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AN ANNUAL **STRATEGY FOR**

PLANNING YOUR YEAR



In youth ministry, we all know what it's like to leave our planning to the last possible second. So how about we try something different this year? How about we start planning our ministries an entire year at a time? It only takes one day each year, and it's going to make the other 364 days of your year so much more fun, peaceful, and effective. And it's actually really doable with the Grow annual strategy!

ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING

Every year with Grow Students, you get all the resources you need to host your own annual planning session (on your own or with your whole team). We give you . . .

- The Annual Planning Meeting Guide These will be mailed
 - Instructions
 - Suggested Schedule
 - Shopping List
- Physical box of calendar cards
- ▶ Editable files of the calendar cards
- A walkthrough video <</p>
- Free access to the online **Grow Creative Board** tool to help you plan your year (and whatever else you want to plan while you're at it!)

to you shortly after

you purchase Grow!

MORE PLANNING TOOLS

With your Grow Students subscription, you'll also get . . .

A weekly planner



organized and encouraged!

To help you stay

Weekly and monthly to-do lists

And, of course, Grow isn't just a planning tool. With Grow, you get all the resources you need for an entire year of ministry in these six areas:

DISCIPLESHIP

EVENTS

TEACHING

VOLUNTEERS

ENVIRONMENTS

FAMILIES

Want to see everything that's coming up this year in **Grow Students?**







AN ANNUAL STRATEGY FOR

DISCIPLESHIP 4

OVERVIEW

When planning your year, we always recommend you start with your discipleship strategy. That's **because spiritual** growth should be the lens through which we see everything else we do in our ministries. We believe there are four spiritual habits that help teenagers (and adults, too) grow closer to God. These four habits aren't anything new. They've been talked about countless ways, by countless numbers of people. Your church is probably already talking about them in your own unique way, so feel free to change the language to fit your context if you need to. The words aren't important, but here's what is: if these four spiritual habits are the behaviors that help teenagers grow closer to God, we need a strategy to help teenagers engage in these four spiritual habits on a regular basis, year after year.



SPEND TIME WITH GOD

If we want to grow spiritually, we need to spend time growing in relationship with God through personal times of prayer, reading Scripture, reflection, and worship.



SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS

If we want to grow spiritually, we need to be engaged in healthy community and godly relationships with others — with people who share our beliefs, as well as with people who don't.



USE YOUR GIFTS

If we want to grow spiritually, we need to understand how God uniquely made us and then use those unique qualities to love God, love others, and impact the world around us.



SHARE YOUR STORY

If we want to grow spiritually, we need to make faith a regular, everyday, go-to topic of conversation as we learn to connect our stories with God's story and then share our stories with others.

WHAT WF'VF PROVIDED

Since there are four spiritual habits we've identified as key to a teenager's spiritual growth, **Grow Students breaks the year into four quarters and focuses on one spiritual habit each quarter.** Each quarter, we provide you with one discipleship activity for that quarter's habit. While every activity we provide in our Discipleship Strategy is unique, every quarter of resources includes resources like . . .



INSTRUCTIONS

- An **activity guide** for you, the ministry leader
- **Editable instructions** for your volunteers
- Shopping lists



GRAPHICS

- **Editable graphics** for each activity
- ► **Title images** in multiple formats and sizes
- Background images in multiple formats and sizes
- Additional social media or screen graphics





MORE RESOURCES

- ▶ Editable resources for students, like handouts, workbooks, and more
- ▶ **Printable posters** for each spiritual habit
- ► The **Grow Habits App** to help students develop more consistent spiritual habits
- ▶ **Daily devotionals** for students for each series on The Bible App and in print
- ▶ Volunteer devotionals for each teaching series

Although we always focus on each spiritual habit at the same time every year, how we practice these spiritual habits **changes every year.** This year, here's what you'll get with Grow Students . . .



