



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.**

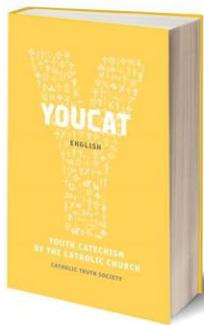
A well-balanced Personal Prayer Life incorporates many aspects of prayer and is ever-changing. A Personal Prayer Life *grows* forth from actively engaging in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Sunday Mass. The goal is to allow God the Father to speak to us and in turn for us to listen and meditate on 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 Catholic Reading



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 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.”

ACADEMIC

Introduce the Academic Pillar.

Questions:

- How is school going? What stresses you out most about school?
- Are you taking any Pre-AP or AP classes?
- What is your most difficult subject this Semester? Why is that?
- Who teaches your most difficult class? What is his or her teaching style?
- What are you learning in that class?
- Are you seeking the right tools to learn the material best?
- Do you find your school to be more difficult than what you hear about other schools?
- Do you know what you might want to study in college?
- If you could do anything what might that be? Maybe we can look into schools that offer the best program for that which you want to possibly study? Google them.
- Do any of your friends know what they want to study in college?
- Do you have good study habits? What is your routine?
- How can you excel in studying better?
- Do you think being worried or anxious at school affects your time for giving God your attention? How can we better prioritize our school work so we can give God time also?

Motivations:

- Encourage them and set goals or benchmarks for test scores, essay grades, etc.
- Tell them you want them to at least achieve a higher overall grade in any of their worst subjects – even in the best; there is always room for improvement.
- Tell them you believe they are capable of doing it.

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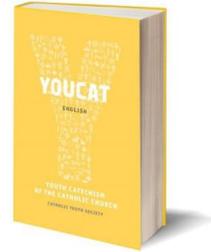
October Continued

CATHOLIC READING

Introduce the Catholic Reading Pillar.

Questions:

- What genres of books, movies, or plays do you enjoy the most?
- Do you enjoy fiction or non-fiction more?
- Have you ever read a book about your Faith before, other than the Bible?
- Would you be willing to read such a book?
- Take out the **YouCat** and review the Table of Contents.
- Would you like to pick which chapter we read for our next meeting?



Motivations:

- Encourage them read and even re-read the short chapter picked.
- Be joyful about the opportunity to read up on the Catholic Faith.
- 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 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

- Inquire on how their most difficult class is going.
- Did they receive the grade they had hoped for on a test or assignment?
- Remind them that you have been praying for them.
- Do they want to set another academic goal?
- Thank them for trying and encourage them to keep seeking all the help they can get.

HEALTH

Introduce the Health Pillar

- What exercise routine do you have going right now?
- Do you have a gym class? What are you doing currently in that class?
- Is it important to you to do some sort of physical activity each day?
- Is there anything you hate about yourself or something that you wish you could always change? Why is that? Does this hurt your self-esteem?
- What is your sleep schedule like? Do you regularly get at least 8 hours of sleep?
- Can you make it a priority to get to bed earlier if needed?
- Do you find that you have a good social life?
- What do you normally do on the weekends? Who are your best friends?
- Do you ever feel pressured to be like someone else or imitate a certain ideal?
- Are you confident that God made you how you are for a reason? Do you see qualities in yourself that are strengths? What are those? Name them.
- What is your favorite hobby? How did you begin to like this hobby?
- If you don't have a hobby, would you consider looking for a new one? Are there any school clubs that might interest you? Chinese Club? Community Service Club? Latin Club?
- Do you know who to contact at school to get involved in these clubs?
- What stresses you out the most? School? Parents? Expectations?
- Do you believe in yourself to meet these expectations? Do you think God has equipped you with enough talent to become someone great in your Parent's/Guardian's eyes? Why or why not?

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November Continued

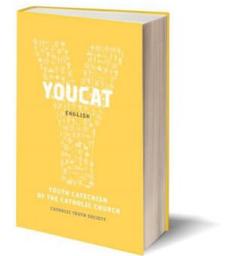
Motivations:

- Encourage them to set aside time every day for some sort of exercise.
- Reassure them that getting and staying involved in *new* clubs is a good thing.
- Joyfully remind them that self-worth is the key to opening the door for allowing God to work in their lives.

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:

- Remind them that learning about the history, traditions, and biblical insights to our Catholic Faith is a marathon, not a sprint.
- Tell them you are inspired by their willingness to read.

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.***

December

Mentorship Program Year One

Prep Work:

- Set a time and location for the meeting.
- Be sure to have the teen bring their copy 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

- Inquire on how their most difficult class is going.
- Did they receive the grade they had hoped for on a test or assignment?
- Remind them that you have been praying for them.
- Do they want to set another academic goal?
- Have they been getting 8 hours of sleep regularly?
- Have they incorporated some aspect of daily exercise into their schedule?
- Do they have a new hobby/club they are pursuing?

SPIRITUAL

Introduce the Spiritual Pillar

- How often do you pray?
- Do you see a benefit to praying? Why or why not?
- Do you pray more for others or yourself?
- Do you pray for others because they ask or you think they need it?
- Do you have a preferred time of the day to pray?
- Are you someone who prefers structured prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be?
- Or do you prefer spontaneous prayer with God like having a conversation with a friend? Is it a mix?
- Do you know the 7 Gifts of the Spirit? Would you like to go over them?
- What is something that a friend is stressing out over this week?
- Which of the Gifts do you think would assist you in giving advice to your friend on their situation?
- Can you develop a skill set to know which Gifts to ask in certain situations?
- Can we hold each other accountable for developing our 15 minutes of prayer each day?
- How would you like to do this? Should we text each other reminders throughout the week?
- Did you bring your Daily Meditations with Holy Spirit book?
- Has this helped you at all? Why or why not?

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December Continued

- What do you normally do after using it? Do you know the A.C.T.S. guide for prayer?
- A – Adore God and **A**cknowledge that He is God, your God.
- C – Tell God you are sorry and have **C**ontrition for things you are not proud about.
- T – **T**hank God for anything and everything on your heart.
- S – Ask God for **S**upplication or needs that you might have.
- Do you think you can listen to God for 3-5 minutes, without interruption?

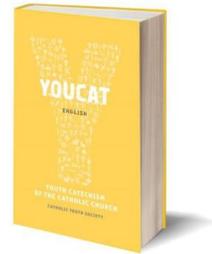
Motivations:

- Set aside a particular time each day, whether its morning or night or whenever to allow for 15 minutes of personal prayer.
- Remind them that you are doing it with them.
- Encourage them to be honest about making it a priority.

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.

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.**