

GROW Tools & Tips



GROW Description and Ministry Goals

GROW Your Church, an initiative of the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department, provides education and resources to help local churches in the great mission of making disciples. It follows the agricultural method of soul-winning taught by Jesus, emphasizing evangelism as a process and not merely an event. Jesus illustrated this ongoing evangelistic activity using the harvest cycle. He spoke the parable of the sower in which the seed represented the Word of God and the soil represented the heart (see Luke 8:11, 12, 15). And He referred to the great body of humanity as “fields” that were “already white for harvest” (John 4:35). Following the growth model of Jesus, we can break down the process of making disciples into five essential phases:

5 Essential Phases

1. **PREPARE** the soil of the heart with friendship and service.
2. **PLANT** the seed with spiritual conversations or with literature and media.
3. **CULTIVATE** spiritual interest with ongoing Bible studies.
4. **HARVEST** decisions with appeals to follow Christ and be baptized.
5. **PRESERVE** the harvest with ongoing discipleship of new members.

For a church to really grow, it needs strong evangelistic activity in EVERY PHASE of the disciple-making process. Therefore, every local church is encouraged to set five ministry goals:

5 Ministry Goals

1. Churchwide Community Ministries—*Prepare*
2. Active Literature and Media Ministries—*Plant*
3. Vibrant Bible Study Ministry—*Cultivate*
4. Regular Public Evangelism—*Harvest*
5. Systematic Discipleship Ministry—*Preserve*

Go to grow.adventist.org for valuable resources, training videos and guides, and a customizable logo and banner to help your church implement the above ministry goals and develop a culture of disciple-making with sustainable growth. May the Lord give you fruit from your labors and GROW Your Church!



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Prepare Description and Ministry Goal

The first phase in the process of making disciples is to **PREPARE** the soil of the heart. When we come close to people in friendship and service, we show that we care and gain their confidence. Individual acts of loving kindness help to prepare hearts to receive the truth of the gospel:

“The sowers of the seed have a work to do in preparing hearts to receive the gospel. . . . In Christlike sympathy we should come close to men individually, and seek to awaken their interest in the great things of eternal life. Their hearts may be as hard as the beaten highway, and apparently it may be a useless effort to present the Saviour to them; but while logic may fail to move, and argument be powerless to convince, the love of Christ, revealed in personal ministry, may soften the stony heart, so that the seed of truth can take root” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 57).

➤ **Local Church Goal: Churchwide Community Ministries**

To ensure that the soil is being actively prepared, local churches should be active in Churchwide Community Ministries to minister to the needs of the people in their territories. *Churchwide* means more than a few people running a community service center or a handful of people holding a cooking school. It means determining the needs of a community and engaging **THE ENTIRE CHURCH** in community outreach.

☰ **7 Keys To Churchwide Community Ministries:**

1. **ELECT** a community services leader and health ministries leader to direct the church’s need-based ministries.
2. **SCHEDULE** regular health ministry events (health expos, cooking schools, monthly supper clubs, free clinics, etc.).
3. **DISCOVER** other local community needs, which may involve contacting civic leaders (mayor, police chief, fire chief, etc.).
4. **CONDUCT** projects to bless your community and build relationships for further ministry.
5. **INVOLVE** every member in some way—health ministries, community service projects, humanitarian ministries, felt-need ministries, finance seminars, etc.
6. **PROVIDE** leadership support—promotion, financial support, and participation.
7. **PRAY** for laborers and for the salvation of souls through community need-based ministries.

Inspired Insights

“Jesus . . . went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). And so should we!

“When properly conducted, the health work is an entering wedge, making a way for other truths to reach the heart” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 327).

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143).



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Plant Description and Ministry Goal

After preparing the soil with friendship and service, the next phase in the disciple-making process is to **PLANT** seeds of spiritual truth. This is accomplished by introducing spiritual elements into our conversations, offering personal testimonies, or sharing truth-filled literature or media. Planting the seed of God's Word can create spiritual interest if the soil of the heart is sufficiently fertile. Planting these seeds is absolutely essential if we are ever to reap a spiritual harvest:

“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6).

➤ **Local Church Goal: Active Literature and Media Ministry**

To ensure that spiritual seeds are being planted, local churches should conduct Active Literature and Media Ministries. *Active* means more than an occasional emphasis on distribution of a sharing book. It means a prominent and robust free literature and media display from which church members are trained to take literature to distribute **EVERY WEEK**.

