

Freshers Edition 2021

for today's Christian nurses  
& midwives

# spotlight

- mentoring
- to share or not to share
- top tips for surviving nursing or midwifery school

# spotlight

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## keep updated

Keep up to date with on our events like National Student Conference or NAMfest at [cmf.org.uk/nurses/events](http://cmf.org.uk/nurses/events).

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📘 [cmf.nurses.midwives](https://www.facebook.com/cmf.nurses.midwives)

🐦 @CMFMidwifeNurse

# editorial: starting well

**W**ell done! You made it to this point – starting your nursing or midwifery course. Arriving at university, a myriad of emotions and a mix of questions may be filling your mind: Can I do this? What will people be like? Will I make friends? How do I get to lecture theatre 37F?

Change can be hard, but change is also good if we turn to God and trust him to transform us to be more like Christ each day.

So, how do we trust him, and how can we be faithful Christian nursing or midwifery students at Uni? CMF exists to help you do just that. We are an organisation passionate about encouraging and equipping Christian medical, midwifery, and nursing students to live their best life for Jesus Christ. We want to help you begin at university well. And not just begin, but to run the race of life (including your studies and career) well to the end.

As you face opportunities and challenges, may I urge you to fix your eyes on Jesus? (Hebrews 12:2) You may trip, fall, or run in the wrong direction – but keep going, don't give up – *'he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion'*. (Philippians 1:6)

This Freshers' Edition of *Spotlight* contains wisdom and advice from people who have been where you are now. Be encouraged as you read that starting well – and continuing well – are possible and that you are being prayed for and cheered on by our team and by lots of other CMF nurses and midwives who have gone before you!

On behalf of the CMF Nurses & Midwives' Team,

Pippa



**Pippa Peppiatt, CMF Head of Nurses & Midwives**

Pippa trained as a nurse. She has planted a church for students with her husband, set up a charity for street kids in Uganda, and has been a Friends International Student Worker.

# top tips

for surviving nursing  
or midwifery school

## 1 put God first!

Daily devotions are important. Read the Bible. Safeguard your intimacy with Jesus. Get a daily devotional book and find a time to read it every day, at a time that works for you, even if you have to get a little creative and intentional when placements start.

## 2 get stuck into a church

You won't make every meeting but try to commit to one local church. Build up relationships with a few people. Having a church family nearby, especially if you are away from home, will help you settle into university life and be a vital part of your support network.

## 4 exercise regularly

Studying as a nurse or midwife can be quite a responsibility. Try and exercise as part of your daily or weekly routine. As well as keeping us in shape, exercise has been proven to help relieve stress and anxiety. It also boosts your ability to retain information.

## 5 use the support at your nursing school

Keep in touch with your personal tutor, even when things are going well. Then you will have a relationship where you can approach him or her whenever you might be struggling.

## 3 look after yourself holistically

You'll be taught to do this for patients. Take the same advice. Care for yourself physically, mentally and spiritually. Training is a marathon, not a sprint. You can probably endure a short period of exhaustion, but your performance will plummet if you neglect yourself long-term. Eat well, exercise, and sleep as much as you can!

# 7 make the most of every opportunity

You'll meet many different and interesting students during your time at uni. Enjoy meeting new people, especially those who are different from you! You never know what the Lord might bring from these relationships. Make the most of the clubs and other unique opportunities you have as a student. (You'll miss the discounts after you graduate!)

# 6 ask questions

The only wrong question is the one not asked. Don't be afraid to grow your inquisitiveness. Ask not only the 'what' and the 'how' but the 'why' questions too.

# 8 learn time management

This is one of the most important skills to develop. Learn to plan and prioritise, instead of just 'going with the flow'. These skills will save you from many bad days, both as a student and later.

# 9 journal before bed

If you catch yourself lying awake at night, frantically reviewing everything you have to do the next day, try journaling. Take just a few minutes before bed to jot down your thoughts, experiences or concerns. This will decrease feelings of worry and fear. Pray through these things.

# 10 and finally... connect with other Christian student nurses and midwives through CMF

It is so helpful and encouraging for Christian nurses and midwives to connect and prayerfully support one another. It's great to unite publicly to promote Christian values in nursing and midwifery, and to look collectively at ethical issues from a biblical perspective. Make use of resources available online and in print and be encouraged to be the best Christian nurse or midwife you can be!

