



# Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

## **MENTORING AND YOUTH MINISTRY AT GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH, PARA VISTA**

One of the challenges every Christian community faces is the faith development of young people.

At Para Vista there are a number of needs that we seek to meet for young people.

- 1) Help young people to grow spiritually so that they take responsibility and ownership of their own faith. This personal faith reflects the faith and belief of the whole Christian community
- 2) Give young people a sense of belonging within the church.
- 3) Be alongside young people as they transition to adulthood. Developing their own personal identity is a struggle many young people encounter through their adolescent years.

One of the strategies we have developed to partially meet these needs and goals is a mentoring ministry that begins in the latter half of year 7. It is a structured ministry that develops a spiritual faith relationship between young people and adults over a period of 3 years.

There are a number of steps in the ministry program.

- 1) An 'Information Evening' for parents of young people in year 7. At this evening the mission, vision and approach to youth ministry is shared. We look at how we are seeking to grow our young people and the partnership the congregation has with parents in this ministry.
- 2) Parents and young people from year 7 are invited to a 'Choosing Your Mentor' evening. Here the role of mentors is further developed, and the young people begin the process of selecting their own mentor. A mentor must be an active worshipper of the congregation who is growing in their faith. They need to be able to listen, accept young people for where they are at, and at the same time gently challenge and guide them. They are expected to be people of prayer. Once a young person has chosen their mentor and the person as accepted the invitation to be their mentor the young person passes on the name and the address to the mentoring ministry leader.
- 3) The mentors are invited to a 'Mentoring Evening' where the ministry is explained, what their role as mentors will be, and the characteristics of young adolescents is explored.
- 4) Following this evening there are further six weekly 2 hour sessions where the relationship between the young person and their mentor is developed. This is a time where fundamental faith issues are discussed and explored together.
- 5) At the end of this six weeks the mentoring relationship continues through once a term, one on one meetings to share faith stories and personal issues the young person is dealing with.
- 6) In year 8 mentors are encouraged to attend the 'Ministry with Adolescents Program' once a term with the young person.
- 7) The mentors are encouraged to maintain a relationship both formally and informally until the end of year 10.



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Currently we are developing our own resource and hope to have it completed by the end of 1999. At the present time the pastor who is responsible for the mentoring ministry supervises and maintains contact with mentors on a quarterly basis through personal conversation, written correspondence and telephone.

The mentoring ministry is something that has evolved over a period of three years and is under constant review.

It has now come to the point where a team will be called together to take full responsibility for the ministry and be accountable to the youth and family pastor.

Pastor Stephen Trautwein, Youth and Family Pastor

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*Further information can be obtained from the following:*

*Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
388 Montague Road, Para Vista SA 5093*

*Postal: PO Box 306, Modbury North SA 5092*

*Phone: 8263 5087*

*Fax: 8395 2680*

*e-mail: [gspv@cobweb.com.au](mailto:gspv@cobweb.com.au)*

*Web: [www.paravista.org.au](http://www.paravista.org.au)*

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