



## Precious Times - Term One 2019

Mentoring Weekend - Precious Blood School Riruta – 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>  
January 2019



Dear Precious Girls,

It is a joy for me to, once more, compile an edition of Precious Times – summarising another great weekend of mentoring, learning and interacting with girls from other schools and our devoted mentors.

### Introduction

Once again, you turned out in good numbers for the mentoring event: 84 of you in school and 30 of the alumni. This made the event a great success. In this our first mentoring this year, the theme of the event was **Teamwork** which is different from our ABC theme. This is in line with us introducing you to other themes that are relevant to you in school.

### What Is Teamwork?

**Teamwork** is defined as “the combined action of a group, especially when effective and efficient”. Wallace explained that **Teamwork** is collaborating with others to achieve a common purpose or goal and most jobs require you to work with others. The sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This saying makes the point that in combining the efforts of many, a team can achieve more than individuals working alone.

By working together, a team accomplishes more, faster and more efficiently and teamwork promotes equality. Here are ten reasons why:

- ❑ Each person contributes different ideas into the team which results in finding solutions faster
- ❑ The shared work results in completion in a shorter time period
- ❑ Dividing up roles and tasks means each person can be more thorough in the way they work
- ❑ The feedback from team members facilitates learning
- ❑ The support of team members encourages even individuals in a team who may not have confidence. It builds the sense of unity
- ❑ Working towards a shared goal motivates team members to keep going when they face obstacles. ‘Sticks in a bundle are harder to break.’
- ❑ Team members feel more respected for the different ways they contribute towards the goal
- ❑ Team members experience a greater sense of accomplishment when they achieve the goal
- ❑ Teams achieve much more than individuals working alone
- ❑ Teamwork builds stronger relationships and networks that you can tap into all your life.



The session with Muthoni continued with the day’s theme. You were asked to form groups and discuss the benefits and failures of **Teamwork**. Your groups were able to come up with the following benefits for teamwork:



- It brings out unity
- It helps group members to achieve their goals
- Improves creativity
- Saves time as many minds are involved
- Improves reliability and efficiency
- Helps reduce boredom and loneliness
- Boosts confidence and self esteem
- Helps members learn to respect others’ opinions and appreciate that people are



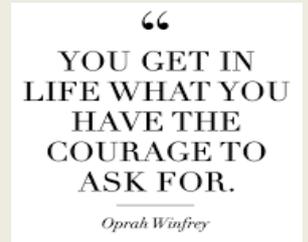
different

While challenges are:

- Team members may fail to achieve their goals
- There may be conflict among members
- Teams may end up wasting time



- Some members may be too bossy to allow others voice their opinion
- Others may be too shy to participate in discussion
- Team members may have very different views on a topic and fail to agree
- Members may not be committed and may fail to be punctual
- A team may end up digressing from their objective and hinder achievement of goal

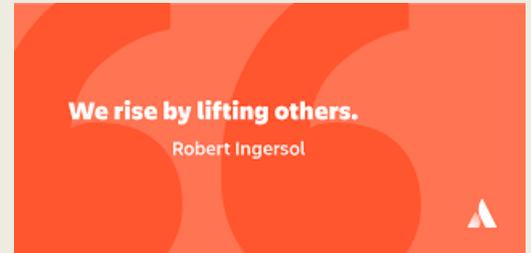


In cases where some team members do not contribute to discussion, the following could be the reasons:

- They might be too shy to speak out
- They may fear being wrong
- There may be a lack of interest in the topic or lack of information on the topic
- There may be a lack of familiarity with fellow team members

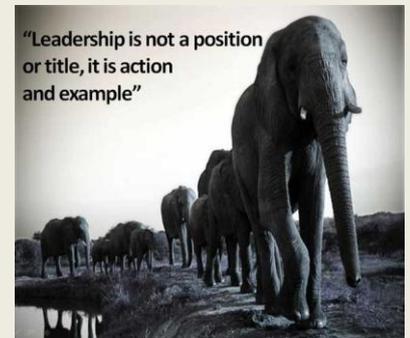
Such people can be assisted through:

- Helping them to understand that no answer is wrong
- Asking them questions frequently
- Giving them opportunities to voice their opinion
- Appreciating them frequently