Because we always focus on the spiritual habit of spending time with others during the fall quarter, this year we've created the Bigger Better Best Challenge to help teenagers have fun while working together towards a common goal with their small groups.





To focus on the spiritual habit of using your gifts during the winter quarter, this year we're providing an event called The Over the Top Challenge to prompt teenagers to practice generosity in new and exciting ways.

SPRING



For the spring quarter, when we always focus on the spiritual habit of spending time with God, we've created a discipleship activity called the In the Rhythm Prayer Prompts to help teenagers learn new ways to pray and connect with God on a daily basis.

SUMMER



With a focus on the spiritual habit of sharing your story during the summer quarter, this year, we're providing an activity called the Long Story Short Pop-up to help teenagers use their creativity to express themselves and their stories.





OVERVIEW

It's so important to have a strategy for what you'll teach your students. Without a strategy, we run the risk of missing important ideas, teaching only the topics that interest us most, and ultimately failing to give our students a full and holistic view of God. The teaching strategy behind Grow Students has been created, influenced, and written by hundreds (literally) of real youth pastors, in real youth ministries, from a diversity of church contexts, cultures, sizes, and denominations. Our goal is to help you help your students grow spiritually by **teaching and discussing Scripture in developmentally appropriate ways.**

OUR AUDIENCE

Grow Students is **designed with grades 6-12 in mind,** since we know most youth workers oversee both middle school and high school students.

But we also know middle schoolers and high schoolers are really different! So here's how we balance that: **every series comes with Middle School Hacks and High School Hacks.** These tips are specific to each series and are designed to help you adjust the teaching to be more age-specific.

We also know when you are ministering to students with disabilities, it's important to adjust your teaching strategy in more specific ways. That's why **every series comes with Accessibility Hacks** to help you adjust the teaching and activities to make them more accessible to students with physical, developmental, or learning disabilities.

OUR STRUCTURE

Maybe you're wondering, "Is Grow Students designed for small groups? Sermons? Classrooms? Home groups? Small churches? Big churches?" The answer is this: Grow really is flexible enough to use in all of those contexts and formats!

If you have 15 or fewer students, we give you a **Lesson Guide** that can be used as-is! It combines teaching, hands-on activities, discussion time, and more, which all of your students can participate in if you'd like.

If you have more than 15 students, you probably save your discussion time for small groups or a separate environment. If that's you, no problem! We'll tell you when to skip the discussion questions in your Lesson Guide, because our standalone Discussion Guide will guide students and adult leaders through those questions later. Plus, the hands-on activities and experiences in every week can be scaled up or down to include all of your students at once, or just a few at the front of the room, depending on your format, time, and available resources.

OUR SCOPE & SEQUENCE

When we were determining what Grow Students would teach each year, and when we'd teach it, we surveyed hundreds of youth pastors about the topics they teach about on an annual basis. When we combined the results of that survey with our team's experience, we came up with a list of categories that we use as the basis of our Scope & Sequence:

EVERY YEAR:

- **JESUS:** exploring Jesus' life, ministry, teachings, and miracles.
- **SPIRITUAL GROWTH:** beginning or nurturing our faith through spiritual habits.
- **DOUBT & QUESTIONS:** expressing and processing our big questions about God.
- **COMMUNITY:** developing godly relationships with friends, peers, mentors, family, and more.
- **LOVING OTHERS:** caring for our neighbors through compassion, service, and generosity.
- **IDENTITY:** exploring how God created us and what we were created to do.
- **JUSTICE**: joining God in the process of making wrong things right.
- **EVANGELISM:** sharing the gospel and our stories of faith through our words and actions.
- **HOLIDAYS:** celebrating Jesus' birth at Christmas and his resurrection at Easter.

EVERY OTHER YEAR:

- **HURT & PAIN:** finding hope and healing in Jesus during difficult situations.
- AUTHORITY: following God's leadership and learning to lead like Jesus.
- **WISDOM:** developing discernment and making choices that honor God.

