

# Mentoring for Ministry Formation

This guide provides a framework for developing the mentoring relationship. This tool is intended to provide structure to the weekly one-hour mentoring conversations.

Weeks indicated with an asterisk (\*) (that is, weeks 1-3, 5, 8, and 10) are in the order that best fits the internship program structure. That is, the themes for weeks 1-3 should be explored in the first three weeks of the internship period. Week 5 is a conversation about the mid-term internship assessment and should come roughly in the middle of the internship period. Week 10 focuses on the final internship assessment and should come at the end of the internship period.

The themes of the remaining weeks can be re-arranged in whatever order is useful for the intern and supervisor-mentor. It is also acceptable to substitute alternative themes in these weeks.

Note that week 8 “Analyzing a Ministry Practice” requires some planning because it asks students to plan and perform a practice of ministry that the supervisor-mentor observes and reflect together on the student’s work.

## Weeks 1-3: Getting Started

### \*Week 1: The Learning Plan

Students should complete a first draft of their [Learning Plan](#) and bring a copy to their mentoring session this week. Please review and make any necessary changes to the Learning Plan during this week's mentoring session.

Focus Especially on section III of the Learning Plan regarding professional competencies. The goal here is to be as specific and concrete as possible: what is the student going to do to cultivate professional competencies, and when will they do it? Also, be sure to identify and agree to a weekly internship schedule.

### \*Week 2: Sharing Spiritual Journeys

The goal of this week’s mentoring conversation is for the student and supervisor-mentor to learn more about one another’s spiritual journeys.

### Questions to Explore:

- Describe your life journey. Where is “home” for you? What was it like growing up in your family and communities of origin? What have been significant events, relationships, and key turning points in your life? What have been your experiences of religion, organized or otherwise? How has God/the Divine been present and working in your life?
- Who is God/the Divine for you now, and how has your experience and image of God changed over the course of your life? In what ways has your understanding of and relationship to God/the Divine been challenged, reshaped, or refined in your life?
- How would you describe your sense of vocation/purpose, and how has it evolved over your life?

### Weekly Catch-Up:

In addition to discussing this week’s theme, please also address the following questions:

- How is the student progressing on internship service hours? Do any adjustments need to be made to the student’s roles, responsibilities, or weekly schedule?
- What does the student need from their mentor this week?
- What does the mentor need from the student this week?
- End in prayer (as appropriate)

## **\*Week 3: Attending to Your Ministry Context**

Early in the summer, interns are orienting themselves to their internship setting. Skilful religious leaders first carefully observe and analyze their ministry contexts before they respond to it. They learn how you ask: what’s going on here?

### Questions to Explore:

- What relevant histories have shaped this place?
- Who are the people who inhabit this space?
- What social, cultural, political, etc., dynamics that shape their lives?
- What do they care about? What do they hope for?

- What realities either enhance or stand in the way of their aspirations?
- What durable patterns shape the ways people relate to one another in this place?
- What is the stated mission and vision of this faith community/organization, and how does it go about pursuing them (or not)?
- What theologies are relevant in this space?

Building on this conversation, students will complete the [Internship Setting Analysis](#) assignment, due June 30.

### Weekly Catch-Up:

In addition to discussing this week's theme, please also address the following four questions/themes:

- How is the student progressing on internship service hours? Do any adjustments need to be made to the student's roles, responsibilities, or weekly schedule?
- What does the student need from their mentor this week?
- What does the mentor need from the student this week?
- End in prayer (as appropriate)

## **Weeks 4-9: Sharing Wisdom**

The themes of weeks 4-9 can be arranged in whatever order makes the most sense given the student's internship timeline, what's happening in the internship setting, etc. The conversation about the Midtern Internship Assessment should happen in the week closest to the halfway mark in the internship process.

### **Week 4: Spiritual Practices for Ministry**

It has been said that "you can't give what you don't have." As spiritual caregivers, institutional leaders, theological interpreters, among other roles, it is vital that religious leaders cultivate their own spiritual life.

### Questions to Explore:

- What does spiritual well-being look like and feel like? How do you know when you have a healthy and vibrant spiritual life?
- How does spiritual well-being relate to emotional, physical, intellectual, and other forms of well-being?
- How does a vibrant spirituality inform the work of religious leadership?
- What practices have been important for both the student and supervisor-mentor for fostering spirituality? If regular practice is a struggle, what adjustments might be made to promote regular spiritual practice?

### Ministry Practice Observation

By the end of the summer, each intern should engage in a ministry practice that their supervisor-mentor observes and provides feedback. The ministry practice can be anything that the supervisor-mentor can observe, for example, preaching or worship leadership, program leadership, or leading a board meeting. Using this [Ministry Practice Observation](#) worksheet, the intern and supervisor-mentor should plan (i.e., identify a date and time) for this time of structured observation now. The discussion for this exercise is in week 8, close to the end of the internship experience.

