

## Introduction

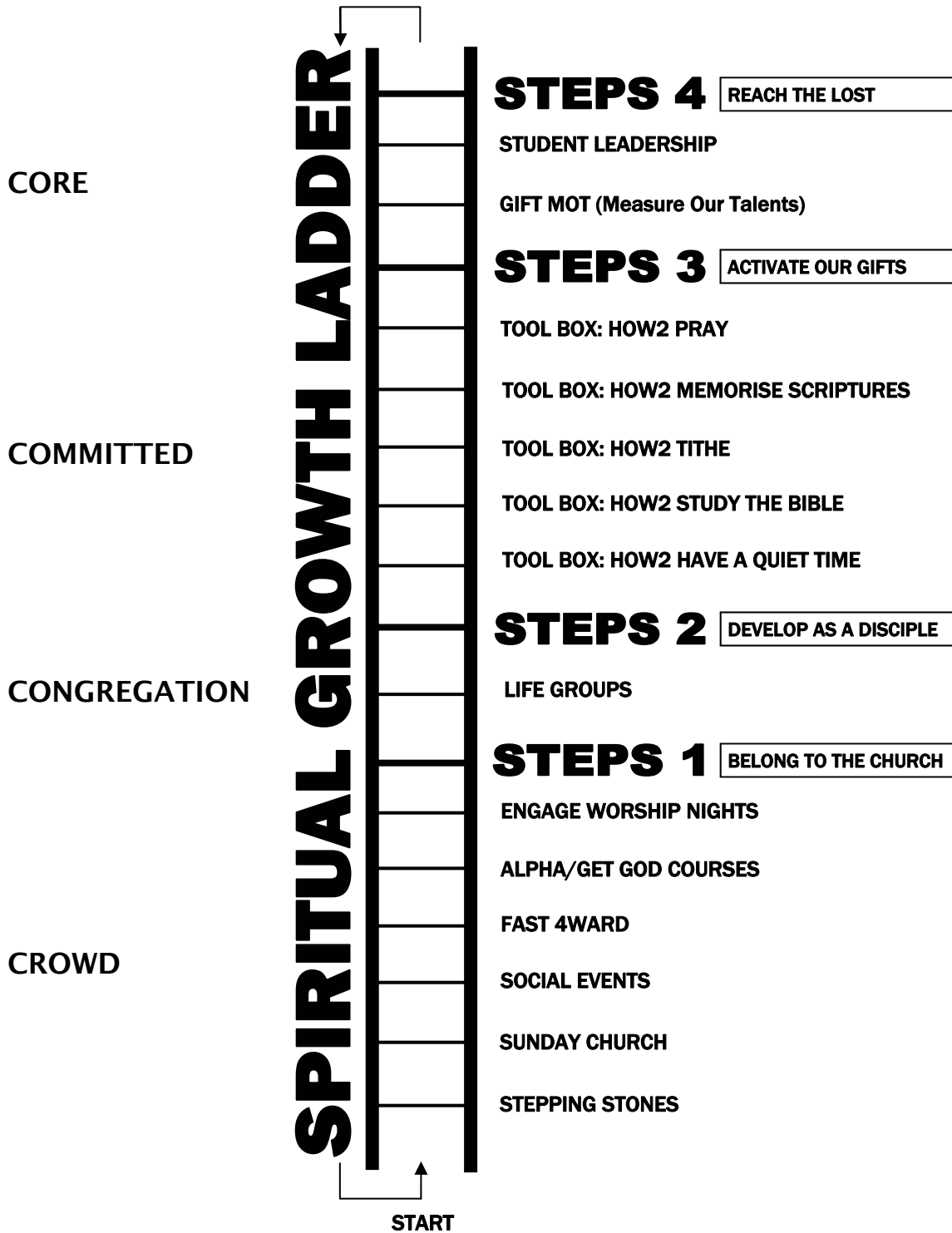
We have a thriving youth ministry in Bristol Community Church and it is important that all we do is comprehensively integrated into the vision and direction of the adult church. Young People grow up! Therefore, it is important that the adult Church is a place where they fit in and can positively contribute at all levels.

Our aim is simple. We want to be 'BREAD'.

- B: BELONG to the Church (*FELLOWSHIP: Ephesians 2:19*)
- R: REACH the Lost (*EVANGELISM: Matthew 28:18-20*)
- E: ENGAGE with God (*WORSHIP: Mtthw 22:37, Romans 12:1*)
- A: ACTIVATE our gifts (*MINISTRY: Romans 12:4-8, James 1:17*)
- D: DEVELOP as Disciples (*DISCIPLESHIP: 1 Corinthians 9:24-25*)

## The Route

We encourage all the young people to move up the spiritual growth ladder by taking steps of *commitment*. Starting at the bottom, they move from the CROWD, to the CONGREGATION, to the COMMITTED and then to the CORE. We make it clear that this is not a competition or an indicator of spiritual superiority, but rather a clear 'route' that helps them grow in their faith. Here is a bit more information on each step...



