TAG | Young Leaders

Mentor Guide

More information at **tag.swym.org.uk**

SWYM
south west youth ministries

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What is TAG Young Leaders

TAG Young Leaders (TAG YL) is an online discipleship and leadership academy for young people who want to go deeper in their faith, character and leadership as they grow into the people God has created them to be and become pioneers of change in their churches, schools, communities, and beyond.

The programme is built around three key elements:



LOCAL MENTORING

Young people meet regularly with a mentor from their local church. These mentoring conversations provide a space to reflect, ask questions, share challenges, and explore how God is at work in their lives. Mentoring is where much of the learning from TAG becomes personal, practical and transformational.



MONTHLY HUB MEETINGS

Each month, young people gather online with peers from across the South West and beyond to hear from inspiring speakers, explore key discipleship and leadership themes, and engage with relevant issues affecting young people today. These gatherings are an opportunity to learn, be inspired and connect with a wider community of young leaders.



CHALLENGES

Following each Hub session, young people are invited to complete simple but meaningful challenges that help them put their learning into practice.
These challenges encourage growth in faith, character, leadership and everyday discipleship.

Your Role

One Young Person
One Hour
Once a Month

Listen
Create space for honest conversation.

Encourage
Champion their growth and celebrate progress.

Reflect
Help young people learn from their experiences.

Pray
Keep Jesus at the centre of the journey.

Could you support a young person during their TAG Young Leaders journey by meeting with them once a month, six times across the year?

These conversations might take place in a local coffee shop, before or after church, during a lunch break, or wherever works best for you both.

The aim is simply to encourage, listen to and support a young person as they grow in their faith and leadership.

Defining Mentoring

Mentoring is a vital part of the TAG YL experience and the reason for this is because it is a model that is clearly evidenced throughout scripture. There are so many clear examples of mentoring relationships, including:

- Jesus and His disciples
- Paul and Timothy
- Elijah and Elisha
- Moses and Joshua
- Barnabas and Paul
- Naomi and Ruth
- Jethro and Moses
- Deborah and Barak

Although the word “mentoring” might not be found in Scripture, the above examples, and others, paint a picture of what mentoring can look like - setting a Biblical precedent for one-on-one, intentional relationships with a focus on personal and spiritual development.

A number of contemporary understandings of “mentoring” exist, leaving some confusion regarding what mentoring is. We have found the following definition from John Mallison helpful in understanding Christian mentoring:

“Mentoring is a dynamic, intentional relationship of trust, in which one person (mentor) enables another (mentee) by sharing their God-given experience and resources to maximise the grace of God in their life, and in the service of God’s Kingdom purposes.”

A TAG mentor helps a young person

- Grow in faith
- Reflect on life and leadership
- Recognise God’s work in their life
- Take practical next steps

As a TAG YL mentor, we ask that you:

- Arrange a conversation with your young person approximately once a month throughout the programme.
- Be Consistent- One of the greatest gifts you can offer is simply turning up and being dependable.
- Listen Well. Create space for honest conversations, questions, doubts, ideas, and reflections.
- Encourage Growth. Help the young person connect their learning from TAG sessions with everyday life.
- Pray Together. Model a life of prayer and offer spiritual encouragement.
- Support Challenges and Next Steps. Help the young person reflect on how they can apply what they are learning.
- Maintain Safe Practice. Follow your church and organisations safeguarding procedures at all times.

As a mentor, you are not expected to:

- Be a professional counsellor
- Fix every problem
- Have an answer for every question
- Take responsibility for every aspect of a young person's life
- Replace parents, carers, youth leaders, or church leaders

When issues arise that are beyond your role or expertise, seek support from the appropriate church leaders or safeguarding contacts.

Safeguarding and Good Practice

As mentors, we have the privilege of supporting young people as they grow in confidence, character, leadership and faith. With that privilege comes a responsibility to create a safe and supportive environment where they can thrive.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every young person has the right to feel safe, valued, listened to and respected. Mentoring relationships are built on trust and must always operate within appropriate boundaries and in line with your church's safeguarding policy.

