



NEW GENEVA
ACADEMY

NOLI ALTUM SAPERE

MENTOR HANDBOOK 2021-2022

MENTOR HANDBOOK 2021-2022

THE BIG PICTURE

“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

The Importance of Mentors

Men who train for the pastorate need spiritual fathers who have experience shepherding the sheep of God’s Flock. When the Apostle Paul saw in Timothy a man called by God, he took Timothy with him to do ministry. Paul trained, encouraged, exhorted, and loved Timothy with the goal of producing a faithful shepherd. If our students are in the position of Timothy, then our mentors are in the position of Paul. A significant part of New Geneva Academy’s work is done within this mentoring relationship.

In fact, being a mentor at New Geneva Academy is the most important job in the school. And so, as you might expect, it takes some work. You will be taking responsibility for a man’s spiritual and practical development over the next three years. You will have to hold his feet to the fire often as he struggles to complete course and *practica* requirements. You will be observing his character, his biblical understanding, and his pastoral ability. You will be guiding him into greater responsibility and considering his fitness for office in the Church of God. And, God willing, you will have the joy of seeing him grow into a leader. How will you help him avoid the typical pitfalls of pastoral ministry, such as pride, laziness, and the fear of man, to name just a few?

You will oversee his completion of the *practica*. This hands-on training will help shape his character, develop his skills, and translate his doctrine into action.

Most of your help will come down to asking him about his progress on specific tasks or objectives, as well as showing him how to do this or that. You’ll never be in a position of “doing his homework” for him. Rather, you’ll help him take responsibility for NGA’s requirements, and communicate with NGA regarding his spiritual and practical progress. We intend to make this work as easy for you as possible.

Goals of Mentoring at New Geneva Academy

To guide the student into greater spiritual maturity and leadership ability.

To evaluate the student’s progress in his chosen ministry.

To provide counsel to the student as he works to become a pastor or worship leader.

Mentor Qualifications

NGA requires mentors to be ordained pastors or elders serving in a local church. They must be willing to carry out the responsibilities set forth below.

Basic Mentoring Responsibilities

- Love, train, encourage and reprove your student. Talk with him about what he's learning and help him know his own strengths and weaknesses.
- Pray with your student.
- Do ministry with your student.
- Give updates to the congregation about the student's progress.
- Communicate regularly with the Director of Mentoring about your student's progress.
- Oversee your student's work through the *practica*, holding him accountable to plow through it steadily.
- Read your student's *practica* reflection papers (1-2 short papers per semester or summer).
- Submit basic feedback about your student's progress to the Director of Mentoring.

THE BRASS TACKS

Regular Time with Your Student

Plan to spend time weekly with your student, especially during the first year. He will benefit from your regular encouragement and correction.

As much as possible, have your student do ministry with you. He'll learn much of what he needs to know through your example in leadership, teaching, and counseling situations.

NGA does not expect you to conform your working hours to the student's schedule. Rather, the student should make every effort to fit into *your* schedule.

Remember that students will not have summer breaks. For both summer sessions of the program, students will have *practica* work (and in the second summer, a Greek class).

Reading Your Student's Reflection Papers

Reflection papers are meant to do two things: help the student crystallize what he's learning, and help you and NGA (particularly the Director of Mentoring) follow his growth. All reflection papers will be more worthwhile if your student processes his experiences with you before he writes them. You will not be responsible to grade these papers—or anything else—only to read them. The student will be responsible to give you a copy at the time he turns in one of these papers to NGA.

Regular Meetings with the Director of Mentoring

The Director of Mentoring will schedule an initial meeting with you to discuss the mentoring role and New Geneva Academy's expectations. After that, plan to meet once or twice a semester with the Director of Mentoring (usually via video chat or phone call). He will always be available to you on an as-needed basis as well.

Submit Feedback to the Director of Mentoring

At the end of each semester and summer term, the Director of Mentoring will email you a feedback form to fill out on your student. This will help NGA track the student's progress in the *practica*, as well as his general progress in godliness and leadership ability. This form will also request feedback from you for any sermons your student has preached during that term.

For this reason, please take some notes as you go so that your feedback can be specific.

PRACTICA: MENTOR'S GUIDE

Student requirements are in italics.

1 | **Preaching**

Students will be mentored in preaching. It is expected that a student will preach 4 exegetical sermons, 2 topical sermons, and 2 evangelistic sermons.

NGA does not have a homiletics course. This means the student will learn everything related to preaching through hands-on training, under your oversight. As he preaches 8 sermons over three years—we suggest he use the preaching schedule below—he will need a lot of encouragement and feedback.

Right off the bat, he will need to learn the difference between exegetical, topical, and evangelistic sermons, and he'll need help to begin outlining and writing sermons. He will also be taking a writing course in his first year that will help him understand structure, argument, and clarity as they relate to preaching and writing. You'll be responsible to facilitate regular feedback about his preaching from other elders and pastors in your church, in addition to giving him your own.

