

THE  
DISCIPLESHIP  
PLACE

Developing Children's Ministry



**SESSION 8**  
Spiritual Formation

## NOTICE TO CLT PARTICIPANTS AND EDUCATORS

---

This is a contract. By using these materials you accept all the terms and conditions of this Agreement. This Agreement covers all Leader's Guides, Student Guides, and instructional resources included in the Continuing Lay Training (CLT) website.

Upon your acceptance of this Agreement, Continuing Lay Training grants to you a nonexclusive license to use these curricular materials provided that you agree to the following:

### 1. USE OF THE MODULES.

- You may distribute educational materials in electronic form to students or other educational providers.
- You may make and distribute electronic or paper copies to students for the purpose of instruction, as long as each copy contains this Agreement and the same copyright and other proprietary notices pertaining to the Module. If you download the educational materials from the Internet or similar online source, you must include the CLT notice for the Module with any online distribution and on any media you distribute that includes the educational content.
- You may translate, adapt, and/or modify the examples and instructional resources for the purpose of making the instruction culturally relevant to your students. However, you must agree that you will not sell these modified materials without express, written permission from CLT.

### 2. COPYRIGHT.

The material is owned by CLT and is protected by United States Copyright Law and International Treaty provisions. Except as stated above, this Agreement does not grant you any intellectual property rights in the Module.

### 3. RESTRICTIONS.

- You may not sell copies of these educational materials in any form except to recover the minimum reproduction cost of electronic media or photocopy expense.
- You may not modify the wording or original intent of the educational material for commercial use.

## THANK YOU

Continuing Lay Training would like to thank Clergy Development for granting permission to modify and adapt their course of study materials for our educational purposes. Their willingness to partner with us is sincerely appreciated.

# Spiritual Formation

## SESSION OVERVIEW

### Defining Spiritual Formation and Disciplines

#### Spiritual Disciplines—Scripture Study and Meditation

#### Spiritual Disciplines—Prayer and Sabbath-Keeping

#### Spiritual Disciplines—Choosing a Spiritual Mentor

### Application

### Exam

### Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

## LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should:

- identify significant characteristics of lifelong spiritual formation.
- assume responsibility for pursuing the spiritual disciplines of studying Scripture, prayer, and taking a Sabbath, as well as finding other disciplines that are meaningful to spiritual growth.
- explore the role and purpose of a spiritual mentor.

# Spiritual Formation

## INTRODUCTION

True spirituality can exhaust us, for it exists not merely for our own edification, but to serve the glory and purposes of God. All aspects of externalized spirituality—serving people's needs, doing good works, taking the gospel to the spiritually lost, working in church ministries—all expend the reserves of both body and soul. There's a problem, though, when the inflow of spiritual renewal doesn't replenish the outflow of spiritual ministry. The spiritual life should also be the source of inner recreation and restoration, since it is the way we most directly experience the Lord in daily life.

Scripture portrays God as a Potter, a Sculptor. The same God who spoke the earth into existence created Adam and Eve, forming them and breathing life into them. Humanity received the personal touch of the living God from the first moments of existence. The potter imagery reminds us that God is in the practice of personally creating and shaping human beings. God uses "stuff" that is already in existence to form us into His image. Our lives are full of "stuff"—minor frustrations, major disappointments, the suffering and profound losses we face alongside victories of joy, love, hard work, and success. God works all these things for our good as God forms and shapes us.

When we begin to search through all the books on "how to do children's ministry," we notice a large hole. There are books on how to plan camps, programs, worship services, how to talk with parents, raise money, and even how to help others spiritually. However, they say little about the self-care of the shepherd. Many people assume children's leaders don't need to care for themselves.

Since they are in ministry, won't God watch over them differently? Aren't children's leaders so busy looking for resources that they wouldn't have time to read about spiritual formation anyway? Besides, there are no simple, step-by-step plans that work universally to achieve spiritual formation. Whatever the reason, many leaders overlook a critical piece to successful, long-term ministry: self-care through spiritual disciplines or practices! There are many different aspects of self-care we could consider, but we are going to limit our discussions to the following areas: Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Mentors, and the Sabbath.