Your church has confirmed that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place. However, it is essential that you understand and follow your church's safeguarding procedures. If you have any questions, speak with your youth leader or safeguarding officer.

Because mentoring often takes place on a one-to-one basis, you should pay particular attention to areas such as:

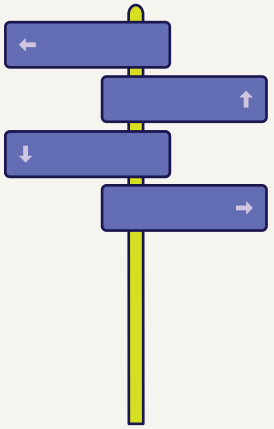
- How and where meetings should take place
- Communication expectations
- Who you are accountable to
- How to report concerns
- Record-keeping requirements

As a mentor, you should always:

- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Maintain appropriate boundaries
- Act and report on concerns promptly
- Seek support when needed
- Prioritise the welfare of the young person

The LOOK Framework

THE LOOK FRAMEWORK provides a simple structure for mentoring conversations. It encourages reflection on the past, awareness of God's activity in the present, personal growth, and intentional next steps. Not every conversation will spend equal time in each area, but the framework provides a helpful guide. There is a section in the mentoring toolkit which gives you some questions for each section which may be helpful to use.



LOOK BACK This creates an opportunity and a space for you to look back at the previous TAG session and what has being going on in the young persons life since you have last seen them. Looking back helps young people recognise growth, celebrate successes and learn from challenges.

LOOK UP This creates an opportunity for you to consider faith and where God is at work in this young persons life. That may have been regarding what God has said to them through the last TAG session or more specifically about what he is teaching them/ speaking to them about at the moment. Looking up encourages young people to consider where God is present in their daily lives and how their faith is developing.

LOOK IN This creates an opportunity to reflect on character, wellbeing and personal growth. Looking in focuses on who the young person is becoming, rather than simply what they are doing. It also gives them a chance to reflect t on their own personal growth as a leader through TAG YL.

LOOK FORWARD This creates an opportunity to consider what is next for the young person at the moment. It gives a chance to identify next steps and opportunties for growth and allows them to move reflection into action.

Toolkit

1. Listening Skills

2. Session Guide

3. Suggested Questions

4. Setting Smart Goals

5. Ideas for Looking Forward

1. Listening Skills

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening involves listening with all senses. As well as giving full attention to the person speaking, it is important that the 'active listener' is also 'seen' to be listening - otherwise the person speaking may conclude that what they are talking about is uninteresting to the listener.

Extra interest can be given to the speaker by using both verbal and non-verbal messages such as maintaining eye contact, nodding your head and smiling, agreeing by saying 'Yes' or simply 'Mmm hmm' to encourage them to continue. By providing this 'feedback' the person speaking will usually feel more at ease and therefore communicate more easily, openly and honestly.

FOUR KEYS TO LISTENING:

1. **Mimic/Mirror the content:**
   Repeat what the other just said. This makes sure that you are listening and that the other person knows it.
2. **Rephrase the content:**
   Tell the same story, but in your own words. You do not only show that you are listening, but also that you understand what the other is (literally) saying.
3. **Reflect on feelings:**
   Focus on the emotions that lie behind what is told, not on the words that try to express these emotions;
4. **Rephrase the content and reflect the feeling:**
   This is a combination of the second and third form of empathic listening. It shows that you are really listening and understanding what message lies behind the words.

2. Session Guide

For those who might value a guide on what a typical mentor session could look like below. This is not a prescriptive model at all and we would encourage you to be led by the young person and flexible when it comes to navigating conversations with them.

Sample Mentoring Session (60 minutes)

1. CATCH UP (10 minutes)

- How have things been since we last met?
- Follow up on previous conversations and action points.

