

WHICH TYPE OF MENTORING IS BEST FOR YOU?



A step-by-step guide
to understanding the right type of
mentoring for you and your mentee.

Which Type of Mentoring is Best for You?

Let's make one thing clear: anytime a caring and positive adult builds an intentional relationship with a child, that is a good thing. All mentoring is good. It is not good for man to be alone, and good things typically happen in the context of a relationship.

However, not all mentoring relationships are the same. There are unique characteristics and dynamics that you should keep in mind before starting a mentoring relationship.

We want to focus on three ways a mentor can build a relationship with a mentee. We are not saying one type is better than the other, but each type of mentoring is unique in the way it influences youth.





The three types of mentoring are:

1. One-on-One Mentoring: Where a mentor meets with a mentee individually.
2. Small Group Mentoring: Where a mentor meets with two or more mentees as a group.
3. Organizational Mentoring: Where an organization facilitates and oversees the mentor/mentee relationship.

Which type is best for you may depend on your personality and the personality of your mentee. For example:

- For the young adult with a family at home, organizational mentoring may give that mentor the support they need to build a relationship. In contrast, an older, empty-nest mentor may have the time and margin to pursue a one-on-one, organic mentoring relationship.
- For the introverted mentor, a small-group setting with multiple mentees can help ease the burden of carrying the conversation is the best way to mentor.
- One-on-one mentoring with an introverted seven-year-old may not set the mentor up for success. However, one-on-one mentoring for a hungry and ambitious seventeen-year-old may be the most effective form.

It also may depend on your community. Here are a few questions to ask:



- Is there a school or community that has a specific need for mentoring? If so, are there churches or organizations that offer faith-based mentoring?
- Do I understand the culture of my potential mentee, or do I need specific training to help me better relate to my neighbor?
- Do I have an organic opportunity to build a relationship with kids, or do I need help facilitating a mentoring relationship?

Which type of mentoring relationship is best for you? Here are the opportunities and obstacles for all three types of mentoring.

One-on-One Mentoring

This is typically what a person thinks of when they think of a mentor building a relationship with a mentee.

Examples:

- Organic connection made between adult and youth
- Neighbor mentoring his neighbor
- Mentoring a friend or coworker's child

Ideal mentee: Older, more mature mentee who has identified personal areas to grow, can articulate their thoughts and feelings through conversation, and is self-motivated to make changes in their life

*One-on-one mentoring can happen under the supervision of an organization.



One-on-One Mentoring

Opportunities:

- One-on-one mentoring offers the best opportunity for the Lord to facilitate actual life change. When someone asks, "Who had the greatest impact on their life?" the answer is almost always a person.
- One-on-one mentoring can offer the mentee multiple opportunities to grow, as the mentor is focused on the needs and desires of the mentee instead of following an agenda.
- One-on-one mentoring removes barriers between the mentee and mentor and creates an environment where the only option is to build a relationship.
- One-on-one mentoring can facilitate rapid growth if the mentee is motivated to change.
- It is the type of mentoring that most involves your heart because you are dealing with an individual.



One-on-One Mentoring

Obstacles:

- Responsibility for all things falls on the mentor. They are responsible for initiating the relationship, finding resources and relationships to help them succeed, and resolving conflict if it happens with their mentee.
- One-on-one mentoring may be difficult if the youth needs to be more mature to have back-and-forth conversations.
- One-on-one mentoring could be awkward if you have little in common with your mentee. It is also dependent on you and your mentee getting along.
- Safety, resources, and networking opportunities are dependent on the mentor.