## DEFINING SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND DISCIPLINES



### NOTES

What is spiritual formation? The idea emerges out of Galatians 4:19, where Paul describes his desire for the Galatians. He writes, “My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.” This is not a desire for outward change, but complete transformation. Paul prayed for and encouraged the Galatians to experience Christ in such a way that their very nature would be changed. They would have Christlike character resulting in Christlike outward behavior due to their formation in the image of Christ. An example that might be useful to us comes from the word that is translated “formed.” It is a somewhat unique word used only three times in Scripture—Galatians 4:19, Mark 16:12, and Philippians 2:6-7. *Morphe* is the Greek word for “being formed,” a term that means a changing of nature and form. The definition of morphing is to change one image gradually to the form of another. In the spiritual life, the change relies on the power of the Holy Spirit, not on a formula. All the same, there are strategies that can help us be in the right position of humble acceptance that invites the Holy Spirit to “morph us” or change us until we are formed into Christ’s likeness.

Wesleyans see this process beginning with prevenient grace, leading us into a salvation experience. We then sense God’s grace leading us to sanctification, even entire sanctification, as we cooperate with His will and purposes for us. As we use our spiritual gifts, engage in spiritual disciplines and fellowship, and worship together in community, we continue to be transformed into His likeness. We learn what it means to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves.

There are many spiritual disciplines—practices that have proven throughout history to be important ways in which people make themselves available to God and His transformative power. Some of these disciplines emphasize letting go of rights, privileges, or things that do not reflect the image of Christ. Other disciplines emphasize things we choose to make part of our lives, so we can better reflect the image of Christ. Both kinds of disciplines serve in our Christian formation. Dallas Willard, author of *The Spirit of the Disciplines and Reformation of the Heart*, says that there is no complete list of spiritual disciplines. Yet, he does offer a taxonomy for organizing different practices.





### *Disciplines of Letting Go or Abstinence*

In these practices, we stop doing something in order to work Christlike character into our lives.

- Solitude: Spending time alone to be with God.
- Silence: Removing noisy distractions to hear from God.
- Slowing down: Putting ourselves in situations where we have to move at a slower pace to break the hurriedness in our lives. Most commonly, this is practiced as Sabbath-keeping.
- Fasting: Skipping a meal(s) (or abstaining from an activity or attitude) to find greater nourishment from God. Fasting forces us to let God fill the needs being met by that particular activity.
- Secrecy: Avoiding self-promotion, practicing serving God without others knowing.
- Frugality/Sacrifice/Simplicity: Choosing to live with less money or material assets, meeting only basic needs so that our resources are available for God's purposes.

### *Disciplines of Activity/Engagement*

In these practices, we intentionally engage in activities that nurture our souls and strengthen us for the race ahead.

- Study/Meditation: Spending time reading the Word of God and meditating on its meaning and importance in our lives in order to cleanse our bodies and minds
- Scripture memorization: Memorizing the Bible in order to “store it in our hearts” and transform our thoughts.
- Worship: Offering praise and adoration to God in order to give our lives perspective.
- Prayer: Talking and listening to God about our relationship with Him and our needs, feelings, frustrations, and desires, in order to learn how to trust Him as our Source and Provider.
- Thankfulness: Recognizing blessings in all of life and expressing gratitude to God and to others for their gifts.

 **NOTES**

- Fellowship: Mutual caring and ministry in the body of Christ through committed, accountable relationships. This includes bearing each others' burdens, sharing each others' joys, and enjoying others' company in both celebration and the mundane events of life.
- Confession: Regularly confessing sins and failures to the Lord and other trusted individuals in order to experience God's forgiveness and cleansing.
- Submission: Humbling ourselves before God and others while seeking accountability in relationships. This is consciously choosing to honor another's authority.
- Hospitality: Sharing ourselves and our personal resources and inviting others to participate in our lives through intentional acts of serving.

There may be some disciplines on the list that surprise you. The disciplines are defined not so much by the act itself as by the motivation of obedience and the purpose of transformation of the heart. In this lesson, we focus on new understanding of three of the most commonly practiced disciplines: Scripture reading, prayer, and keeping the Sabbath.