And you'll be responsible to submit your feedback about his preaching during your end of semester assessment. (This means you'll need to hear a recording of sermons he preaches outside your church, or review the written sermon with him if that is not possible.)

Most of his sermons should be preached to a congregation, but one open-air sermon may be counted towards the total required.

Suggested Preaching Practicum Schedule

Year 1

- **learn** the 3 types of sermons: exegetical, topical, evangelistic
- **outline** 2 sermons, one of each kind
- **write and preach** 1 sermon

Summer 1

- **write and preach** 1 remaining outlined sermons from Year 1
- **outline and begin writing** 2 sermons

Year 2

- **write and preach** 2 outlined sermons from Summer 1
- **outline and begin writing** 2 sermons

Summer 2

- **write and preach** 2 outlined sermons from Year 2
- **outline and begin writing** 2 sermons

Year 3

- **write and preach** 2 outlined sermons from Summer 2

2 | Teaching and Discipleship

Students will gain teaching experience in three areas: children (e.g. catechetical training, Sunday school, youth group work), adults (e.g. men's group, Adult CE), individual discipleship (e.g. one-to-one mentoring, formal counseling). Students will participate in ongoing ministry (minimum of two semesters) in one of these areas.

At the end of each semester, students will turn in a 2-3 page reflection paper on their experiences and what they learned.

You will help your student get plugged into teaching and discipling in your church. Most semesters and summers, he should be involved in one of the three areas listed above. Remember that he will need to give a full academic year (i.e. two semesters) to at least one of them. He will write a reflection paper at the end of each semester on what he learned.

3 | Visitation

Students will participate in a minimum of 12 visits—hospital, nursing home, church members, church visitors, jail inmates—and write one 2-3 page reflection for each type of visit on their experiences. They must participate in at least 1 visit of each type listed above.

You should bring the student with you on pastoral visits as you're able, in addition to sending him on pastoral visits by himself when that is wise. He'll learn pastoral care from your example, and he'll need your help to internalize what he's seen. Remember to encourage him in particular places he needs to grow pastorally. Your student will easily complete this requirement if he has about 2 visits per semester.

He will write reflection papers about each *type* of visitation, not about each individual visitation. This may mean he waits to write about hospital visitations, for example, until he's done two or three of them.

4 | Personal Disciplines

Students will discuss personal and family disciplines (daily Bible reading, meditation, and prayer) regularly with mentors. Students will write a personal testimony. Students will receive instruction in stewardship of personal finances and demonstrate financial faithfulness. Students will develop a plan for regular participation in evangelism and implement it.

With some regularity—we suggest at least 6 times per year—you should talk frankly with your student about his personal disciplines. In fact, your first “official” mentoring meeting with your student is a good time to start inquiring into this area if you haven’t already. It would be wise to meet with him this way before the start of the first semester.

Regarding his personal and family devotions, ask him how he leads his family (or himself) in Scripture, prayer, and song to God, and how often. The short book *Family Worship*, by Donald S. Whitney, is a helpful resource on this topic.

Regarding finances, find out if he and his wife have debt—what kind and how much. Does he have a budget and a basic financial plan, and are he and his wife united around them? Do they tithe regularly and show generosity? Generosity includes hospitality as well—how does the student lead his wife to open their home?

If your student does not have a budget and a basic financial plan, then part of your work will be to help him develop it, or set up a financial planning meeting for him with another qualified party. One way or another he will need this training.

Regarding evangelism, does he have a heart for the lost? Is he skilled at connecting with unbelievers? Does he know how to present the Gospel clearly? How intentional is he? Does he pray for opportunities, and does he pray regularly for specific people? Does he pray only for unbelieving family members, or also for friends, co-workers, and strangers he meets along the way?

Your student will write a personal testimony that is more formal and considered than an off-the-cuff testimony. This will help him think more clearly about God’s work in his life.

5 | Worship Leading

Students will gain experience in planning worship services, organizing services, and leading in worship services (including singing, praying, and Scripture reading).

You will help your student think through worship services. If another pastor or staff member in your church is responsible for the order of service and music, then send him to that staff member for this training. He needs to understand the elements of the service and be able to plan a basic service himself.

He needs to know how to read Scripture publicly, so ask him to read aloud to you somewhat regularly. Can he project his voice? Is he boring to listen to? Is he able to pronounce difficult names? Does he emphasize the words he ought to in the text?

He needs to know how to pray publicly too. You will want to have him do things such as write out a prayer of corporate confession of sin, for example, and help him improve it. Then have him pray it in a service. He should also be able to pray extemporaneously.

He needs to develop confidence and skill to lead congregational singing. This does not mean he has to be a good singer or a talented musician! It only means he has to be willing to make himself heard and to express joy in public worship. There may be some men who are so unable to sing that they will never be able to lead a congregation. But with encouragement and a little instruction, most men will be able to lead others in singing a hymn or song for worship.

