

Welcome to Coaching

Ministerial Study Program

Office of Ministry Studies

Your district superintendent has notified us that you have been appointed to be a coach to oversee the studies of a student in the Ministerial Study Program of the Office of Ministry Studies. I hope you will consider this a privilege, and not just as another duty imposed by the district office.

The student has applied to study in the Ministerial Study Program because of their desire to prepare for ministry. Rather than just send the student course materials to study, the Office of Ministry Studies requires each student to have a coach to supervise their studies.

An age-old method of training

I trust you will take your responsibilities as a coach very seriously. Coaching is a well-recognized method of training. Years ago, young people were apprenticed to a master craftsman to learn a trade or skill. By working day by day with the master, they learned the skills (tricks) of the trade. The Apostle Paul used this same approach to train Timothy, Titus, Aquila and Priscilla, and many others who became leaders in the church. You have the privilege of modeling the Christian life and ministry before the person who has been assigned to your tutelage.

What is a coach supposed to do?

Your responsibility will be to coach a person who desires to enter the ministry. Someone has said that a coach is “a brain to pick, a shoulder to cry on and, when needed, will give a kick in the seat of the pants.” Although this might seem a bit facetious, it really describes the role of a coach:

- *A brain to pick.* You should be a resource person for the student, not only to clarify those points of truth in the curriculum that need clarification, but you are also an advisor as he/she moves out into ministry and “tries his wings.” The student will learn not only from what you say, but from the way you think and reflect.
- *A shoulder to cry on.* There are times of discouragement, both personal and ministerial, in which the student needs a “sympathetic” ear. Don’t be afraid to become transparent before the student, expressing your anxieties and times of discouragement, both past and present, in the ministry.
- *A kick in the seat of the pants.* Sometimes the student needs a word of exhortation to continue in the ministry or in his studies. Your job is to encourage and prod him/her to “keep on keeping on.”
- You are also *a model to see.* We usually talk in principles, but learn from models. Students need to see ministry skills and perspectives “incarnated” in order to learn. Once they have learned a particular way of doing something, they can then go on to develop their own style and approach. Sometimes it can be vicarious (talking about your approaches and

experiences), and other times is live (when they see how you actually perform, and discuss it with you).

Study formats

In most cases, students who register in the independent study courses take each course as an **online** course. This format requires students to read and assimilate textbooks and articles, interact with the Evaluator and others in the course, and then use that information to complete a paper or project. In online courses, a student usually uploads each project or assignment before moving on to the next one.

You have the opportunity for frequent contact with your student in the online courses, although the student has a limited number of months to complete each course. The online system automatically enrolls you in each course with the student, where you can read and respond to their postings in the question-and-answer forums, and review the projects they are submitting to the course evaluator. Generally, you should plan on making face-to-face contact with the student at least once a month.

Note that some students study in a different mode, as part of a “cluster group.” Students meet weekly with their coach to discuss in detail each week’s assignment. Often, the coach takes on many of the characteristics of a tutor or teacher, in addition to their coaching role.

A Coach’s responsibilities:

- Be available to discuss the subject matter with the student.
- Be transparent with the student.
- Try to clarify those points that he/she has doubts about or did not understand in the lesson material.

Many of the above responsibilities are broad, allowing you freedom to establish a close relationship with the student. Each student’s needs are different. Some students require more help and attention than others.

Please note the other tools we have provided in the Coach’s Resources, and be sure to read:

- **Coaching values**, which explains the attitudes a coach should have.
- **Developing Spirit-empowered Church Leaders**. This document describes the character and competencies that we believe a minister of the Gospel should be striving to obtain. MSP students are developing these qualities, along with obtaining cognitive knowledge.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact your district office or the Office of Ministry Studies at info@cmallianceu.org.