



Mentoring Activity Ideas

Provided by Mentor Michigan
To be used by mentoring programs everywhere!

These days, mentors and mentoring programs are experiencing more and more budget restrictions. When money is tight, it's easy to get stuck in a rut doing the same activity every week. It doesn't have to be that way! Mentor Michigan has collected activity ideas from mentors, mentees, program staff, youth development professionals, teachers, and others to share with you. Please feel free to use this powerful resource to make mentoring a success in Michigan!

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| Activity Name: Car Maintenance Night |
| Activity Overview: A "Car Maintenance Night" teaches youth about simple car repair and maintenance skills. The skills youth can learn include: checking fluids, changing tires, checking air pressure, jump starting a battery, changing windshield wipers, fuses, and burned out brake lights. |
| Prep Time: Time to find a mentor willing to provide food, time to find two mentors willing to lead the group on car maintenance skills, and time to find the necessary supplies. |
| Location: See if a local business will donate their space – enough for two vehicles. |
| Materials Needed: Food, beverages, utensils, plates, cups (if feeding matches). Appropriate fuses, windshield wipers, light bulbs, paper towels, air pressure gauge, jack, jumper cables, sponges, buckets, soap, wax (for car maintenance). |
| Cost: If obtain food and space donations, free. Varied cost for car maintenance supplies. |
| Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Depends on space. |
| Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: 1. Prepare/pick up food and necessary supplies. 2. Pick up necessary vehicle supplies. 3. Prepare food and vehicle area. 4. Welcome guests. 5. Eat. 6. Split into at least two groups and have leaders teach appropriate skills. 7. Clean up. |
| Activity Audience: Individual matches, group matches, new matches, experienced matches, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth. |
| Activity Name: Chocolate River |
| Activity Overview: "Chocolate River" is a teambuilding activity. |

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| Prep Time: 5-10 minutes |
| Location: Large space is needed, either inside or outside. |
| Materials Needed: Two long ropes and six to eight carpet squares. |
| Cost: If already have materials, free. Need to purchase materials, under \$50. |
| Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Best for groups of eight or larger. |
| Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: 1. Have two long ropes parallel to each other with six to eight large carpet steps separating them. 2. Explain to the group they are about to enter a chocolate river but can only get across by using the six to eight carpet squares provided. The trick is that the carpet squares must be held down by someone at all times or else they will float away. (Staff should take carpet squares away if the participants are not touching them at all times) 3. Also explain the participants must be holding on to each other at all times (i.e. holding hands or linking arms). 4. Then allow them time to figure out how they will get across the chocolate river. |
| Activity Audience: Group matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth. |

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| Activity Name: Fishing Outing |
| Activity Overview: Invite a group of local Bass Tournament Fisherman to bring their boats to a local lake. They will then take the matches out to fish (catch and release). The provide prizes; such as fishing poles and lures, lunch, and cameras. |
| Prep Time: A few months. |
| Location: Any public lake. |
| Materials Needed: None, the volunteer fishermen provide nearly all the materials. |
| Cost: None, if donations are received. |
| Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: As many as the fishermen can allow. |
| Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: 1. Help secure the location and gather in-kind donations. 2. Keep in contact with volunteer fishermen so they know how many boats to bring. 3. Show up at the event/participate at event. |
| Activity Audience: Individual matches, group matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth. |

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| Activity Name: Library Outing |
| Activity Overview: This activity features a trip to a local library to engage in an interactive story, learn about library functions, and take a tour of the facility. Matches are also invited to participate in a book hunt. |
| Prep Time: Two hours at the most. |
| Location: Public library. |
| Materials Needed: Paper, postage, pizza, and soda. |

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| Cost: Cost of refreshments. |
| Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Check with library on size limit. |
| Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: 1. Arrange event with library. 2. Print and mail invitations and/or flyers. 3. Record reservations of matches. 4. Order pizza. 5. Attend event. |
| Activity Audience: Individual matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth. |

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| Activity Name: Life Journal |
| Activity Overview: The match creates a pictorial life journal. Each person creates their own life journal using photographs, pictures from magazines, construction paper, rubber stamps, glue, etc. The journal contains events, people, and memories of their life. The journal then continues into the future. What do you want your future to look like? What photos, pictures, people, or things do you need to make your future? |
| Prep Time: The time it takes to collect materials. |
| Location: Anywhere with tables available. |
| Materials Needed: Photographs, magazines, paper, glue (general scrapbooking materials). |
| Cost: Cost of two blank journals, typically \$5-\$10. |
| Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Mentoring match. |
| Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: See activity overview. |
| Activity Audience: Individual matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth. |

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| Activity Name: Mentoring Story Book |
| Activity Overview: Invite a match to document their mentoring relationship in a book filled with personal stories and methods for successful mentoring. |
| Prep Time: A few months. |
| Location: Anywhere. |
| Materials Needed: Index cards with open-ended questions to elicit mentoring stories/methods, recording device, person willing to transcribe audio recordings, primary writer to pull together content in logical order (if necessary). |
| Cost: Printing of book. |
| Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Mentoring match. |
| Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: 1. Decide the overall content for the book – chapters, key points, etc. 2. Create personalized index cards with open-ended questions. (For example: How did we meet? What was your life like before you met? Is this type of relationship important to you?) 3. Respond to questions independently and/or through interviews with |

a third-party. 4. Transcribe responses to the questions. 5. Have the primary writer pull together the content and create a book that has logical flow and progression.

