



Christadelphian Sunday School Union Summer Newsletter 2023

Editorial: Growth

Growth - surely this is the aim of all our Sunday School lessons? Growth in the children's understanding, of their relationship with God and Jesus, of their own spirituality and desire to know and understand the gospel message and growth in their appreciation of the ecclesial family in which they are being nurtured.

It is easy to have these idealistic aims but how do we achieve them?

We could tell them everything we think our children need to know so we would get through the material more quickly and they would grow their knowledge more efficiently.

Alternatively, we could pose questions or set up scenarios and encourage them to either puzzle out answers for themselves or work with others to do so.

Or we could get them to explain to one another what they have learned, a test of their own understanding.

No doubt there are many possible avenues to choose from and different approaches will work better with some than others.

So, is the key to really know the children in your care and what makes them tick? We want them to enjoy as they

learn and to be satisfied with the experience because that will leave them coming back for more. We also want to ensure the lesson stretches the children and helps them move forward in their thinking.

Perhaps we could draw some parallels with growing a plant? It needs the right soil, feed, moisture, light, environment. Without some of these a plant will die; without others it will not grow and produce as it should. I see a similarity with teaching a child, who needs love, support, trust, the right spiritual food at the right time, a good learning environment; you will be able to add your own conditions which you know will help a child to grow.

If you are keen to make spiritual growth an aim in your class, then we hope you will put October 7th in your diary: this is the occasion of the CSSU Teachers' Forum when professionals will share their experiences of helping children to grow and move on in their learning. There are more details later in the Newsletter, as there are a couple of practical ideas on the topic of growth which you could try out in your Sunday School. If you do, please let us have a report on how it went, with perhaps a photo or two.

With love in the Lord, [Ali Lawrence & Caz Parsons](#)
Newsletter Editors

**“Like newborn
infants, long for
the pure spiritual
milk, that by it
you may grow up
into salvation”**

1 Peter 2:2



Quick Teaching Tips

Tree Rings

Equipment Needed:

Tree trunk with at least 40 rings, magnifying glasses, small nails 5-8cm long, sticky labels, hammer, felt tips, sticky tape.

The Science:

Why do trees have rings? The paler wide rings show fast growth and are made of bigger cells. The darker rings show slow growth and are made of smaller narrower cells. These rings can be seen using a magnifying glass. Each pair of dark and light rings is a year's growth.

Experimental Method:

This is an expedition into memory. The last ring was when the tree was cut down. Get children to write their name and date of birth on a label. Stick it to a nail and hammer it into the correct ring. Add other memorable dates. Does anyone know of anything that happened in the family or even in the world in the tree's first year or any other year?

Big Thinking:

Why are the rings different sizes/ Use the magnifying lens to check that the cells are different sizes. What might make the tree grow at different rates? Summer? Winter? Warmth? Cold? Cold temperatures will make the plant grow more slowly while warm ones will speed up growth.

Big Questions:

When do we grow best? What sort of things help us? What about our spiritual growth, our growth in kindness? Can people see us growing in love or thoughtfulness? Trees have rings to show how they have grown, so what evidence is there for our growth?



Growing Babies Best

Equipment needed:

Cress or white mustard seeds; cotton wool or kitchen towel; plates; water; labels; individual egg holders, cut up from egg boxes; small freezer bags with closures for them.

Before you begin

Plants need a variety of conditions to grow properly. This experiment examines how plants grow in different places.

At least a week in advance, place some cotton wool on a plate, make it really damp and add 20 seeds. Do this for several plates and put them in different places, such as the fridge, windowsills facing different ways, outside, under a saucepan, in an airing cupboard, etc Water every day. The plants in each condition will grow differently. Create some labels for each location but don't stick them onto the plates.

Experimental method:

Bring the plants and labels to Sunday School or CYC. Get the children to try to link up a plant with its correct label and talk about why they made the decision. Share the correct location and conditions for each one, what happened and why.

Give everyone a cut-up egg box, some cotton wool, 10 seeds and the plastic bag. Ask them how they might make the perfect home for plants. Set up the cotton wool and seeds in the egg box, dampen and pop into the plastic bag, sealing it. (Or use eggs as in the photo)

Big Thinking:

Plants by a window will grow towards the light. This is called phototropism. Plants in the dark will be etiolated. They will grow tall, spindly and yellow. Plants with less water will not grow as well. Cold temperatures will slow growth; warm temperatures will speed up growth.

Big Questions:

How could you grow the perfect plants? What conditions will you give the seeds and where will you place them?

So, what are the perfect conditions for growing people? How could you grow better spiritually? What stops us growing?

(Taken from 'Messy Church does Science' published by BRF)

We need you!

The Bible Explorers magazine for 7-12 year olds has been ably edited by Esther Thorpe for over ten years now but as family commitments increase she understandably wants to step back for a while. If your family has benefited from the magazine, if you are willing to commit some time and are familiar with InDesign (or willing to learn!) we'd love to hear from you. You can email editor@bibleexplorers.org to ask Esther about what is involved.