# why CMF?

what is the Christian Medical Fellowship,  
and why it's worth your while joining us

**C**MF exists to unite and equip Christian nursing and midwifery students to live and speak for Jesus Christ. Sounds good, but what does it mean? Why should I join CMF and what can I get out of it?

## being a Christian...

defines who we are and our 'why?' of life. Being a Christian will have an impact on how we study and practice as a nurse or midwife. CMF provides resources and space to think these through. Whether it's an article in our journal – *Spotlight*, or during an interactive seminar at our annual Student Conference.

## our medical focus...


means that we can navigate the unique challenges that come with studying in

healthcare. These are often areas that the church does not have the time, knowledge, or experience to address. How do we cope with constantly being faced with life and death? Can I (and should I) share my faith with patients?

## being a large fellowship...

allows us to have a strong and credible voice as issues relating to healthcare are debated and discussed in parliament, in the media and wider society. It is an opportunity not just as individuals but as a collective to speak God's truth, love and the good news of the gospel to the world around us. In doing that we can also be a voice for the voiceless and vulnerable in our society.

Joining with other Christians who understand the context in which we study and the highs



and lows it may bring, allows for stories and experiences to be shared. It provides a place for mutual encouragement and building up through discipleship, mentoring and pastoral care as we seek to serve Christ in all that we do.

All that we do at CMF is to glorify God, for the benefit of our members, the church and wider society. There are so many opportunities on offer to you if you join — from conferences with other students from around the UK and Ireland, to day courses tackling specific topics. A wealth of written, audio, and visual content looking at the issues where faith and healthcare intersect is also available.

Perhaps you want to explore working globally as part of our 18-month Global Track programme or get involved in one of our

short-term vision trips overseas. Or maybe you have an interest in developing as a writer and want to write for one of our publications? How about volunteering with us and serving the membership by helping to organise events or leading a local group? The opportunities to connect, grow, speak, and serve as a student are immense.

There might be a host of reasons why you chose to study nursing or midwifery. Perhaps you felt called by God or want to serve a particular group of people. Perhaps it seemed like a nice profession to be part of. Whatever your reason, joining CMF and getting involved is a great place to find out and live out your 'why?' for the glory of God. Join today! 🌟



connecting

# local groups:

what's that  
all about?

## how CMF members connect

You may still be wondering what CMF is all about? Well, a great way to connect and be encouraged by others is in a local CMF group.

## Church? CU? CMF?

**A CMF group is not a church, nor is it the same as a Christian Union (CU).**



We think it's vital that all Christian nursing and midwifery students are committed to their local church and their CUs. CMF is complementary to church and CU, not an alternative. So, try not to clash and avoid meeting on the same evening as CU or regular church activities. The aims and activities of a CU are very similar to some of CMF's aims, especially praying for and reaching your friends with the gospel. But CMF is also explicitly focused on integrating your faith with your vocation.

## CMF is for life

Nursing and midwifery are vocational; nearly all of us will go on to be nurses and midwives long after we graduate. Becoming Christian healthcare professionals is a career-long process, and it's essential to understand and practise our vocation in a Christian way from the very beginning.

The nursing and midwifery side of CMF is much newer than the established medical part of the fellowship, so we are still growing in terms of new members and established student groups. It's exciting to see God growing something fresh and how appreciated the fellowship is for nurses and midwives. And if there isn't yet a group near you, please consider being part of the answer and helping start one!

## how does it work?

Most groups meet monthly and have a varied programme, including sharing and prayer or looking at a biblical perspective on key topics in healthcare. CMF produces many resources to help with this, including sharing faith with patients, beginning of life, ethical decisions, avoiding burnout, and keeping compassion alive as a nurse or midwife.

We also are in the process of developing links with qualified nurse and midwife members in different regions to create opportunities to meet or receive mentoring and support.

We hope this has given you a feel of what can happen locally. Please email us at [nursesandmidwives@cmf.org.uk](mailto:nursesandmidwives@cmf.org.uk) and let us know where you are based, and we'll seek to connect you with others near you.

As Christian nurses or midwives, we are given particular opportunities to serve God's kingdom that few others have. We need to take this seriously and ask how our careers can be used most effectively for his glory. CMF is here to help you in this, building a movement of healthcare professionals passionate for the glory of God in and through our vocations. ✨

# CMF

is for nurses  
& midwives too!