Activity Audience: Individual matches, group matches, experienced matches, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth.

Activity Name: Reading Exercise

Activity Overview: This activity invites the mentor to bring a variety of reading materials to the meeting with his/her mentee and look at them and rate them on a scale of 1 to 5. This gives the mentor an idea of what types of reading materials his/her mentee enjoy, as well as prompting discussion about the subjects of the materials themselves.

Prep Time: As long as it takes to make a trip to the library or bookstore to “shop” for a diverse number of books and/or media.

Location: Match meeting site.

Materials Needed: Four or five different books and/or media selections that address different topics and are in different formats (i.e. graphic novels, short stories, fiction, non-fiction, magazines).

Cost: None if materials are obtained from library.

Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Mentoring match.

Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: See activity overview.

Activity Audience: Individual matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth.

Activity Name: Scrapbook

Activity Overview: Invite a match to take a picture every time they meet to document what they are doing. Then, once a month ask the match to take these pictures and work on a scrapbook together. At the end of one year, they both can look back and see all that they did together.

Prep Time: None.

Location: Match meeting site.

Materials Needed: Camera, printer, scrapbooking materials.

Cost: Photo printing costs, anywhere from nine to 12 cents.

Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Mentoring match.

Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: 1. The match meets. 2. The match takes a photo each time they meet. 3. Once a month they work on the scrapbook. 4. At their year anniversary, they reflect on their scrapbook.

Activity Audience: Individual matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth.

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| Activity Name: Teach a Kid to Play |
| Activity Overview: Teach a child to play the game of chess. |
| Prep Time: A few moments to set up a chess board. |
| Location: Match meeting site. |
| Materials Needed: Chess boards. |
| Cost: Cost of chess board, approximately \$5. |
| Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Mentoring match, or large group of matches. |
| Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: 1. Make sure chess tutors have background checks conducted. 2. One person should moderate the activity. 3. At the end of the instructional period, let the mentees have some free time to play among each other. 4. Duration of activity should be no longer than one hour a week. 5. Have fun! |
| Activity Audience: Individual matches, group matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth. |

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| Activity Name: Traveling Around the World |
| Activity Overview: Expose a mentee to another culture. An example of this activity: a mentor asked her mentee if there was a country she wanted to visit. She chose China. The mentor then asked a friend to read up on Chinese culture and help her teach the mentee about the country. When they arrived at the friend's home, there was a room filled with Chinese decorations, the friend was wearing traditional Chinese attire, and they all learned how to cook spring rolls and egg drop soup. |
| Prep Time: The mentor can plan and research this project, but it is an easy activity to ask a friend to host. |
| Location: Anywhere. |
| Materials Needed: Recipe and ingredients for cultural dish, cultural decorations, directions and materials for craft. |
| Cost: Varies based on materials. |
| Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Mentoring match. |
| Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: 1. Pick a country to "visit." 2. Research a country/ask a friend to research and host activity. 3. Buy ingredients, craft materials, and/or rent movie/arrive at host location. 4. Enjoy! |
| Activity Audience: Individual matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth. |

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| Activity Name: Warm Fuzzies |
| Activity Overview: This activity is best used for group mentoring sessions but could also be used in one-to-one mentoring relationships. The "Warm Fuzzies" activity is designed to express what each person's "warm" thoughts are |

towards each other. Each person's name is entered into a bucket, or the "warm fuzzy" jar, and names are picked randomly. The individual, who picks a name out, especially in a group setting environment, tells the group what he or she enjoys and appreciates about the person. Those in one-to-one matches can do this as well, and use the "warm fuzzy" jar to tell each other what they enjoy about the other person.

Prep Time: 10 minutes.

Location: Anywhere.

Materials Needed: Plastic jar or box, paper, pen/marker.

Cost: Varies based on materials.

Number of People Activity Could Accommodate: Mentoring match or large group.

Step-by-Step Activity Instructions: See activity overview.

Activity Audience: Individual matches, group matches, new matches, experienced matches, elementary-school aged youth, middle-school aged youth, high-school aged youth.