



ST. CLARE OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH Mentorship Program Information

Over the years, I have realized that great role models are vital in helping teens grasp the deeper mission of the Catholic Faith. Teaching all the treasures of the Church is one thing; seeing individuals embrace these treasures is quite another. For this reason, role models in the Catholic Faith are essential. St. Clare's Mentorship Program connects what is taught to how it is lived by encouraging mentors to carry on the conversation with guided materials.

Historically, in the Catholic Church, mentors have fallen into the category of sponsors within the framework of one's journey towards receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. The traditional purpose of a "sponsor" was someone who could mentor the individual as a role-model Catholic themselves. In the early Catholic Church, the process to become a Confirmed Catholic was called "Mystagogia" or "Guidance in the Mysteries." Although the length and approach to the process has changed through the centuries, the sponsor's role has remained a vital part in the **growth** of the candidate's spiritual journey towards receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. The relationship is deemed to be life-long, continuing well after reception of the Sacrament.

Who can be a mentor? Mentors are individuals that must be at least 16 years of age, Confirmed in the Catholic Church, practicing their Faith, and cannot be one's mom or dad. We cannot suggest anyone to be someone's mentor; this is a task that you, as a parent, must decide on your own accord with your teen. Please consider having someone who is **trustworthy, in communication with you as a parent, and committed.**

What will the mentor be expected to do? The mentor will be asked to set up a 45-minute meeting once-a-month with the teen through the teen's parent(s). These can take place at a coffee shop, over lunch, on the phone or even FaceTime if need be. The mentor & parents will receive emails from St. Clare's, outlining the basics of *Thrive's Sunday Message* or *Fellowship's Wednesday Message*. Both will also receive a detailed guide for the monthly meetings, which follows a 4 Pillar Approach of discussing notions of Academics, Health, Spiritual, and Catholic Reading. If your son or daughter is in Year 2 of Confirmation Prep, then the mentor can be chosen to fulfill the role of sponsor for the Rite of Confirmation Mass.

We encourage mentors to email us with general updates, so we can give resources and guidance when they are faced with tough questions. Please prayerfully discern who might best fit this role for your son or daughter. It can bear much fruit in their life and especially in learning to trust in God's plan for them. If you have questions, feel free to email me.

Your Brother In Christ,

Chris Stevenson
Director of Youth Catechesis & Evangelization
Chris.Stevenson@StClareHouston.org



Guide to St. Clare Mentorship Program Year One

4 Pillars

ACADEMIC

HEALTH

SPIRITUAL

CATHOLIC READING

There are **4 Pillars of Topic** to being an Effective Mentor: *Academic, Health, Spiritual, and Catholic Reading*. It is expected that you are invested in these Pillars yourself, before you proceed to offer them as guiding points for the teen. You cannot give what you do not have or grasp. Each **45-minute meeting** will touch on some aspect of one or a combination of these Pillars. From experience, certain stepping stones need to be put in place before diving into talking about prayer. Noteworthy stepping stones are those of the Academic and Health Pillars. Below you will find a brief description of each Pillar and your role as mentor within each. Also, you will find a detailed monthly guide for your meetings; it is meant to serve you as a reference guide to conducting a fruitful and engaging encounter.

ACADEMIC

Teens often *worry* about the pressures of homework, maintaining great grades, and staying on top of the academic expectations that are given in High School. **When these worries are not met with encouragement, they consume the teen with fear of failure, depression, and unnecessary anxiety.** It is noteworthy to ask specific questions as to why they might have anxiety for a particular class or assignment. These inquiries offer the teen an opportunity to *express* where they might be needing encouragement or guidance in either getting into a study group or having confidence in meeting teachers after class for clarification. They may even need help in seeking a tutor if necessary. A worrisome teen will not be able to engage in the Spiritual Life. Furthermore, if the teen does not know what they want to do in life or feel confused about which college to strive towards applying to, this anxiety will consume them from within. Having a conversation about their interest and sharing your own journey will help them realize they must cut out their own path with courage and trust in God's plan for them. With that said, you are able to concretely find opportunities for them by inquiring about SAT/ACT study material and prep classes, National Honors Society requirements, involvement in social clubs and organizations, as well as, helping them understand the college admissions process. If you don't know the process, don't feel overwhelmed yourself. Your role is to be a positive guide who encourages, supports, and engages them to do their best with the best help that is available to them.

