

Growing into Maturity

TEACHING NOTES

Our motive for growth

Components of spiritual growth

 What are we aiming to accomplish? (Philippians 3:8-9a; 1 John 5:20)

 Transformation needs God's presence and power (Galatians 5:16-18)

Practical ways we can come to know God better

KEY VERSES

2 Peter 1:3-8; Colossians 1:9-10;
Hebrews 12:1-2

KEY THEMES

God's love is our motive for growth
Transformation needs God's
presence and power
God's plans are fulfilled as we grow
into maturity

 **Obstacles to our spiritual growth (Hebrews 12:1-2a)**

 **Maturing as a church body (Ephesians 4:11-16)**

 God's plans are fulfilled as we grow into maturity

Lesson objective: *To understand why and how to grow in our relationship with God, and to see that God desires that every believer would grow into maturity so that we can become all that God intends.*

PERSONAL STUDY

Session 1

Prepare your heart and mind

Take some time to quiet your mind and heart. Ask God to help you focus on Him and what He has for you during this time.

Your role in the body of Christ

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. – Romans 12:4-5

As maturing believers we need to realize that, as part of the body of Christ, we each have a role to play. Just like the eyes, ears, and fingers have special roles in the human body; we have unique roles in the body of Christ. We also need to understand that we must look beyond ourselves to see how God wants to use us to help others and grow His church. It's time to ask ourselves if we're engaged and playing our part in the body of Christ. And to consider whether we are using our God-given abilities and gifts for His purposes. To answer those questions, we need to understand just how God has gifted us.

Spiritual gifts

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. – 1 Peter 4:10

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.
– 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

God has gifted each of us in unique ways. And He uses our gifts to bless and serve others and grow His church. During next week's session, we will learn about all the spiritual gifts. To prepare for that teaching and to grow in your understanding of the unique way God has gifted you, take some time now to complete your spiritual gifts assessment by following the instructions below.

Discovering your spiritual gifts

During this week's session, you heard instructions on how to take the spiritual gifts assessment. This week you should receive an email invitation with a link to the online assessment. *(Please let Sarah know if you haven't received it within a few days by emailing her at sneel@warsaw.cc)* This activity will take 10-15 minutes to complete. At the end of the test, you'll see your results, they will be emailed to you, and we will receive a copy as well. Feel free to make notes about your gifts using the following list so you'll have them as a reference during next week's teaching.

Administration –

Discernment –

Encouragement –

Evangelism –

Faith –

Giving –

Helps –

Hospitality –

Intercession –

Knowledge –

Leadership –

Mercy –

Prophecy –

Shepherding –

Teaching –

Wisdom –

Key verse

Put to memory Colossians 1:9-10. Place the provided card somewhere you'll see it throughout the day so you can be frequently reminded of the truth of God's Word.

So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

Prayer time

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for how He uniquely gifts each of us. Thank Him for the opportunity to learn more about the specific way He has gifted you. Ask Him to reveal how He wants to use your gifts within the body of Christ.

Session 2

Prepare your heart and mind

Begin this lesson by praying through the truth of Colossians 1:9-10:

So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.



Transformation can't take place apart from God's presence and power

God loves us right where we are, but He loves us too much to leave us there. The process of moving from accepting Christ to growing in our knowledge of Him is called sanctification, or simply spiritual growth. And just as we put ourselves in situations that enable us to develop educationally, physically, and relationally, we must do the same to grow spiritually. Today, we will focus on how God grows us in relationship with other believers.

What are some things that come to mind when you think of the phrase *Christian community*?

You may have mixed feelings about Christian community. Perhaps you've been burned a time or two. Maybe the community you participated in was friendly, but superficial, causing you to want to avoid it. But, it is our Creator who calls us to live in community with other believers. Author Howard Macy says that maturity takes time *and* our brothers and sisters in Christ. He describes it as "a process that is revealed in the each other language of the New Testament: forgive each other, encourage *each other*, pray for each other, etc." We need the community of faith to grow up in Christ.



Read Colossians 3:16

What command does God give us in this verse? Why can we be confident in following His command?

Christian community is a place where we can teach each other and receive trusted counsel.

Read the following verses and write down other benefits associated with God's command to live in community with one another.

James 5:16 –

Galatians 6:2 –

Galatians 5:13-14 –

Hebrews 10:25 –

In community, we learn to pray and care for each other. Community provides us with a venue to serve in our giftedness and share what God has given us. Through community, we are encouraged, forgiven, loved, taught, and corrected. But, community was also designed to fulfill the Great Commission.



Read John 13:34-35 and Matthew 5:14-16

How does Christian community witness to the unbelieving world?

Community is valuable for us individually, for the healthy growth of the church, and for what God wants to do in the world through the Church.

Key verse

Keep working to memorize Colossians 1:9-10. Attempt to write it out from memory now.

Prayer time

Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you surrender to His guidance and direction. Thank Him for how He has uniquely made and gifted you. Ask Him to show you a place in the body where you can have community and grow spiritually.

PARENT GUIDE

As our children get older and start to make decisions on their own, it is important that they have a solid foundation and relationship with Christ. One way to help them grow in their relationship is to teach them how to have Quiet Time with God.

To help your children understand ways to have Quiet Time with the Lord, you should keep the format very simple and limit the time to under 15 minutes. You can look at a Bible passage or listen to some worship songs together. You can talk about what the verses or songs made you think or feel. You could read them a short devotional. Make sure to end your Quiet Time in prayer. Below are a couple of suggestions to get you started:

Studying the Bible Together

Read the following verses out loud with your family: Mark 6:32-44.

Give everyone a few minutes to think about the story they just heard. Then talk through the following questions:

- What was the problem in this story?
- How would you have solved the problem?
- How did Jesus solve it?
- How can we let Jesus help us with our problems today?

After your discussion, spend some time in prayer together.

Listening to Worship Music Together

Either pick a couple of your family's favorite age-appropriate worship songs or use a few of these suggestions: *Gracefully Broken* by Matt Redman, *I Surrender All* by Brian Littrell, or *I Surrender*, *What a Beautiful Name*, and *Mighty to Save* all by Hillsong.

Have everyone find their own spot where they can listen to these songs. Encourage your kids to sing or dance along if they want. After playing a few songs, discuss this question: what's one thing you learned from the music we just listened to? (Parents, be prepared with an answer to this question to guide this discussion if necessary)

After your discussion, spend some time in prayer together.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

Transformation in the life of a Christian takes place through the power and authority of God. This transformation is a part of God's plan for us. (Romans 12:1-2) There is a purpose behind His plan that includes His church being built. As growth and maturity take place in us as individuals, we naturally begin to work together and produce unity in the body.

Read the scripture below twice. As you read the first time, highlight how Christians are to live and work together. Next, reread the passage and use the observation, interpretation, and application prompts below.



Read Romans 12:3-8

³Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. ⁴Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

⁶In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Observation

(Who? When? Where? Why? What does it say? What do I notice?)

Interpretation

(What are the key themes or truths? What is the writer's intended meaning? What is the context? What questions do I have?)

Application

(How do I apply it? What does this mean for me?)