Sample Outline of a First Mentor Training Session

Modify this outline to best meet the needs for your plans for sharing Companioned Prayer.

This training session focuses on:

1. an overview of the learning experience,
2. general guidelines for mentoring, and
3. the first two learning sessions (experiencing the prayer).

In advance of the training session, provide four folders to each person and ask them to read: 1) all of the documents referred to herein, 2) all documents to be used in the first learning session, 3) documents of the second learning session, and 4) all of the supplemental handouts. Reading in advance is necessary because there will not be enough time during the training session to cover all of the material. Ask participants to bring these folders to the training session.

Let people know that you will be arriving early, and ask them to do so too if possible. The number of minutes suggested for each topic or activity is based on a two-hour meeting. It will be challenging to cover everything in this outline within two hours. Adding start times to your outline (at least to the major topics/activities) can help you stay on track.

Open and close this training session with a prayer and/or scripture reading: , e.g., Matthew 5:14-16

Ask for discussion, contributions, and questions throughout, and feedback after the first two learning sessions.

| **Start time** | **Minutes** | **Topic or Activity** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 15 | Pre-meeting visiting and set-up |
|  | **5** | **Opening prayer, scripture reading & prelude** |
|  | 5 | * Welcome * Opening prayer * Scripture reading * Prelude:   + Today’s topics: 1) an overview of the learning experience, 2) general guidelines for mentoring, and 3) the first two learning sessions (experiencing the prayer)   + The next training session will focus on: 1) the third and fourth learning sessions (learning to companion), 2) ongoing prayer meetings, and 3) the follow-on retreat   + We do not have enough time in these training sessions to discuss everything, so please take the time to read everything.   + *If not previously provided or if they forgot to bring theirs*, hand out folders of materials as necessary.   + Ask for discussion, contributions, and questions throughout. Ask for feedback, including after putting this into practice. |
|  | **15** | **Overview of the learning experience** (hand out and refer to the paper “Overview of the Learning Experience”) Discuss the following: |
|  | 1 | * Simplicity in three parts: a) four learning sessions (1 & 2 = experiencing the prayer, 3 & 4 = learning to companion); b) ongoing prayer meetings; and c) a follow‑on retreat |
|  | 3 | * Flexibility of offering |
|  | 8 | * Accessible and safe environments. (Discuss with the handout) |
|  | 3 | * Availability of all materials on the CPCF website, and what should be read |
|  | **10** | **General principles of the mentoring process** (hand out and refer to “Guidelines for Sharing Companioned Prayer”) Discuss the following: |
|  | 3 | * Share from the heart. Share your personal testimony appropriately. Everyone has spiritual experiences; it is part of our humanness. |
|  | 1 | * Do not try to fix anyone, convert anyone, or expect them to have certain experiences. Trust in God. |
|  | 1 | * Learning will be experience-based (with self-validation of the experiences) rather than from intellectual discussion. |
|  | 1 | * Personal mentoring rather than classroom or lecture style. |
|  | 2 | * Keep personal discussions (chatting) after prayer to a minimum in order to keep personal experiences fresh (and how to handle chatting). |
|  | 1 | * You cannot cause anyone to have a ‘prayer experience.’ You are powerless, so let God do it. Do not place expectations of having an “experience”; we are just happy that they are with us. |
|  | **85** | **The first two learning sessions** (hand out and refer to “Guidelines for the First Two Learning Sessions – with Mentors”) |
|  | 1 | Discuss:   * Available time for these sessions, and the number of new participants per experienced companion. Fitting everything necessary into the first learning session can be difficult. |
|  | 1 | Discuss:   * The 1st & 2nd learning sessions can be included within an ongoing Companioned Prayer ministry meeting, or separate from it. |
|  | 1 | Discuss:   * *Opening.*   + Welcome; scripture reading; opening prayer; and introductions |
|  | 2 | Discuss:   * *About the learning experience.*   + A brief overview of what happens when.   + Read Bishop Quinn’s remarks and then hand out that page.   + Discuss the Disclaimer and ask for questions.   + Discuss confidentiality, and the handout.   + Discuss the principles of a Safe Environment and ask for questions.   + Provide blank journals to participants who did not bring one. |
|  | 7 | Discuss:   * *About Companioned Prayer.*   + How to break into small groups of 1, 2 or 3 new learners per experienced companion. (Preference is 2, 1, 3)   + Share your own personal experiences of the prayer (and their significance to you);   + Very briefly discuss how companioning works, i.e., praying with a companion.   + Explain that we learn the prayer primarily by praying it. Do not describe each prayer movement. (If you find it is necessary to review the prayer movements, do not go into detail beyond that in the supplemental handout “The Companioned Prayer Movements.”)   + Read out loud the “Guidelines for Praying” but do not read out loud the sixth bullet about sharing symbols. (In this first session, do not provide any instruction regarding the sharing of symbols.) Have everyone in this training session take out the “Guidelines for Praying” to review it.   + Do not yet share the printed prayer form. |
|  | 20 | Discuss:   * *Mentors companion one person at a time. [should be done in a small group]*   + Always use the standard prayer form for Ordinary Time during the four learning sessions.   + Hand out and discuss “Guidelines for Reflecting the Prayer Experience.” Review and discuss this handout in detail. |
|  | 50 | Practice:   * Separate into twos and companion each other with reflection. * Rejoin as a larger group when finished |
|  | 5 | Discuss:   * How did the prayer reflection go? How did you do it? Was it easy? * *Group sharing/discussion.* |
|  | 1 | * *Closing* (including handouts). |
|  | **5** | **Training session wrap-up** |
|  | 3 | * Questions, feedback, suggestions |
|  | 2 | * Who will accompany the new learners? Who will step in if they can’t? |
|  |  | * Closing prayer |

