Launching a Commitment to GROW ministry...

One of the best ways to bring awareness and value to discipleship is to launch a commitment to GROW discipleship ministry in the context of a regular worship service. A GROW commitment service as part of your worship gathering provides an annual intentional opportunity to focus on a commitment to GROW deeper as Christ’s disciples throughout the coming year.

“My Commitment to GROW” Cards...

“My Commitment to GROW” is a tool to help persons of all ages intentionally focus on a growing relationship with Christ. As individuals fill out their commitment to GROW, they may include existing commitments to GROW and/or add new commitments. We suggest that these “My Commitment to GROW” cards be used in conjunction with a GROW Commitment service. A GROW Commitment Service can initiate a powerful year-long spiritual experience as the entire church commits to growth in their relationship with God. To facilitate this ministry initiative in your church:

Preparing for a GROW Commitment Service

1) Begin with prayer about and for spiritual growth throughout the church.
2) Discuss this discipleship ministry with church leaders.
3) Set a date for the initial service.
   You may want to consider placing this service on Christian Formation Sunday, 2nd Sunday in September. The beginning of the calendar year is also appropriate for this service, as people are reflecting on their upcoming year.
4) Gather needed resources:
   • To order printed resources, visit www.covenantbookstore.com.
   • To download resources, visit www.covchurch.org/resources.
   • For additional help, contact the Resource Center at 1-800-338-IDEA.
   • To see a full list of resources possibilities, see the resource section in this brochure.
5) Plan the service. See the next section for ideas on worship planning.
6) Set dates for people to share their stories of growth with the congregation in the months ahead.

A GROW Commitment Service...

The following is a sample of what might be done during a GROW Commitment Service.

1) Announce your intention (written and/or verbal):
   “We invite you to make a commitment to GROW closer to God this year. We are using the acronym G.R.O.W. as a framework for our commitments. For example, you might choose to commit to regularly reading and meditating on God’s Word, commit to helping one another to grow in faith through mentoring Relationships, commit to Obedient Living, loving God through witness, service, and mission, and commit to faithful Worship by interacting with God daily and making God first in our lives.” A second set of descriptions for GROW can be found on the back of this brochure.

2) Describe the process of making a commitment (written and/or verbal):
   * Take a few moments to read through the GROW commitment cards you have received, reflecting on the specific ways you will commit to GROW this year, and to write your plan on both sides of the cards. It is our hope and prayer that this commitment will help each of us GROW closer to God and deeper in faith as individuals, as families, and as a church, so that together we can help fulfill God’s mission in the world. It is also our hope that during the course of the upcoming year, some of you will give a testimony to this church family of the ways your commitment has helped you to GROW.” At this point, you may choose to include any of the following optional worship elements, or create your own.

3) Responsive call to commitment (optional):
   Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!
   People: God’s steadfast love lasts forever.
   Leader: We dedicate ourselves to you, Lord Jesus.
   People: Through the daily reading of your Word.
   Leader: We dedicate ourselves to you, Savior and King.
   People: Through mentoring relationships.
   Leader: We dedicate ourselves to you, Holy Spirit.
   People: Through witness, service, and mission.
   Leader: We dedicate ourselves to you Lord God Almighty.
   People: As we worship you moment by moment, making you first in our lives.

4) Prayer of commitment (optional):
   “We bow before you this morning, O God, knowing that you are with us. You are our God, the one who gives us life, who loves us, forgives us and guides us. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for giving us the opportunity to know you, and to grow closer to you. We thank you for your living word, which guides
us and draws us closer to you. We thank you for those you have put in our lives who have lovingly nurtured us in our faith. We thank you for opportunities you have given us to serve and to witness to those both inside and outside the walls of this church. And we thank you Holy Spirit for bringing us to faith, for helping us to grow, and for drawing us here to worship you this morning. Help us this year as individuals, as families, and as a church to grow closer to you and to remain faithful to the commitment we have made to you today. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.”

