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Everyone, Everywhere, Growing in Faith

Youth group resource

Introduction

As part of the 2023 Everyday Faith event, the Go Team have produced a resource for use with young people (11+) as we explore together the theme 'Everyone, Everywhere, Growing in Faith'.

The six sessions mirror the small group resource and explore six themes spelling out the word GROWTH:

1. Growth
2. Rhythms
3. Others
4. Word
5. Together
6. Hope

Each youth group session includes:

- A simple icebreaker game or challenge that requires little or no preparation or materials.
- A discussion starter that introduces the theme.
- A Bible passage to explore and reflect on.
- Questions to discuss and consider.
- A prayer suggestion for the week.
- Something to encourage the group to try before you meet again.
- An image of a Christian icon that you might like to reflect on as you consider the theme (What do you notice about the image? What do you think its meaning might be?)

Feel free to adapt the material to fit the young people you are working with and context of your group. You might like to add a time of worship led by group members, have some quality refreshments to share and give plenty of time and attention to building relationships within the group.

We'd love to hear your feedback and any stories of how you have used the resource. Please share them with us by email or tag us on Instagram or Twitter @GoTeamAdvisers.

For other resources relating to 2023 Everyday Faith event visit:
bathandwells.org.uk/everyday-faith-event/

For more resources for those working with children, young people and families visit: bathandwells.org.uk/children-young-people/

Growth

Icebreaker

Challenge the group to organise themselves in the following ways as quickly as possible (if you have a larger group you could do this in 2 or 3 teams).

- Height order, tallest to shortest
- Age order, oldest to youngest
- Birth month order, January to December
- Birthday order, 1st to 31st

Something to try

Hand out some paper and encourage the group to plot their life's journey so far. You could draw a winding path and add to it significant points along the way (e.g. birth, started school, moved house etc.) noting perhaps how God has been at work along the way.

Discussion starter

What do you want to be when you grow up?

If it doesn't naturally do so, encourage the conversation to go beyond ideal jobs to the kind of person you want to be and using the gifts God has given you (e.g. a teacher, creative, a good neighbour, a loving parent).

Read the Bible passage

Ephesians 4: 11-16

Pause and pray

After reading the Bible passage, pause and encourage one of the group to say a prayer. Then read the passage again (or ask someone else to) before asking the group if any words or phrases stood out to them as they heard it read.

Questions to consider

1. Why is it important that we grow in faith as followers of Jesus?
2. Looking back, can you see ways in which you have grown in faith?
3. Looking forward, how would you like to grow in faith?
4. How can you help others grow in faith... as an individual? as a group?

Prayer for the week

“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”

Read verse 16 again and pray that as a group and as individuals you may grow in faith and love.

Rhythms

Icebreaker

Ask the group to stand up. Explain that you want them to sit down after a minute has passed, starting when you say 'go'. Use a stopwatch to time them but ensure no one else in the group can see a clock or phone. The person to sit down closest to the actual minute is the winner.

Discussion starter

What are the rhythms or patterns in your life? Things you do every day, every week, every year? What's good about having some rhythm in life?

Read the Bible passage

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

Pause and pray

After reading the Bible passage, pause and encourage one of the group to say a prayer. Then read the passage again (or ask someone else to) before asking the group if any words or phrases stood out to them as they heard it read. What do you notice?

Questions to consider

1. Thinking about your spiritual life, do you have a rhythm to it? If so, how does it help?
2. What things might help you to continue to grow in faith... as an individual? as a group?
3. Are there new rhythms that you could try... as an individual? as a group?
4. Talk about what these might be and listen to different people's experiences.

Prayer for the week

“Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 NLT

Read the verse from Paul’s letter to the church in Thessalonica and pray for one another to grow in faith this week as you go about your (extra) ordinary everyday life.

Something to try

Take time this week to try something that someone else in the group talked about as a helpful rhythm for growing in faith. Decide to give something a go for a month or maybe during Lent.

Others

Icebreaker

Stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder and ask everyone to put their hands into the centre. Each hand should then grab another hand* but not their neighbour's. Without letting go of hands, see how quickly you can untangle yourselves into one long line.

* note: you might want to encourage the use of hand sanitiser before and after this game.

Discussion starter

If you moved to live on a desert island, what would you miss the most? (Possessions, people, something else?)

Read the Bible passage

2 Thessalonians 1: 3-6, 11-12

Pause and pray

After reading the Bible passage, pause and encourage one of the group to say a prayer. Then read the passage again (or ask someone else to) before asking the group if any words or phrases stood out to them as they heard it read. What do you notice?

Questions to consider

1. Why are other people important for our personal faith growth?
2. Can you think of certain people who have helped you grow in your faith? How did they help you?
3. Can you think of examples in the Bible where someone has been helped to grow in their faith? (e.g. Paul and Timothy, Zacchaeus).
4. Can you think of ways you have helped others grow in their faith? How could you help one another to grow in your faith?

Prayer for the week

Being a Christian can sometimes be seen as an individualistic faith, 'it's my faith and no one else's', but we grow in our faith in the communities that we also belong to. By meeting together for worship, to talk about our faith and to pray for one another we can build one another up.

Take time to share one thing you could pray for this week (in pairs or as a whole group) and then pray for one another, bringing those things before God. Conclude your time by reading 'Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Growth' in Ephesians 3: 14-20.