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES—SCRIPTURE STUDY AND MEDITATION



### NOTES

Why is reading the Bible important? You already know many of the stories and big ideas of Scripture. Isn't that enough? There are many responses to this question but at least four worth consideration. We need to have a firm and constantly developing grip on the Word of God as it protects us from deception, develops our minds, transforms our hearts and lives, and nurtures ongoing growth.

#### *The Bible Guards Us from Deception*

The Bible warns us again and again about being deceived. The disciples were warned in Matthew 24:4 concerning deception: "Beware that no one leads you astray." We need to recognize that Scripture can be interpreted and lived quite diversely, shaped by historical and contemporary assumptions. In the late 1990s, there were 2,500 Christian denominations in the United States. Worldwide, there are more than 23,000 different Christian denominations, all basing their beliefs on the same book, the Bible. Most of these denominations have small points of difference or uniqueness in regional or cultural practices that have caused them to bond together in particular fellowship, forming their own organizational structures of accountability.

However, if we are deceived in a small way and pass that small deception on to someone else, the deception becomes bigger. It is easy to see how individuals can be led astray if they do not take personal responsibility for evaluating teachings against the knowledge of God's Word. The failure to live holy lives, and the seeming ease with which Christians interact with sinfulness, is cause for great concern at many levels. It may come from ignorance of God's Word.

It is not enough to rely on the few verses a pastor brings to the congregation each week. If individual believers do not reflect on the sermons and solidify the teaching in their minds, what was said can become distorted and even completely disappear. It is the responsibility of Christians to study to show themselves approved by God (2 Timothy 2:15). Is it different for those in leadership? It is different in this way: As a leader you are accepting the responsibility for the spiritual care of others.




**NOTES**
*The Bible Helps Us to Develop Our Minds*

There are many ways to study God's Word. Tremper Longman offers seven principles of Bible study known as the "Informational approach."

1. *Come to the Scriptures with a seeking mind and heart.* If you already know a passage, it is tempting to put your own spin on it. The first important step in informational Bible Study is to discover the author's intended meaning. You must know the author's meaning before attempting to apply the passage to your life.
2. *Read the Bible passage as it was originally intended and in the context of the other passages around it.* Is this portion of Scripture a summary, a transition, an introduction, or even the second point of a three-point argument the author is making to discuss a broader theme? How does it fit into the rest of the passage?
3. *What type of writing are you reading?* Is it a song, a proverb, or a prophecy? Is it history or a warning? Is it a quotation of what God said, or is it a story or parable? It will help you to understand the text's purpose once you know the type of literature you are reading. This is one place a broader educational background really helps your spiritual formation.
4. It is important to *consider the historical and cultural setting of the people to whom the author was writing.* What difference would it make if the people were slaves under Roman oppression or churches in the culturally-mixed port city of Corinth? Ask yourself other questions that will help you understand better the author's audience. Try to understand the times and the expectations of the place in that period of history. Again, broader educational resources will contribute to your understanding of the biblical context.
5. *Consider the grammar and structure within the passage.* If you run into a "therefore," see what it is "there for." Look for "ands," "buts," and repeated words or ideas. These serve a purpose.
6. *Interpret your personal experiences in the light of Scripture, not the other way around.* If you are reading the Scripture in the light of your personal experiences or your own cultural observations, you may be shifting your ideas onto the Bible.


**NOTES**

7. *Always seek to understand what the entire Bible says concerning a particular theme.* Learn to use Bible concordances, dictionaries, and commentaries to assist you. Computer Bible programs are wonderful tools, and they make your research much quicker. If you cannot get an affordable program, you can access many resources over the internet as long as they prove to be a credible source.

*The Bible Changes Our Hearts and Lives*

Reading God's Word must be for more than information. It must be for transformation. If you are reading for "transformation," you must move from seeking "information" to submitting to the text. There must be a humble willingness to allow the words of God to cleanse your heart, shape your thoughts, and direct your behavior. Reading for information is "you mastering the text," whereas reading for transformation is allowing the "text to master you." The Transformational Approach might include different approaches to interacting with Scripture.

