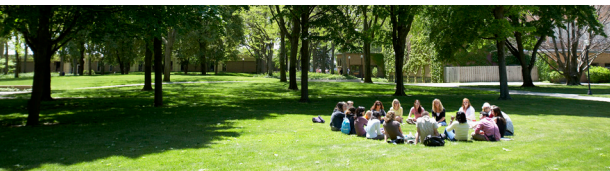


# Doing

## *What can we DO to nurture the faith of our students?*

### Out of the classroom

- Share aspects of your life and faith journey... a little vulnerability goes a long way.
- Invite students to your church.
- Share Bible verses that have been helpful to you.
- Connect with a particular student club.
- Share the ways you engage in prayer.
- Sit in the “student section” of your church.
- Be part of a college-age Sunday school class.
- Attend Chapel and Convocation.
- Explain why you go to church.
- Use GC Prayer booklet (print, online).
- Eat with students in Fraker or dining hall.
- Take a class as a way to connect with students.
- Make hot tea for a sick student.
- Have coffee with a student in Java Junction.
- Listen to and validate students’ faith questions.
- Send encouraging notes in campus mail.
- Connect with a particular Residence Hall floor.
- Be part of a prayer or book discussion group.
- Invite students home for a meal, game night.
- Refer students to Campus Ministry resources.
- Model faith, pray with and for students.
- Discuss with colleagues how they mentor faith.
- Help students get involved in local service opportunities.



### In the Classroom

- Post on Moodle a brief statement about key aspects of your faith journey.
- Lead them in various contemplative practices.
- Communicate your availability to students.
- Have students engage in a local service opportunity.
- Articulate how ethics/faith connect with your class/discipline.
- Start class with a prayer, poem, devotional, hymn.
- Incorporate faith with syllabus, textbooks, readings.
- Bring in guest speakers that connect your discipline with faith.
- Have students follow a character in a novel that is going through some sort of “faith crisis.”
- Assignment on how faith and the class intersect.
- Have students engage “spiritual friendship” as an assignment (*see GC Prayer Book*).
- Creatively engage scripture passages.
- Encourage students to describe aspects of their faith journey in reflection papers.
- Discuss any faith questions/situations that arise in their internships and field placements.
- Present a course relevant or contemporary complex problem related to a faith topic.
- Link a church practice with course content (e.g. tithing and business).
- Articulate how this course might shape/interact/inform their faith.
- Utilize real-life people as faith exemplars relevant to course content.
- Select articles on spirituality and course subject.
- Practice yoga/exercise and link to the idea of one’s body as a “temple.”
- Utilize campus Prayer Labyrinth (*outdoor or indoor*).

# National Studies

## This project has been informed by two national, longitudinal studies:

**The National Study of Youth and Religion** has demonstrated that most young people are not articulate in their faith beliefs, but subscribe to a belief system that researchers identified as Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. They suggest that religious educators need to work much harder on articulation and not be shy about teaching young people.

[www.youthandreligion.org](http://www.youthandreligion.org)

**The Spirituality in Higher Education Project from UCLA** examined the role that college played in facilitating the development of students’ spiritual qualities. “It is our shared belief that the findings provide a powerful argument for the proposition that higher education should attend more to students’ spiritual development, because spirituality is essential to students’ lives... Educational experiences and practices that promote spiritual development – especially service learning, interdisciplinary courses, study abroad, self-reflection, and meditation – have uniformly positive effects on traditional college outcomes.”

[www.spirituality.ucla.edu](http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu)



If you have any questions or want to discuss this topic further, please contact:

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# FAITH MENTORING

GOSHEN COLLEGE

# Introduction

## Goshen College Mission Statement:

... as a community of faith and learning, we strive to foster personal, intellectual, spiritual and social growth in every person....

Bob Yoder, campus pastor, embarked on a two-year study of **Goshen College as a faith mentoring environment** in 2010-2012. Students, professors, staff, and administrators completed surveys and were interviewed. Key findings included:

### The majority of students

- wished to discuss faith and hear faith journeys of employees
- believe employees are interested in students' spiritual lives

### The minority of students

- sought spiritual guidance from employees
- viewed employees as "faith mentors"

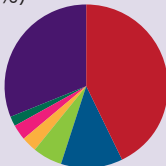
### Most employees

- embrace the role of "faith mentor"
- are comfortable sharing aspects of their faith journey
- do not feel that GC has equipped them in this area

## What is GC's student faith demographics (Fall 2015)?

### Over 40 different faith groups represented

- Mennonite (43%)
- Roman Catholic (12%)
- Independent/Non-denominational (6%)
- Baptist (3%)
- Disciples of Christ (3%)
- Methodist (2%)
- Everyone else (31%)



# Knowing

## What do we need to KNOW to be helpful in student faith development?

### What is "faith"?

"Faith is often linked exclusively to belief, particularly religious belief. But faith goes far beyond religious belief, narrowly understood. Faith is more adequately recognized as the activity of seeking and discovering meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience—that is, faith is as much a verb as a noun."

Sharon Daloz Parks in *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Emerging Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith* (Jossey-Bass, 2011) p. 10



## Who are the people of GC's Faith Mentoring Environment?

- Students
- Staff
- Professors
- Administrators

## What are the gifts of a mentor?

- Recognize promise and vulnerability
- Support students as a guide, leading to resources
- Challenge students, at times with "tough love"
- Inspire students to go beyond "mere cynicism"
- Dialogue with students in mutually beneficial ways

Sharon Daloz Parks in *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Emerging Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith* (Jossey-Bass, 2011)

## What are critical life realities of college students?

- Tremendous influence of media in all its forms
- Many struggle with loss and grief issues
- Susceptible to experiencing a "metaphorical shipwreck" in which they might feel as if their world is falling apart due to unexpected or disappointing experience (family crisis, loss of relationship, health crisis, etc.), or engaging questions that challenge their meaning-making
- Top three reasons why GC students see the campus counselor: mood issues (anxiety and depression), relationship issues (family, friends, romantic), life transitions.
- In general, young adults deal with questions of **Who am I?, Do I matter?, How will I relate to others?**. They work at resolving a compelling life vision, intimate companionship, coherent worldview and composition of commitments.

# Being

## How should we BE as faith mentors and a faith mentoring environment?

"BEING" may be the most difficult concept to truly grasp and measure, particularly in an educational environment that values "knowledge" and "hyper-activity."

## How should GC personnel "be" both individually and collectively in order to authentically and honestly serve as helpful faith mentors?

Yes, we need to attend to our own spiritual lives as individuals, but also as a collective community. Therefore, it is important that we spend time in prayer, worship, service and other practices of faith.

Do we patiently listen to one another and respect our varying viewpoints of faith? Do we pray for our students and each other? Are we honoring each other's sacred faith journeys even if they greatly contrast ours? Do we seek to build up one another in faith? Do we stop to breathe and rest in God's awareness? Are we active in a local church?

## What are the features of a mentoring environment?

- Serves as a network of belonging
- Extends hospitality to the "big questions" of life
- Fosters a genuine hospitality to "otherness"
- Develops deeper wells of meaning, purpose, and faith
- Nurtures students in their "worthy dreams"
- Provides images of hope, truth, transformation
- Engages students in practices that pause and reflect

Sharon Daloz Parks in *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Emerging Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith* (Jossey-Bass, 2011)