUP STUDY
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The Evangelical Covenant Church

MAKE & DEEPEN DISCIPLES

CRESCENDO: MENTORING

SMALL GROUP STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Crescendo mentoring small group study! This is a follow-up resource to the CRESCENDO: An Ascent to Vital Living small group study. Crescendo is an initiative of the Evangelical Covenant Church's Make and Deepen Disciples mission priority that provides resources based on a framework for ministry to, with, and by boomers and older adults.

This study is designed with small groups in mind, but you may choose to use it for individual study or even in a large group setting with smaller breakout sessions. How you use it is up to your context and needs. Each Session consists of four parts, based on the elements of Christian worship: Gathering, Word, Response, and Sending. The sessions are designed for small or large groups and can be completed within a 90-minute time frame.

The first Crescendo small group study took a deeper look at a framework for planning that can be used as we envision ministries by, with, and for persons in their pre-retirement and retirement years. The goal was to develop ministries that further the ongoing growth of adults in the later phases of life to be like the tree described in Psalm 1:3 (NRSV): "They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper." Since the release of that resource, many people have participated in Crescendo workshops and retreats. As more and more people explored the concept of "retiring to" instead of "retiring from," the importance of mentoring kept surfacing.

This study starts with an overview of mentoring, including an explanation of the difference between mentoring and coaching. We then go on to explore mentoring relationships in the Bible as well as discussing Jesus as the ultimate mentor. We close with a lesson that provides mentoring guidelines and other tips.

SESSION ONE

MENTORING OVERVIEW – WHY, WHAT, AND HOW?

“If you are planting for a year, plant grain. If you are planting for a decade, plant trees. If you are planting for a century, plant people.” —Chinese Proverb

MATERIALS NEEDED

Simple drawings (e.g., snowman, tugboat, eyeglasses, teddy bear, sun with rays, etc.)
Copies of Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article “Beyond bffs”

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

Large (25x30”) sticky note pad and easel
Pencils and/or pens
Blank 3 x 5 notecards
Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

GATHERING

10 MINUTES

ACTIVITY: OPTION A

In pairs or small groups, answer the following question:

- Think about an individual who has spoken into your life in a significant way. What is something from that relationship that still impacts your life?

ACTIVITY: OPTION B

In pairs, complete the drawing activity. Partners will sit back to back, so neither can see the other. Partner A will be given a simple drawing, and Partner B will be given a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. Without saying what the image is, Partner A must give Partner B instructions for how to draw it. For example, if the image is a snowman, Partner A might instruct Partner B to: 1) draw three circles on

top of each other, 2) draw a rectangle on top of the top circle, 3) draw a square on top of the rectangle, 4) draw a short 45-degree line from the middle of the second circle, etc. Pairs will have 5 minutes to complete the drawing portion of the activity. When time is up, Partner A will reveal the original image, and Partner B will reveal their drawing.

As a large group, discuss the following questions:

- For those of you who were Partner A, what was difficult about this activity?
- For those of you who were Partner B, what was difficult about this activity?
- For both groups, what lessons about mentoring does this activity reveal?

WORD

50 MINUTES

MENTORING: WHAT AND HOW?

Merriam-Webster defines a mentor as “a trusted counselor or friend.” It’s interesting to note that the word “mentor” comes from Homer’s “The Odyssey,” written in 800 B.C. Mentor was a friend of Odysseus and later served as friend and advisor to Odysseus’ son, Telemachus.

However, the practice of mentoring – though not referred to as such – can be seen throughout the Bible.

True biblical mentoring can be described as discipling at its fullest and usually involves an ongoing relationship between one who is recognized as the “older and wiser” and one who is the “learner.” (However chronological age isn’t a necessary factor for a mentor.) For Christians, spiritual maturity is a key requirement for mentors. In *Mentor for Life: Finding Purpose through Intentional Discipleship*, Natasha Sistrunk Robinson refers to three pillars of the mentoring framework: knowing and loving God, knowing your identity in Christ, and loving your neighbor (p. 35). She states that “**Mentoring is a trusted partnership where people share wisdom that fosters spiritual growth and leads to transformation as mentors and mentees grow in their love of Christ, knowledge of self, and love of others**” (p. 31).

The process of fostering spiritual growth that leads to transformation will often require a mentor to wear many hats. You will find that what works for one group or individual doesn’t work for another. You’re encouraged to explore

the different mentoring types (Appendix 2), keeping in mind the goal of spiritual growth that leads to transformation.

ACTIVITY

In pairs, review Appendix 2 (“Mentoring Types” handout) and answer the following:

- What on this list have you done?
- What fits this point in your life?

Next, in a large group, spend some time brainstorming traits that a good mentor should possess. Be sure to capture responses for future reflection. *This part of the activity should take about 15 minutes.*

MENTORING: WHY?

