Grow students



GROW STUDENTS | VOLUME 6

STRATEGY GUIDE

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A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR ANNUAL

PLANNING

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OVERVIEW

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. It's actually really doable with the Grow annual strategy.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

PLANNING

- An **Annual Planning Meeting guide**
- A meeting **planning timeline**
- A **suggested meeting schedule**
- A **shopping list**

CALENDARS

- Editable **annual calendars** in PSD, PDF, and XLS formats
- **Calendar cards** in PDF and PSD formats
- **A physical box of calendar cards,** shipped to you for free

WALK-THROUGH VIDEOS

- *Planning Your **Discipleship Strategy***
- *Planning Your **Teaching Strategy***
- *Planning Your **Weekly Programming Strategy***
- *Planning Your **Events Strategy***
- *Planning Your **Volunteer Strategy***
- *Planning Your **Family Strategy***

EVEN MORE STUFF

- An annual **font list**
- Weekly and monthly **to-do lists**

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A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR

4 DISCIPLESHIP

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OVERVIEW

When planning your year, we always recommend you start with a **discipleship strategy.** That's because we believe **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.** Here they are . . .

SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS

In the fall, we focus on developing the spiritual habit of Christlike community when teenagers are beginning a new school year, making new friends, and getting plugged into new small groups.

USE YOUR GIFTS

In the winter, we focus on helping students develop the spiritual habit of knowing and using their gifts to serve God and others, because during the holidays, there are lots of service opportunities available.

SPEND TIME WITH GOD

In the spring, we go deep into the spiritual habit of spending time with God individually through personal spiritual disciplines, when Easter is on the way and the unpredictability of school and the holidays will have leveled off into some stability for your students and your ministry.

SHARE YOUR STORY

In the summer, we focus on helping students develop the spiritual habit of sharing their stories while they prepare for summer mission experiences and a new school year.

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THIS YEAR IN GROW STUDENTS

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

FALL



The Spiritual Habit Tracker App helps students track their spiritual habits and set goals. The app also includes strategic (and safe) ways for students to share their progress with people they trust as they log their spiritual habits. Also included is a paper version of the spiritual habit-trackers.

WINTER



An **activity** for students to explore the ways people in their community use their unique gifts to create and make a difference. Includes handouts for students to reflect on how they could use their gifts to do the same. This activity is adaptable for large groups or small groups.

SPRING



A 4-week **devotional journal** to help students develop a closer relationship with God by practicing and reflecting on the spiritual habits of reading the Bible, giving something up, praying, and resting.

SUMMER



A **serving others challenge** to get students involved with God's work in their community and around the world by sharing their faith through service. Each challenge is customizable to fit your specific context, community, and international partner organizations.

PLUS! To help you better understand how your students are growing spiritually throughout the year, we've included **4 quarterly surveys** (one for each spiritual habit) to help you get real feedback and insight from your students about how they are putting these habits into practice.

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

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

GRAPHICS

- **Editable graphics** in PSD format for each discipleship activity
- **Title images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats, so you can use them easily on all print, online, and social media platforms
- **Background images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats, so you can use them easily on all print, online, and social media platforms
- **Spiritual habits posters** in PDF, and JPG formats

PLANNING

- **Activity guides** for you, the ministry leader
- **Editable handouts and instructions** for your volunteers in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats
- **Editable handouts and instructions** for your students in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats

QUARTERLY SURVEYS

- **Editable graphics** in PSD format for each discipleship survey
- **Additional images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats, so you can use them easily on all print, online, and social media platforms
- **Instructions** for you, the ministry leader
- **Editable surveys** for your students in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats

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A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR

TEACHING

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OVERVIEW

It's so important to have a strategy for what you will teach your students. Without a strategy, we run the risk of **missing important ideas, teaching only the topics that personally 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 are responsible for both middle school and high school students.

If you're leading a ministry of just middle schoolers or just high schoolers, don't worry! We've got you covered. **Each series comes with a set of "middle school hacks" and another set of "high school hacks"** to help you customize each series to whichever age group you're leading. Plus, we also include a set of **"hacks for students with special needs"** with each series, which will help you adapt your teaching content for students with physical, developmental, or learning challenges.