5) Commitment dedication (optional):
At this point you may have people tear apart the two GROW Commitment Cards. One copy should be kept in their Bible as a reminder of how they can GROW in their relationship with Christ this year. There are a couple of options of what to do with the other side of the card. You may want to have congregants bring one side forward before the cross or put them in the offering plate as a sign of commitment to Christ for the coming year. Alternatively, people can give their second card to an accountability partner or spiritual growth companion in order to help them stay accountable to their GROW commitment. A resource titled “Sharing Your GROW Faith Story” is available on the web at www.covchurch.org/cov/resources/. The following guidelines may help you encourage adults, youth, and children to share their continuing journey of faith with others.

Sharing Your GROW Faith Stories...
1) Use one of the bulletin insert bookmarks every three months as a reminder to the congregation of their commitment to GROW (there is one bookmark for each GROW element)
2) Ask persons to give a short testimony, at least once every three months, of their commitment to GROW. This could include people of all ages, or even whole families. (See “Sharing Stories”)
3) Have another GROW -emphasis worship service in 12 months, during which the church celebrates their spiritual GROWth over the past year and makes a new commitment for the upcoming year. The following is a sample of what might be done during a GROW Commitment Service.

GROW Commitment Follow-up...
1) What to share: Commitments made this year; struggles or joys they experienced in their relationship with God; people who helped them grow closer to God this year; how their GROW commitment helped them grow closer to God. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer—this is their story, their journey.
2) Ways of sharing: Testimonies, sermons, artwork, photos, music, video, poetry, prose, dance, drama
3) Venues for sharing: Worship services, retreats, small groups, youth groups, family camps, special services, arts fairs, Sunday School, inter-generational gatherings

GROW Resources For Your Church
Downloadable resources are available at www.covchurch.org/formation/resources. Printed resources are available for order at www.covenantbookstore.com or by calling the Covenant Resource Center at 1-800-338-IDEA (1-800-338-4332).
What is Christian Formation?
Christian formation involves a continuing journey of growth—both as individuals and as a community— a journey of being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Christ, experiencing and expressing love for God and others.

What is GROW?
We believe God has provided significant means that help us to be receptive to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. We have put these into the acronym GROW to help remind us what they are and what the hoped outcome will be. We believe the Holy Spirit works through GROW (God’s Word, Relationships, Obedient living, and Worship) to transform us into the fullness of all God desires us to be—both individually and as a church. No matter whether you have been growing for a few days, a few years, or a lifetime, continued growth requires taking time to foster our relationship with God. This growth doesn’t happen in isolation—we need each other. Transformational growth is facilitated when we actively and intentionally embark on the journey of growth together.

GOD’S WORD, shaping our actions and our lives
Covenant people are BIBLICAL people—people of the Word, who value Scripture as the only perfect rule for our lives. We desire to know, understand, and live out the truths of the Bible. Scriptures: Psalm 119:105; Psalm 1:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:16, Joshua 1:8; Hebrews 4:12

RELATIONSHIPS, nurturing our growth
Covenanters are CONNECTIONAL people. Our Christ-likeness is demonstrated most openly in the way we relate to others: within our families, the wider community, and the world. Healthy and effective spiritual growth takes place in the context of relationships, within peer groups, across generations, and among people of varying ethnicities and backgrounds. Scriptures: Psalm 119:63; Deuteronomy 6:4-8; Luke 10:25-37; 1 John 4:7-12; Proverbs 27:17

OBEDIENT LIVING, using our gifts in witness and service
We are a MISSIONAL people, believing that discipleship to Jesus implies radical obedience to all of his teachings. Such obedience, together with the Spirit’s work in us, equips us to do kingdom work, giving witness to the good news and serving others in Jesus’ name. Scriptures: Micah 6:8; Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 4:11-13; Matthew 22:36-39; Matthew 28:19-20

WORSHIP, interacting with and experiencing God
We are a DEVOTIONAL people. Knowing that God desires an intimate relationship with us, we are committed to a lifestyle of worship characterized by both individual and corporate expressions of devotion. Our daily worship practices empower us for living an obedient, abundant, and joy-filled life in Christ. Scriptures: 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 100:1-2; Romans 12:1; John 15:4-5; Mark 1:35

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Department of Christian Formation
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