HELP WANTED

Contributions from Sunday Schools

Summer Sunday School

Sis Fiona Oram from Ashby-de-la-Zouch writes:

We have a Sunday School available every week of the year. Our public Bible talk and Breaking of Bread run consecutively, with a short coffee break in between, so it's great for our young ones to always have an opportunity to be with their friends and have a bible time aimed at them. We also have a couple of regular visitors with young children, so it's lovely that we can keep the routine of Sunday visits open for them, too. We normally run 7 classes but during the Summer break with teachers and students being away at different times for 6 weeks, we ease the

pressure by running 'Summer Sunday School'. The younger (pre-school/primary aged) children have a joint session during the Bible Talk & the older ones during the Breaking of Bread; we use WhatsApp to gauge numbers expected. This year, our Sunday School Superintendents have chosen a theme for the younger ones to follow and then craft options for the little ones and activities for the older ones. The Older Group have a more flexible plan, sometimes listening to the leader talk or working with them on a subject of the leader's choice, allowing them to bring their Bible interest and expertise to the group that they might not usually be able to. We have a large number of older teenagers and we give them the option of this or sitting in the Breaking of Bread, allowing them some autonomy.

News from the CSSU

Fruit of the Spirit Project Packs

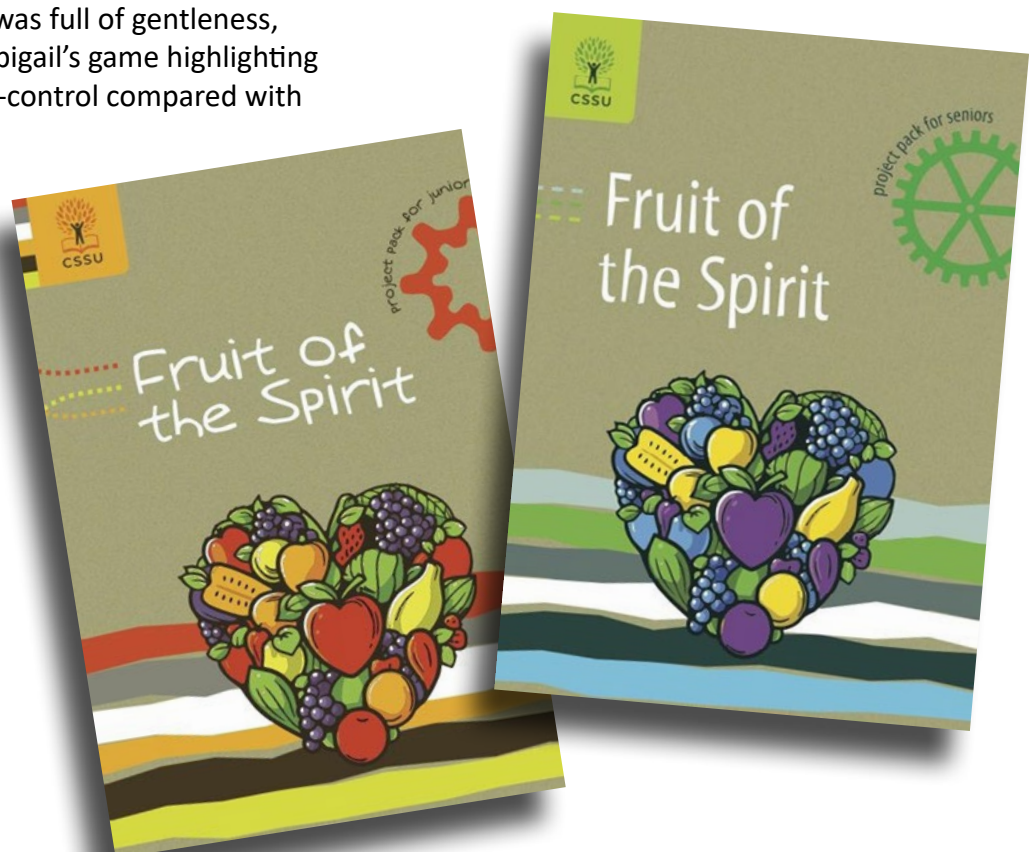
We have been revamping these Project Packs which were first written a while ago before they are reprinted this year.

The Junior Pack is designed to try and simplify the concepts underlying Galatians 5, exploring the characteristics God wants us to avoid or develop in a fun way. This includes games, such as the Ruth Story Trail, which shows how she was full of gentleness, goodness and kindness or Abigail's game highlighting her patience, peace and self-control compared with Nabal's lack of them.

There are crafts to enjoy, a spot of cooking, codes to crack and word puzzles to complete, all with the aim of focussing on developing the good fruits ourselves.

The Senior Pack has similar aims but suggesting more use of our Bibles. There are games, some repeats of the Junior Pack but also some fresh ones, some computer art, cooking, codes to crack, word puzzles and even a little science.

When completed, the new versions of both packs will be available on our website for you to download.



Save the Date!

Get the CSSU Annual Teachers Forum on **Saturday 7th October** in your diary, phone and calendar now!!

This annual event features speakers and a wealth of support from other teachers on how to encourage the growth of our students, ourselves as teachers and ultimately our spiritual families as a whole. No one who attends ever regrets it!!


Running on Zoom from 10-11.30am, and with talks aimed at teaching Infants, Juniors and Senior age groups you are sure to come away uplifted, encouraged and brimming with ideas!

Zoom Meeting ID: 819 8619 4853

Passcode: CSSU-TF23



We LOVE your contributions!

To encourage dialogue between our readers and the CSSU we have included a  sign wherever we'd like you to get involved!

Please share any good ideas you have up your sleeve on our Facebook page or send to caz@cssu.org.uk for inclusion in our next newsletter so others can benefit!

www.cssu.org.uk www.facebook.com/CSSU.SundaySchool

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Rooted in the Bible