Small Group Mentoring

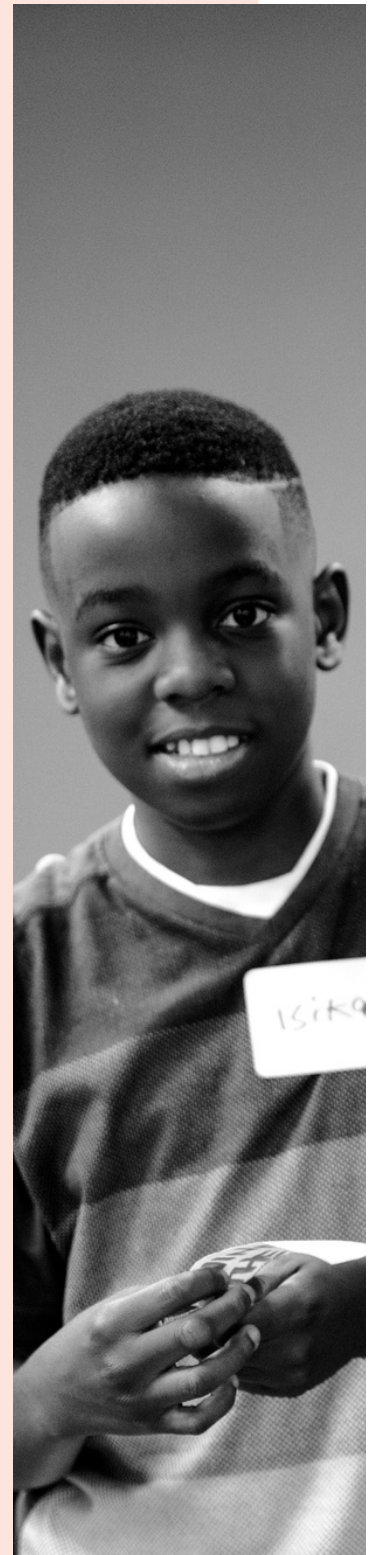
This is where a mentor meets with a group of people to influence them to grow individually and as a group.

Examples:

- Parents and their child's group of friends
- Organic connection made between an adult and a group of youths
- Leader of church youth small group, discipleship group, or para-church organization peer group

Ideal mentees: Any group who enjoy each other's presence and desire to grow in their faith or fulfill their potential.

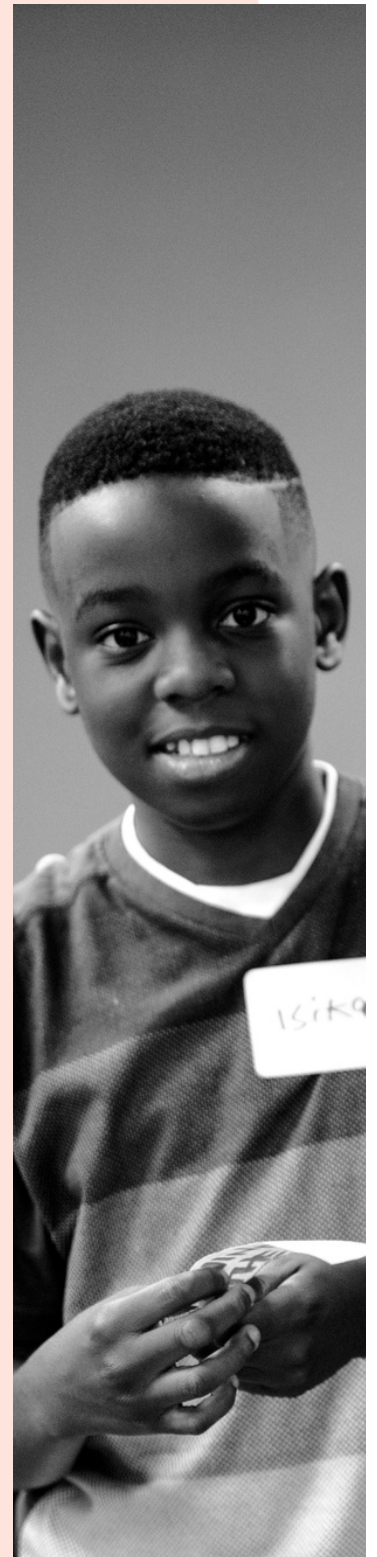
*Small group mentoring can happen under the supervision of an organization.