OUR FORMAT

Every week of our curriculum comes in two formats:

- **TEACHING GUIDE & SMALL GROUP:** We provide a Teaching Guide, designed to be followed by a Small Group Guide. We usually recommend this format if you have more than 15 students and break into groups for discussion after the message.

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SCOPE & SEQUENCE

When we were determining what Grow Students would teach, 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 key topics that we use as the basis of our teaching strategy.

Although our scope and sequence is structured by topic, not every series is a topical series. **Many of our series are book or character studies** that fall under the scope of the topics in our scope and sequence. Some of these topics are recycled every year, while others may appear every other year.

EVERY YEAR

- **FRIENDSHIP:** A series on developing healthy friendships or community. Usually scheduled in the first half of the school year.
- **IDENTITY:** A series on discovering who God created us to be. Usually scheduled in the winter to support the winter discipleship focus on knowing and using your gifts.
- **WISDOM:** A series on making wise choices in general or in a specific area (dating, social media, peer pressure, etc.). The timing of this series each year depends on the subject.
- **LOVING OTHERS:** A series on loving or serving others. Usually scheduled in the first half of the school year.
- **CHRISTMAS:** A series on the Christmas season or story. Scheduled every December.
- **SPIRITUAL HABITS:** Each year, we schedule at least one series on our four spiritual habits: spending time with God, spending time with others, using your gifts, and sharing your story. These series are usually scheduled in the spring to align with the spring discipleship focus of spending time with God.
- **JESUS:** A 4-week series on the life and message of Jesus. Usually scheduled near Easter.
- **EASTER:** Scheduled for the weeks leading up to Easter. Depending on the timing of Easter Sunday, this series is usually either a two-week series exclusively on Good Friday and Easter, or it's combined with our Jesus series for a 6-week series on Jesus' life, including His death and resurrection.
- **DOUBT:** A series on approaching tough faith questions. The timing of this series may change year to year.
- **JUSTICE:** A 4-week series on biblical justice. The timing of this series may change year to year.
- **EVANGELISM:** A series to help students hear and share the good news of Jesus. Usually scheduled in the summer to align with the discipleship focus of sharing your story.

EVERY OTHER YEAR

- **AUTHORITY:** A series on responding to authority figures and examining who (or what) we allow to have authority in our lives.
- **FAMILY:** A series on building healthy relationships and navigating conflict with our families.
- **HURT & PAIN:** A series on trusting God during times of crisis. The timing of this series will change on the calendar, depending on its subject.

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THIS YEAR IN GROW STUDENTS

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



4 WEEKS ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH



4 WEEKS ON FRIENDSHIP



4 WEEKS ON WISDOM



4 WEEKS ON LOVING OTHERS



4 WEEKS ON CHRISTMAS



4 WEEKS ON IDENTITY



4 WEEKS ON JUSTICE



4 WEEKS ON SPIRITUAL HABITS



6 WEEKS ON JESUS & EASTER



4 WEEKS ON DOUBT & QUESTIONS



4 WEEKS ON EVANGELISM



4 WEEKS ON JESUS

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

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

- **Access to the Grow Message Builder Library** where all of your messages can be created, edited, viewed, and printed online
- **Teaching guides** for each week in PDF, DOC, and Message Builder formats
- **Small group guides** for each week in PDF and DOC formats, as well as in the Grow App
- **Small group guides for middle schoolers** for each week in PDF and DOC formats, as well as in the Grow App
- **Activities, object lessons, music, reflection, response, and more** in every week of teaching
- **Hacks for middle schoolers** to help you customize each series for a middle school specific context
- **Hacks for high schoolers** to help you customize each series for a high school specific context
- **Hacks for teenagers with special needs** to help you customize each series to include students with different levels of physical, developmental, or learning abilities

MARKETING

- **Weekly volunteer emails** and **monthly parent emails** in plain text, MailChimp, and HTML formats
- **Weekly one-minute sermon** videos and scripts
- **A social media plan, marketing checklist**, and **social media posts and captions** for each series
- **Promotional cards, posters, and images** to promote each series