**Pippa Peppiatt** explains  
about CMF's network of  
nurse and midwife groups  
around the UK

CMF is here to build a movement of healthcare professionals passionate for the glory of God in and through our vocations, and to unite and equip them to live and speak for Jesus in the workplace.

To this end, our student department works not only with medics, but also with nursing and midwifery students. They face many of the same opportunities, challenges, and ethical dilemmas as medics, and equally appreciate the support, resources and training that CMF offers.

As the nursing and midwifery side of CMF is still relatively new and growing, the challenge is to get the word out that we are here and welcoming nursing and midwifery members. So far we have CMF nursing groups in the following regions.

1. Aberdeen
2. Belfast
3. Bristol
4. Cambridge
5. Dundee
6. Keele
7. London
8. Nottingham
9. Oxford
10. Sheffield
11. Southampton
12. Surrey

We have other groups in process of starting or on pause while looking for new student leaders. We are very keen to help nursing and midwifery students set up groups in new places where there is interest.

So please be in touch if you are keen and pass on the message to any nursing or midwifery students you know that CMF welcomes them and that we'd love them to join! For more info, please contact [nursesandmidwives@cmf.org.uk](mailto:nursesandmidwives@cmf.org.uk)



# running a student group

**Bethany Fuller** looks at some practical tips from her experiences running a CMF nurses and midwives student group

It's that time of year again when we start to get excited about the next cohort of nurses and midwives joining our student ranks. But how do you connect? How do you let them know you're there and want to get to know them? How do you welcome them to your local CMF group?

I'm not pretending to have the answers to all these questions as each group is so unique, but in this article, I will give you some tips about things our group has found helpful over the years.

## prayer

The number one priority is prayer and always prayer. Whatever you do, pray for your group and fellow leaders, pray for the individual members, pray about how to lead, pray that God will give you ideas suited to your situation, pray that he will provide the right people at the right time, pray he provides a place for you to meet, and pray that he would be glorified. He answers prayer!

## how do I tell others about the CMF group?

There are lots of different ways to get the message out. Lecture shoutouts (if you're feeling brave!) and mentions at CU meetings are two great ways. Asking the CU committee

for a slot also has the advantage of letting them know what CMF is about and paving the way for a friendly relationship between the CU and CMF, which exist for distinct but complementary reasons.

Contacting all the local churches with information about the CMF group and asking them to put it in their church notices or look out for new healthcare students has also proved fruitful in the past. You could even contact your school – we managed to get an advert on the main health sciences news page last year!

## what do we do?

It's really important to have a few dates in the diary and events that you can invite freshers to from the word go. But what do you do for the first meeting?

Food is always a good thing! At the first meeting, you are just trying to get to know people, show them what CMF is about and get them hooked and eager for the next time. Meeting in a home is fantastic and really aids fellowship, but if that's not possible for you at the moment, pray about it, and the Lord will provide for you in his timing. Meeting outside on picnic rugs is also fun. During the last year of restrictions on meeting together, walks

around campus or halls have become more popular and have been an excellent way to meet freshers.

Your group may be quite small, and so it is particularly important as a leader to ask everyone what they want from the group – fellowship? Informational/educational talks? Prayer support? Etc. Once you know what people are keen on, you can align the group's direction with the vision you have, and all go there together. Having some sort of group chat and social media presence is handy for staying in contact with each other.

It is important to introduce what CMF is and does as an organisation early in the term. It can be quite a hard thing to explain to people who have never heard of CMF before. Making them aware of membership and resources such as *Spotlight* and the *CMF files* is a great way to encourage engagement.

Before Covid, we used to meet on the third Friday evening of the month. Going online meant that we reduced the meeting frequency. Each group will face challenges peculiar to them, but it can be helpful to have

a group **1** or **2**  
first needs  
**KEEN STUDENTS**  
to be the  
**LEADERS**  
(reps) in order to  
**START**

WE GIVE  
**REPS**  
SUPPORT &  
RESOURCES  
to make leading  
**EASY**

**REPS**  
get  
TRAINING and a  
FREE PLACE  
at our  
CMF NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE

a regular meeting date, as time has a habit of slipping by. It also helps everyone know where they are when arranging shifts, etc. Some groups will meet more frequently than once a month and others less so, but whatever you decide, try to keep it regular.

