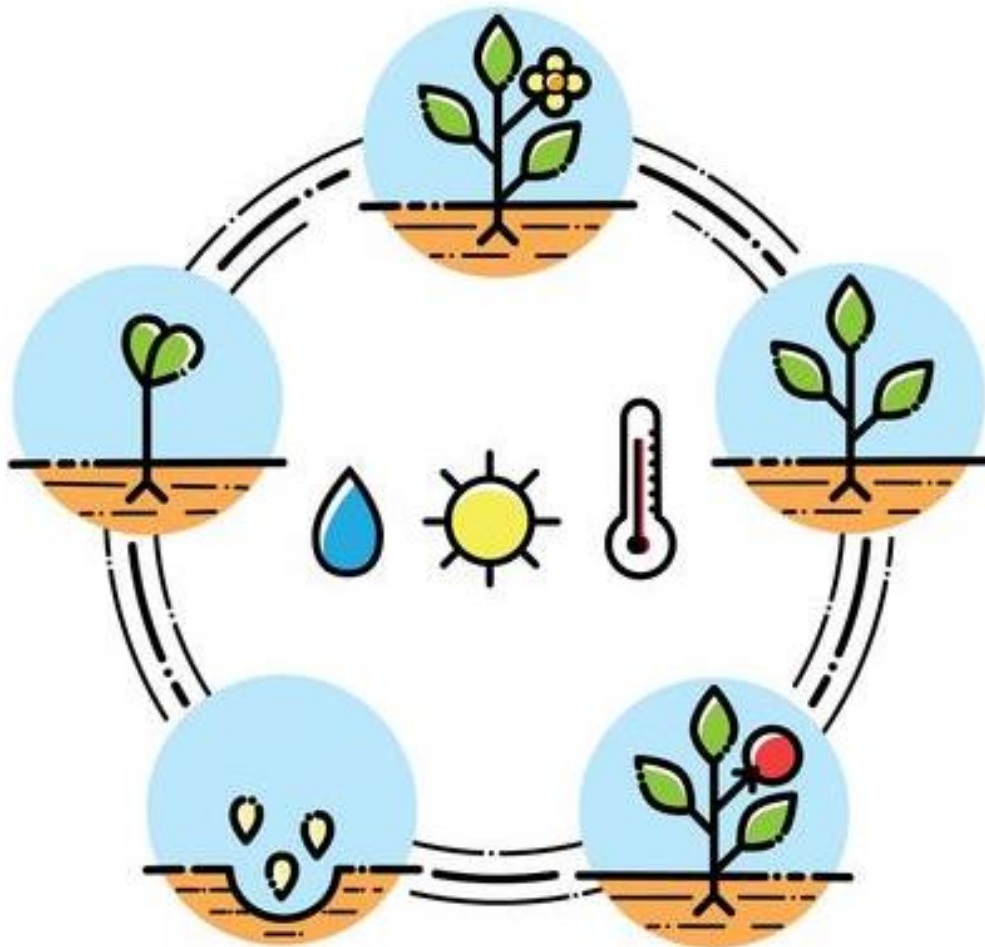


GROWTH CAMPAIGN 2020

"How to grow... your discipleship
groups... your Sunday school... your
Christian community."



*Invested life: Intentional Discipleship through...
... Teaching and Service*

Dear Leaders of SDMI:

As a great department of our church, Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International (SDMI), we want to join together to work with NCM (Nazarene Compassionate Ministries) inside and outside the church by touching people, by attending to their specific integral needs, and by following the example of Jesus.



When you dream of the future of your Sunday school, of your discipleship groups or of your Christian community, you aren't thinking about having a church that simply exists - you imagine a flourishing church. We want to see all of these grow! We want to see children, youth and adults discover Jesus, learn, mature and touch the lives of others!

I pray that these ideas can be applied, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that lives and ministries can witness the beautiful process from planting until harvest. I invite you to live the Great Commission embraced by Compassion as a way of life.

Blessings!

Raquel Ramos

Ideas for Growth



It is easy to think of your church as a destination. A lot of money and energy is spent thinking about ways to make auditoriums, sermons and programs more welcoming to people who may visit them. But many growing churches will tell you that

the key to church growth lies in serving and touching lives in their communities.