GRAPHICS & VIDEO

- **60-second bumper videos** for every series
- **Countdown videos** for every series
- **Weekly one-minute sermon videos** for every week of curriculum
- **Editable series graphics** in PSD format
- **Series title slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats, so you can use them easily on all print, online, and social media platforms
- **Series background slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats, so you can create your own slides and use them easily on all print, online, and social media platforms
- **Big Idea images** for every week of teaching, in horizontal, vertical, and square formats, so you can use them easily on all print, online, and social media platforms
- **Lower thirds images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats so you can easily add them to your videos or screen
- **Style guides** with the font names and key colors used in each series branding

EVEN MORE STUFF

- **Room or stage design ideas** to complement each series' theme
- **Worship song suggestions** to complement each series
- **Bonus song suggestions** to complement each series, in addition to the worship songs
- **Game suggestions** for each week of teaching
- **A font list** of every font used during the year
- **A shopping list** of every item we suggest you purchase for your messages during the year

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A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR WEEKLY

PROGRAMMING

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OVERVIEW

To help you make the most of your weekly program, we include an entire year's worth of games. And, okay, we get it — games don't really sound like something that can help your students grow spiritually. But do you know what games can do? **The right games can help make your weekly program a place where students want to be — and where they'd like to invite their friends.** With a great weekly programming strategy, you'll get a head start on planning a fun and engaging game for every week of the year so you can spend more time thinking about everything else you still need to do.

THIS YEAR IN GROW STUDENTS

For every game, we'll give detailed **instructions**, awesome **screen graphics**, and strategic recommendations about **which games to play during which series.** Plus, you can get easy access to all of these games (and hundreds more) in the free Grow Games & Icebreakers App!



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A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR

EVENTS

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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 for keeping your event strategy simple: **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 small group leaders. In Grow Students, this is usually **an all-nighter or half-nighter.**

WINTER

Every winter, we recommend doing a **just-for-fun event** that gets students together before the busyness of the holidays really kicks in.

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.

SUMMER

Every summer, we recommend putting a **mission experience** and **summer camp** on the calendar, but we also recommend doing another **just-for-fun event** that gets students together before the busyness of the summer begins.

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THIS YEAR IN GROW STUDENTS

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 (or half-nighter)** is inspired by popular and fun obscure holidays! It's packed with activities, games, decor and food ideas, and a teaching outline to help you share the gospel.

WINTER



This year, our **just-for-fun winter event** is a city-wide scavenger hunt! It includes everything you need to send students to complete challenges in their local community. Included is an option to host a scavenger hunt in your church building.

SPRING



This year, we're giving you everything you need to plan a **spring weekend retreat**, along with the teaching content for a series on being loved by God and loving others called *Higher Love*.

SUMMER



This year, our **just-for-fun summer event** is a cardboard quest that includes team and individual games designed for students to experience what it's like to be a knight in shining cardboard.



Every year, we provide a guide to creating a **5-day summer camp,** including games, how-tos, packing lists, planning resources, family and volunteer communication, and the teaching content for a series called In The Lead.





Every year, we provide a guide to creating a local or international **mission experience,** including how-tos, packing lists, planning resources, family and volunteer communication, and content to help train and debrief with your students before and after the experience.

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

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

- **Event guides** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **Planning timelines** in PDF and DOC formats
- **Suggested schedules** in PDF and XLS formats
- **Shopping lists** in PDF and DOC formats
- **Volunteer roles** in PDF and XLS formats
- **Volunteer meeting guides** in PDF and DOC formats

GRAPHICS & VIDEO

- **Editable event graphics** in PSD format
- **Event title slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats, so you can use them easily on all print, online, and social media platforms
- **Event background slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats, so you can create your own slides and use them easily on all print, online, and social media platforms

MARKETING

- **Event flyers** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats
- **Family handouts** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats

EVEN MORE STUFF

For some events, we also include . . .

- **How-to guides** for subjects like booking transportation, budgeting, or finding a venue
- **Teaching guides** for teaching sessions in PDF and DOC formats
- **Small group guides** for discussion time in PDF and DOC formats
- **Editable teaching graphics** in PSD format
- **Teaching title slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats
- **Teaching background slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats

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A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR

VOLUNTEERS

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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 1-Year 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: 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 meeting with a volunteer for building relationships and giving and receiving feedback.