A recent Barna report reveals that only 4% of Gen Z (born after 1999) in the U.S. have a biblical worldview. That is, at the time of the study in 2015, only 4% of 13-19-year-olds relied on biblical teachings for answers to questions about the existence of God, the origin of the world, identity, purpose, morality, etc. This is even though 50% of Gen Z identifies as Christian. (Only 1 in 11 teens in the study were considered an “engaged Christian;” i.e., not “Christian in name only.”) Lastly, this generation is sometimes referred to as “the lonely generation.” If ever there was a group who would benefit from the trusted partnership of discipleship, it is Gen Z. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. There are certainly people in other age groups who are in need of mentoring, but this seems like a unique ministry opportunity for Boomers and beyond!

Why mentor? There is a whole generation in need of spiritual and vocational guidance. They are sitting a few rows behind you in church, they are sitting a couple of chairs over from you in the local coffee shop, and they are even sitting across from you at Thanksgiving dinner. They are waiting on you!

In the remaining sessions, you will explore different models of mentoring by studying biblical examples. Before continuing, though, let's further explore the biblical basis for mentoring.

ACTIVITY

Break into groups of 3-4 for this activity. In your groups, review the scriptures and share your responses to the discussion question. You may need to read a larger portion of scripture for better context. Assign a scribe to record your responses, so they can be shared with the entire group. After small groups discuss each section, each small group will summarize their findings for the entire group. Make note of points addressed by multiple groups. *This part of the activity should take about 25 minutes.*

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Next are 5 sets of scripture passages. Discuss what each says about why we should mentor.

Section 1

One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. *(Psalm 145:4)*

So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to all the generations to come. *(Psalm 71:18)*

We will not hide them from their children; we

will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. *(Psalm 78:4)*

Section 2

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
(Matthew 28:18-20)

Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD. *(Psalm 102:18)*

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Section 3

Some friends play at friendship but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin.
(Proverbs 18:24)

Perfume and incense make the heart glad, but the soul is torn by trouble... Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another.
(Proverbs 27:9, 17)

Section 4

Hear, my child, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many. I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the

paths of uprightness. When you walk, your step will not be hampered; and if you run, you will not stumble... My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. *(Proverbs 4:10-12, 20-22)*

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. *(Colossians 2:6-7)*

RESPONSE

20 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

In pairs or small groups, share your responses to the following questions. Close this activity with a time of sharing with the entire group, and assign a scribe to record the action items.

- After engaging with this session's material, do you feel more excited or anxious about serving as a mentor? Why?
- What has been your experience with mentoring – either as a mentor or a mentee?
- How is Christ calling you to respond to what you've experienced in this session? Feel free to share reflections from the Word activity.

Section 5

Your decrees are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. *(Psalm 119:111)*

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In sessions 1-4, this time will be used to review and discuss 2 mentor stories from the Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article "Beyond bffs." For this session, focus on "The Volunteers" and "The Church Planters." *This part of the activity should take about 10 minutes.*

SENDING

10 MINUTES

In pairs or small groups, pray for each other. The group leader will close with a final corporate prayer.

SESSION TWO

MENTORING FAMILY MEMBERS

“Being present with God and present in community with other disciples is essential for our spiritual transformation.”—Natasha Sistrunk Robinson

MATERIALS NEEDED

Copies of Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article “Beyond bffs”
A/V equipment/Wifi to support
StoryCorps video

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

Large (25x30”) sticky note pad and easel
Pencils and pens
Blank 3x5” notecards
Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

GATHERING

10 MINUTES

ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

Together, watch the StoryCorps video, “Mi Abuela Panchita” (<https://storycorps.org/animation/mi-abuela-panchita/>).

Then, in pairs or small groups, share a story about a life lesson you learned from a relative.

WORD

50 MINUTES

We don’t know what kind of relationship Naomi and Ruth had during the time that Ruth’s husband was alive. We enter the story during a time of grief and distress. Naomi is dealing with the death of her two sons, and her daughters-in-law are dealing with the deaths of their husbands. There’s nothing left to bind the women together. All of this is happening during a great famine. It seems like the perfect set of circumstances to break up a family, but we see the opposite happen.

Similarly, but without as much pain, Jethro and Moses’ mentoring relationship is the result of an older family member stepping in to provide guidance to a younger family member.

BIBLE STUDY

Break into groups of 3-4 for this activity. In your groups, review the scriptures and share your responses to the discussion questions. You may need to read a larger portion of scripture for better context. Assign a scribe to record your responses, so they can be shared with the entire group. After small groups discuss each passage, each small group will summarize their findings for the entire group. Make note of points addressed by multiple groups. *This part of the activity should take about 40 minutes.*

So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!" When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her. *(Ruth 1:15-18)*

Discussion Question: What observations can you make about the timing of this mentoring relationship (i.e., was it planned or something that happened in the moment?)?

