

DISCIPLESHIP

ANNUAL STRATEGY GUIDE

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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 kids (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 kids grow closer to God, **we need a strategy to help them practice these four spiritual habits on a regular basis, year after year.**

HERE'S THE PLAN...

1 REVIEW GROW'S 4 SPIRITUAL HABITS

You'll hear a lot about these four spiritual habits during your time with Grow, so let's get you familiar with them!



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.

2 SPLIT YOUR YEAR INTO 4 QUARTERS

Since there are four spiritual habits we've identified as key to spiritual growth, **the Grow Strategy breaks the year into four quarters and focuses on one spiritual habit each quarter**. You can structure this however you'd like, but here's our recommendation...

- **FALL:** At the beginning of the school year, focus on helping kids build healthy relationships with the habit of **Spending Time with Others** when they're entering new classes, making new friends, and starting new small groups.
- **WINTER:** Around the holidays, give kids a chance to serve others by focusing on the habit of **Using Your Gifts** when there are plenty of service opportunities in your community.
- **SPRING:** Challenge kids to go deeper in their relationships with God by focusing specifically on the habit of **Spending Time with God**, now that you've been building trust and relationships with them for half a year.
- **SUMMER:** During the time of year when you're probably already focusing on summer outreach, mission experiences, and getting kids excited for a new school year, it's the perfect time to focus on evangelism with the habit of **Sharing Your Story**.

3 CHOOSE QUARTERLY DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES

Once you know which spiritual habits you'll focus on during each quarter, it's time to [visit the Grow Marketplace](#) and choose activities that help kids put each spiritual habit into practice. (Or, of course, you can create your own activities from scratch!) Here are some of the types of activities Grow provides for each spiritual habit...



SPEND TIME WITH GOD

- Guided devotionals
- Bible reading plans
- Prayer prompts
- Stations of the Cross or other Easter worship experiences
- Quiet time or prayer journals



SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS

- Conversation starters
- Small group party kits
- Fun family experiences
- Small group challenges



USE YOUR GIFTS

- Spiritual gift assessments
- Service projects
- Generosity campaigns
- Creative group projects



SHARE YOUR STORY

- Prompts for writing a faith story
- Evangelism tools
- Community outreach ideas
- Faith story conversation starters

Every Discipleship Activity in the Grow Marketplace comes with **instructions, editable graphics, handouts, and everything else you need** to make each activity happen.



When you've chosen your spiritual habits and Discipleship Activities for each quarter, **put four orange cards on your Grow Strategy Calendar!**

4 LET YOUR DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY GUIDE EVERYTHING YOU DO

Discipleship, of course, can't be done entirely through these quarterly activities, no matter how strategic those activities are! That's why it's so important to let your Discipleship Strategy inform every area of your ministry. Like...



TEACHING & WEEKLY ENVIRONMENTS:

Once your quarterly spiritual habits are on the calendar, how can your Discipleship Strategy inform what you teach? Maybe you can talk about godly friendships during your **Spend Time with Others** quarter, or about sharing the gospel during your **Share Your Story** quarter! Check out the [Annual Strategy Guides for Teaching](#) and [Weekly Environments](#) to get a more in-depth look.



EVENTS: While some ministry events are just-for-fun, how can you align your Events Strategy with the spiritual habit of each quarter? Maybe you tell the Easter story during your event for **Spending Time with God** or incorporate a service project into a silly Christmas event when you're talking about **Using Your Gifts**. Check out the [Annual Strategy Guide for Events](#) to get a more in-depth look!



VOLUNTEERS: Is your Discipleship Strategy a clear part of your volunteer on-boarding and training? Maybe you do a meeting where you train them on all four spiritual habits or create quarterly goals for your volunteers based on each habit. Check out the [Annual Strategy Guide for Volunteers](#) to get a more in-depth look!



PARENTS: How do these four spiritual habits show up in the ways you invest in parents? Maybe you train them on each habit during your annual [Parent Workshops](#) or give them ways to practice your Discipleship Activities at home. Check out the [Annual Strategy Guide for Families](#) to get a more in-depth look!