Although we have twelve categories in our scope and sequence, we cover so much more! Think of these twelve categories as simply the containers that hold infinite numbers of topics. Topics like anger, worship, forgiveness, the Exodus story, friendship, anxiety, how to read the Bible, prayer, and so much more are all contained within these categories.

Although our scope and sequence might sound topical at first, not every series is a topical series. Many of our series are book or character studies, like a study in Hebrews (under the category of Spiritual Growth) or a study on the life of Joseph (under the category of Justice).

Plus, if your church uses a lectionary to help guide the Scripture you study each week, every week of Grow Students uses at least one passage of Scripture from The Revised Common Lectionary. Our curriculum for kids does too, so if your church uses Grow Kids your kids and youth ministries can get more aligned!



While every series in our Teaching Strategy is unique, we always provide you with the same core tools and resources to make each one happen. With each series, we'll include . . .



TEACHING

- ► A **series guide** for each teaching series
- **Editable teaching guides** for every week in multiple file formats
- ▶ One-Minute Sermon videos and scripts for every week
- ► Editable discussion guides for every week in multiple file formats (plus weekly discussion guides just for middle schoolers)
- ► Engaging teaching techniques in every week, like activities, object lessons, music, reflection, polls, stories, and more
- ► Free access to the **Grow Lesson Builder** for editing your curriculum or writing lessons from scratch
- **Daily devotionals** for students for each series, on The Bible App and in print
- ▶ Volunteer devotionals for each series
- ► A **memory verse** for each series
- ▶ Middle school hacks for each series
- ► **High school hacks** for each series
- ► Accessibility hacks for each series to help you accommodate students with disabilities
- Additional handouts, images, and activity
- ▶ Shopping lists and prep lists for each series



ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Room design ideas to complement each series theme
- ► Music suggestions for each series
- ▶ **Game suggestions** for each series, with instructions and graphics
- ► Free access to the **Grow Games & Icebreakers** app



GRAPHICS

- **Editable graphics** for each series
- ► **Title images** for each series in multiple formats and sizes
- ▶ **Background images** for each series in multiple formats and sizes
- ▶ **Big Idea images** for every week in multiple formats and sizes
- ► **Lower thirds images** for every week in multiple formats and sizes
- ▶ **Memory verse images** for each series in multiple formats and sizes
- ► Additional **social media and screen** graphics as needed
- ► **Style guides** for every series with font names and suggested color swatches
- Free access to **Grow Slides** to help you streamline your presentations



VIDEOS

- ▶ One-Minute Sermon videos for every week
- Free access to the **Grow TV App** to help you share the **One-Minute Sermons** with families
- **Bumper videos** and **countdown videos** for each series



COMMUNICATION

- Weekly volunteer emails in multiple formats
- ► Monthly **parent emails** in multiple formats
- Marketing checklists, social media posts, and social media captions for each series
- ▶ Promotional cards and posters for each
- Free access to **Grow Hubs** to help you streamline your communication

This year, here are the series we'll be covering in Grow Students . . .









4 Weeks on Friendship

4 Weeks on Doubt & Questions

4 Weeks on Leadership

4 Weeks on Generosity







4 Weeks on Identity



4 Weeks on Spiritual Habits



4 Weeks on Anger



2 Weeks on Easter



4 Weeks on Family



4 Weeks on Jesus



4 Weeks on Evangelism



4 Weeks on Stress & Anxiety



AN ANNUAL STRATEGY FOR ENVIRONMENTS

The things you teach each week are really important — but we all know the experience that surrounds your teaching time can often make or break the effectiveness of what you teach. On top of your weekly teaching time, there's a lot that goes into your weekly environment. Between the decor, graphics, music, games - there's a lot to do. But here's a strategic and easy way to think about weekly environments: determine a monthly theme that complements your teaching. Then create an environment around it! We like to think of weekly environments like this: games, music, room design, and visual aids (like graphics and videos).