She said to her, "All that you tell me I will do." *(Ruth 3:5)*

Discussion Question: What do Ruth's response and actions reveal about her feelings for her mentor?

Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." *(Ruth 4:14-15)*

Discussion Question: What has mentoring done for Naomi, the mentor?

Discussion Question: What traits do we see demonstrated by Naomi that would be valuable in a mentor?

Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had beset them on the way, and how the LORD had delivered them. Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the LORD had done to Israel, in delivering them from the Egyptians. *(Exodus 18:8-9)*

Discussion Question: What does Jethro do for Moses in this passage?

The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?" *(Exodus 18:13-14)*

Discussion Question: How does Jethro attempt to help Moses? How is Jethro's approach helpful to Moses?

Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace." Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went off to his own country. (Exodus 18:17-23)

Discussion Question: Besides advice, what does Jethro give to Moses concerning his situation?

Discussion Question: What traits do we see demonstrated by Jethro that would be valuable in a mentor?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In sessions 1-4, this time will be used to review and discuss 2 mentor stories from the Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article "Beyond bffs." For this session, focus on "The Theologians" and "The Professionals." *This part of the activity should take about 10 minutes.*

RESPONSE

20 MINUTES

It's clear that Naomi was the experienced one in their mentoring relationship. She had much wisdom to share with Ruth. However, Naomi benefitted from their relationship as well. By the time he becomes a part of Jethro's family, Moses has learned quite a bit about leadership. However, his relationship with Jethro shows that there is always more to learn. While Ruth immediately receives Naomi's advice, Jethro 1) encourages Moses to listen to God and 2) leaves the decisions up to Moses. It's wonderful when someone receives our advice well, but mentors must remember that decision-making is a part of the mentee's learning process. As much as we want people to do what we tell them, we should want them to ultimately rely on God's words, not ours.

ACTIVITY

In pairs or small groups, share your responses to the following questions. Close this activity with a time of sharing with the entire group, and assign a scribe to record the action items.

- Feel free to share additional reflections from the Word activity.
- How might the scenarios from this session reflect a relationship with someone in your family? Consider whether God may be calling you to mentor them.
- If you know of a real-life mentoring pair like the ones presented in this session, please share it.
- How is Christ calling you to respond to what you've experienced in this session?

SENDING

10 MINUTES

In pairs or small groups, pray for each other. The group leader will close with a final corporate prayer.

SESSION THREE

MENTORING IN INTERGENERATIONAL SETTINGS

“Anyone who is willing to follow Christ can become a mighty influence on the world providing, of course, this person has the proper training.”—Robert E. Coleman

MATERIALS NEEDED

Copies of Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article “Beyond bffs”

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

Large (25x30”) sticky note pad and easel
Pencils and pens
Blank 3x5” notecards
Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

GATHERING

10 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

As a large group, form a circle. The facilitator will share a phrase with one participant, who will then whisper that phrase to the person on their left. Each participant will whisper the phrase to the person on their left, until everyone in the circle has shared the phrase. The last person will share the phrase aloud to the whole group, and the facilitator will share the original phrase. As a group:

- Try to identify where the breakdown occurred
- Discuss practical lessons that this activity teaches

WORD

50 MINUTES

We are most familiar with the Apostle Paul’s letters which make up a significant portion of the New Testament. Embedded within those letters is evidence of the ways in which he was a hands-on mentor to younger church leaders. One of those leaders is Timothy. Elizabeth and Mary’s relationship is interesting because it is an intergenerational pairing with unique power dynamics. While Elizabeth is Mary’s elder, Mary is the mother-to-be of the Messiah.

BIBLE STUDY

Break into groups of 3-4 for this activity. In your groups, review the scriptures and share your responses to the discussion questions. You may need to read a larger portion of scripture for better context. Assign a scribe to record your responses, so they can be shared with the entire group. After small groups discuss each

passage, each small group will summarize their findings for the entire group. Make note of points addressed by multiple groups. *This part of the activity should take about 40 minutes.*

Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. (Acts 16:3)

Discussion Question: After inviting Timothy to follow/accompany him, why would Paul ask Timothy to be circumcised?

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia. (2 Corinthians 1:1)

Discussion Question: By co-authoring a letter to the church in Corinth, what might this say about Paul and Timothy's relationship to one another? To the church in Corinth?

I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, having faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith. (1 Timothy 1:18-19)

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12)

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:5-7)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Discussion Question: What is the tone of Paul's letters to Timothy? Why? How would you describe Paul's approach with Timothy?