HEALTH

When teens have low self-esteem, they lack confidence in being the best version of themselves. **In fact, teens who hate something about themselves, cannot begin to love anything about God. As teens** sort through these anxieties, it is important to be a reassuring voice that God the Father has created a masterpiece with each of His creations. If the teen is too busy *trying to become* someone else or is infatuated with mirroring a celebrity or being consumed with a trend for fear of not fitting in, then they are unconsciously closing the doors upon God's guidance for who they were created to be. **In short, teens need to be reassured that God the Father works with what He creates.** Once the teen realizes this and incorporates prayer into their daily lives, they begin to understand how God the Father uses them as instruments to do a plethora of good in their very own community.

Teens need encouragement for good sleep habits, avoiding parties where drugs and alcohol are present, and making time for daily exercise in order to build their self-esteem. **Developing a set of good daily habits that assist in reducing the amount of stress that they incur is of utmost importance.** Many teens are involved in school-related sports teams, dance activities, or even a gym class. Others may not be. Encouraging a personal routine for exercise, whether it be a brisk walk or playing a sport with friends is imperative for teen's overall well-being. **Remember, we are body and soul.** Incorporating a walk into your meeting time is a great idea. St. Clare's offers an open-gym on Wednesdays from 6pm-7:30pm for High School teens; it is called Fellowship/Leadership. Encourage them to attend.

Other stress indicators such as dealing with gossip, bullying, and self-esteem issues are critical to address. You are not a licensed counselor, but your support in listening and conversing can go a long ways in helping them navigate through these issues and potentially lead them to seek professional help if it is needed. We have a great rapport with Student Support Counselors at several of the nearby high schools. Never hesitate to reassure these teens to seek out these professionals when they are struggling with school-related stress.

SPIRITUAL

The Slacker's Prayer, as I call it, is infamous among Catholics. It goes something like this: *Dear God, you are God and I am human. You take care of the problem set before me. Amen.* Unfortunately, **God wants instruments, not genie worshippers.** Historically, King David is said to have had 7 Gifts bestowed upon him from an early age; Fear of the Lord, Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, and Piety. Put this in perspective: David was around 17 years old when he inherited the largest known Kingdom in his realm. Imagine the daily decision making and advice this teen, David, had to make on a regular basis. Nearly 1,000 years later, Jesus takes these Gifts and tells us that they are not just for a King, but for all who seek them through the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised us that God the Father would send the Holy Spirit to fill us with these Gifts. **Are we building a skill set to utilize these 7 Gifts?**

Picture a person coming to you and asking for advice. Let's say the person is depressed and perhaps even suicidal. Your first thought, upon the person asking you for advice, might be a plea to God the Father, saying why ME? And then, perhaps, it is followed by a silent Slacker's Prayer. The problem here is God did not instruct us to approach him as a genie every time something seemingly goes wrong. **We must be disciplined to learn a skill set that enables us to specifically ask for a combination of the Gifts given.** In the case of a suicidal teen asking for advice, I would ask the Holy Spirit for Wisdom and Counsel; Wisdom to know what questions to ask & Counsel to know where to lead him or her towards in terms of professional help. Each person might ask for different Gifts under different circumstances; yet, it is in knowing how and what to ask for that is most important. **We are called to collaborate with God.**