CELEBRATION

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

COMMUNICATION

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

TOOLS

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

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THIS YEAR IN GROW STUDENTS

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

EVENTS



You'll get everything you need for an incredible **volunteer kick-off.**

MEETINGS



And you'll get all the training content and marketing materials for a year of **volunteer meetings!**

DISCUSSION GROUPS

And everything you need for your **volunteer discussion groups!**



CONVERSATIONS



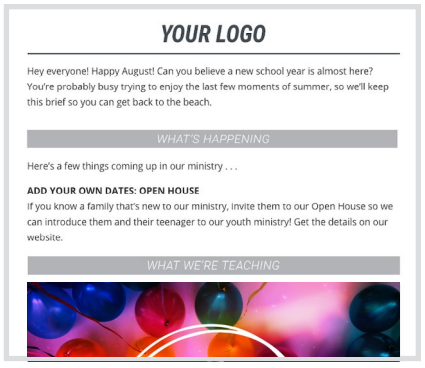
And everything you need for your **volunteer conversations!**

CELEBRATION



You'll get a year of **volunteer celebration instructions.**

COMMUNICATION



YOUR LOGO

Hey everyone! Happy August! Can you believe a new school year is almost here? You're probably busy trying to enjoy the last few moments of summer, so we'll keep this brief so you can get back to the beach.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Here's a few things coming up in our ministry . . .

ADD YOUR OWN DATES: OPEN HOUSE

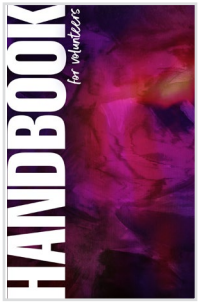
If you know a family that's new to our ministry, invite them to our Open House so we can introduce them and their teenager to our youth ministry! Get the details on our website.

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

And everything you need for your **volunteer communication.**

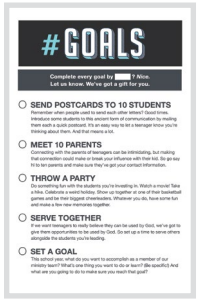
TOOLS













You'll get everything you need to equip your volunteers year-round with **helpful tools.**

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

EVENTS

- **An event guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **Editable event graphics** in PSD format
- **Title and background slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats
- **Planning timelines** in PDF and DOC formats
- **Suggested schedules** in PDF and XLS formats
- **Shopping lists** in PDF and DOC formats
- **Event flyers** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats

MEETINGS

- **A meeting guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **3 meeting guides** to cast vision for the Grow strategy
- **3 meeting guides** for small group leaders
- **3 meeting guides** for teachers or communicators
- **3 meeting guides** for worship teams
- **3 meeting guides** for student leaders
- **3 meeting guides** for special needs ministry
- **3 meeting guides** for greeter and first impressions teams
- **Editable meeting graphics** in PSD format
- **Title and background slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square format
- **Planning timelines** in PDF and DOC formats
- **Suggested schedules** in PDF and XLS formats
- **Shopping lists** in PDF and DOC formats
- **Flyers** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats

DISCUSSION GROUPS

- **A discussion group guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **A discussion guide** for small group leaders
- **A discussion guide** for communicators
- **A discussion guide** for worship teams
- **A discussion guide** for support teams
- **Title and background slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square format
- **Invitations** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats

CELEBRATION

- **A celebration guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **A weird holiday** you can use for appreciation
- **Shopping lists** in PDF and DOC formats

CONVERSATIONS

- **A discussion group guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **A conversation guide** for new volunteers
- **A conversation guide** for small group leaders
- **A conversation guide** for communicators
- **A conversation guide** for worship teams
- **A conversation guide** for support teams

COMMUNICATION

- **A communication guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **50 pre-written editable emails** in HTML, MailChimp, and plain text formats
- **12 volunteer tip videos and scripts** in case you want to film new versions on your own
- A customizable **social media plan** and **social media posts** for each series

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TOOLS

- **A volunteer tool guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **An Annual Volunteer Survey** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats
- **An editable Volunteer Handbook** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats
- **Editable Volunteer Goals** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats
- **Editable Volunteer Business Cards** in PSD and PDF formats
- **Volunteer T-Shirt Designs** in PSD and PNG formats

PLUS!

