

Quick Tips for Choosing A Mentor

As we've touched on, an outside caring adult makes a significant difference in a student's spiritual and faith development. Another crucial piece of the puzzle is that a student connects with and feels comfortable being free-spoken with their mentor. Consider these quick tips that can raise the likelihood that your student connects and grows during Confirmation:

Align Interests. We've all experienced how much easier it is to have an on-going conversation with and feel connected to someone who shares our interests. Having an initial interest in common elevates the likelihood of a strong base to carry student-mentor pairs into deeper faith-based discussions. Last year we had a student-mentor pair who enjoyed playing the trumpet; after each mentor session, the mentor gave the student lesson! Floris has a huge congregation; there's bound to be an adult who shares the interests of your student. Network to see if somebody knows somebody who shares you student's interests.

Keep Your Student In Mind. You've got a great friend who attends Floris—you two get along really well, your faith perspectives align, and she would be excited to mentor your student for Confirmation. She's a no-brainer, right? Maybe not. Before you ask an adult to mentor your student, strongly consider how comfortable your student would be opening up to the prospective guide. There may be reasons your student isn't comfortable openly speaking with your friend. For example, your student may fear a lack of confidentiality; a lack of trust will not benefit your student's development over the course of Confirmation.

Mentor Who Talks To, not At. While Confirmation at Floris certainly contains an educational component—among other things, students are exposed to the Old and New Testament, as well as United Methodist tenets—Student Ministries believes students learn best when they are emotionally and socially engaged as well as allowed to creatively explore. This level of engagement--and consequently learning--is achieved when adults can tune into a student's subjective experience, discover what themes resonate with the student, and guide discussion deeper around those themes. Try to find a mentor who is comfortable with and prioritizes this kind of organic process over having an agenda to complete. In Student Ministries we believe our vision aligns with yours as a parent: we all want our students to develop into authentic, compassionate, and resilient adults who are "lights" in the world. As a parent, you know your student best and, therefore, are powerfully poised to find a mentor who can guide your student's growth during Confirmation. As you're thinking about who would be a great fit, consider aligning interests, keeping your student's needs in mind, and choosing someone who will prioritize your student's subjective experience over an agenda that your student strictly adopts every nuance of the Confirmation curriculum.

Questions? Concerns? Comments?

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With kind regards,

Student Ministries