This is more than a trick to increase your attendance. It is a way to instill in your church the sense of mission, while treating people in your community the way God wants to see them treated. When you are able to do these two things, you will find that growth becomes a natural process.

You may wonder exactly how your ministry can thrive and in turn grow your church, so here is a list of five things that can help your church go from planting to harvest.

3. Become a force for good in your community.

Meet with your city hall, municipality, police department, fire department, or local schools in your community and find out what kinds of needs are out there. Next, brainstorm with your leadership team on how you can help meet those needs. Don't just look for unique, one-time projects; it is better to find ways to serve regularly (every week, every month, every three months, etc.), and create relationships in your community, with institutions and with people.

Examples:

- ✓ With the help of the young people, do a house by house survey of the needs of their community: spiritual, social, physical, educational, and emotional.
- ✓ Team up with NCM on your district or in your country and organize a medical brigade every 4 months for people in your community.
- ✓ Start a child development center for children in need or children at risk.
- ✓ Transform the way the community sees the church by providing a purified water plant, cooperatives, vocational schools, homework workshops, toy libraries, children's clubs, internet cafe, etc.
- ✓ Work with other churches in your area to open a migrant assistance center.
- ✓ Locate in your community, or near it, centers for addiction, orphanages, the elderly, women at risk etc., supporting and ministering to their needs.

- ✓ Organize community service projects such as cleaning up public areas (parks or beaches), offer free assistance such as washing cars, mowing lawns, home repairs, helping a local shelter, etc... this will help establish a presence in your community.
- ✓ Conduct your Bible and Discipleship Classes outside the church and in different locations, promoting and inviting in advance the people who live nearby.
- ✓ Register your church building as a shelter or safe place for times of disaster and prepare for it.

2. Have conversations about volunteer service and generosity

A church without generosity and compassion will go from being a movement to a monument, from being the light to being a lamp, from being salt to being a salt shaker.

About 5% of attendees give the church 10% or more of their money. This is not a good thing, but it is possible to increase the percentages in your church, and it will be necessary if you want to flourish.

It is difficult to instill in people true generosity, so you should find ways to have conversations on the subject, as often as possible: sermons, small groups, Sunday school classes and individually thus shaping the DNA of your church.

Examples:

- ✓ Promote ideas in favor of the integral development of the human being and the care for Creation.
- ✓ Teach the church to proclaim the Gospel to all people in word and deed.
- ✓ See that your congregation or discipleship classes live compassion and generosity as a way of life.
- ✓ Teach your students to understand their role in transformation of the world and their response to the needs of their community.
- ✓ Teach your discipleship classes that people in your community are images of God and have dignity, courage and ability to create change in themselves.
- ✓ Consider the spiritual, relational and systemic aspects that keep people trapped in poverty and respond to them.
- ✓ Allow and encourage children to become the people God wants them to be.
- ✓ Let your goal be the transformation of individuals and community in and through Christ.

3. Use electronic media at your disposal.

Growth begins by making connections. Engaged members and students are not made after one or two interactions. You need to be able to build relationships with them, and you can't leave them the responsibility to foster that relationship. This means that you need to communicate with them. Electronic media is an excellent and powerful way to do this.

With a list of contacts via emails, telephone, Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, etc., a non-invasive tool is built to interact with people on a regular basis. Be careful not to use that bridge too often or to send content that people don't want. Create opportunities to attract them back to the church and to become active and committed members and students.

With a little effort and knowledge, you can set up a series of documents, notices and information that could include:

- ✓ Your goals, vision and mission
- ✓ Volunteer Opportunities
- ✓ Information about various church ministries
- ✓ Stories of people and families transformed by God

Examples:

- ✓ Prioritize obtaining information from people using a form.
- ✓ Adapt your contact forms to make them easy to fill out (not too many fields)
- ✓ You can consider a small gift for those who return their form.
- ✓ Contact them, be at their service, tell them you want to serve them, identify receptive people, and start building those important relationships.
- ✓ Have a plan for those who are receptive that you want to visit and pray for them.
- ✓ Make prayer visits, invite them to be a part of Maximum Mission, celebrate special dates, etc.
- ✓ Promote special activities for each age group and have celebration services.
- ✓ Send messages of encouragement and a short prayer during time of bereavement, illness, crisis, loss of employment, divorce, etc.
- ✓ Evangelism requires prayer, planning, time and effort.