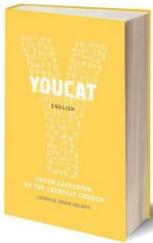
A well-balanced Personal Prayer Life incorporates many aspects of prayer and is ever-changing. A Personal Prayer Life *grows* forth from actively engaging in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Sunday Mass. The goal is to allow God the Father to speak to us and in turn for us to listen and meditate on what He may be leading us towards. It is an adventure; a daily adventure. Often, many designate being a good Catholic as choosing a good work found in the Bible and doing likewise, whether that is visiting the sick, clothing the naked, feeding the poor etc. We must flip this ideology on its head in order to truly proclaim that we are imitators of Jesus. **For good works are results of prayer first and foremost. Jesus taught us to pray first and act second.** Honest prayer allows us to sort through what God the Father intends for us to be a part of. If we are praying sincerely, we will most likely find ourselves eventually doing one of these works mentioned in the Bible; **but it's imperative that we not choose, but allow God's guidance towards any one or a combination of such works.**

As a Catholic, the method to having a Prayer Life is centered upon a relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit in order to become who God the Father intended for us to be. The result of a Personal Prayer Life is *having confidence that one is doing the Will of the Father.* How do we go about this? **Your ultimate goal for the Spiritual Pillar is to help the teen develop a daily 15 minute routine dedicated to Personal Prayer.**

Discussing favorite ways to pray is a good start. **Seeking preferences is important.** Does the teen prefer a structured style like using traditionally memorized prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be or do they prefer being spontaneous and like to speak out to God as in a conversation with a friend? What are their favorite times of the day to pray; morning, afternoon, evening, or before bed? Let this be organic and follow up with them the challenges of being faithful and committed to this time each day. **Accountability is essential in order that this habit of daily prayer takes root. Be encouraging, often!**

CATHOLIC READING

Mentorship Program Year One



In Year One, the teen will receive a copy of the YouCat; a Youth Catechism designed to help deepen the teen's knowledge of their Catholic Faith. It is an easy read, but also offers great insight into why we do what we do as Catholics. Furthermore, the book helps us grasp the history, meaning, and purpose behind many of our most basic beliefs. **As a Mentor, you are expected to set the Chapter(s) to read for each meeting.** Taking time to soak in the chapters and have meaningful conversations about what had been read is priority. Don't overdo it. **This is not a sprint, but a marathon.** One Chapter a month is more than enough.

EMERGENCY

If anything arises from your conversation, which is of concern for teen's safety it is critical that you contact the right leads. **In the case of abuse, it is required by the State of Texas that you report it immediately. The reporting number is 1-800-252-5400. After reporting, contact Chris Stevenson.** If the teen demonstrates indicators that they may be suicidal, you need to immediately contact Chris Stevenson at 832-705-6238. It is required by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston that the parents are contacted and the Pastor is made aware of the situation immediately. Remember, this is for the teen's best interest. The Houston Hotline for Suicide Prevention & Crisis Intervention is 1-713-529-TEEN.

Prep Work:

- Set a time and location for the meeting.
- Be sure to have the teen bring their copy and yours' of the **YouCAT**. They received the books in November/December.

Opening Prayer

- Use this prayer by the **St. Francis de Sales** as an opening:
 - "My God, I give you this day. I offer you, now, all of the good that I shall do and I promise to accept, for love of you, all of the difficulty that I shall meet. Help me to conduct myself during this day in a manner pleasing to you. Amen."

Follow Up

- How have you been? How is your family?
- Did your family attend Mass on Easter? If so, where did you go?
- Did you have a chance to hang out with any friends over Spring Break? Tell me about that.

ACADEMIC SPIRITUAL

Refocus the Academic Pillar

***Emphasis on Finishing the School Year Strong**

Follow-Up on the Spiritual Pillar

***Emphasis on Maintaining a Nightly Prayer Routine through Encouragement**

Questions:

- How many weeks until your school finishes? (If they are in the CCISD, June 2nd will be their last day)
- Can we make some **NEW** academic goals for this stretch of time? What do you hope to accomplish in school between now and Summer? Can I pray for you during this time?
- Is their one class in particular that you are struggling in? What can you do pro-actively to change this?
- When you frequently give God the Father those few minutes each night in conversation, do you believe in Him more or do you think He is not present to you?
- Do you have doubts about your faith in God? Explain your viewpoint.
- What do you think brings Honor to God the Father? What do you think His Code of Honor is?
- What is one way in particular you can give God the Father Honor each and every day?

