

# Mentor Discussion Starters for the Classroom:

Work to engage students in intelligent conversations! These topics will help students reflect on their values, accomplishments and personal attributes. Many of these questions are a sneaky way to get these ideas out in the open. Use them to encourage students to open up and share with the group.

You can ask for volunteers to raise their hand and answer or you can go around the room (Round- Robin style). When using round robin format, give them an opt out option. I suggest using the option of saying "Ditto" to the response before them, instead of "pass". This will place a little pain on the "easy way out option" by encouraging them to accept the response before them or finding an answer that is their own! Make sure you provide a safe environment in which to share. Students should be reminded to respect each others' answers and opinions; otherwise, they will find the activity uncomfortable and embarrassing. There are no right or wrong answers; in fact, much of the fun will come from hearing a variety of responses and learning more about each individual in the process. The Mentor may want to answer the question first, to set the stage of openness and risking sharing yourself! (Just be sure to keep your responses within the bounds of what would be appropriate to share with kids.)

- If you had to give every human being one quality, what would it be and why?
- If you could be a famous athlete, actor, writer or musician which would you choose and why? (It is fun to guess what the other people in the group will say before divulging answers)
- If your life was made into a movie, who would play you? Why?
- If you could invent one thing, what would it be?
- What is the most important quality for a boss to have?
- What is the most important quality for a worker to have?
- If you could know one thing about the future, what would it be?
- How do you choose your friends?
- What is the first thing you notice about a person?
- What do you think is the biggest problem in the United States and Why?
- Describe the most beautiful thing you have ever seen.
- If you were to be on the cover of a magazine, what magazine would it be and why would they feature you on the cover?
- If you could trade places with anyone in the world, who would it be and why? How about someone in your family?
- Tell the group (or other person) the best thing about the person on your right.
- If I had a million dollars, I would...
- The accomplishment I am most proud of is ...
- One thing I wish I could go back and do differently is ...
- One piece of advice I would give to younger kids is ...
- I think my parents generation had it tougher as kids because ...
- I think my parents generation had it easier as kids because ...
- The most important thing that has happened in my lifetime is ...
- The perfect day would be ...

## **Other Variations**

- Have each student create their own discussion starter to contribute to the activity.
- Try one discussion starter each day as an ice breaker...
- Write each discussion starter down on a separate slip of paper and put the slips in a box. Each participant reaches in and selects one to read and answer. Or a single person can select one for the entire group to respond to.
- Pair kids together and have them share their responses with each other rather than the larger group.