## what support is available?

It is also important for you to remember all the resources CMF can offer you to help lead, including Bible study ideas, *Spotlight*, *CMF files*, student conferences, etc. Not least of these resources is the staff worker in your area. They are there to pray for you and may even come and speak at a meeting if you ask them nicely!

Another source of prayer is your nursing and midwifery representatives on the National Student Council of CMF. They love hearing from group leaders and, as fellow students, will commit to pray for you and your group.

Finally, trust in the Lord, and he will sustain you and provide all your needs according to his riches in glory. 🌟

**Bethany Fuller** is a newly qualified adult Nurse who trained at Surrey University

it is particularly important as a leader to ask everyone what they want from the group

to  
**share**  
or not to  
**share**

**George Coster** looks at how  
we can positively talk about  
faith at work



If you're a student nurse or midwife, I can hazard a guess that one of your most pressing questions is something like this: Can I share the gospel with my patients? You might have a longer list of questions about boundaries. Can I pray with my patients? Am I even allowed to tell my patients that I'm a Christian, or is that totally inappropriate?

I can also hazard a guess that by the time your very first lecture draws to a close, you will have heard all about the NMC Code, and rightly so, because it is our guide for professional practice and behaviour, designed to protect our patients from substandard care and malpractice.

The Code tells you that as a nurse or midwife, you must '*make sure you do not express your personal beliefs (including political, religious or moral beliefs) to people in an inappropriate way.*'<sup>11</sup> Those words can send a shiver down the spine of even an experienced nurse or midwife, let alone a first-year student. The thought of having your PIN taken from you before you've even earned it can make you want to vow never to mention the name of Jesus when you're on duty.

Did you know, that's how many Christian nurses and midwives feel? Silenced. Gagged, even. Knowing they have words of life – words that can point to the most reliable source of peace, joy, and hope there is – but feeling totally unable to share them. That can be very difficult. Must it be that way?

it is possible for  
nurses and  
midwives to  
express their  
personal beliefs...  
to people in a way  
that is appropriate

I think the mistake many of us make is forgetting those final four words of instruction from the NMC: '*in an inappropriate way*'. Take those words out of the sentence and the

message changes entirely. But the NMC chose to put them there and that tells me that they believe it is possible for nurses and midwives to express their personal beliefs (including political, religious, and moral beliefs) to people in a way that is appropriate. The NMC are not asking us to be undercover Christians. Isn't that encouraging?

I love these words of Jesus – as if he hears our sigh of relief and reassures us that we can indeed call off the search for a basket big enough to hide in.

*'You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.'*  
(Matthew 5:14-16)

Are you asking those questions I mentioned at the start of this article? They were pressing questions for me as a student too. I found very practical answers by doing a Saline Solution course,<sup>2</sup> aimed at equipping Christian healthcare workers to be witnesses for Jesus in the workplace. The course was so helpful to me that I later trained to teach it myself, and

I think every Christian healthcare professional should do it at least once! To find out if there's an upcoming course near you or online via Zoom, email me at [georgie@cmf.org.uk](mailto:georgie@cmf.org.uk). 🍁

**Georgie Coster** is a staff nurse in a Critical Care Unit and CMF's Associate Head of Nurses and Midwives

## References

1. Nursing and Midwifery Council. *The Code*. January 2015. Updated October 2018.
2. See [cmf.li/Saline](http://cmf.li/Saline) for more information about the Saline Solution course.



saturday  
16 october

# salty **n** Sweet

**10-12.30**  
virtual taster mini-Saline course

led by and for nurses and midwives. Come and learn how we can best be witnesses to Christ in our workplaces.

**1-3**  
virtual bake off

come and bake scones with us and then join in a virtual cream tea and social, with a chance to worship while we cook!

[cmf.org.uk/nurses\\_and\\_midwives](http://cmf.org.uk/nurses_and_midwives)





global

# global healthcare mission

**Vicky Lavy** describes  
an urgent need

## what's the problem?

The vast majority of people in the world live in low or middle-income countries (LMICs). In the UK, we enjoy a standard of living, level of education and quality of healthcare that most of the world will never experience. Indeed, most deaths and disabilities due to treatable diseases occur in LMICs where there are fewest resources – and healthcare workers.