Sample Outline of a Second Mentor Training Session

Modify this outline to best meet the needs for your plans for sharing Companioned Prayer.

This training session focuses on:

1. the third and fourth learning sessions (learning to companion),
2. ongoing prayer meetings, and
3. the follow-on retreat.

In advance of the training session, provide two folders to each person and ask them to read: 1) the documents referred to herein, and 2) all documents to be used in the third and fourth learning sessions. Reading in advance is necessary because there will not be enough time during the training session to cover all of the material. Ask participants to bring these folders to the training session.

Let people know that you will be arriving early, and ask them to do so too if possible. The number of minutes suggested for each topic or activity is based on a two-hour meeting. It will be challenging to cover everything in this outline within two hours. Adding start times to your outline (at least to the major topics/activities) can help you stay on track.

Open and close this training session with a prayer and/or scripture reading: e.g., Luke 24:32-36

Ask for discussion, contributions and questions throughout, and feedback after the third and fourth learning sessions.

| **Start time** | **Minutes** | **Topic or Activity** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 15 | Pre-meeting visiting and set-up |
|  | **10** | **Opening prayer, scripture reading, prelude & feedback** |
|  | 5 | * Welcome * Opening prayer * Scripture reading * Prelude:   + Today’s topics: 1) the third and fourth learning sessions (learning to companion), 2) ongoing prayer meetings, and 3) the follow-on retreat   + We do not have enough time in these training sessions to discuss everything, so please take the time to read everything.   + *If not previously provided or if they forgot to bring theirs*, Hand out folders of materials as necessary   + Ask for discussion, contributions and questions throughout. Ask for feedback, including after putting this into practice. |
|  | 5 | * Feedback   + *If this training session is held after a first learning session:* Ask for feedback and discussion as a result of the first learning session that might improve the learning experience or our training. |
|  | **90** | **The third and fourth learning sessions** (hand out and refer to “Guidelines for the Third and Fourth Learning Sessions – with Mentors”) |
|  | 1 | Discuss:   * Format of the 3rd & 4th learning sessions   + Can be included within an ongoing Companioned Prayer ministry meeting, or separate from it.   + The sessions follow the same format as an ongoing Companioned Prayer ministry meeting, except when separating into pairs for companioning. |
|  | 4 | Discuss the large group topics:   * + Ask for questions from previous sessions or experiences (due to time constraints, try to keep these discussions brief)   + Invite them to try being a companion. Emphasize its simplicity (just read from a sheet). Today is just practice to see what it is like.   + Read out loud the “Guidelines for the Companion,” answer any questions. [Get these guidelines out and review them as a group in this training session.]   + Explain that this is a learning session and they don’t have to get it right, and that you will be next to them to provide assistance if they wish it. |