Small Group Mentoring

Opportunities

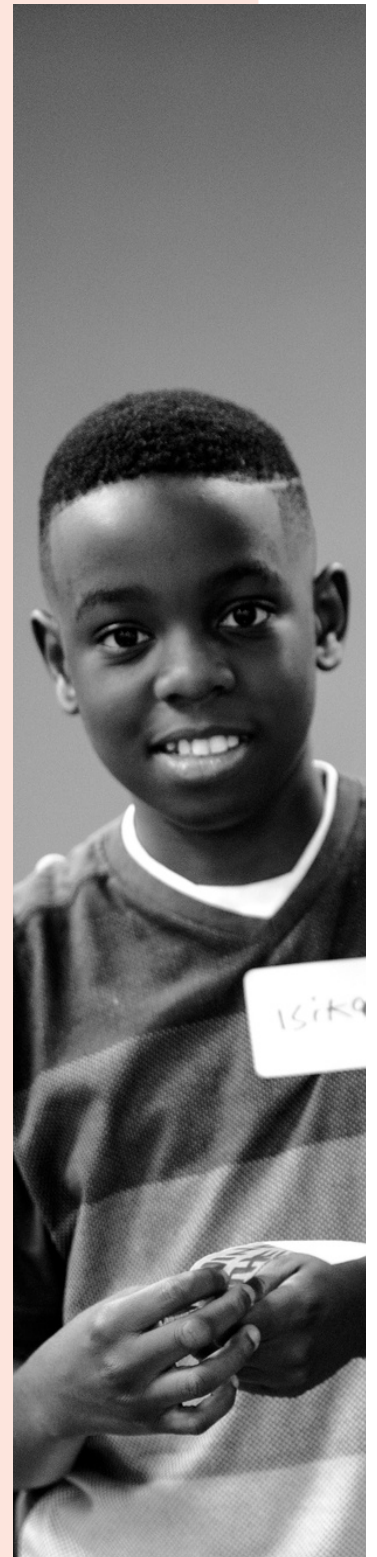
- The relationship is not as dependent on your relationship with an individual mentee because there are multiple people for each to connect with.
- Small group mentoring has a lower barrier to entry and is typically a more accessible and easier way to invite youth to get involved.
- Group mentoring allows mentees the opportunity to mentor and influence each other. Change is hard, but it is easier to do it with someone else.
- It is typically easier to converse with group mentoring because multiple people are there to offer input.
- More access to support, as you can reach out to the mentee's parents for help.
- If a mentee doesn't show up or is not engaged, the show can still go on.



Small Group Mentoring

Obstacles:

- Responsibility for all things falls on the mentor. They are responsible for initiating the relationship, finding resources and relationships to help them succeed, and resolving conflict if it happens with their mentee.
- It's not as much of a personal interaction as you are talking to a group instead of an individual. Also, there is less flexibility to alter the content to fit the mentee's needs.
- More mentees mean more opportunities for the mentees to distract each other or have conflict with one another. Jealousy may also arise if a mentee senses the mentor is imbalanced in their investment.
- Safety, resources, and networking opportunities are dependent on the mentor.



Organizational Mentoring

This is where a mentor submits to a church, non-profit, or community organization and relies on them for resources, coaching, and oversight of the mentor/mentee relationship.

Examples:

- Church mentoring group
- School-based mentoring organization
- Non-profit organization mentoring initiative

Ideal mentees: The mentees are typically specific to the specific focus of the church, school, or non-profit. IE: Sports ministry typically mentors athletes, and churches mentor kids in their community.



Organizational Mentoring

Opportunities:

- More resources, connections, and oversight to help you navigate your mentoring relationship. Also, more events and programs to get the mentor involved.
- Safety and policy and procedures are a top priority, ensuring that both you and the mentee are protected from unfortunate events. Also, it typically requires parental involvement.
- The organization is primarily responsible for the relationship, which reduces the responsibility on both the mentor and the mentee. If one moves or cannot participate in the relationship, the organization facilitates the next steps.
- Organizational mentoring can be focused on one specific aspect of growth, such as academics, sports, or community service.
- Provides encouragement for both mentors and mentees by facilitating peer relationships with other mentor/mentee relationships. You and your mentee can glean from other mentor/mentee relationships.



Organizational Mentoring

Obstacles:

- Typically not as flexible regarding activities, discussion topics, meeting times, etc...
- Some organizations can have a high barrier to entry, which can discourage some mentors from beginning the process.
- If the mentee's parents or guardians are cooperative, it can help the mentor/mentee relationship.
- It can be harder to have deep, meaningful relationships with the mentee because they want to have fun or are too busy talking to their friends.