4. Create a clear path that turns visitors into members

What is your plan to turn a visitor into a member? Do you have one? What are the steps of your Sunday school, discipleship group and church to help someone become a member, and how do you plan to take people through those steps?

Too many churches are more reactive than proactive when it comes to involving people. They are waiting for visitors themselves to start every step of the relationship and discipleship. That is a big mistake. You need to have a firm understanding of how to move people through the process, and you need to have disciples, partners and mentors on your team and in place to help and encourage people to the next step.

While this process must be unique to each Bible study and church, here is an example to help your creativity flow:

- ✓ Get their contact information.
- ✓ Meet with them to find out what their interests are.
- ✓ Suggest volunteer opportunities and inform them of other possibilities along the same interests in the church.
- ✓ Send the first email of your introductory email series.
- ✓ Send an email on Friday giving a preview of the next Sundays' topic and invite them to come back.
- ✓ Enlist Sunday School classes to participate in your church visits to new attendees or prospects.
- ✓ Encourage your classes to start their own visitation program and take care of the physical environment of the classroom.
- ✓ Debut a new small group or support group for special groups, such as singles, single mothers, adults dealing with the recovery of the death of a spouse or divorce; people recovering from substance abuse, etc.
- ✓ Prepare a small "preview sheet" that describes the various Sunday School classes offered, along with ages and location of classrooms. This would be useful for anyone who comes in contact with visitors or new attendees.
- ✓ Have your youth organize a way to make your church known in your community with an activity (parade, seasonal festival, or participation in a community event, etc.). Maybe your church can sponsor a stand, exhibit, etc. and distribute literature about your church, evangelistic information, free portions of Scripture, videos, etc.
- ✓ Prepare an usher/greeter whose main responsibility is to welcome new class attendees, introduce them to others and help them feel comfortable in this new environment.

- ✓ For your second visit, offer to take them to lunch where you can meet them, share the vision of the church and help them imagine how they could be part of that vision.

Whatever the process of assimilation, it needs to be reproducible and the staff needs to understand how it works. Once you have something concrete in your context, you can rework it until it works perfectly.

Intentionality is the key to church growth: intentionality in relationships and teaching (discipleship).

As you can see, the key to becoming a flourishing church is to make specific plans (according to your context and need) and follow them. Don't do things that lack an intentional process. Once you start creating some adaptive procedures around these things, you will be surprised how naturally growth begins to occur.

5. Celebrate the opportunity to serve

Celebrate what God allows you to do by inviting people who represent the community and people affected by the service, Sunday school and worship. Share publicly with them your appreciation for the opportunity to serve and the reason you did what you did.

Always remember to systematically follow up on new people: maintain relationships so they will see and imitate your conduct and faith; make personal inquiries about their spiritual growth; provide comprehensive support; be patient, pray for them and with them; and finally have courage and run the risk of paying the price for people to learn.

Examples:

- ✓ Intentionally involve older adults in your congregation in a special way through testimony / interview, special music or other presentation. These perspectives can be powerful reminders of God's faithfulness to his followers.
- ✓ Allow families to "adopt" those without a family in the area or without biological families.
- ✓ Offer a "New Family Welcome" hour to neighborhood families. Open Sunday school classes and develop "care packages" to distribute to these new families.
- ✓ Organize a special communion service for families (include non-typical "family groups" whose only family is the church family). Schedule programs for the celebration of this sacrament, instructing children, parents and family members about the significance this event.

- ✓ This is an excellent time to receive new attendees to the Bible study, Sunday school class or discipleship group of your local church. Will you plan to have a "baptism service"? Celebrate the newly found peace that Jesus offers? Find a way to celebrate spiritual victories!
- ✓ Consider a "Getting to Know Everyone" Sunday. Have the whole church (pastor, teachers and Sunday school workers, ushers, youth and children) take part in the event.
- ✓ Organize a "Meet the Pastors" lunch after the morning worship service. Honor new people, new converts, new class members with a gift or special recognition.
- ✓ Allow time for these new people to spend time with the pastoral staff and families and other key church leaders.
- ✓ Provide information about the opportunities available in the church, how they can participate in ministry and in the church community.