These are the things you must insist on and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:11-12)

Discussion Question: How does one's age figure into mentoring?

And what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. (2 Timothy 2:2)

Discussion Question: What was Paul's expectation of Timothy after mentoring him?

Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and my suffering the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. What persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. (2 Timothy 3:10-11)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

Discussion Question: What is at the root of Paul and Timothy's mentoring relationship?

Discussion Question: What traits do we see demonstrated by Paul that would be valuable in a mentor?

"...And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren." In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:36, 39-40)

Discussion Question: How does Mary respond to the news about Elizabeth, and what might that reveal about her opinion of Elizabeth?

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women,

and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." (Luke 1:41-45)

Discussion Question: What does Elizabeth's response to Mary reveal about the power dynamics of their relationship?

Discussion Question: What traits do we see demonstrated by Elizabeth that would be valuable in a mentor?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In sessions 1-4, this time will be used to review and discuss 2 mentor stories from the Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article "Beyond bffs." For this session, focus on "The Pastors" and "The Farmers."

This part of the activity should take about 10 minutes.

RESPONSE

20 MINUTES

In the mentoring relationship between Paul and Timothy, there are two things that aren't often highlighted. First is the way in which Paul shared his "platform" with Timothy in order to elevate Timothy's status. In addition, Acts 16:3 portrays Paul as a bridgebuilder of sorts. He is using his experience and knowledge to help Timothy adapt to ministering to a different cultural group. Consider ways in which you can contribute these gifts in a mentoring relationship. Elizabeth knew of Mary's pregnancy and visitation from the angel.

This information wasn't revealed by Mary but by the Holy Spirit. This reminds us of the importance of being in tune with the Spirit, so you can provide sound guidance to your mentee.

ACTIVITY

In pairs or small groups, share your responses to the following questions. Close this activity with a time of sharing with the entire group, and assign a scribe to record the action items.

- Feel free to share additional reflections from the Word activity.
- How might the scenarios from this session reflect a relationship with a younger person in your life? Consider whether God may be calling you to mentor them.
- If you know of a real-life mentoring pair like the ones presented in this session, please share it.
- How is Christ calling you to respond to what you've experienced in this session?

SENDING

10 MINUTES

In pairs or small groups, pray for each other. The group leader will close with a final corporate prayer.

SESSION FOUR

JESUS AND THE GROUP MENTORING MODEL

“A great mentor is worth more than gold. They intangibly gift you their confidence to accomplish more than you could without them.”—Christian Leadership Alliance

MATERIALS NEEDED

Copies of Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article “Beyond bffs”

A/V equipment/Wifi to support StoryCorps video

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

Large (25x30”) sticky note pad and easel

Pencils and pens

Blank 3x5” notecards

Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

GATHERING

10 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Together, watch the StoryCorps interview of Maurice Rowland and Miguel Alvarez (<https://storycorps.org/animation/maurice-rowland-and-miguel-alvarez/>). Then, in pairs or small groups, share a story about something you did for someone who wasn’t in a position to pay you back.

WORD

50 MINUTES

When we teach about spiritual gifts, we often teach that Jesus has them all. So, it would seem that, in the life of Jesus, we can see demonstrations of various mentoring types. Perhaps the type that immediately comes to mind is group mentoring. Whether it was 120, the trusted inner circle of 3, or one-time mentoring encounters along the road, we can learn a lot about mentoring from Jesus’ example.

BIBLE STUDY

Break into groups of 3-4 for this activity. In your groups, review the scriptures and share your responses to the discussion questions. You may need to read a larger portion of scripture for better context. Assign a scribe to record your responses, so they can be shared with the entire group. After small groups discuss each

passage, each small group will summarize their findings for the entire group. Make note of points addressed by multiple groups. *This part of the activity should take about 40 minutes.*

Jesus said to his disciples, "Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. (Luke 17:1-6)

Discussion Question: What does this moment with Jesus do for the disciples?

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (Matthew 8:23-27)

Discussion Question: When compared to the previous passage (Luke 17:1-6), what important lesson about mentoring

relationships is revealed?

When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that 'looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.' (Luke 8:4-10)

Discussion Question: What does this passage reveal about the relationship between Jesus and his disciples?

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his

answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

(Luke 2:41-51)

Discussion Question: What important reminder about the mentor/mentee relationship can be gleaned from this encounter between Jesus and his parents?

Discussion Question: What traits do we see demonstrated by Jesus that would be valuable in a mentor?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In sessions 1-4, this time will be used to review and discuss 2 mentor stories from the Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article "Beyond bffs." For this session, focus on "The Teacher and the Youth Pastor" and "The Visionaries." *This part of the activity should take about 10 minutes.*

RESPONSE

20 MINUTES

One mentoring practice of Jesus' that stands out is the use of parables/storytelling. It's said that the Bible records 253 questions that were asked of Jesus, and he only answered 8 directly. In addition, he asked about 250 questions. Consider ways that you can use storytelling and questions as you are mentoring others.