You also discussed what to consider when choosing a team leader and came up with the following characteristics of a good leader:

- Should ensure the task gets done
- Is an example to the rest of the team members
- Considers others first
- Is respectful, hardworking, committed and has integrity



Muthoni explained the following approaches to handle conflict:

- ▣ The competitive approach - the person who takes the firmest stand wins
- ▣ Avoidance approach - accepting decisions without question and avoiding confrontation
- ▣ Accommodating approach - giving in so that the other person can get what they want
- ▣ Collaborative approach - finding a solution that meets everyone's needs.
- ▣ Compromising - each person gives up something that contributes towards the conflict resolution

### The Bottom Line

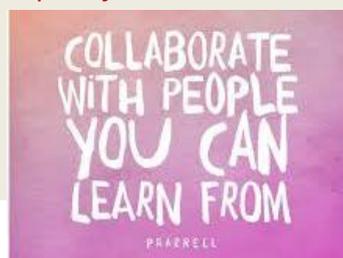
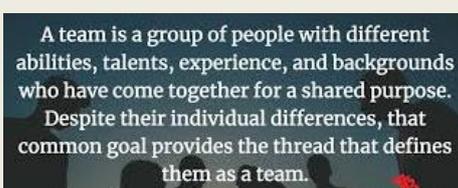
There is no right or wrong style of conflict resolution. Each has its time and place. Learn how to use all five and you'll be much more effective. As a team leader, learn to suggest different approaches based on these five styles when striving to resolve conflict.

This time round, we had with us several of our alumni who have been successful in applying for scholarships to the USA and they took time to explain the journey through the application process. They explained that one needs to perform very well in the KCSE, be all-rounded while in school through participating in leadership and community service and be resilient during the tedious application process.

### Group Sessions with the Mentors

There was a very good turnout of mentors and this helped the group session to run smoothly. During the group discussion, you were able to share your experiences on teamwork. You discussed activities that you engage in that enhance teamwork while in school, at home or in church. You had opportunities to ask questions in the group and came up with the conclusion that teamwork is necessary because,

**"Great things in are never done by one person. They are done by a team of people" ...edited quote from Steve Jobs and "There is no I in TEAM!"**

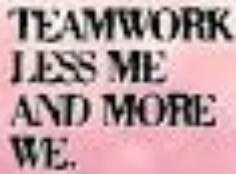


Compiled from reports written by:

- Kilungu – Mary & Mirriam
- Riruta – Elizabeth
- Gatimu – Mercy & Ruth
- Starehe – Elizabeth & Esther
- Mary Hill – Purity

## Public Speaking & One-on-one Session with a Mentor

In the afternoon, as you took turns to meet for 1-1 session with your mentors, the public speaking session was going on in two groups, one facilitated by Muthoni and the other by Jackie, one of our mentors. The public speaking topic required each of you to stand and share personal experiences demonstrating teamwork: one about conflict and one about benefits. The public speaking session requires courage to stand and speak in front of a group. It is meant to develop a good posture and how to express self in front of a crowd. One of you shared with me how for the first time she spoke in front of a group and Muthoni commended her and rewarded her with a chocolate. This encouraged her to be more active in answering and asking questions in class and consulting teachers which she was too shy to do before.



TEAMWORK  
LESS ME  
AND MORE  
WE.

The 1-1 session with a mentor gave each one of you an opportunity to discuss your experiences during the school holiday and performance last term. Your mentor helped you come up with solutions on how to improve your performance in school and how to deal with issues that may cause you distraction while in school. A number of you have shared that the mentors helped you remove your doubts and boosted your self-esteem, gave you study tips that you are implementing and encouraged you to work in teams as, *'two minds are better than one'*.

## Sunday Morning Skits

The skits that you presented were absolutely wonderful which really keeps showing us that only you can limit yourself because you have amazing talent. Everyone was a winner for participating in a team and you all received the much-sought after gifts of chocolate from Muthoni.

## Career Talks



We had three amazing career speakers on Sunday morning, two of whom are pilots with Kenya Airways, Janet and Evelyn. They shared their journeys from high school to becoming pilots. Janet was sponsored by Kenya Airways in her training since it is very expensive. She was an A student and applied to the training programme after high school. Among 300 people who applied, she was one of the 13 lucky ones who were accepted. This scholarship programme is not often available and Kenya Airways advertises for it once in a while. To get into the programme, candidates have to undergo a psychometric and aptitude tests.