Something to try

Encourage the group to think about those who have encouraged them in their faith this week. Why not send them a card or a message to thank them or let them know how they have helped you grow in faith?

Word

Icebreaker

Try this Bible Numbers Quiz with your group. You could make it easier by having cards with the numbers on to choose from. Answers in brackets.

1. How many days did it take God to create the world? [6 + a day off]
2. How many days and nights did it rain on Noah? [40]
3. How many brothers did Joseph (of multicoloured coat fame) have? [11]
4. How many commandments did God give to Moses? [10]
5. How many feet tall was the giant Goliath supposed to be? [9]
6. How many days was Jonah in the fish for? [3]
7. How many years was Jesus on the earth for? [33]
8. How many loaves and fish did it take to feed the 5,000? [5 loaves + 2 fish]
9. How many people were added to the believers/church on the day of Pentecost? [3,000]
10. How many books are there in the Bible? [66]

Discussion starter

Do you have a go to book of the Bible or a favourite Bible character or story?

Share with the group what it is.

You also might like to discuss whether those in the group have a Bible at home or on their phone that they can use.

Read the Bible passage

Hebrews 4: 12-16

Pause and pray

After reading the Bible passage, pause and encourage one of the group to say a prayer. Then read the passage again (or ask someone else to) before asking the group if any words or phrases stood out to them as they heard it read. What do you notice?

Questions to consider

1. The Bible is often called ‘the word of God’, how do you think reading the Bible helps us grow in our faith?
2. What do you enjoy about reading the Bible? What do you find difficult?
3. The Bible is the grand story of God revealed from Genesis through to Revelation, it is the written word which reveals the living word (Jesus). How can we encourage one another to read more of it and go deeper into it... as individuals and as a group?

Prayer for the week

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” 2 Timothy 3: 16-17 NLT

Having talked about how we could read and understand more of the Bible, pray that in the coming week God’s word will come alive and be powerful in the life of each one of the group. Pray that God would speak through it into everyday situations.

Something to try

Spend some time remembering some of the Bible stories or verses that have inspired your faith growth.

Pick one of them and read or listen to it every day. You might like to write or print it out and put it somewhere you will easily see it throughout the week.

Together

Icebreaker

Try this group counting game. Sitting in a circle, take it in turns to speak out a number (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4 etc). The only rule is that you can't go around the circle in turn but instead the numbers must be said by a member of the group at random, and without hesitation. If two people say a number at the same time you have to start again from 1. The challenge is to see how high you can count up to without hesitating or two people speaking at the same time. The bigger the group the harder the challenge.

Discussion starter

What things are better done in a team than on your own? What things make a team work well? What things stop a team from working properly?

Read the Bible passage

Acts 11: 19-30

Pause and pray

After reading the Bible passage, pause and encourage one of the group to say a prayer. Then read the passage again (or ask someone else to) before asking the group if any words or phrases stood out to them as they heard it read. What do you notice?

Questions to consider

1. The Bible passage is written about the church in Antioch, one of the very first Christian communities ever! How did the believers' togetherness enable them and others to grow in their faith?
2. How does being part of a group help you and others to grow in faith?
3. What are the benefits of growing together as a group rather than growing in faith as an individual?

4. How have you seen this group (or other groups you know about) grow in faith?
5. What opportunities are there to grow our faith community and grow within it?

Prayer for the week

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.” Hebrews 12: 1-2a NLT

Reflect on the opening verses from Hebrews chapter 12 above and pray that we would ‘run the race’ God has set before us, cheering one another on when things are challenging and tough, and that as a group we may keep our eyes on Jesus himself.

Something to try

Send messages to the group this week, thanking them for being part of the group and encouraging them to keep going in their faith.

Hope

Icebreaker

Write names of famous people, characters or historical figures on some sticky notes, one for each person in the group and ask them to apply them to their forehead without looking at them. The group then ask one another yes/no questions to try and guess who they are.

Discussion starter

How would you finish the sentence 'Hope is...'? (for other people's ideas see the goteamadvisers 'Hope is' highlights on Instagram)

Read the Bible passage

1 Peter 1: 3-13

Pause and pray

After reading the Bible passage, pause and encourage one of the group to say a prayer. Then read the passage again (or ask someone else to) before asking the group if any words or phrases stood out to them as they heard it read. What do you notice?

Questions to consider

1. Looking at the Bible passage, how many things can you spot that give us hope?
2. What part do you think hope plays in growing in faith?
3. When have you been reminded to have hope? How has it helped?
4. Having spoken a lot about growing in faith in these sessions, what is the one thing you want to do next to deepen your faith and sense of connection to God?

Prayer for the week

"I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead..."

Ephesians 1: 18-20 NLT

Pray for each other to know the hope there is in Jesus and that we might go on growing in faith, becoming the people God made us to be.

Something to try

If you've still got the 'map' of your life journey so far from Session 1, have another look at it (or draw it again) and consider how your faith has grown and how you would like it to grow in the weeks, months and years to come.

Is there a next step of faith you could take (for some people baptism or confirmation - a public declaration of your faith in Jesus). Talk to God about it and then perhaps to a leader at church/youth group.

Join us for our Everyone, Everywhere Growing in Faith event. 29 January to 4 February 2023.

bathandwells.org.uk/everyday-faith-event



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