Because our Environments Strategy is tied to our Teaching Strategy, we provide you with a new set of the same core tools and resources for each teaching series. With each series, we'll include . . .



GAMES

- ► **Game suggestions** to complement each series topic and theme
- ▶ **Instructions** and **graphics** for each game
- Free access to the Grow Games & **Icebreakers** app



MUSIC

- ▶ Worship song suggestions to complement each series topic
- **Bonus song suggestions** to complement each series theme
- ► Spotify playlists of our recommended songs



DECOR

- ▶ Room designs to complement each series topic and theme
- ► Instructions and links to purchase supplies for each room design
- Promotional posters for each series



GRAPHICS & VIDEO

- **Bumper videos** and **countdown videos** for each series
- **Editable graphics** for each series
- ► **Title images** for each series in multiple formats and sizes
- ▶ **Background images** for each series in multiple formats and sizes
- ▶ **Big Idea images** for every week in multiple formats and sizes
- ► **Lower thirds images** for every week in multiple formats and sizes
- ► Additional **social media and screen** graphics as needed
- ► **Style guides** for every series with font names and suggested color swatches
- Free access to **Grow Slides** to help you streamline your presentations





OVERVIEW

Events are a pretty big deal for most youth ministries. They're a way to have fun, connect with students, get new people in the door, and create some excitement. Events matter, but we've got to keep things in perspective. That's why we're fans of keeping your event strategy really simple, because you can make a bigger impact each year if you choose to do fewer events with more intentionality. Here's our recommendation: **do one event each quarter, plus a summer camp and a mission experience.** Here's what that looks like each year . . .



FALL

Every fall, we recommend doing an event that aligns with the fall discipleship focus (Spend Time with Others) by helping students connect with each other and with their adult leaders. In Grow Students, this is usually **an all-nighter or half-nighter** with a gospel presentation.



WINTER

Every winter, we recommend doing a just-forfun event that gets students together before the busyness of the holidays really kicks in. In Grow Students, this is usually a **holiday-themed or other just-for-fun event.** Sometimes this event aligns with our discipleship focus (Use Your Gifts) by incorporating a service or generosity challenge.



SPRING

Every spring, we recommend doing an event that aligns with the spring discipleship focus (Spend Time with God) by creating a **weekend retreat** off-site or in host homes that challenges students to grow closer to God. In Grow Students, we always provide you with the teaching content and instructions you need to pull this off.



SUMMER

Every summer, we recommend putting a **mission** experience and summer camp on the calendar, but we also recommend doing another just-forfun event that gets students together before the busyness of the summer begins. In Grow Students, our just-for-fun event is usually an outdoor competition, while our mission experiences and summer camp focus on the summer discipleship focus (Share Your Story) — and we always provide you with the teaching content and instructions you need to make it all happen.

WHAT WE'VE PROVIDED

While every event in our Event Strategy is unique, we always provide you with the same core tools and resources to make each one happen. With each event, we'll include . . .



PLANNING

- ► An **event guide** for you, the ministry leader
- Suggested schedules
- Shopping lists
- Volunteer roles
- On-theme ideas for each event for:
 - Decorating
 - ▶ Food
 - Activities
 - ▶ Prizes & giveaways
- Additional handouts, images, and activity sheets
- ► And for events that include a teaching time . . .
 - ► A **series guide** for each lesson
 - ► Editable teaching guides for each lesson in multiple file formats
 - ► Editable discussion guides for each lesson in multiple file formats
 - Engaging teaching techniques in every lesson, like activities, object lessons, music, reflection, polls, stories, and more
 - Free access to the <u>Grow Lesson</u> <u>Builder</u> for editing your curriculum or writing lessons from scratch



GRAPHICS

- ► Editable graphics for each activity
- ► **Title images** in multiple formats and sizes
- ▶ Background images in multiple formats and sizes



MARKETING

- ▶ Editable flyers in multiple formats
- ► **Family handouts** in multiple formats
- ► Free access to **Grow Hubs** to help you streamline your communication



Although we always use the same rhythm for our events every year, the events we provide always change. This year, here's what you can expect with Grow Students . . .