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April Continued

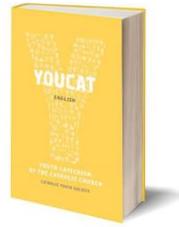
- Explore ways to look at Jesus as a Model for bringing Honor to God the Father. What did Jesus say and do to bring this honor forth? How can we imitate this same behavior in our own lives?
- Placing trust in Jesus to be your motivator is key. Do you ask Jesus to come into your life when you start your morning? Do you ask Him to give you the encouragement that you need to bring Honor to the Father with the day that is before you? How might such a prayer to Jesus look? What would you say in your own words?

Motivations:

- Encourage them to place trust in Jesus to be that GUIDE.
- Tell them that you believe in the importance of trusting God in all things, especially academics.
- Tell them you believe they are capable of doing great so long as they do their part and trust that God will do His.
- **Next month**, we will explore the components of a “developing this trust in Jesus.”

CATHOLIC READING

Follow-Up on what was read from the **YouCAT**.



Questions:

- What stood out to you from what you read in the YouCAT?
- (If nothing had truly been read, take a moment to read something right then and there)
- What will you do differently in your Faith, now having this knowledge?
- What chapter shall we read for next month?

Motivations:

- Encourage them read and even re-read the short chapter picked.
- Be joyful about the opportunity to read up on the Catholic Faith. **(See Attachment on Page 12ff)**
- Remind them that this is not a school assignment, but something even more personal.
- Challenge them to find something unique to share about what they read for the next meeting.

Closing Prayer

- **Lead Closing Prayer and offer to God some of the topics discussed from the meeting.**
- **After closing with prayer, set the next meeting if possible.**

Prep Work:

- Set a time and location for the meeting.
- Be sure to have the teen bring their copy and yours' of the **YouCAT**.

Opening Prayer

- Use this prayer by the **St. Francis de Sales** as an opening:
 - “My God, I give you this day. I offer you, now, all of the good that I shall do and I promise to accept, for love of you, all of the difficulty that I shall meet. Help me to conduct myself during this day in a manner pleasing to you. Amen.”

Follow Up

- Thank them for making time to meet with you.
- Ask them to name the best and worst thing of their past month. Talk about yours as well.
- Remind them that you have been praying for them. Ask them to pray for you.

HEALTH SPIRITUAL

Revisit the topic of the Health Pillar

***Emphasis on Exercise**

Follow with the Spiritual Pillar

***Emphasis on Developing Trust in Jesus**

Questions:

- How is your exercise going?
- Have you been able to get outside from time to time to take a moment for yourself?
- What is stressing you out the most this month? School? Parents? Expectations?
- Do you think Jesus had similar stressful moments as a teen? Explain your viewpoint.
- Jesus was both human and divine, meaning he experienced all the human emotions you can think of. How do you think Jesus dealt with insecurity? Do you think of insecurity, when you think of Jesus? Why or why not?
- God the Father essentially crafted His Son, from the moment Jesus became human; meaning God the Father had a plan that He carefully put forth through the life of His Son. The unfolding of this life through God's only Son here on Earth was a carefully orchestrated plan to help us come to know God the Father better. If Jesus' human side had ignored this plan, what do you think would have happened? Do you think there was a risk factor in God's only Son becoming human?
- Why do you think God the Father wanted His Son to become one of us?

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May Continued

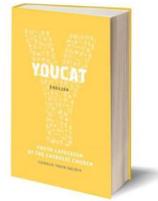
- As humans, we understand things in a particular way. We relate more fully with other humans, than we do with, say our pets. We can feel a bond with our pets, but only with other humans can we truly express ourselves. Do you find comfort in knowing God the Father wanted to make certain you came to know is LOVE for you in a language/expression that you were sure to understand?
- At the same time, we are reminded through Jesus' miracles that God is so much more than human. In what ways do you think that God's *ways* might be different than *human ways*? (Isaiah 55:8)
- Do you think you can develop a trust in God's Son to show you the way, the life, and the truth of being human? How so?