*The Explorer's Method:* Become observant of all the details of the passage. Look at every word. What are the powerful key words? This exercise with John 3:16 (KJV) shows what happens when you emphasize different words.

- For GOD so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- For God so loved the WORLD that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- For God so loved the world that he GAVE his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- For God so loved the world that he gave his ONLY begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- For God so loved the world that he gave his only BEGOTTEN son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Each emphasis leads us to a different treasure found in this single verse.

- Salvation is about what God did.
- God loves all, and His gift is for the whole world, not a chosen few.
- Sacrifice is involved in God's act.


**NOTES**

- There is one Son. Jesus was a unique demonstration of God, more than a prophet.
- The fifth emphasis on begotten leads to a theological inquiry. What does it mean that Jesus is begotten?

Next, discover what the text means. What is the author trying to tell me? What's the main idea when all the words are understood? What else does the Bible say about this concept? Then meditate on questions like: Why was it a good thing that I read this passage today? Finally, apply the passage: Lord, what would You have me do with what I read today?

*The "Being There" Method:* Imagine being in the scene. Take on the thoughts and experiences with which these individuals might have been dealing. Picture it, feel it, try to look around the scene in your mind and attempt to use all of your senses. What do you see? What do you feel? What can you touch? Can you smell anything or taste anything? Listen carefully to the dialogue. Who are you identifying with most in the story? Was there any character you resisted the most? Did you get any good insights into the meaning of the passage?

*The Formational Approach:* In this approach, you ask probing questions that will lead to transformational experiences.

- How do I experience God the Father in this passage?
- How do I experience Jesus Christ in this passage?
- How do I experience the Holy Spirit in this passage?
- Is the passage discussing sin to avoid?
- Are there commands I am to obey?
- Is there a promise I can hold on to today?
- Is there something the passage can teach me about myself?
- Should I memorize this passage?
- Do I need to share this with anyone else? Who?
- If I really believed this verse, how would my life be different?

**NOTES***The Bible Brings Ongoing Spiritual Growth*

There is only one way to coast, and that is down. If we are to be vibrant and victorious Christians, we must be constantly shaped by Scripture. If you are not growing, you risk being deceived, because your world keeps changing whether you keep applying Scripture or not. This is true for any intimate relationship. If you do not work at growing the relationship, it will eventually suffer and die.

The heart of spiritual formation, the reading of the Bible, must be both informational and transformational in order for it to be formational. We combine our analytical judgment with an openness to be shaped and purified. The Bible does not exist primarily to help you feel better, reduce the stresses of life, or help you find peace, joy, and satisfaction. The Bible records the revelation of God in Christ Jesus and the hope of the gospel that Jesus came to demonstrate. As you are learning to love God with every part of yourself—heart, soul, mind, strength—and neighbor as yourself, you must be constantly applying the challenges of the Bible to the daily process of your life in humble submission to His shaping process. As you model this kind of thirst for knowing God through the Bible, it becomes contagious to your children.

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES—PRAYER AND SABBATH-KEEPING

### NOTES

Prayer is an amazing resource in the Christian life. It is a discipline—something we can do to accomplish what we cannot accomplish on our own. Sometimes, we find we pray mostly when we are convinced that there is nothing else we can do. We pray when there is a crisis, someone we love is ill, a marriage is dissolving, or financial ruin is closing in.

Prayer is not an option for the believer. It is the power of our relationship with God. We must communicate in order to maintain relationship. John Wesley emphasized the importance for ministers to engage in prayer in two separate letters. On November 30, 1770, Wesley wrote to Joseph Benson, a scholarly theologian, “Let no study swallow up or intrude upon the hours of private prayer, *nil tanti*” (nothing is of so much importance). In another letter, Wesley wrote to Ann Bolton on August 25, 1771. Ann was busy with the work of the Lord (organizing prayer meetings, small group ministries, and charities for the sick and poor). He said: “Let not your works of mercy rob you of time for private prayer.”

