



GROW GROUPS | VOLUME 6

STRATEGY GUIDE

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— A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR ANNUAL —

PLANNING

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OVERVIEW

In ministry, we all know what it's like to leave our planning to the last possible second. This way of thinking, planning, and preparing can be stressful and surprisingly time-consuming and we always, always end up regretting it. 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**

EVEN MORE STUFF

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

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



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4 — A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR — **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 people 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 people grow closer to God, **we need a strategy to help people 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 by helping people to focus on making new friends and getting plugged into their new groups.

USE YOUR GIFTS

In the winter, we focus on helping people 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 we are fully into the new year where people's schedules become more stable and predictable.

SHARE YOUR STORY

In the summer, we focus on helping people develop the spiritual habit of sharing their stories while they prepare to interact more consistently with friends and loved ones in the coming months.

THIS YEAR IN GROW GROUPS

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 Groups . . .

FALL



The **Spiritual Habit Tracker** is a simple tool your group can use anytime to practice good habits every single day. This tool is customizable, full of ideas, and makes tracking habits easy and fun. Great habits grow best over time!

WINTER



The **Break the Silence Challenge** will encourage your group to recognize the communities and causes they care most about and spread the news. Don't worry, singing is not required – breaking the silence is simply about you and your group using your gifts this holiday season to spread awareness and make a difference.

SPRING



As we focus on spending time with God this quarter, we've created a **28-day devotional journal** designed to be a companion to the 4-week series on spiritual growth called Sustainable. This journal is full of daily readings and challenges and while it is designed to be printed, you can also post screenshots, excerpts, and quotes on social media throughout the time you're focusing on this challenge.

SUMMER



In the **My Story Challenge** groups will be presented with a variety of prompts and activities to help each individual explore their personality, experiences, and relationships. By doing a deep dive into their own stories, each person can begin to identify their likes and dislikes, remember their past successes and difficult circumstances they've overcome, and look ahead at the next chapter in their story. When we discover how unique and amazing our stories are, we are more likely to love ourselves and share our stories with others.

PLUS!

To help you better understand how your group members 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 people about how they are putting these habits into practice.

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

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 group in PSD, PDF, and DOC 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 groups 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 in your group. 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 people a full and holistic view of God**. The teaching strategy behind Grow Groups has been created, influenced, and written by hundreds (literally) of real leaders, in real ministries, from a diversity of church contexts, cultures, sizes, and denominations. Our goal is to **help you help your group grow spiritually, by teaching and discussing Scripture in developmentally appropriate ways**.

OUR AUDIENCE

Grow Groups is designed to be relevant, thought-provoking, and engaging **for adults of all ages**.

OUR FORMAT

Every week of this curriculum is designed with discussion in mind. We strive for great discussion in two ways:

- **DISCUSSION GUIDES:** We provide a simple guide that a volunteer or ministry leader can use to break the ice, set up the teaching content, ask engaging questions, and keep the discussion going even beyond the programmed time together.
- **VIDEOS:** For this audience, we recommend using concise methods of teaching to allow people to learn something new (or challenging) and be eager to jump right into a discussion about that topic. We provide the teaching videos for each session of Grow Groups curriculum as well as the video scripts if you want to make your own teaching videos or teach live.

THIS YEAR IN GROW GROUPS

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



4 WEEKS ON SPIRITUAL HABITS



4 WEEKS ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH



4 WEEKS ON EMOTIONS



4 WEEKS ON DOUBT & QUESTIONS



4 WEEKS ON LOVING OTHERS



4 WEEKS ON CHRISTMAS



4 WEEKS ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH



4 WEEKS ON JUSTICE



4 WEEKS ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH



4 WEEKS ON EASTER



4 WEEKS ON THE EARLY CHURCH



4 WEEKS ON CREATION & EARLY HUMANITY



4 WEEKS ON JESUS' PARABLES

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
- **Discussion Guides** for each session in PDF, DOC, and Message Builder formats
- **Video Scripts** for each session in PDF and DOC formats
- **Teaching Videos** for each session

MARKETING

- **Monthly volunteer emails** in plain text, MailChimp, and HTML formats
- **A social media plan, marketing checklist, and social media posts and captions** for each series

GRAPHICS & VIDEO

- **Countdown videos** for every series
- **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



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— A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR WEEKLY —

PROGRAMMING

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OVERVIEW

To help people connect like never before, we include an entire year's worth of activities, challenges, and ideas designed for relationship building. These may not seem like the most crucial elements to help people grow spiritually, but these are much more than just fun ideas. **The right programming strategy can help make your group a place where people want to be, where they feel known, and where they want to bring their friends.** These simple ideas can go a long way toward creating the environment you are looking for with your group. When you plan to have fun together ahead of time you can spend more time thinking about everything else you still need to do.

THIS YEAR IN GROW GROUPS

For every idea, we'll give you detailed **instructions**, amazing **graphics**, and **strategic recommendations** about when to try and pull off a particular challenge or activity.

FALL



A great small group can be a place where a group can be real, honest, and vulnerable with one another. In other words, a great small group should be made up of great friends. Making friendships that matter can be a challenge, but here are three things that can help jumpstart the process – food, fun, and a challenge to work on together. This quarter, **Trick Shots** will bring out the best of your group's competitive side as you share a meal, compete in challenges, and give away some prizes.

WINTER



For many of us all around the world, exchanging gifts is a classic tradition of the holiday season. Gift-giving allows us to communicate our feelings and appreciation for the people we love with a very simple, practical gesture. We tend to think of gifts in terms of something we can buy, wrap, and hand to someone we care about – but there is more than one way to share a gift. In **The Great Gift Exchange**, your group won't be spending any money, but they will get creative as they help one another, share experiences, and use their skills.

SPRING



For this quarter, we recommend hosting an **Easter Brunch** where your group will prepare and share a delicious meal together. Food can often do the heavy lifting in relational growth and even more so when we put in the work to prepare the food together.

SUMMER



When is the last time anyone in your group has been recognized for their hilarious jokes, delicious snacks, or the energy they bring to the room? This quarter, we recommend hosting an award show event to recognize the greatness you see in one another and take some time to celebrate this amazing group of people.



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A 1-YEAR STRATEGY FOR YOUR
VOLUNTEERS

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OVERVIEW

If we want to be effective as leaders, 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 people a better shot at building a lifelong faith. Research shows that people don't just need one pastor, but a community of influences who are all investing in them and growing alongside them in different ways. So, if you want volunteers to invest in people, 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 three different ways throughout the year.** Here they are . . .

★ **EVENTS**

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

🎉 **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.

THIS YEAR IN GROW GROUPS

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

EVENTS



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

CELEBRATION



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

COMMUNICATION



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

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

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

COMMUNICATION

- **A communication guide** with instructions for you, the ministry leader
- **12 pre-written editable emails** in HTML, MailChimp, and plain text formats
- A customizable **social media plan** and **social media posts** for each series

PLUS!

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