☰ **7 Keys To An Active Literature And Media Ministry:**

1. **ELECT** a local church publishing director or assign a personal ministries assistant to oversee the literature and media ministry.
2. **CREATE** and **MAINTAIN** a prominent display of truth-sharing literature and media.
3. **INCLUDE** an offer for Bible studies with every piece of literature or media.
4. **ENCOURAGE** every member to daily share literature and media from the church's display and digital media over the Internet and social networks.
5. **CONDUCT** church-wide literature and media distribution projects in your territory with established goals for individuals, departments, Sabbath School classes, and the church.
6. **PROVIDE** leadership support—promotion, financial support, and participation.
7. **PRAY** for laborers and for the salvation of souls through the literature and media ministry.

🔍 **Inspired Insights**

“The dissemination of the truth of God is not confined to a few ordained ministers. The truth is to be scattered by all who claim to be disciples of Christ” (*Christian Service*, p. 68).

“Satan is now seeking to hold God’s people in a state of inactivity, to keep them from acting their part in spreading the truth, that they may at last be weighed in the balance and found wanting” (*Christian Service*, p. 37).

“The truth must not be muffled now. Plain statements must be made. Unvarnished truth must be spoken, in leaflets and pamphlets, and these must be scattered like the leaves of autumn.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 231).

“If there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting our publications before the public, thus leading them to search the Scriptures” (*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 7).

“More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications” (*Evangelism*, p. 693).



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Cultivate Description and Ministry Goal

After preparing the soil of the heart with friendship and service and creating interest by planting the seed of God’s Word, the next phase in the disciple-making process is to **CULTIVATE** the growing spiritual interest. This is the longest and most labor-intensive part of disciple-making process and is best accomplished by engaging in ongoing personal Bible studies:

“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (2 Corinthians 9:6).

➤ Local Church Goal: Vibrant Bible Study Ministry

To ensure that spiritual interest is being cultivated in preparation for a bountiful harvest, a Vibrant Bible Study Ministry should be at the heart of every local church’s evangelistic activities. *Vibrant* means more than the pastor, Bible worker, and a few eloquent church members giving Bible studies. It means involving every member in some way. **EVERY LOCAL CHURCH** is a Bible school.

☰ 7 Keys To A Vibrant Bible Study Ministry:

1. **ELECT** a Bible school coordinator to oversee the Bible study ministry.
2. **CHOOSE** a Bible study plan or lessons/videos for members to use in giving Bible studies.
3. **TRAIN** every member to be involved in some way—offering, advertising, hosting, giving, and/or inviting to Bible studies.
4. **GENERATE** Bible study interests using every means possible (ask people you know, ask door-to-door, offer at events, advertise using tracts, advertise on Internet or social media, mail offer, etc.).
5. **RECORD** and **TRACK** Bible study interests.
6. **PROVIDE** leadership support—promotion, financial support, and participation.
7. **PRAY** for laborers and for the salvation of souls through the Bible study ministry.

🔍 Inspired Insights

“Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them,—the burden of leading souls into the truth” (*Christian Service*, p. 69).

“There are those in the world who are reading the Scriptures, but who cannot understand their import. The men and women who have a knowledge of God are needed to explain the word to these souls” (*Christian Service*, p. 142).

“The plan of holding Bible readings [studies] was a heaven-born idea” (*Christian Service*, p. 141).

“The more one tries to explain the Word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself.” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 354).

“In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God’s people. . . . Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 196)



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Harvest Description and Ministry Goal

After cultivating interest with ongoing Bible studies, it is time to reap a **HARVEST** of spiritual decisions that culminates in the decision to be baptized. Full-grown wheat does not bless anyone unless someone intentionally reaps the harvest. In the same way, we are counseled to make personal and public appeals to those studying Bible truth, urging them to follow Christ and the light that has been revealed to them:

“When persons who are under conviction are not brought to make a decision at the earliest period possible, there is danger that the conviction will gradually wear away” (*Evangelism*, p. 229).

> Local Church Goal: Regular Public Evangelism

One of the best ways for churches to consistently gain decisions for Christ is to conduct Regular Public Evangelism. *Regular* means more than holding a series every few years. It means publicly proclaiming the three angels’ messages, accompanied by personal ministry, through a full evangelistic series **EVERY YEAR**.