|  | 10 | Discuss:   * In the small group, when it is time for companioning, ask each person to companion the other:   + When there are two people who are willing to try companioning, the experienced companion typically does not companion anyone nor is companioned. The experienced companion just sits with them and provides support as needed during their prayers.   + Immediately after each prayer experience, invite the companion to say a blessing if they haven’t spontaneously done so.   + After the blessing, ask the person who just prayed if there is anything that they could tell the new companion that might help the new companion be a better companion. (Typically, such feedback can be to go more slowly, to have a softer voice, etcetera. This feedback is often positive as well.)   + Next ask the person who was in the companioning role, what it was like being the companion, and then if there was anything that the person who was praying could have done differently that would help them in their companioning role.   + Do not engage in the type of reflective discernment that occurred in the first two learning sessions (and do not allow the companions to do that.) Also, in the small group, do not encourage them to share their prayer experiences, but do encourage them to write in their prayer journals. Wait until everyone rejoins the larger group for sharing of prayer experiences.   + When finished, rejoin the larger group, and continue as in a regular Companioned Prayer ministry group meeting. * Discuss how to companion when there is only one or when there are three learners per experienced companion, or when not everyone feels ready to try companioning another person.   + When there is only one person per experienced companion, companion her or him first before they companion you. |
|  | 70 | Practice:   * Break into small groups of three and practice the above with each person having the role of the experienced companion while the other two people companion each other, as follows:   + A companions B, while C observes and provides support   + C companions A, while B observes and provides support   + B companions C, while A observes and provides support * Return to the larger group when finished. |
|  | 5 | Discuss:   * How did that go? |
|  | **15** | **Ongoing Companioned Prayer ministry meetings** Discuss the following: |
|  | 1 | * Discernment continues, as does the development of fellowship. |
|  | 2 | * How to present best prayer practices during sharing of prayer experiences when there are people who are fairly new to the prayer. |
|  | 1 | * The minimal use of the supplemental handouts. |
|  | 1 | * Keep conversations (chatting) to a minimum from the time of prayer to the end of sharing. |
|  | 2 | * Mentoring via sponsorship, like in RCIA. |
|  | 8 | * What to do when a new person simply shows up.   + Do not ask them to leave.   + Separate and conduct the first learning session.   + Identify in advance who will mentor any new people.   + Have all of the regular handouts available for a first and second learning session.   + Whenever a person who has not participated in a first learning session attends the group meeting, confidentiality should be reviewed |
|  | **10** | **Follow-on Retreat** (hand out and refer to “Guidelines for Retreats”) Discuss: |
|  | 3 | * A follow-on retreat is like a booster shot. When? After at least 2 to 4 ongoing prayer meetings after the four learning sessions. * The retreat can be one or two days long. It will energize the individuals and also the group. * The site should be ADA compliant and support separation into small prayer groups. |
|  | 3 | * Great flexibility in the design and focus of this follow-on retreat. Plan it well in advance, with input from everyone. * Keep the agenda non-hurried. Allow time for personal reflection. * Avoid too much instruction, but have the supplemental handouts available to pick up. |
|  | 4 | * Allow plenty of time for planning. * If available, include other Companioned Prayer ministry groups in the area. * Include multiple retreat leaders or presenters if possible. * See the CPCF website for additional ideas. |
|  | **5** | **Training session wrap-up** |
|  | 3 | * Questions, feedback, suggestions |
|  | 2 | * Who will accompany people who have not participated in the learning experience but who show up at an ongoing Companioned Prayer group? Who will be a sponsor? |
|  |  | * Closing prayer |