Here are some incredible statistics. It has been estimated that in sub-Saharan Africa, three per cent of the world's health workforce care for ten per cent of the world's population bearing 24 per cent of the global disease burden, with less than one per cent of global health expenditure.<sup>1</sup> In addition, LMICs see 99 per cent of maternal deaths, 95 per cent of HIV infections, 90 per cent of people with visual impairment... the list goes on.<sup>2</sup>

## why medical mission as a Christian?

Throughout the Bible, we read of Jesus' care for the vulnerable and downtrodden. There are over 300 passages that speak about his concern for justice and his heart for the poor. We see that he calls us to 'make disciples of all nations'.<sup>3</sup> This means that both evangelism and social action are part of God's all-encompassing mission to restore the whole of creation.

When Jesus explained what he had come to do, he described a holistic mission; bringing the good news of the gospel, restoring broken people, and bringing justice in broken communities.<sup>4</sup> The exciting thing is that he chooses to use his people to accomplish this mission. Jesus said, 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you'.<sup>5</sup>

Christian nurses and midwives are part of the plan, bringing God's love to a needy world through competent, compassionate healthcare. In one sense, we are called to do 'healthcare mission' wherever we are. God sends us into a broken world to play a part in its restoration, both through our clinical skills and as we share the good news of God's love when there is the opportunity – living and speaking for Jesus both at home and away.

God asks his people to care for the poor and to work for justice. He doesn't call all of us to live and work in a developing country. But he does call all of us to be engaged with the issues and the needs.

## what can I do as a student?

So, as a nursing or midwifery student, how can you begin to think about getting involved from the off? Here are some thoughts:

## 1. develop relationships

The best way to do this is to develop a passion for prayer. Pray, perhaps through Operation World,<sup>6</sup> for the nations. But also develop relationships with medical missionaries so you can pray for and with them. CMF has around 200 members living and working overseas. Why not read their blogs and newsletters, or even write to them yourself? You can also pray and develop relationships with students and qualified nurses and midwives through our partner organisation, Nurses Christian Fellowship International (see *ncfi.org*). Also, check out the CMF International Facebook Group, open to all CMF members at [facebook.com/groups/CMF.International](https://facebook.com/groups/CMF.International) for discussions and information on global health issues and resources.

## 2. attend a course

CMF runs several courses to help health professionals engage with global healthcare mission. For example, consider being a participant on CMF's Global Track, aimed at encouraging thought and experience for students and newly qualified health workers to explore working long-term in overseas healthcare settings (see [cmf.org.uk/global/global-track](https://cmf.org.uk/global/global-track)) Who is my neighbour now? is a day conference exploring global health and mission.

The annual Developing Health Course equips health professionals for work in resource-poor settings. Visit [cmf.org.uk/global](https://cmf.org.uk/global) for details of these courses and events.

## 3. read about it

We've published some short, readable guides:

- *The Electives Handbook* – a terrific resource for students. [cmf.org.uk/global/global-resources-books](https://cmf.org.uk/global/global-resources-books)
- *Off the Beaten Track* – a guide written for junior doctors but with lots of useful general advice.
- *Short-term Medical Work* – for all health professionals on short trips.

All our resources can be found at [cmf.org.uk/global/resource](https://cmf.org.uk/global/resource)

## 4. go

As well as numerous short-term options throughout your studies, an elective to a developing country is a golden opportunity to do something different; to see life and nursing or midwifery in another setting, and look at the world from a different perspective. For many students, it's an experience that changes the way they live and shapes their future.

Deciding what to do, where to go and how to get there can seem a daunting task, but CMF has lots of resources to help. The CMF website

contains a database of over 80 Christian hospitals around the world that accept elective students and inspiring elective reports from former students.