With our Hubs tool, you have the ability to create a customizable **Volunteer Hub** to help you communicate with your team every week. It's included in your curriculum subscription! Yay!

HUBS

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A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR

FAMILIES

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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 your family strategy that you can replicate and improve year after year. **With this 1-Year Family Strategy, you'll learn a system for investing in families in four different ways throughout the year.** Here they are . . .

EVENTS

3-4 TIMES A YEAR: An event for your families is an environment that provides value to families and connects them with their child, your church, or both. Each year, that includes . . .

- A family **Open House** to begin the school year
- A **Family and Small Group Leader Breakfast** to connect families and volunteers
- **1-2 family events** for teenagers and their parents
- A **Parent Workshop** halfway through the year

DISCUSSION GROUPS

TWICE A YEAR: A discussion group is a gathering with a small but diverse group of parents or guardians of teenagers.

COMMUNICATION

MONTHLY: Communication is anything you do to connect or share information with parents.

TOOLS

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

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THIS YEAR IN GROW STUDENTS

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 . . .

EVENTS



You'll get everything you need for an incredible **Open House.**



And a **Family and Small Group Leader Breakfast!**



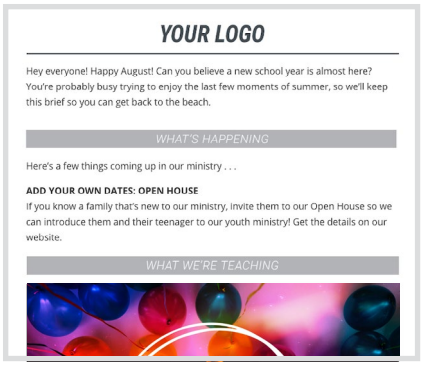
And **Parent Workshop!**

DISCUSSION GROUPS



And everything you need for your **parent discussion groups!**

COMMUNICATION


YOUR LOGO

Hey everyone! Happy August! Can you believe a new school year is almost here? You're probably busy trying to enjoy the last few moments of summer, so we'll keep this brief so you can get back to the beach.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Here's a few things coming up in our ministry . . .

ADD YOUR OWN DATES: OPEN HOUSE

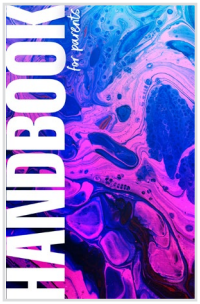
If you know a family that's new to our ministry, invite them to our Open House so we can introduce them and their teenager to our youth ministry! Get the details on our website.

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

And everything you need for your **parent communication.**

TOOLS

You'll get everything you need to equip your parents year-round with **helpful tools.**







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WHAT'S INCLUDED

EVENTS

- **Event guides** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **Editable event graphics** in PSD format
- **Title and background slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square formats
- **Planning timelines** in PDF and DOC formats
- **Suggested schedules** in PDF and XLS formats
- **Shopping lists** in PDF and DOC formats
- **Event flyers** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats

DISCUSSION GROUPS

- **A discussion group guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **A discussion guide** for the middle of the year
- **A discussion guide** for the end of the year
- **Title and background slide images** in horizontal, vertical, and square format
- **Invitations** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats

COMMUNICATION

- **A communication guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **13 pre-written editable emails** in HTML, MailChimp, and plain text formats
- **12 volunteer tip videos and scripts** in case you want to film new versions on your own
- A customizable **social media plan** and **social media posts** for each series

TOOLS

- **A parent tool guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **An Annual Family Survey** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats
- **An editable Family Handbook** in PSD, PDF, and DOC formats
- **Editable Volunteer Business Cards** in PSD and PDF formats

PLUS!

With our Hubs tool, you have the ability to create a customizable **Parent Hub** to help you communicate with families every week. It's included in your curriculum subscription! Yay!

HUBS

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