FALL



This year's fall all-nighter was created with laughter in mind. This event is packed with games, activities, challenges, competitions, ideas, and a teaching outline all inspired by the art of improv comedy.

WINTER



This year, our just-for-fun winter event is a Karaoke party. This event contains everything you need to create a night of games, performances, prizes, and activities that will get everyone into the Christmas spirit.

SPRING



This year, we're giving you everything you need to plan a weekend retreat, along with the teaching content for a series on knowing and being known by God called By Name.

SUMMER



This year, our just-for-fun summer event is an Olympic-themed series of competitions, games, and stations designed to give teenagers the chance to break records and win medals together with their friends.



This year, we've provided a guide to creating a 5-day summer camp, including games, how-to guides, packing lists, planning resources, family and volunteer communication, and the teaching content for a brand new series called Legends.



This year, we're providing a guide to creating a local or international mission experience complete with how-to guides, packing lists, planning resources, family and volunteer communication, and content to help prepare your group before the trip and debrief after the experience.



STRATEGY FOR VOLUNTEERS

OVERVIEW

If we want to be effective as youth pastors, we need to get really serious about investing in and empowering the volunteers we lead. When we do that, we multiply our influence, increase the capacity of our ministry, and give students a better shot at building a lifelong faith. Research shows that young people need not just one youth pastor, but a community of adults who are all investing in them and in their faith. So, if you want volunteers to invest in teenagers, **it's probably a good idea for you to invest in your volunteers first.** With this annual Volunteer Strategy, you'll learn a system for investing in your volunteers in seven different ways throughout the year. Here they are . . .



EVENTS

ONCE A YEAR: A major vision-casting opportunity you'd want every volunteer to attend.



MEETINGS

EVERY OTHER MONTH or **AS NEEDED:** An opportunity to teach your volunteers about a very specific topic.



DISCUSSION GROUPS

AS NEEDED: A gathering with a small group of volunteers who all serve in a similar role.



CONVERSATIONS

AS NEEDED: A conversation is a one-on-one connection with a volunteer for building relationships and giving and receiving feedback.



COMMUNICATION

WEEKLY: Communication is anything you do to connect or share information with your volunteers outside of your weekly program.



TOOLS

AS NEEDED: A tool is any resource you provide to help your volunteers make their jobs happen.



CELEBRATION

EVERY MONTH: A celebration is anything that celebrates your volunteers for what they've accomplished or who they are.





EVENTS

- ► A Volunteer Kick-Off event guide for you, the ministry leader
- ► A suggested schedule and shopping list
- **Decor, activities,** and **food ideas** to complement the event
- ► A **teaching guide** for a time of vision-casting
- **Editable graphics** for the events
- **Editable flyers** in multiple formats



MEETINGS

- Access to a collection of meeting guides on a variety of topics, with discussion questions
- Suggested schedules and shopping lists
- **Editable graphics** for each meeting
- ▶ Editable flyers in multiple formats



DISCUSSION GROUPS

- ► Access to a collection of discussion group **guides** on a variety of topics
- ► A suggested schedule and shopping list
- **▶** Editable graphics
- **Editable flyers** in multiple formats



CONVERSATIONS

Access to a collection of one-on-one conversation guides on a variety of topics



COMMUNICATION

- ► A **communication guide** for you, the ministry leader
- ▶ 50 pre-written weekly **volunteer emails** in multiple formats
- Marketing checklists, social media posts, and social media captions for each teaching series
- ► Volunteer devotionals for each teaching series
- ► Access to the a library of **volunteer tip** videos and scripts in case you want to film new versions on your own
- Promotional cards and posters for each teaching series
- Free access to **Grow Hubs** to help you streamline your communication



TOOLS

- ► A **volunteer tool guide** for you, the ministry
- ► An editable **volunteer survey** in multiple
- ► An editable **volunteer handbook** in multiple formats
- ► Editable **volunteer goals** in multiple formats
- ► Editable **volunteer business cards** in multiple formats
- Volunteer t-shirt designs in multiple formats



CELEBRATION

- ▶ Monthly celebration ideas based on weird holidays
- Shopping lists and prep lists for each month
- Blank thank you cards



Although the strategy stays consistent every year, each year in Grow Students, we provide new resources every year to help you invest in your volunteers. This year, here's a preview at what's included in Grow Students . . .



