## how will you be involved?

We are all called to engage in global mission, be it through going, giving, praying, or simply being informed. Indeed, the history of medical missions shows that medical, nursing, and midwife missionaries have always been at the forefront of changes in medical science and practice.<sup>7</sup>

The world needs committed, God-honouring, well-trained healthcare workers who are prepared to live out transformed lives for the sake of the gospel. Let's support each other, asking God to use our gifts throughout our training (and wherever we end up in the future) as we join him on his mission in a hurting world. ✨

**Vicky Lavy** served as a medical missionary in Malawi and led CMF's Global Mission ministry until 2016

### References

1. WHO, 2016
2. WHO, 2014
3. Matthew 28:19
4. Luke 4:18-19
5. John 20:21
6. Operation World. [operationworld.org](http://operationworld.org)
7. Knowles R. The Christian contribution to healthcare. *Nucleus*. Freshers' Edition 2016:52-55

# Christian student resources

**James Howitt** offers  
some online suggestions

[cmf.org.uk](http://cmf.org.uk)



A collection of Christian Medical Fellowship resources to advise Christian doctors, nurses, midwives and students, in addition to articles and upcoming events.

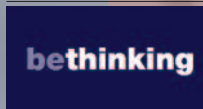
[uccf.org.uk](http://uccf.org.uk)



Universities & Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) is the umbrella body for Christian Unions.

They provide resources for students reading the Bible who want to share their faith with their friends and peers, and lots more besides.

[bethinking.org](http://bethinking.org)



Written and recorded material from UCCF, helping to answer the difficult questions of life, faith and the Bible that Christians may be asking (or be asked).

[fusionmovement.org](http://fusionmovement.org)



Fusion supports Christians at universities in finding churches in their local area and in developing student ministry and mission on campuses across the UK.



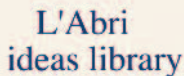


## desiringgod.org



From the ministry of John Piper, 'desiring God' aims to provide information, news and resources to guide people towards God and the joy of fellowship with Christ.

## labri-ideas-library.org



L'Abri is a Christian community with centres around the world. Their ideas library

aims to provide answers about the reality and relevance of the Christian faith in today's societal contexts.

## christiantoday.com



An independent UK Christian news body, providing news, commentary and analysis on the global church and religious affairs.

## christiansinsport.org.uk



With groups in most universities, 'they aim to support students at all levels of participation with resources and local connections. 🍷

**James Howitt** was formerly a doctor who performed Work Capability Assessments and a CMF Associate Staff Worker in Essex



feature



# mentoring

**Esther Chevassut** looks at the impact we can have mentoring the next generation of nurses

**H**ave you ever thought about the influence you have on the people around you? Or the influence they are having on you? Who do you look up to?

And who looks up to you?

Some relationships have a significant influence on us; we invest in some people and some people invest in us — be it in our workplace, personal life or church. It's helpful to assess whether these relationships aid growth in a positive way. A mentoring relationship has huge potential for influence and impact, as one person comes closely alongside another and invests in their growth.

A mentor can be defined as a more experienced, trusted advisor, who trains, guides and counsels a less experienced/knowledgeable mentee or 'protégé'. The relationship between mentor and protégé is not equated to age, but to expertise, wisdom or maturity and usually entails informal face-to-face communication over a sustained period of time.

Being mentored is an essential ingredient for growth in almost any vocation or pursuit, but certainly in one so emotionally, physically and mentally challenging as nursing; a career in

which learning never stops. The personal growth and learning that takes place when training to be a nurse, and significantly during the transition into working as a newly-qualified one is monumental and can be greatly affected by mentoring. Furthermore, as followers of Christ, changed by his grace and living as his witnesses in a world which is often hostile to him, mature Christian mentors can have a huge impact on our spiritual growth.

## what does this essential practice look like?

The focus of mentoring is to develop the whole person, so the techniques are broad and require wisdom in order to be used appropriately. One business model<sup>1</sup> suggested these five approaches:

1. **Accompanying**  
committing to the learning process side-by-side with the learner.
2. **Sowing**  
developing the learner by challenging them out of their 'comfort zone'; teaching information ahead of the time when it will be required.
3. **Catalysing**  
plunging the learner into change,

provoking a different way of thinking, identity or reordering of values.

#### 4. **Showing**

using your own example to demonstrate a skill or activity, understandably.

#### 5. **Harvesting**

reflecting, to create awareness of what was learned by experience and drawing conclusions.

As a newly-qualified nurse (NQN), just nine months into my first year working, I have felt the effect of workplace mentorship more profoundly than ever before. Although I had spent thousands of hours exposed to healthcare environments, I was, in many ways, unprepared for the step up in responsibility. Working autonomously — whereby no-one will scoop up my unfinished tasks and where I am legally accountable for every signature, action and communication made — can feel overwhelming. A mentor can be a huge support to an NQN during this transition and aid their development of confidence and competence.