ACTIVITY

In pairs or small groups, share your responses to the following questions. Close this activity with a time of sharing with the entire group, and assign a scribe to record the action items.

- Feel free to share additional reflections from the Word activity.
- How might the scenarios from this session reflect a relationship with a group of individuals in your life? Consider whether God may be calling you to mentor them.
- If you know of a real-life group mentoring experience feel free to share it.
- How is Christ calling you to respond to what you've experienced in this session?

SENDING

10 MINUTES

In pairs or small groups, pray for each other. The group leader will close with a final corporate prayer.

SESSION FIVE

GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS & OTHER PRACTICAL TIPS

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." African Proverb

MATERIALS NEEDED

A/V equipment/Wifi to support
StoryCorps video

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

Large (25x30") sticky note pad and easel
Pencils and pens
Blank 3x5" notecards
Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

GATHERING

10 MINUTES

ACTIVITY

Listen to this StoryCorps interview of teacher, Celeste Davis-Carr, and her student, Aaron. Listen for examples of active listening: <https://storycorps.org/stories/aaron-and-celeste-davis-carr/>

After listening to the interview, discuss with a partner or small group some of the ways Davis-Carr demonstrated good active listening skills.

WORD

50 MINUTES

Natasha Sistrunk Robinson says one of the basic truths about leadership and mentoring is: "Mentoring is an integral part of leadership; all great leaders mentor" (p. 34). To those who don't consider themselves a leader, this sounds like you're "off the hook." However, if mentoring is discipleship at its fullest, we are all called to this – regardless of whether we view ourselves as a leader.

BIBLE STUDY

Break into groups of 3-4 for this activity. In your groups, review the scriptures and share your responses to the discussion questions. Assign a scribe to record your responses, so they can be shared with the entire group. *This part of the activity should take about 15 minutes.*

Discussion Question: *We've covered a lot of scripture passages in this study thus far. As you studied, did other passages come to mind? If so, please share those and discuss how you saw the connection to mentoring. Feel free to also reference these passages:*

1 Peter 5:1-5	Proverbs 13:20
Proverbs 22:6	Colossians 3:16
Psalms 102:18	Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
Proverbs 9:9	Deuteronomy 34:9
1 Corinthians 11:1	Proverbs 27:17

Discussion Question: *In exploring the why, what, and how of mentoring, we studied the examples of Naomi and Ruth, Jethro and Moses, Paul and Timothy, Elizabeth and Mary, and Jesus. What are some other examples of mentoring that you have encountered in the Bible?*

MENTORING TYPES

This part of the activity should take about 10 minutes. In pairs or small groups, answer the following questions about the Mentoring Types list:

- Which mentoring types did you connect with the most? Why?
- Were there mentoring types you don't see yourself using? Why?
- Are there mentoring types you think are missing from the list? What are they?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Next, each small group should summarize their findings for the entire group. Make note of points addressed by multiple groups. *This part of the activity should take about 15 minutes.*

PRACTICAL APPLICATION: LEARNING LAB

Break into groups of 3-4. This is a time for you to learn from each other. What practical lessons about mentoring have you learned from experience? Are you struggling to connect with a mentee? Ask the group for feedback. *This part of the activity should take about 20 minutes.*

RESPONSE

20 MINUTES

Congratulations, you've completed the Crescendo Mentoring Small Group Study! We hope that this study has reiterated the fact that there's no doubt about it, God created us for community. We are indeed better together, so we hope and pray that you walk away from this study feeling strengthened and equipped to commit to walking alongside others in a mentoring journey. If your church has a mentoring ministry, consider signing up. If not, pray about whether God's leading you to start one!

ACTIVITY

In pairs or small groups, share your responses to the following questions. Close this activity with a time of sharing with the entire group, and assign a scribe to record the action items.

- In what ways has your understanding of mentoring changed since the first session of this study?
- At the end of each session, you were invited to consider whether there were specific people God might be leading you to mentor. Take a moment to reflect and pray. Then write down the name of 1 or 2 people you will invite into a mentoring relationship.

SENDING

10 MINUTES

In pairs or small groups, pray for each other. The group leader will close with a final corporate prayer.

APPENDIX 1

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR LEADERS/FACILITATORS

While instructions for the activities are provided in each session, you may wish to read them aloud and provide any clarifying information. You are also encouraged to adjust based on the needs of your context. ***Please be mindful of the physical and cognitive abilities and needs of participants as you go through the activities, and adjust as needed.***

Prior to the participants' arrival, ensure that the meeting space has been set-up in a way that accommodates all activities. If feasible for your context, you may wish to have music playing softly as participants get settled.