☰ 7 Keys To Conducting Regular Public Evangelism:

1. **SCHEDULE** at least one full evangelistic series each year in a neutral or church location that can accommodate a crowd.
2. **APPOINT** one or two speakers, a meeting coordinator, and other necessary team members.
3. **INVOLVE** every member in some way—prayer and personal invitations, distribution of flyers, visitation, children’s program, registration, greeting, music, etc.
4. **ADVERTISE** and **INVITE** in every way possible (personal invitations, mass mailings, radio, Internet and social media, etc.).
5. **COMBINE** a personal soul-winning plan with public preaching to include Bible studies, resources, letters, visitation, baptismal classes, appeals, and a follow-up plan for each interest.
6. **PROVIDE** leadership support—promotion, financial support, and participation.
7. **PRAY** for laborers and for the salvation of souls through public evangelistic series.

Inspired Insights

“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Luke 10:2).

“All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in.” (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109)

“If there is not a decided application of the truth to their hearts, if words are not spoken at the right moment, calling for decision from the weight of evidence already presented, the convicted ones pass on without identifying themselves with Christ, the golden opportunity passes, and they have not yielded, and they go farther and farther away from the truth, farther away from Jesus and never take their stand on the Lord’s side” (*Evangelism*, p. 283).

“The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether they are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord’s side, to come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Before baptism, there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidates. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Bring the requirements of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism” (*Evangelism*, p. 311).

“Too much hasty work is done in adding names to the church roll. Serious defects are seen in the characters of some who join the church. Those who admit them say, ‘We will first get them into the church, and then reform them.’ But this is a mistake. The very first work to be done is the work of reform. Pray with them, talk with them, but do not allow them to unite with God’s people in church relationship until they give decided evidence that the Spirit of God is working on their hearts (*The Review and Herald*, May 21, 1901).



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Preserve Description and Ministry Goal

After the joy of the harvest, we must not relax our disciple-making efforts. Jesus called us to make disciples, not members. To do so requires that we **PRESERVE** the harvest through intentional and systematic discipleship after baptism. In order for the disciple-making process to be a disciple-making cycle, we must nurture new church members and train them to engage in making other disciples. The consumer must become a producer. The receiver must become a giver. The one caught by the gospel net must become a fisher of men:

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’”
(Mark 1:17).

➤ **Local Church Goal: Systematic Discipleship Ministry**

To ensure that the harvest is preserved, local churches need a Systematic Discipleship Ministry. *Systematic* means more than assigning spiritual guardians and hoping for the best. It means implementing an intentional plan to disciple **EVERY NEW MEMBER** after baptism.

☰ **7 Keys To A Systematic Discipleship Ministry***

1. **APPOINT** a discipleship ministry leader (PM leader or other).
2. **RECRUIT** experienced and responsible members to serve as mentors to newer members—regular meetings can happen in personal or small group settings.
3. **FOLLOW** a systematic plan to aid new members in establishing vital spiritual habits (daily prayer and Bible study, consistent attendance, regular witnessing, etc.).
4. **PROVIDE** ongoing instruction in areas such as the devotional life, church life, Christian lifestyle, and evangelism.
5. **INTEGRATE** new members into the life and ministries of the church while training the rest of the membership to befriend and pray for each newly baptized member.
6. **PROVIDE** leadership support—promotion, financial support, and participation.
7. **PRAY** for laborers and for spiritual growth through the new member discipleship ministry.

* *The Discipleship Handbook is a comprehensive yet simple-to-use resource for local churches that incorporates all of the 7 keys to a systematic discipleship ministry.*

Inspired Insights

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).

“After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. . . . These newly converted ones need nursing—watchful attention, help, and encouragement. These should not be left alone, a prey to Satan’s most powerful temptations; they need to be educated in regard to their duties, to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, and to be visited and prayed with” (*Evangelism*, p. 351).

“When souls are converted, set them to work at once. And as they labor according to their ability, they will grow stronger” (*Evangelism*, p. 355).

“Let all be taught how to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God” (*Christian Service*, p. 69).

“It is evident that all the sermons that have been preached have not developed a large class of self-denying workers. This subject is to be considered as involving the most serious results. Our future for eternity is at stake. The churches are withering up because they have failed to use their talents in diffusing light.” (*Christian Service*, p. 58).

“One soul, won to the truth, will be instrumental in winning others, and there will be an ever-increasing result of blessing and salvation” (*Christian Service*, p. 121).