However, during this period of change, an NQN can feel out of their depth, incompetent and inadequate, and confidence in their

nursing ability can be fragile. A mentor who is training and critiquing an NQN but insensitive to the challenges of this transition can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy before the NQN's skin has 'thickened', and thus stunt potential growth. I am pleased to say I have largely been positively supported, encouraged, and guided in my skills and understanding of how to deliver high quality care amidst the pressure of NHS wards. Criticism from mentors is of course a key part of development, but I have felt the difference in effect between constructive and destructive criticism.

During a typical, busy morning on the ward amidst constantly repeating, mid-volume alarms from call-bells and IV pumps, I am interrupted for the fifth time during my already-late-running drug round, to be reminded my patient's relative is still waiting on the phone for an update. As I pause to answer the phone, my HCA reminds me three 'double-up' washes are outstanding, and the Sister asks that I hand over my side room patient ASAP to the ward upstairs. There are about twelve tasks which need to be done at once... so what should I prioritise?

I have to breathe... complete one task at a time, as proficiently and efficiently as possible,

and coordinate sharing the tasks of personal care, observations and blood sugar checks with my HCA before lunch. But before I know it, it's lunchtime and drug round again. I haven't written any notes yet, I haven't taken a break and my 13:00 IVs are due.

When I finally get to the treatment room, half an hour after my IVs were due, I am met by the nurse in charge, who chooses this moment to confront me about my time-keeping and lack of awareness of the importance of giving IV antibiotics on time.

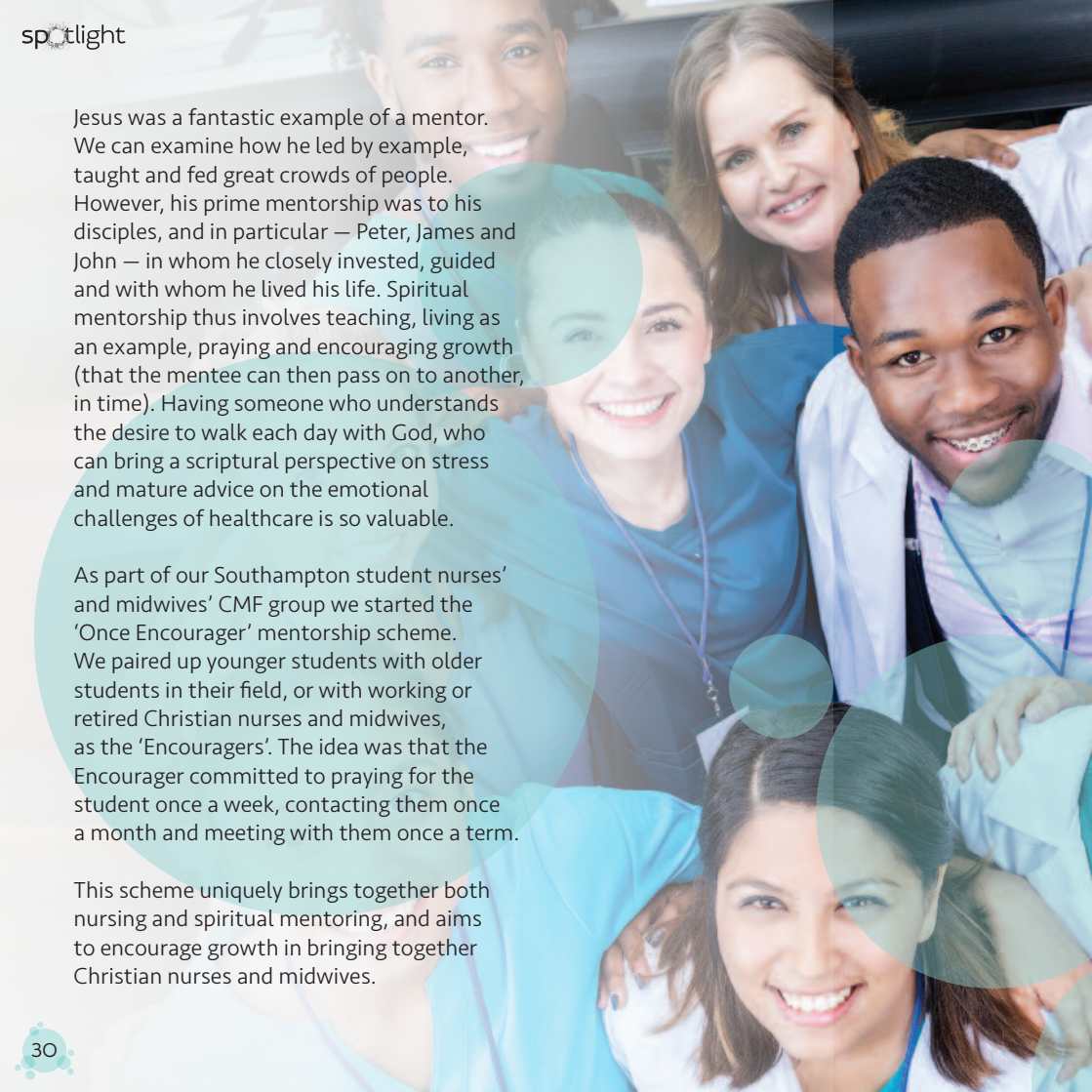
I can barely engage in self-reflection while I am equally hungry, stressed and aware of running late. The Sister raises her concern about my lax working and while I try to form a response I feel myself crumbling emotionally and my composure give way to blurry tear-filled eyes. The Sister continues criticising my management skills despite my tears and I have to take myself off the ward, leaving my IVs to be completed even later, once I've composed myself...