**A psychometric test** is often used as part of the recruitment process and is a way for employers to assess your intelligence, skills and personality. ... The tests are structured to accurately evaluate your capacity to work with others, process information and cope with the stresses of the job.

**An aptitude test** is to measure your work-related cognitive capacity. ... The most commonly used set of cognitive tests includes – abstract/conceptual reasoning, verbal reasoning and numerical reasoning.

For Evelyn, she did not have a scholarship and the training took longer to complete. First, she had to pass some exams and then undergo a medical test. The training took a total of 15 months. There are lots of exams covering subjects like how a plane works and weather patterns among others. Then you have to sit for a Kenyan pilots' exam to be registered as a pilot in Kenya even if you train outside Kenya.

For those who desire a career as pilots:

- ❑ You should be good in Math and sciences
- ❑ You need to be very patient as the training is very hard and you have to keep reminding yourself of the 'why' you are in training
- ❑ You should be a good team player as being a pilot requires you to work well with ground staff, weather people and the rest of the cabin crew.

Muthoni was our third career speaker and shared with us her life's journey to where she is now. She talked about her love for books from when she was very young. Upon graduation, she worked various jobs but her passion was always writing. She learnt how to write online and her first story was accepted by BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). This gave a boost to her passion for writing. She was one of the founder members of Kwani Trust

which is a Kenyan based literary network dedicated to developing quality creative writing through the publishing and distribution of contemporary African writing and offering training opportunities. Thereafter, she founded Storymoja Publishers which is a publishing company committed towards publishing contemporary East African writing of world-class standards. They publish adult titles under the Storymoja Imprint and have published more than 100 children books under the Storyhippo Imprint.

**Take away from Muthoni**

- 📌 Everyone should start a side-hustle, which is any type of employment undertaken, in addition to one's full-time job. Side hustles are often started from things a person is passionate about. This helps one to be commercially aware (general knowledge of business).
- 📌 One should always have integrity
- 📌 Learn good communication skills
- 📌 Be good at teamwork as there is no job that one does alone
- 📌 Have a sense of humour. It helps in times of conflict to laugh at self and correct self.

**Alumni Section** – *report written by Nancy Kabura*

**Topic – Campus and Careers: Preparing and Adapting**

Rosemary who facilitated the alumni session took time to appreciate the Class of 2018 for posting impressive KCSE results. She then conducted a personal test where you were asked to answer questions that would help you reflect on your inner self and help you make wise decisions on the careers you would choose. The questions included:



- 📌 What do others say you are good at?
- 📌 Who is living the kind of life that you most desire?
- 📌 If you know you can't fail, what would you be doing?
- 📌 What do you most want to teach or present in this world?
- 📌 If your tribute consisted of one word or phrase, what would you like it to be?
- 📌 What concept or principle would you like to defend with all your life?

After analysing these questions, you learnt that, first: what others believe about you may be true or not. Therefore, before taking any risk in life, what you desire to do should be driven by your own self. Second: when choosing your role models, you should be careful. The kind of people you desire to live like should have the best qualities that you can copy.

Christine Kisenga, a HR professional spoke in the afternoon. She talked about Emotional Quotient (EQ). You learnt that as well as intelligent quotient, there is emotional quotient. This is the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the powers and acumen of emotions to facilitate high levels of teamwork, productivity and effectiveness in the work place. By understanding your own EQ, you are able to focus and improve in decision making.

You were also led in a brief session of knowing your personal values. These are the things you believe are important for the way you live and work. Though it is not easy to define or know your values, it is also necessary to find them, this is because they usually match with the things you want to do in life. Values can change with time. Therefore, it is necessary to go through your realization of your values when you change your definition success about something.

*We greatly appreciate all our Mentors for making the time to come and mentor our girl, we also appreciate the administration at Precious Blood Secondary School, Riruta for your wonderful hospitality. Thank you to all our sponsors for believing in Precious Sisters and partnering with us to 'Give the Bright Girls a Chance to Shine'*