GATHERING

(APPROXIMATELY 10 MINUTES)

You may choose to include a time for refreshments during the Gathering or Sending times, if this is a practice in your context. Prior to the start of the icebreaker activity, you may wish to open with a time of prayer. To foster community, you may also wish to provide nametags each week.

You may find it helpful to take time at the beginning of each session to briefly review the session contents; this will ensure that participants are oriented and understand the theme for each session.

WORD

(APPROXIMATELY 50 MINUTES)

The intro content in this section can be read aloud by you, or you may choose to have

different participants read it aloud during each session.

Consider using a variety of methods for reading scripture: 1) the leader reads the passages, 2) the leader asks for volunteers to read, or 3) the leader can use a recorded version of the passage, such as what's available through the YouVersion Bible app.

To help keep people engaged, the Bible study portions should incorporate large group discussions immediately after the small group discussion of each section of scripture.

You may choose to play music softly during portions of this component.

RESPONSE

(APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES)

The intro content in this section can be read aloud by you, or you may choose to have different participants read it aloud during each session.

You may choose to play music softly during portions of this component.

SENDING

(APPROXIMATELY 10 MINUTES)

Prior to the final corporate prayer, you may wish to open the floor for a time of prayer requests and praise reports, to contribute to the fostering of community. It's a good idea to also pray over the action items submitted by participants.

REFLECTING ON ACTIVITIES

During the times of sharing with the whole group, you may need to provide prompts to get people started. Consider questions such as:

- What did you feel during this activity?
- What did you hear during this activity?
- What about this activity was difficult for you? Why?
- What did you enjoy about this activity? Why?
- If this was a new activity for you, is it something that you might try again? Why, or why not?

SUGGESTED TIMING

The times for the session components is based on a 90-minute session. You will find that these times may need to be adjusted based on your context, class size, etc. Please feel free to make the adjustments that will be most effective and beneficial for your group.

AUDIO/VISUAL CONTENT

Be sure that you have the appropriate electronics – including speakers – if you wish to play music or recordings of Bible verses. Please carefully review the list of suggested materials in advance, to ensure that you are prepared for each session.

DIGITAL CONTENT

Be sure to check the Crescendo website regularly, as it will be updated with helpful digital resources.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

SESSION 1

Materials Needed

- Simple drawings (e.g., snowman, tugboat, eyeglasses, teddy bear, sun with rays, etc)
- Copies of Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article “Beyond bffs”

Suggested Materials

- Large (25x30”) sticky note pad and easel
- Pencils and/or pens
- Blank 3 x 5 notecards
- Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

Note: There are two options to choose from for this session’s Gathering activity. Option A may be more helpful if most of your participants are coming together for the first time. Option B may be more helpful for a group of participants with some established relationships. You may choose the activity that you think will work best for your group.

Also, for the blind drawing activity (Option B), you may wish to do an Internet search for “sample pictures for blind drawing game” to find simple images. Two samples are included with this study.

SESSION 2

Materials Needed

- Copies of Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article “Beyond bffs”
- A/V equipment/Wifi to support StoryCorps video

Suggested Materials

- Large (25x30") sticky note pad and easel
- Pencils and pens
- Blank 3x5" notecards
- Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

Note: There are transcripts available on the StoryCorps website. In the event that you do not have the A/V equipment or Wifi needed to show the videos, you may wish to use the transcripts. However, if you do this, please be sure to watch the video in advance to prepare yourself to lead the discussion.

SESSION 3**Materials Needed**

- Copies of Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article "Beyond bffs"

Suggested Materials

- Large (25x30") sticky note pad and easel
- Pencils and pens
- Blank 3x5" notecards
- Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

Note: For the Gathering Activity, it's helpful to use phrases that can easily be misunderstood. Some suggestions are:

- *I saw a guppy in a shark tank.*
- *They are candy crunching coconut lovers.*
- *Have you ever held red roses with thorny stems?*

Feel free to use your own or do an Internet search for others.

SESSION 4**Materials Needed**

- Copies of Covenant Companion (January/February 2016) article "Beyond bffs"
- A/V equipment/Wifi to support StoryCorps video

Suggested Materials

- Large (25x30") sticky note pad and easel
- Pencils and pens
- Blank 3x5" notecards
- Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

Note: See Session 2 note about StoryCorps videos and transcripts.

SESSION 5**Materials Needed**

- A/V equipment/Wifi to support StoryCorps video

Suggested Materials

- Large (25x30") sticky note pad and easel
- Pencils and pens
- Blank 3x5" notecards
- Your choice of an electronic device capable of playing music (optional)

Note: See Session 2 note about StoryCorps videos and transcripts.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO BIBLE STUDY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SESSION 1

What do these passages say about why we should mentor?