2. LOOK FRAMEWORK (35 minutes)

Look Back

- What stood out to you from the last TAG Hub session?
- How have things been since we last met?

Look Up

- What do you think God might have been saying to you through that session?
- How have you been getting on in your faith recently?

Look In

- What did that session teach you about yourself as a leader?
- What is something you're learning about yourself at the moment?

Look Forward

- What is one thing you want to do as a result of that session?
- What is one thing you would like to focus on before we next meet?

3. AGREE A NEXT STEP (5 minutes)

- Identify one simple and achievable action before your next meeting.

4. PRAYER (5 minutes)

- Pray for any challenges, opportunities, and next steps discussed.

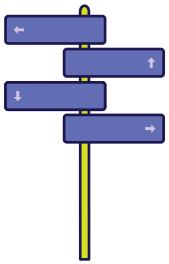
5. CLOSE (5 minutes)

- What is one thing you're taking away from today?
- Confirm any actions and arrange your next conversation.





3. Suggested Questions



Here are some helpful questions for the different parts of the framework.

Not all of them will be relevant or necessary for every session but can give you some good starting points.

LOOK BACK

What has been happening since we last met?

What did you learn in the last TAG YL session?

What has gone well recently?

What has been difficult or challenging?

What have you been most proud of?

What have you learned about yourself?

How did you get on with your challenge from TAG YL session?

Was there anything from the session that surprised or challenged you?

LOOK UP

Where have you noticed God at work recently?

What has God been teaching you?

Have there been any answered prayers?

What questions are you currently asking about faith?

How are you finding prayer, worship, or reading the Bible?

Has the session made you think differently about God, yourself or others?

What do you think God might have been saying to you through the session?

Is there anything you would like prayer for?

LOOK IN

What are you learning about yourself?

What strengths do you see in yourself?

Where are you growing in confidence?

What challenges are helping you develop resilience?

How are your relationships with friends and family?

What are you finding difficult at the moment?

LOOK FORWARD

What is one thing you want to focus on before we next meet?

Is there a challenge you would like to take on?

What do you think God might be inviting you to do next?

How can you use your gifts to serve others?

What support do you need moving forward?

What would success look like over the next month?

How would you like to put what you've learned in TAG into practice over the next few weeks?



4. Setting SMART Goals

SMART Goals can be helpful for turning good intentions into action. This could be helpful for the part of the look framework that requires the Young Leader to look forward.

STEP 1: Make it specific
What do you actually want to achieve?

STEP 2: Make it measurable
How will you know when you've reached your goal?

STEP 3: Make it achievable
How realistic is it that you will be able to achieve this?

STEP 4: Make it relevant
Why does this goal actually matter?

STEP 5: Make it time-framed
When will I do it by?

For example a good smart goal is:
"I will spend 10 minutes reading the Bible three times each week for the next month."



5. Ideas for Looking Forward

The Look Forward section is all about helping young people move reflection into action. While some will already have a clear sense of their next step, others may need help exploring what that could look like. The ideas below are intended to spark conversation and inspire practical, achievable next steps.

Grow Your Faith: Start a prayer journal, read a book of the Bible, practise silence and reflection, learn about an area of faith that interests you.

Serve Others: Volunteer in church or your community, use one of your gifts and strengths to help someone, pray with someone, intentionally encourage someone each week, commit to praying for a friend, school, family member or community.

Take Courageous Steps: Share your faith with a friend, invite someone to church or a Christian event, have a conversation you've been avoiding, take on a new leadership responsibility or opportunity.

Develop as a Leader: Ask someone you trust for honest feedback, complete a challenge from TAG, lead something small in church, school or community.

Remember: The goal is not to do everything, but to identify one realistic and meaningful next step that helps move reflection into action.



TAG | Young Leaders

TAG exists to see the Transformation of A Generation through mobilising young people, aged 15-19, across the South West to become pioneers of change.

www.swym.org.uk/tag