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PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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# GROWTH

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# ***Growth* Participant Guide**

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*Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord*

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The leaf image on the cover of *Growth* represents life, health and vitality. It brings to mind these Scripture passages:

*"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."*

John 15:5

*Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,  
whose trust is the Lord.*

*They shall be like a tree planted by water,  
sending out its roots by the stream.*

*It shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear fruit.*

Jeremiah 17:7-8

The imagery in these verses reminds us of the indispensable presence of the Holy Spirit, through whom growth and fruit appear (as discussed in *Source*). This study reminds us of the growth that is possible when we are rooted in Christ, confident in our relationship with him and uniting our efforts to grow in holiness with the Spirit.

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*To St. Paul  
whose letters instruct and inspire us  
to grow to maturity in Christ.*

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***Growth* Small Group Information**

**TIME:**

**PLACE:**

**LEADER:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

**EMAIL:**

**PARTICIPANTS:**



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**LESSON 1**

# **Growth Essentials**

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# Introduction

In *Discovery*, we affirmed that Jesus Christ is God's plan for our salvation. We ended the study emphasizing that we must choose to live out the call of our Baptism and follow God. This process of conversion must continue for the rest of our lives.

Ongoing conversion implies growth; our relationship with God should always be growing. But how does that happen? *Source* emphasized the role and importance of the Holy Spirit in our faith life; now, in *Growth*, we will take a very practical look at what we can do to grow our relationship with God.

## 1 What is necessary for any kind of a relationship to sustain growth?

“ The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. ”

CCC 2015

# Parable of the Sower

Jesus often taught spiritual truths through nature-based parables and images. We will now look at his Parable of the Sower. Jesus shows us how environment is critical to promote and sustain growth in both the natural and spiritual worlds.

## 2 Read Luke 8:4-8. Jesus touches on environmental factors which are needed for plant growth. What are such factors?

**3** What happens to a plant if one or more of these elements is not sufficiently present?

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**4** Read Luke 8:11-15. What jeopardizes spiritual growth?

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**5** We have talked about the factors needed for plant growth. What practical elements are needed for spiritual growth?

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**6** What happens if one or more of these elements is not sufficiently present in our lives?

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# Christian Growth

**7** Read Colossians 2:6-7. How can we concretely *live [our] lives in him*?

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**8** How are we *rooted and built up in him and established in the faith*? Try to be as specific as possible, elaborating on the elements for spiritual growth from the last section.

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**9** This verse (Colossians 2:6-7) begins with *As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord*. How do we first receive Jesus?

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**10** Why is this important to remember?

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**11** What do the phrases *just as you were taught* and *abounding in thanksgiving* tell us about the disposition we should have towards the faith?

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# Personal Application

**12** What factors in your environment could jeopardize your spiritual growth?

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**13** Which of the elements for spiritual growth is strongest in your life right now? Which is the weakest? What would you like to see improve?

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## Summary

Prayer, Scripture, the sacraments, fellowship, service and witness are practical ways we can nourish our spiritual lives and grow in holiness. Balanced Christian growth can happen if each of these areas is cultivated. We progress in Christian maturity when our efforts cooperate with the graces we receive from the Holy Spirit.

## Living It Out

### CHALLENGE

Pick your weakest area and decide on a way to strengthen it. Make a concrete and practical resolution.

### MEMORIZE COLOSSIANS 2:6-7

*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*