- *Psalm 145:4; Psalm 71:18; Psalm 78:4.* The Bible exhorts us to mentor the next generation.
- *Matthew 28:18-20; Psalm 102:18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.* Mentoring is important for the sustaining growth of the church.
- *Proverbs 18:24; Proverbs 27:9, 17.* Because of increasing fragmentation and mobility

of society and decreased supportive relationships, spiritual friendships are extremely important in a person's life.

- *Proverbs 4:10-12, 20-22; Colossians 2:6-7.* Mentoring benefits the young because it's the Lord's plan for growth and maturity.
- *Psalm 119:111.* Mentoring benefits the older mentor because it is life-giving to share one's resources.

SESSION 2

NAOMI AND RUTH

- **What observations can you make about the timing of this mentoring relationship (i.e., planned or happened in the moment)?** Mentoring relationships can come about any time in any circumstance, especially adversity. They are not something we do in the future when we have enough time/surplus energy/better knowledge. They are for now. Adversity bonds us to others.
- **What do Ruth's response and actions reveal about her feelings for her mentor?** Trusts/respects her.
- **What has mentoring done for Ruth, the mentor?** Blessing; the returns are many!

Possible mentoring types to describe Naomi and Ruth's relationship:

Informal/organic, Passive, Intergenerational, Counseling

JETHRO AND MOSES

- **What does Jethro do for Moses in this passage?** Jethro listens to Moses' whole story, then celebrates what God has done in Moses' life.
- **How does Jethro attempt to help Moses? How is Jethro's approach helpful to Moses?** Mentors with deep relationships can ask great, probing questions without offending.
- **Besides advice, what does Jethro give to Moses concerning his situation?** Jethro exhibits presence, provides direction, and gives Moses the big picture perspective. He is a "new set of eyes" here. Then, he encourages Moses to listen to what God would have him do. Ultimately, Jethro leaves the decisions up to Moses.

Possible mentoring types to describe Jethro and Moses' relationship:

Informal/organic, Discipleship focused, One-time mentoring, Intergenerational, Distance

SESSION 3

PAUL AND TIMOTHY

- **After inviting Timothy to follow/ accompany him, why would Paul ask Timothy to be circumcised?** Sometimes God asks us to change for the sake of others. Mentors can anticipate roadblocks and help us understand the bigger picture of our actions.
- **By co-authoring a letter to the church in Corinth, what might this say about Paul and Timothy's relationship to one another?** To the church in Corinth? It was mutually beneficial. Paul was raising Timothy's status to ready him to take on more responsibility.
- **What is the tone of Paul's letters to Timothy? Why? How would you describe Paul's approach with Timothy?** Parental to encourage him to do the right things. Inspirational, practical, familiar, etc.
- **How does one's age figure into mentoring?** Maturity is the issue, not chronological age.
- **What was Paul's expectation of Timothy after mentoring him?** That he would pay it forward and mentor others himself.
- **What is at the root of Paul and Timothy's mentoring relationship?** Godly modeling over time.

Possible mentoring types to describe Paul and Timothy's relationship: Discipleship focused, Coaching, Intergenerational, Passive, Counseling, Informal/organic

ELIZABETH AND MARY

- **How does Mary respond to the news about Elizabeth, and what might that reveal about her opinion of Elizabeth?** Mary immediately goes to Elizabeth. This suggests that theirs is a positive relationship and that Mary values Elizabeth's input.
- **What does Elizabeth's response to Mary reveal about the power dynamics of their relationship?** Though Elizabeth is the more mature and experienced one in the relationship, she still acknowledges and affirms the role God has placed on Mary. Elizabeth is confident enough in who she is to not feel threatened by Mary's new status. While she is older, it seems that Elizabeth will not wield her age as a weapon against Mary.

Possible mentoring types to describe Elizabeth and Mary's relationship:

Intergenerational, Passive, Informal/organic

SESSION 4

- **What does this moment with Jesus do for the disciples?** In this moment, as they are listening to Jesus' teachings, they realize that they need more faith. It reveals the spiritual growth that is happening within the disciples as a result of their time with Jesus.
- **When compared to the previous passage (Luke 17:1-6), what important lesson about mentoring relationships is revealed?** Jesus rebukes the disciples for their lack of faith, a sign that they've still got some growing to do. There are times when the disciples demonstrated keen insight and spiritual maturity, and there are times when you wondered whether they'd heard anything Jesus had said! That's normal. Expect the mentee's level of growth to sometimes swing like a pendulum.
- **What does this passage reveal about the relationship between Jesus and**

his disciples? Instead of pretending they understand what Jesus is teaching, the disciples trust him enough to be vulnerable and say they don't get it. It also shows their desire to learn.

