

## Your role is critical...

Front lines. Mentoring will enable you to much more effectively serve souls and focus your ministry more on *building people* rather than just running programs. How to get started?

### Warmly Introduce Yourself

In your first email to a learner introduce yourself directly, warmly and simply, avoiding stiffness or over-formality. Ask yourself: What can I do to be genuinely approachable to this person?

### Ask Good Questions

Open-ended questions are best for getting to know others because they enable creative, self-revealing responses. What do you hope to gain from the Catechetical Institute workshops? Ask yourself: What can I do to discover what this person most needs and what I can do to help?

### Respond with Empathy

Being empathic does not signal agreement (that is being sympathetic) but that you closely consider where the learner is coming from, what their perspective is. Ask yourself: How can I aim to create a warm relational space and trust with this person?

### Manage Yourself

Any encounter with another person is an opportunity to help them achieve their ultimate end in Christ or instead to somehow impede them from reaching this destiny. Ask yourself: Am I aware of my own need to grow in how I communicate and listen? Do I have a tendency to be curt? Do I tend to gloss over problems? Am I responding to the person, or to a problem?



## How to successfully, fruitfully mentor others



*Half of holiness is  
choosing the right  
companions.*

*~ St. John Bosco*

## All conversion is local...

Formation in the faith is always first and foremost God's attentive presence to the *individual*. From this principle arises the vital importance of mentorship, and for that guidance to be proximal and personal: a mentoring accompaniment.

The overarching priority of the Catechetical Institute is to commit the effort necessary to form those who form others, rather than replace them with distant experts or high production value video and audio resources. Evangelization and catechesis can thus remain appropriately situated with those who can be in authentic ministerial relationships in the field. To accomplish this, all the online workshops designed by CI critically rely upon mentorship. By doing this, we seek to encourage dioceses in the direction of mentored formation and person-to-person engagement.

While this means greater time committed by both learners and mentors, there are clear advantages: for learners, that they become better ministers, with better results than less-attentive formation methods could ever achieve, and that they are enabled to take more creative ownership of their call to serve and form souls. For mentors and diocesan officials, these workshops help them to grow substantially in their own formation skills and ministerial competence, to discover an effective mechanism for accountability and excellence, and to find themselves ever more deeply in relationships with those they are called to lead and form.

## Here are some workshops on [FranciscanAtHome.com](http://FranciscanAtHome.com) that will greatly help you...

We encourage you to take these great workshops to grow in your pastoral accompaniment skills:

- ◆ The Vocation of the Catechist
- ◆ Catechetical Mentorship
- ◆ Being Guided & Guiding Souls
- ◆ Personal Vocation and the Mentoring Relationship
- ◆ Building the Mentoring Relationship: Asking Good Questions
- ◆ Building the Mentoring Relationship: Empathic Listening
- ◆ Mentoring in Ministry

### Got questions?

Here's some of the most common questions we're asked by mentors:

- ◆ What is the difference between teaching and mentoring?
- ◆ How often should I reach out to a learner?
- ◆ How should I handle tough ministry questions?
- ◆ What if a question seems more appropriate for spiritual director?
- ◆ How many people is good to mentor at a time?
- ◆ What is the normal time commitment for a mentor?

Answers to these and many other questions can be found at:

[FranciscanAtHome.com/faq](http://FranciscanAtHome.com/faq)

We've also included video tutorials and other resources on this page to better help you serve your mentees!

Got a tech problem? Contact us at:

[ci@franciscan.edu](mailto:ci@franciscan.edu)

## As yourself: What does it mean to live sacrificially to build up those we lead?

We are all aware of the loneliness of *many* people in ministry – the isolation of the catechist in a classroom, or parents in a culture of indifference, or of priests working on their own. The mentoring role is to support, reinforce, refer back, and refer on to other workshops. Don't become second teacher. Help them to use the teacher well, to trust the teacher, use the sources, not to see you so much as an expert on all things, but instead more of a sounding-board and friend. Mentors seek to listen, to take a sincere interest in another soul, enjoy achievements, believe in what they do, support their mission, and help them through difficult patches. We find good points to affirm in their work, countering the tendency to make our points refer only to problems and shortcomings! We can always find some genuine good points in a workshop. By identifying and noting genuine strengths, we affirm people in things they may not otherwise recognize or repeat. This consolidates the good and cultivates virtues. If we did just this, we would be doing something very worthwhile. Don't waste the power of acknowledging the good!

Trust the workshop tasks and help learners to trust them as useful and helpful for formation. Remember you are there for personal long-term support. This "slow evangelization" avoids giving in to the illusion of rapid formation. Progress will be over a period, a sequence of workshops. Hopefully you will have the person for at least a dozen workshops. Mentoring needs to focus especially on building confidence by encouragement not so much correction. Always think, where can I be of most assistance in supporting this person? Above all, we pray, asking the Holy Spirit to show you how to assist well.