This I would describe as destructive criticism – at an inappropriate time and without positive or conducive feedback, when the protégé is stressed and working at their capacity.

In a similar vein, during my first months of work, I found myself getting into an unhealthy pattern of staying late after every shift to complete my written documentation of care for each of my patients, having felt inundated with practical tasks throughout the day without time to stop and write.

One week I had three consecutive shifts with one of the Sisters who noticed I'd stayed late two evenings running. On the third morning, at a quiet moment in the treatment room, she gently asked how I was doing. I wondered whether she was asking in regard to this day, my work that shift, personal life or my emotions on my third, twelve-hour shift of the Bank Holiday weekend... I didn't know which answer she was looking for, but I won't forget how genuinely she asked and listened to me. She didn't have to bring up the fact she knew I had stayed late on both previous shifts, but I very quickly brought it up on my own accord.


Her next question was 'And how can we improve this?' I was struck by how she was engaging with this situation so constructively and seeking a solution with me; by her simply asking the right questions, I drew on ways I could improve, more than simply saying 'time management'.



Jesus was a fantastic example of a mentor. We can examine how he led by example, taught and fed great crowds of people. However, his prime mentorship was to his disciples, and in particular — Peter, James and John — in whom he closely invested, guided and with whom he lived his life. Spiritual mentorship thus involves teaching, living as an example, praying and encouraging growth (that the mentee can then pass on to another, in time). Having someone who understands the desire to walk each day with God, who can bring a scriptural perspective on stress and mature advice on the emotional challenges of healthcare is so valuable.

As part of our Southampton student nurses' and midwives' CMF group we started the 'Once Encourager' mentorship scheme. We paired up younger students with older students in their field, or with working or retired Christian nurses and midwives, as the 'Encouragers'. The idea was that the Encourager committed to praying for the student once a week, contacting them once a month and meeting with them once a term.

This scheme uniquely brings together both nursing and spiritual mentoring, and aims to encourage growth in bringing together Christian nurses and midwives.



Furthermore, the scheme is low commitment. Most nurses and nursing students are busy people with full-time placements mixed with academic pressures. Christian students are likely to be involved in churches and Christian Unions where they may already have a mentor. The Encourager scheme is a manageable commitment that fills a niche gap, with great potential for fruit.\*

We can all mentor others. Ask yourself who are your potential protégés, and how might you be able to aid them in their professional and spiritual growth, in a constructive and fruitful way. 🌱

**Esther Chevassut** is a staff nurse and works part time as a CMF Staff Worker for nurses and midwives.

\* For more information on the Encourager Scheme and becoming a mentor to nursing and midwifery students, please email [pippa.peppiatt@cmf.org.uk](mailto:pippa.peppiatt@cmf.org.uk).

1. Aubrey B & Cohen P. *Working Wisdom: Timeless Skills and Vanguard Strategies for Learning Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1995:23, 44–47, 96–97

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