Prayer is not a magic formula for success, but there is little real success without the work of prayer. Prayer puts us into an attitude of dependence, submission, thankfulness, and openness to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ gives us a model for prayer in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). The elements prove so simple, calling out to God, recognizing both His close relationship and His amazing holiness. “Our father in heaven, may your name be honored” (v. 9, NLT). Within and between those words is nearly every situation of our lives. Jesus calls us to prayer so that we might lay everything before the Father.

*A Model for Prayer: The Lord’s Prayer—Matthew 6*  
(based on the New Living Translation)

- We recognize both His close relationship and His amazing holiness. “Our father in heaven, may your name be honored.”
- We speak of our dependence on His infinite wisdom to rule over the situations of our lives. “May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven.”
- We speak of our real and present needs. “Give us our food for today.”
- We speak of our failures. “And forgive us our sins.”
- We speak of our attitudes about being wronged. “Just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.”


**NOTES**

- We acknowledge that life is hard, and there are forces beyond what we can see with the eye. “And don’t let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from evil.”
- We express our faith in God’s infinite and eternal purposes. “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

### *Pray as You Can*

Many Christians feel ashamed of their prayer lives. Christians know how much they need to pray. They have 100 reasons why they don’t. About 50 of those reasons usually have to do with time. Some people feel there is a certain way we should be praying, and that way doesn’t fit them. They give up, and think they are prayer failures. Brennan Manning quotes Don Chapman in a book entitled, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*: “Pray as you can; don’t pray as you can’t.” If you don’t want to pray, pray for a desire to pray. If you can’t pray long, you can pray often. If you can’t pray in public, pray in public privately. If you can’t pray without falling asleep, pray until you fall asleep and pray again when you awaken, or pray while you pace the floor to stay awake. If you can’t think of the words to pray, pray without words, and let the Holy Spirit intercede for you; or pray the prayers of saints that are recorded for all history.

The Bible tells of at least 10 different types of prayer and at least six different body positions for prayer. Those are given to show there are many different ways to pray, and we can explore many ways of being in God’s presence. Engaging in a variety of prayers helps us model to our students a willingness to meet God in every situation in our lives. If we are willing to model fun, engaging, real-life prayer to children, we help them to see themselves as effective communicators with God from their earliest days. Engaging in a variety of prayers helps us model to our students a willingness to meet God in every situation in our lives. If we are willing to model fun, engaging, real-life prayer to children, we help them to see themselves as effective communicators with God from their earliest days.

In the nursery, we pray with babies as we thank God for their cheeks and bellies. We praise God by clapping our hands, stomping our feet, and raising our arms. We pray over the babies’ anxiety when their mommies leave. We give prayer words to their experience: “Jesus hears Max’s cries and see his tears. God, help him feel better.” And we can share that prayer life with families by doing something as simple as placing a sticker on a child’s back that says, “I was prayed for today.” Make sure every baby gets a sticker, but don’t put it on their backs until it is true!




**NOTES**

Pray with preschoolers, using books with simple pictures they can identify. For example, an animal book is perfect! Hold up the first page, and say, "Thank You, God, for ducks." Before you turn the page, say, "Thank you God for . . ." Then turn the page and encourage the children to shout out the name of the next animal. We can pray memorized prayers with them. Far from being meaningless, this simple act helps to establish times to pause in their day, such as snack time, naptime, and bedtime. We can pray whisper prayers with folded hands and shouting prayers with eyes wide open. We can go around the circle and ask each child to tell one thing for which he or she is grateful. Encourage all the children to join in with "Thank You, thank You, God."

With elementary students, you can go on a prayer scavenger hunt in your neighborhood, looking for things that indicate a need for prayer. You can engage in times of complete silence, encouraging personal prayer (one to two minutes seems like a long time to a child, but you can stretch this out to a length of a short instrumental song if you are encouraging and not harsh about it). You can make prayer time exciting by counting down to prayer with the last word being "bow" instead of blast-off, followed by complete silence.

These "prayer adventures" may be of little significance and may feel quite ineffective or uncomfortable if you are not willing to expand your own prayer life with new ways of praying. This can include prayer journaling, praying with your eyes open to nature, silence as prayer (listening), partner praying (conversational prayer), praying Scripture, or other kinds of prayer that may not be familiar to you.

