



— GROW STUDENTS | VOLUME 8 —

STRATEGY GUIDE



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. And it's actually really doable with the Grow annual strategy!

WHAT WE'VE PROVIDED

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**

- Instructions
- Suggested Schedule
- Shopping List

These will be mailed to you shortly after you purchase Grow!

- Physical **box of calendar cards**
- **Editable files** of the calendar cards
- **A walkthrough video**

Our team is here to guide you (and explain the Grow strategy in detail) every step of the way!

MORE PLANNING TOOLS

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

- A **weekly planner**
- **Editable annual calendars** in multiple file formats
- Weekly and monthly **to-do lists**

To help you stay organized and encouraged!

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**
- 📖 **TEACHING**
- 📖 **ENVIRONMENTS**

- 📅 **EVENTS**
- 👥 **VOLUNTEERS**
- 🏠 **FAMILIES**

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.



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.



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.



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 WE'VE 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

THIS YEAR IN GROW

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 . . .

FALL



Because we always focus on the spiritual habit of **spending time with others** during the fall quarter, this year, we've created the **Small Group Party Kits** to help teenagers have fun and grow their relationships within their small groups.

WINTER



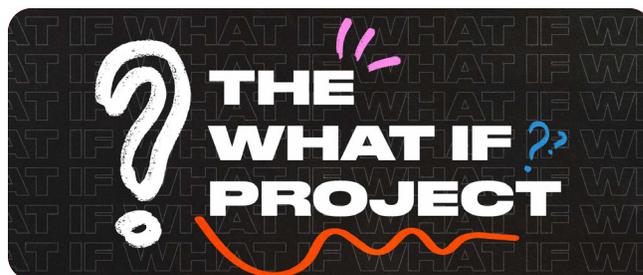
To focus on the spiritual habit of **using your gifts** during the winter quarter, this year, we're providing an event called **Spiritual Gifts Assessment** to help teenagers begin to explore the gifts God has given to them.

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 **Bible Journaling Pages** 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 **What If Project** to help teenagers partner with local organizations and use their creativity to reflect on how they can share their stories daily.



OVERVIEW

It's so important to have a strategy for what you'll teach your teenagers. 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 teenagers 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 teenagers 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 teenagers 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 teenagers 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 teenagers, 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 teenagers can participate in if you'd like.

If you have more than 15 teenagers, 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 teenagers and adult leaders through those questions later. Plus, the hands-on activities and experiences in each week can be scaled up or down to include all of your teenagers 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 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!

WHAT WE'VE 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

- 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 sheets**
- **Shopping lists** and **prep lists** for each series



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



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](#)



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 series
- Free access to [Grow Hubs](#) to help you streamline your communication

THIS YEAR IN GROW

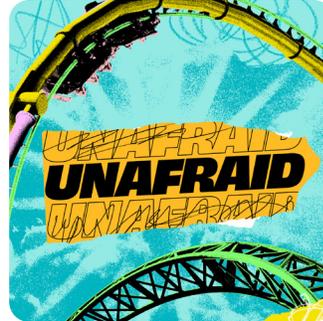
This year, here are the series we'll be covering in Grow Students . . .



4 WEEKS ON IDENTITY



4 WEEKS ON WISDOM



4 WEEKS ON HURT & PAIN



4 WEEKS ON LOVING OTHERS



4 WEEKS ON CHRISTMAS



4 WEEKS ON JESUS



4 WEEKS ON FRIENDSHIP



4 WEEKS ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH



6 WEEKS ON EASTER



4 WEEKS ON JUSTICE



4 WEEKS ON EVANGELISM



4 WEEKS ON DOUBT & QUESTIONS

OVERVIEW

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 environment: **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).

WHAT WE'VE PROVIDED

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

THIS YEAR IN GROW

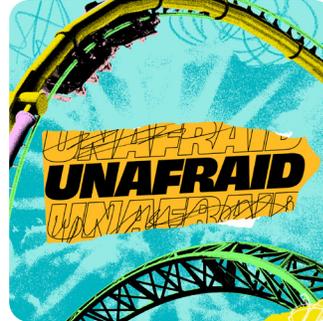
This year, here are the themes we're pairing with our teaching series in Grow Students . . .



VIDEO GAMES



SPORTS



AMUSEMENT PARKS



MUSIC PLAYLISTS



CHRISTMAS NOSTALGIA



JESUS



GAME SHOWS



MOVIES



PARTY



ART



PLANET EARTH



SHADOWS



OVERVIEW

Events are a pretty big deal for most youth ministries. They're a way to have fun, connect with teenagers, 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-for-fun 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-for-fun 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 [Grow Lesson Builder](#) 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 series

THIS YEAR IN GROW

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 to help teenagers level up their relationships. They'll play video games, jump into life-sized versions of some classics, and more as they build relationships and create new memories.

WINTER



This year, our **just-for-fun winter event** is a Christmas Party to help teenagers find the joy in restoring and repurposing incredible thrift store finds. With a little creativity, they'll create the magic of Thriftmas and have the chance to donate and support thrift stores and their community.

SPRING



This year, we're giving you everything you need to plan a **weekend retreat**, and the teaching content for a series on learning to own your faith as you grow.

SUMMER



This year, our **just-for-fun summer event** is full of messy, hilarious, and over-the-top challenges where teenagers will get to compete together and embrace some of the best, slimy television nostalgia of all time.



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 Jump.



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.

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.



COMMUNICATION

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



MEETINGS

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



TOOLS

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



DISCUSSION GROUPS

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



CELEBRATION

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



CONVERSATIONS

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

WHAT WE'VE PROVIDED



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 event
- **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 leader
- An editable **volunteer survey** in multiple formats
- 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**

THIS YEAR IN GROW

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

3 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
- 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 guardians of teenagers.



CONVERSATIONS

AS NEEDED: A conversation is a one-on-one 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.

WHAT WE'VE PROVIDED



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 vision-casting
 - 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 [Grow Hubs](#) 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



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

THIS YEAR IN GROW

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 . . .

OPEN HOUSE

PARENT AND SMALL GROUP BREAKFAST

PARENT WORKSHOP

PARENT MEETINGS

PARENT DISCUSSION GROUPS

PARENT CONVERSATIONS

PARENT CELEBRATIONS

PARENT COMMUNICATION

PARENT TOOLS