Motivations:

- Encourage them to set aside time every day for some sort of exercise.
- Reassure them that *trusting that God's Son was a carefully crafted plan to help us come to know God clearly.*
- Remind them of the complexity of God and how creative His world is and how creative His responses to our petitions might be.
- **Next month**, we will explore the Holy Spirit's role in God's Plan.

CATHOLIC READING

Follow-Up on what was read from the **YouCAT**.



Questions:

- What stood out to you from what you read?
- What will you do differently in your Faith, now having this knowledge?
- What chapter shall we read for next month?

Motivations:

- Encourage them read and even re-read the short chapter picked.
- Be joyful about the opportunity to read up on the Catholic Faith.
- Challenge them to find something unique to share about what they read for the next meeting.

Closing Prayer

- **Lead Closing Prayer** and offer to God some of the topics discussed from the meeting.
- **After closing with prayer**, set the next meeting if possible.

Prep Work:

- Set a **time and location** for the meeting.
- Be sure to have the teen bring their copy and you bring yours' of the **YouCat**.

Opening Prayer

- Repetition helps us appreciate new insights; once again use this prayer by the **St. Francis de Sales** as an opening:
 - “My God, I give you this day. I offer you, now, all of the good that I shall do and I promise to accept, for love of you, all of the difficulty that I shall meet. Help me to conduct myself during this day in a manner pleasing to you. Amen.”

Follow Up

- Ask them how their exercise is going.
- Ask them if they have been trusting in Jesus as their Guide in the life.

SPIRITUAL

Revisiting the Spiritual Pillar

*Emphasis on the Holy Spirit's role in God's Plan

- Last month we discussed how God the Father wanted us to come to know Him clearly; hence, He had His Only Son become human to express His Love to us.
- Throughout Jesus' time on earth, He emphasized that God the Father had an advocate in place for us. Many during Jesus' day did not understand this, *since they believe Jesus to be the advocate* for them. However, Jesus knew that it was in God's Plan that His stay on Earth was to be limited. Do you know what this advocate is? What does it mean to advocate for something?
- A modern equivalent of an advocate would be a campaigner. Someone who encourages, supports, and backs a candidate. In our Catholic Faith, our campaigner is the Holy Spirit. Do you know where in Scripture, the Holy Spirit, our Advocate, is given to us? (**Acts 2:1ff**)
- What does this mean to you? Do you find strength in knowing God the Father has in His Plan for our species, a campaigner who will encourage you through it all?
- How can you embrace this Holy Spirit in your life? Do you know much about the Sacrament of Confirmation? Tell me what you do know.
- Note that every Baptized person has the Holy Spirit with them; it is in Confirmation that we are completely SEALED with the fullness of what the Spirit offers us.

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June Continued

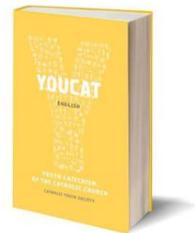
Motivations:

- Tell them to set aside time each week to jot down a few ways they can embrace the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives.
- Remind them that they have the Holy Spirit with them through their Baptism.
- Encourage them to be honest about making it a priority to invite the Advocate to be their source of support.

CATHOLIC READING

Questions:

- What chapter did you pick and read?
- Are you glad that you read that chapter or do you wish that you chose a different one?
- Name one thing that you learned by reading the chapter in which you did not know previously.
- Was there anything that you did not understand completely?
- Would you like to pick the next chapter to read?



Motivations:

- Tell them *you are inspired* by their willingness to learn more about their Faith.
- Acknowledge their effort as heroic as they dedicate themselves more and more towards God.

Closing Prayer

- **Lead Closing Prayer and offer to God some of the topics discussed from the meeting.**
- **After closing with prayer, set the next meeting if possible.**