### *Keeping Sabbath*

The discipline of Sabbath may help with that. Sabbath is not as much a day as an attitude. For leaders, Sunday is a work day. Does that release us from our obligation to rest? When God gave the commandment to remember the Sabbath, He didn't say anything about what day that should be. Sunday Sabbath is more of a Christian tradition than a rule. What God did say was we need to work six days and set aside—keep holy—one day. In that one day, we are not bound to legalistic rules. We are bound to "not work." What does "not work" mean to you? By laying aside our desire to be productive, we have opportunity to consider things that are beyond material concerns—things that are eternal, like our relationship with God.

This "not work" seems to be one of the most significantly protective gifts God has given to us. Scientists confirm that people who intentionally learn to "not work" learn to be more creative and are healthier. While we usually associate the Sabbath with the Ten Commandments, there is another biblical basis for its observance. "Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don't pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the Lord's holy day" (Isaiah 58:13-14).

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES—CHOOSING A SPIRITUAL MENTOR



### NOTES

American humorist Mark Twain said, “It ain’t those parts of the Bible that I can’t understand that bother me. It’s the parts that I do understand.” Most of us understand perfectly well that the disciplines we have talked about are important. Even so, we struggle to make them a priority. One way to practice spiritual disciplines and continue to experience spiritual formation in our lives is to work with a spiritual mentor. This person may also serve as an accountability partner.

Leaders have a difficult time entering into a spiritual mentoring relationship because they feel they must have all the answers. A healthy leader knows that it is OK to say, “I am not certain, but I will certainly seek and pray along with you.” We all need guides, and we all need accountability. You may already be in such a relationship.

Mentoring is a biblical principle—look at Paul and Timothy, Barnabas and Paul, Peter and Mark, Moses and Joshua, and Elijah and Elisha, for example. Mentoring is often overlooked in today’s busy world. A spiritual mentor should have the following characteristics:

- A well-established Christian. You need a mentor who has journeyed the road ahead and can lead you through difficult terrain.
- A good reputation and a strong character.
- Has studied and knows the Scriptures.
- Someone of the same gender who is competent in theology and skilled and loving in relationships.
- Embraces the history of the Christian faith.
- Known for living a life of personal holiness.
- Filled and led by the Holy Spirit.
- Discerning.
- Demonstrates grace while being frank and honest.
- A good listener and respectful in his or her responses.
- Patient.
- Content with life and not greedy; a person who values God over things.


**NOTES**

- Demonstrates self-giving love, openness, and vulnerability in relationships.
- Knows forgiveness and can be forgiving.
- Experienced in life and in prayer.
- Fits with your personal needs and personality.

Begin to pray and ask God about who might fulfill this role in your life and when you should enter into such a relationship.

What are the goals of spiritual mentorship? One can identify at least five. First, mentorships help us to have true Christian fellowship. It is not unusual for church leaders to feel all alone in terms of intimate Christian fellowship. Leaders may feel if they expose a weakness or a struggle to a friend at church, they will lose respect or compromise their leadership ability. A mentor gives you a safe place to be real about issues in your life without fear of rejection or hindrance to your ministry.

Second, mentorships help keep us accountable. One characteristic of a spiritual mentor is to be frank and honest. That means that this person will confront you in love when necessary. When you are involved in things that might come back to hurt you later or even may have the appearance of impropriety, your spiritual mentor can help you see this. The key aspect to mentorship being successful is your ability to be 100 percent honest. You must honestly want help to see your blind spots. One area of accountability that should be addressed is sexual temptation. Many situations arise in ministry that lead to unique emotional intimacy that can easily be misinterpreted as having sexual overtones. Do not put yourself in situations that can lead to your own spiritual demise. Set standards for interacting with the opposite sex, and stick to them. You may also have to take steps to avoid other forms of temptation. Knowing you have a spiritual mentor who will ask you whether you are maintaining your standards can give you the reason to take the extra step of caution even before you sense temptation.

Third, mentors help us grow and mature spiritually. Our spiritual mentor should check with us about our practices of spiritual discipline, be willing to pray and search the Scriptures with us, and be a resource for advice on issues of spiritual growth.