### Weekly Catch-Up:

In addition to discussing this week's theme, please also address the following questions:

- How is the student progressing on internship service hours? Do any adjustments need to be made to the student's roles, responsibilities, and/or weekly schedule?
- What does the student need from their mentor this week?
- What does the mentor need from the student this week?
- End in prayer (as appropriate)

## **\*Week 5: Midterm Internship Assessment**

This week, using the midterm internship assessment, students and supervisor-mentors should review the student's internship experience so far. Students and supervisor-mentors should complete and submit their respective midterm internship assessments by Friday of this week. The student assessment can be found [here](#), and the mentor assessment can be found [here](#).

### Questions to Explore:

- What has worked well? What needs to be adjusted?
- What learning goals has the student met? If all goals have been met, what new goals might be appropriate for the second half of the internship experience?
- How is the mentoring relationship going so far?

### Weekly Catch-Up:

In addition to discussing this week's theme, please also address the following questions:

- How is the student progressing on internship service hours? Do any adjustments need to be made to the student's roles, responsibilities, or weekly schedule?
- What does the student need from their mentor this week?
- What does the mentor need from the student this week?
- End in prayer (as appropriate)

## Week 6: Relational Dynamics and Conflict

This week's theme invites the student and their supervisor-mentor to consider how they navigate interpersonal dynamics, especially relational conflict.

### Questions to Explore:

- Describe any relational conflict the student has had with anyone in the faith community/organization.

### Weekly Catch-Up:

In addition to discussing this week's theme, please also address the following four questions/themes:

- How is the student progressing on internship service hours? Do any adjustments need to be made to the student's roles, responsibilities, or weekly schedule?
- What does the student need from their mentor this week?
- What does the mentor need from the student this week?

- End in prayer (as appropriate)

## Week 7: Leadership Styles

The focus of this week's mentoring conversation is leadership.

### Questions to Explore:

- What does good leadership look like in this particular ministry setting?
- How would the student and supervisor-mentor describe their respective approaches to leadership?
- What gifts and opportunities for continued growth in leadership does each identify? What might each do concretely to grow as a leader?
- What, if anything, is distinctive about the kind of leadership theologically trained leaders provide in this ministry setting (or any ministry setting)?

### Weekly Catch-Up:

In addition to discussing this week's theme, please also address the following four questions:

- How is the student progressing on internship service hours? Do any adjustments need to be made to the student's roles, responsibilities, or weekly schedule?
- What does the student need from their mentor this week?
- What does the mentor need from the student this week?
- End in prayer (as appropriate)

## \*Week 8: Analyzing a Ministry Practice

The goal of this week's mentoring conversation is to reflect on the intern's practice of ministry. Using the Ministry Practice Observation worksheet,

The Ministry Practice Observation worksheet is available [at the link here](#).

### Weekly Catch-Up:

In addition to discussing this week's theme, please also address the following four questions/themes:

- How is the student progressing on internship service hours? Do any adjustments need to be made to the student's roles, responsibilities, or weekly schedule?
- What does the student need from their mentor this week?
- What does the mentor need from the student this week?
- End in prayer (as appropriate)

## Week 9: Theological Reflection

How have you observed God's presence and work in your internship setting? How might God be calling your faith community/organization in new ways? What stands in the way of folks responding to God's call?

### Weekly Catch-Up:

- How is the student progressing on internship service hours? Do any adjustments need to be made to the student's roles, responsibilities, or weekly schedule?
- What does the student need from their mentor this week?
- What does the mentor need from the student this week?
- End in prayer (as appropriate)

## Week 10: Ending Well

### \*Week 10: Final Internship Assessment

In the last internship week, both the intern and the supervisor-mentor should complete their respective final internship assessments (the intern's assessment is [here](#); the supervisor-mentor's assessment is [here](#)), share them with one another, and use them as the basis for the final mentoring conversation.

### Questions to Explore:

- For both the intern and supervisor-mentor, what was most powerful and/or transformative about the internship experience?
- Of what contributions to the work/ministry of the faith community/organization is the intern most proud and want to celebrate?
- How do the people the intern served (congregation, clients, guests, etc.) understand the intern's contribution to the faith community/organization?
- For both the intern and supervisor-mentor, what was missing, or what would you like to have done differently?
- For the intern, how has this experience shaped your sense of vocation/purpose? What have you learned about what you'd like to do with your life?
- For both, what was important about the mentoring relationship? What was missing that would have been helpful?
- How might the faith community/organization formally celebrate and bring the internship experience to a close?