OVERVIEW

When it comes to families, let's be honest — we could all do a better job of engaging them. For some of us, sometimes even just acknowledging their existence would be a good step forward. But no matter how new or how seasoned you are at engaging families in your ministry, we hope this strategy we're about to unpack will give you a framework for investing in families that you can replicate and improve year after year. With this annual Family Strategy, **you'll learn a system for investing in families in different ways throughout the year.** Here they are . . .



EVENTS

- **4 TIMES A YEAR:** An event for families is an environment that provides value to families and connects them with their child, your church, or both. Each year in Grow Students that includes . . .
- A family **Open House** to begin the school year
- The Parent and Small Group Leader Breakfast to connect parents and volunteers
- A family event for teenagers and their parents
- An annual Parent Workshop to train parents on something helpful



MEETINGS

AS NEEDED: An opportunity to talk to teenagers' parents and guardians about a very specific topic.



DISCUSSION GROUPS

AS NEEDED: A discussion group is a gathering with a small but diverse group of parents or quardians of teenagers.



CONVERSATIONS

AS NEEDED: A conversation is a one-onone connection with a parent for building relationships, providing support, or giving and receiving feedback.



COMMUNICATION

WEEKLY: Communication is anything you do to connect or share information with families outside of your weekly program.



TOOLS

AS NEEDED: A tool is any resource you provide to help families connect with your ministry or with their kid.



CELEBRATION

EVERY MONTH: A celebration is anything that celebrates families (and especially parents and guardians) for how they're caring for the teenagers they parent.



EVENTS

- **Event guides** for you, the ministry leader
- Suggested schedules and shopping lists
- **Decor, activities,** and **food ideas** to complement each event
- **Editable graphics** for the event
- **Editable flyers** in multiple formats
- And for events that include a teaching time...
 - ► A teaching guide for a time of visioncasting
 - ► Free access to the **Grow Lesson Builder** for writing lessons from scratch
 - Additional handouts, images, and activity sheets



COMMUNICATION

- ► A **communication guide** for you, the ministry leader
- ► Monthly pre-written parent emails in multiple formats
- Marketing checklists, social media posts, and social media captions for each teaching series
- ► Access to the a library of **parent tip videos** and **scripts** in case you want to film new versions on your own
- Promotional cards and posters for each teaching series
- Free access to <u>Grow Hubs</u> to help you streamline your communication



MEETINGS

- Access to a collection of meeting guides on a variety of topics, with **discussion questions**
- Suggested schedules and shopping lists
- **Editable graphics** for each meeting
- **Editable flyers** in multiple formats



TOOLS

- A **family tool guide** for you, the ministry leader
- ► An editable **parent survey** in multiple formats
- ► An editable **parent handbook** in multiple formats
- ► Editable **volunteer business cards** in multiple formats



DISCUSSION GROUPS

- ► Access to a collection of **discussion group** guides on a variety of topics
- A suggested schedule and shopping list
- **▶** Editable graphics
- **Editable flyers** in multiple formats



CELEBRATION

- Monthly celebration ideas based on weird holidays
- Shopping lists and prep lists for each month



CONVERSATIONS

Access to a collection of one-on-one conversation guides on a variety of topics



Although the strategy stays consistent every year, each year in Grow Students, we provide new resources to help you invest in families. This year, here's a preview at what's included in Grow Students . . .