If opportunities for planning and leading all or part of a service at your church are limited, it's time to get creative. Here's one idea: have your student plan and lead a Sunday evening service at a local nursing home. The residents will be grateful and tolerant of mistakes. A service like this could help him fulfill requirements for more than one practicum at the same time—e.g., visitations, worship leading, and preaching.

Specific requirements for this *practica* are as follows:

- Student must lead two prayers of confession in church services
- Student must read Scripture publicly on two occasions as part of church services
- Student must regularly lead worship/singing in a small-group setting

6 | Administration and Leadership

Students will gain experience in administration by discussions with mentor and participating in administration through activities such as:

- *attendance at church budgeting committees,*
- *attendance at church and denominational committee meetings,*
- *attendance at church staff meetings,*
- *development of prayer & financial support for missionaries, etc.*

Students will participate in ongoing administrative responsibility assigned by the mentor (minimum of two semesters) in one such area. Additionally, students will gain experience in leadership by discussions with mentors and attending elder board meetings, diaconate meetings, as well as the elder board meeting of another church. Students will read Robert's Rules of Order and meet with each active elder of the church. Students will participate in ongoing leadership responsibility assigned by mentors (minimum of two semesters) in one such area. (If the administrative responsibility is a leadership position, this responsibility can fulfill both requirements.)

The goal of this practicum is for your student to have a general sense of how decisions are made (leadership) and how plans are carried out (administration) in your church—and to be competent at both.

Some administrative responsibilities are leadership responsibilities and vice versa. Some leadership meetings are administrative meetings and vice versa. Some students will be ready administrators, some not so much. Some will have a natural aptitude for leading other men, some not so much. Leadership ability is more important for pastoral work than administrative ability, and harder to train. But a student with natural leadership must also learn to lead administratively.

The simplest part of this practicum for the student will be attending meetings. Students should attend:

- As many elder board meetings as possible, at the discretion of the moderator of the elder board.
- Any official denominational meetings (i.e. presbytery meetings, annual meeting, general assembly).
- At least one elder board meeting at another church.

You will help determine what other meetings or church work, if any, he ought to regularly be a part of (or lead). Budget committee meetings? Staff meetings? Logistics coordination for picnics or men's nights?

He ought to attend every possible *kind* of meeting in your church at least once or twice over the three years of the program, so far as that can be arranged.

Remember that he must complete two semesters in a leadership role AND two semesters in an administrative role. There are many ways he can do this. For instance:

- Training him to take minutes for the elders or deacons fulfills the administrative requirement.
- Having him lead a children's ministry in the church fulfills the leadership requirement AND fulfills part of the "Teaching and Discipleship" practicum. If the leadership role is also administrative, it fulfills the administrative requirement as well.

He is also required to meet at least once with every elder in your church, in order to gain insight into the work of an elder and grow in his appreciation and respect for the office. These meetings don't need to be formal. The student should initiate them and be ready to ask questions about the testimonies and experiences of these men who lead his church. Depending on the size of your church, this may take very little time or quite a bit of time.

It may be helpful for you to let your elders know ahead of time that your student will want to meet with each of them at some point.

The final requirement for this practicum is for the student to skim *Robert's Rules of Order (RRO)*. The purpose of reading *RRO* is for the student to understand how to run meetings in an orderly way. There are many parts of *RRO* which are seldom or never used in elder board meetings. But the basic system allows leaders to give a voice to the minority view as well as the majority view.

He won't be examined on his knowledge of *RRO* or asked to write any papers. If he skims the book, or spends several hours reading about the most basic elements of the system, he will have done well.

7 | Ordination Prep

Students will prepare for ordination exams.

As far as your work as a mentor goes, this is the simplest of the *practica*. Beginning right away, encourage your student to do the following:

- Know where to find significant Scriptures—chapter and verse is always best, but chapter alone is next best. Does your student know where to find the Ten Commandments? The Sermon on the Mount? Key texts on justification or the nature of God's Word? The earlier a student learns to remember references (and to memorize key verses and passages, for that matter,) the better.
- Understand and teach key doctrines clearly and succinctly. Can he explain the Gospel to a child? Can he talk simply about the mystery of the Trinity with an interested unbeliever? Can he distinguish between infusion and imputation? As he learns doctrinal distinctions throughout the courses, he will need to consider how to explain them.
- Remember key dates in church history. When did Martin Luther nail the 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg Chapel? How did John Knox adapt Genevan polity to Scotland? What is the broad sweep of the history of Christian missions?

Beginning in Year 2, you ought to begin reminding your student that licensure and ordination is a long and difficult process. He may have to write several papers and take many exams.

The booklet *Preparing for Licensure & Ordination Exams* by Bryan Chapell will be a helpful resource for study, and one that the student should begin looking at early in Year 2.

As another part of his preparation the student is required to read through his denomination's constitutional documents by the end of Summer 2.