Fourth, mentors can be a model. Mentors should model appropriate interactions, values, and relationships as an ongoing example of Christlikeness. There is a part of our mentor that will become a part of us as he or she models Christ for us.

**NOTES**

Fifth, mentors serve as our support and advocate. It may be helpful to have someone who is loved and respected in the church go to bat for us sometimes. Our mentors do not have to be from our church. However, if he or she does attend, it can be helpful to have someone support us and stand by us because he or she knows the process we have gone through in making a decision.

So how does one get a spiritual mentor? Don't be afraid to ask. Don't be discouraged if one mentoring relationship doesn't work out. Don't expect the mentor to fix everything for you. Don't expect the mentor to do all the work or set the pace alone. Don't assume the mentor can read minds—communicate openly. Don't give up. Mentorships require time and personal investment, but the benefits are limitless for both you and your mentor. You also have to be open to being a mentor. Maybe it won't be today, but as you grow in your relationship with the Holy Spirit, you will be required to reach out and help others on their spiritual journeys.

Millions of Christians have grown older without ever growing up. The truth is that spiritual growth requires a commitment to grow. A person must want to grow, decide to grow, and make an effort to grow. We become whatever we are committed to. Without a commitment to grow, growth that does occur will be circumstantial, rather than intentional. Spiritual growth is too important to be left to circumstance. It needs to be intentional, not incidental.

## APPLICATION

---

**NOTES**

1. Write a two-page paper on how you spiritually care for yourself. This is not a paper on your ideal, but your actual day-to-day process. Include in this paper if you actually experience a Sabbath (day of rest). If so, how does it work? What is your prayer life and Bible reading time like? Describe your times of private worship. Are you in a mentoring relationship? Are you in an accountability group? These are areas of suggestion, and the paper does not have to be limited just to these areas. The idea is to begin to take a serious look at your spiritual health.
2. Choose two to three of the practices suggested this week that you have not included in your spiritual formation in the past. Choose to practice them once this week and adopt one of them as a weekly practice for the rest of the series.
3. Write a letter to a person who has been a spiritual influence on your life and thank him or her for what that influence has meant to you. Send the letter this week.

## EXAM


**NOTES**

1. The spiritual formation of children's leaders is not a prominent topic in children's ministry.
  - A. True
  - B. False
  
2. Wesleyan approaches to spiritual formation include a healthy sense of:
  - A. Prevenient grace
  - B. *Morphe*
  - C. Sanctification
  - D. A and C.
  - E. All of the above.
  
3. Disciplines of abstinence include:
  - A. Solitude
  - B. Secrecy
  - C. Frugality
  - D. A and C.
  - E. All of the above.
  
4. Disciplines of engagement include:
  - A. Worship
  - B. Fasting
  - C. Confession
  - D. A and C.
  - E. All of the above.
  
5. Matching: Match the correct words to the descriptions.
 

\_\_\_\_\_ Scavenger Hunt

\_\_\_\_\_ Being There

\_\_\_\_\_ Accountability

\_\_\_\_\_ Explorer

\_\_\_\_\_ Fellowship and Advocacy

  - A. Bible Study/Meditation
  - B. Prayer/Sabbath-Keeping
  - C. Mentoring





6. Since children's leaders often "work" on Sundays, keeping Sabbath is not important for their spiritual journeys.
- A. True
  - B. False

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT

---



NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. How does one select the appropriate spiritual disciplines for a holistic approach?
2. What is a good approach to balancing informational and transformational Bible study?
3. How do I strengthen my prayer life and select a Sabbath day?
4. What should I concentrate on in selecting a spiritual mentor?

*Review your answers with your mentor, then respond to the following:*

*How many responses focus on supporting children (particularly in areas where they are not yet fully self-reliant), and how many answers focus on empowering children?*

*Which of these answers support the goal of living Christlike relationships? Why?*

*What do we need to add to our list to make our approach more comprehensive, more faithful? Which do we need to incorporate into the role of the children's leader as one who both supports and empowers Christlike relationships with children?*