



5 Marks of Growing – Children and Young People



How to use this material:

The activities in these sessions are intended as a way of helping children and young people to reflect on the '5 Marks of Growing' material which other members of your church might be looking at in sermons or discussion groups. You can find out more about them here:

<http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/diocesan-info/generous-churches/generous-churches-study-course/>

There is no fixed session plan, and there is not a particular message or idea for your groups to learn. The material is designed to help your groups think about the ideas and start to apply them to their own lives. So we suggest you have a look through all the activities and ideas and then pick something which you like or which you think might suit your group(s). There are some suggested age groups that particular activities might suit better - J(unior), I(nter) and S(enior) for want of better terms. Please don't be restricted by these age suggestions at all. If you think an activity will work for your group, or if you think you can adapt one to make it work, then go for it!

The ideas fall into four categories:

- Some introductory questions to think about and (these cover some of the basic ideas around each session)
- A Bible passage (to help connect the ideas to the Bible and Jesus)
- Some activities to do (these should help your group to think about the questions from the beginning)
 - o NB: WATCH ANY SUGGESTED VIDEOS FIRST! Some videos aren't necessarily from a Christian perspective but are there to help discussion
- A final reflection and focus for prayer

You might like to find your own songs, images or prayers that will fit in with each theme and which you can include in your session. You might also have other ideas that would work well for your group, in which case, give them a go.

If the group goes off at a tangent which is meaningful for them, don't worry! If the tangent runs out, you can come back to the starting point, but if the group is inspired or enthused by a particular focus or aspect of the theme, encourage their exploration of that.

We hope you will enjoy these materials and find them helpful. If you have any good experiences from using them please do let us know. Any other feedback is welcome too, of course!

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Introductory Session - Growth:

Here are some introductory ideas to get your group thinking about the idea of growth. These might be useful for a preliminary discussion or they could be integrated into the other 5 sessions. You cannot assume that everyone knows what is meant by 'church growth'. So use these questions to see what your group understands by the idea of 'growth' and what it might mean for churches.

Introduction: (J, I, S) You could choose a couple of questions to ask the whole group, or put all the questions 'out there' to see which ones they respond to most. Some questions may be more suitable to certain age groups. You could also give people the opportunity to respond in a variety of ways – drawing ideas can be a fun alternative to discussion, especially if people find it hard to put things into words; Use your experience and knowledge to pick the right level. If a question doesn't quite work – try another.

- *I wonder what the word 'growth' makes you think of?*
- *List some words or draw some pictures of the things that you think of when you hear the word 'grow'.*
- *I wonder if growth is a good thing or a bad thing?*
- *In what ways might growth be good? In what ways might growth be bad?*
- *I wonder in what ways you have grown recently ... or are still growing?*
- *I wonder what it might mean if a church is growing? In what sort of ways can a church grow?*

Activity: Make some Cressheads (J, S)

If you've never done this before you can find some help and ideas here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/mr-blooms-nursery/makes/mr-blooms-nursery-cressheads/>

<http://www.rhs.org.uk/Children/For-families/Grow-it!/Cress>

- *What do seeds or plants need to grow well?*
- *What might a church need to grow well?*

Activity: Video Discussion (S) Watch this short video and then think about the following questions: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8JycfeoVzg>

- *What do you think of this video? Which ideas stand out for you?*
- *I wonder how this might relate to your church life or your relationship with God at all?*

If some of these questions resonate with your group, you might like to come back to them at the beginning of each of the following sessions. This is one way of linking the sessions together.