- **What important reminder about the mentor/mentee relationship can be gleaned from this encounter between Jesus and his parents?** This is a reminder that mentors should be open to learning from mentees. There may be times when God uses a mentee to teach a mentor or even give a corrective/cautionary word to a mentor.

Possible mentoring types to describe people's relationship with Jesus in biblical times as well as the present day:

Informal/organic, Discipleship focused, Coaching, One-time mentoring, Group

SESSION 5

We've covered a lot of scripture passages in this study thus far. As you studied, did other passages come to mind? If so, please share those and discuss how you saw the connection to mentoring.

Answers will vary.

In exploring the why, what, and how of mentoring, we studied the examples of Naomi and Ruth, Jethro and Moses, Paul and Timothy, Elizabeth and Mary, and Jesus. What are some other examples of mentoring that you have encountered in the Bible?

Answers will vary.

APPENDIX 2

MENTORING TYPES

Taken from Dallas Theological Seminary website

- 1. Formal scheduled relationship.** Mentor and learner formally agree to meet according to a predetermined schedule to address a topic or work through a curriculum.
- 2. Informal, organic relationship.** Meetings take place when the mentee desires a mentor's input on everyday life. The content of the meetings varies according to the mentee's needs or interests. Although not regularly scheduled, many turn into ongoing relationships that last for years.
- 3. Discipleship focused relationship.** Meetings focus on specific spiritual disciplines to be developed by the mentee. These include but are not limited to personal devotion, worship, prayer, study of scripture, etc.
- 4. Coaching relationship.** A mentoring coach provides practical help for the development of specific skills. The coach trains, identifies harmful habits, oversees opportunities for practice, and provides feedback. Once the learner demonstrates competency the relationship concludes.
- 5. Group mentoring.** Several people desire to spend time with a particular mentor and address a specific subject such as perseverance, fasting, disciplining children, or leadership. Group mentoring can be short term.
- 6. One time mentoring.** A learner seeks a mentor's input to process a situation or solve a problem. A single conversation is adequate to move the learner forward.
- 7. Passive mentoring.** This mentoring takes place during serendipitous encounters or conversations. One person makes comments or performs actions that teach another.
- 8. Distance mentoring.** Those who don't even know us sometimes serve as mentors. An author, a conference we attend, a large group teacher, or the pastor who faithfully teaches each week can mentor from a distance.
- 9. Counseling relationship.** This mentoring addresses deeper heart issues that hinder a learner's growth. It might focus on subjects such as recovery from a past sin, marriage conflict, addiction, grief recovery, sexual abuse, etc. Depending on the extent of the problem, a professional counselor may be the best choice. However, trained lay people can also offer substantial assistance.
- 10. Intergenerational Mentoring.** Informal and semi-formal relationships that develop within the context of an intentional shared learning experience. Parents, youth workers, Christian Formation teachers, grandparents, etc. all share in intergenerational mentoring.

APPENDIX 3

THE MENTORING COMMITMENT: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

*Taken from Mentor for Life: Finding Purpose through Intentional Discipleship,
by Natasha Sistrunk Robinson*

MENTORING AS INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP:

- Reminds us of our desperate need for God's presence and the community of God's people, which we miss when our lives are consumed with noise and distractions.
- Incorporates spiritual disciplines to encourage us to right thinking and right action.
- Requires that we focus on God's kingdom mission and understand the felt needs of others.
- Requires us to agree with God that it is not good for humans to go through life isolated and alone.
- Requires a compassionate embrace of God's invitation and message for all women.
- Is a continuous, sacrificial, and selfless act that shapes our character, clarifies our spiritual gifts, and affirms our purpose and calling.

APPENDIX 4

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Allen, Holly Catterton and Lawton, Christine. *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community, and Worship*. IVP, Downers Grove, IL: 2012.

Anderson, Keith R. and Reese, Randy D. *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction*. IVP, Downers Grove, IL: 1999.

Benner, David. *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship & Direction*. IVP, Downers Grove, IL: 2004.

Ogden, Greg. *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*. IVP, Downers Grove, IL: 2019.

Osaigbovo, Rebecca Florence. *Spiritual Sisterhood: Mentoring for Women of Color*. IVP, Downers Grove, IL: 2011.

Robinson, Natasha Sistrunk. *Mentor for Life: Finding Purpose through Intentional Discipleship*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI: 2016.

StoryCorps: <https://storycorps.org/>

White, James W. *Intergenerational Religious Education: Models, Theory, and Prescription for Interage Life and Learning in the Faith Community*. Religious Education Press, Birmingham, AL: 1988.