The Spiritual Growth Ladder

## CROWD LEVEL

### **Stepping Stones**

Many young people are starting to view themselves as 'missionaries' to their schools but are unsure how to put this into practice. We use a simple tool that helps each young person evangelise. It covers seven simple steps and is presented in a postcard size format:

1. Identify 5 non-Christians
2. Pray for them once a week
3. Tell your friend you are a Christian
4. Invite your friend to an appropriate event
5. Tell your friend WHY you are a Christian
6. Tell your friend HOW you became a Christian
7. Ask your friend if they want to become a Christian

We do some practical training with the young people, helping them share their faith and pray for their friends and encourage them to view this as a long-term project as it takes time!

### **Sunday Church**

The Church hold special evangelistic services on the last Sunday of each month (usually). These meetings provide a great opportunity to invite friends along. Using a more structured format, including interesting testimonies and relevant, punchy, life-changing talks, these Sunday meetings are for the young people as well as for the adults.

### **Social Events**

These special events come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. As a Group, we love being together and having fun so these special reflects often reflect this! In the past we have included a week and/or weekend away at an activity centre, a trip to Alton Towers/Thorpe Park, a residential activity week or weekend, 'Party in the Park' end of term specials, paintballing, orienteering, BBQs, Quiz Nights and lots more. They are events that reach out to non-Christians, bringing them into contact with the message of Jesus Christ. Keep an eye on the website for regular updates.

### **Fast 4ward**

This is a four session introduction to the Christian faith looking at Me and...God // Me and...Church // Me and... The Bible // Me and...Prayer. It is aimed at anyone who wants to learn more about the basics.

### **Get God / Alpha Courses**

These Courses are specifically designed for young people interested in finding out more about the Christian faith or are new Christians needing to grow in their faith. These are run periodically as required.

### **ENGAGE Worship Nights**

We know that the presence of God convicts people of their sin and causes them to repent and follow Christ. Every fortnight or so we meet as a whole Group in the King's Rooms for a time of worship. This is an opportunity for us to worship God for who He is and what He's done. Unlike some more traditional Churches, we tend to sing more modern songs and the sessions are sometimes led by our own Youth Band or other worship leader.

All these activities are about REACHING THE LOST. This forms the 'R' of BREAD: Reaching the Lost.

## CONGREGATION LEVEL

### Step 1 Course

This course is about **BELONGING** to the Church and represents a deeper commitment to Jesus. We teach **WHO** we are and **WHAT** we believe. If the young people want to proceed, we encourage them to commit to the Church and join a **LIFE Group**. This Course runs every year or so, for about two hours on a Tuesday evening. It is the gateway to the congregation level of commitment and represents a step up the ladder. It is not compulsory but we encourage all the young people to do it. The Course covers three key issues:

1. What we believe (ie being born again, baptism, breaking bread and joining a LIFE Group) and
2. Where they go next.

### LIFE Groups

This stands for 'Living In Faith Everyday' and are groups (split along gender lines) which meet in different homes around the city. Initially led by the Youth Team, these groups are designed to help each young person **BELONG** to the Church. The STEP 1 Course will explain to a young person what they can expect if they join and what we expect from them (eg regular attendance).

#### ***Why bother joining a LIFE Group?***

- Develop some solid, genuine friendships
- Feel like you really belong to the Group.
- Have a safe place to be open and honest about what is going on in your life.
- Grow as a Christian & have some fun along the way too! Not bad for starters!

#### ***Why are they split into male and female groups?***

Sometimes it is easier to talk about things without the opposite sex being around especially if the subject is a bit embarrassing or awkward. Being in single sex groups puts each young person with people who know what they're going through. Don't forget we are all together for our fortnightly worship event ("ENGAGE"), Church on Sunday and all socials and special events!

### ***If I share stuff who else will know?***

Feeling safe enough to talk about what is going on in your life is important. Only your LIFE Group (including Leader) will know what you talk about. Your LIFE Group Leader may share things with James ONLY (not the rest of the team) for prayer/advice. If you or someone else is at risk of harm (this is very unusual!) then others will have to be involved. James will chat with John or Richard as they have the ultimate responsibility to keep all of us in the Church safe and protected. **What is behind all of this is the fact that we love you and want the best for you.** Trust us!

### ***What is the LIFE Group Leader for?***

The LIFE Group Leader is there to help the young people belong to the Church and be a Godly influence. The Youth can chat with them about anything, hang out, get prayer, fill them in on their week, get hair care/fashion tips, climb Everest together, build a house etc.

### ***How do I get into a LIFE Group?***

Just come along a few times! Give it a taste and see what it is like. Please respect the privacy of those who share stuff. Make a decision. If you want to join, then you will need to do the STEP 1 Course. You can join before you do STEP 1 as long as you attend the next course. If you don't want to join a LIFE Group that is fine: you are free to come to everything in the CROWD section of the Growth Ladder.

### ***Who will be my LIFE Group Leader?***

Before any young person is placed in a LIFE Group we ask them to identify one other young person OR one Leader they want to be with. We will try and match them as far as possible.

### ***Where will we meet?***

LIFE Groups meet in different houses every fortnight across the Bristol area. Due to increase we sometimes meet in the King's Rooms as there are not enough houses around that can fit us all in (comfortably that is).

All the Groups are run on the following values:

<b>G</b>	-	<b>Going 4 God</b>	100% committed to Christ
<b>R</b>	-	<b>Respect</b>	Respect each other's views/feelings: Listen!
<b>O</b>	-	<b>Outreach</b>	We will outwork the Great Commission
<b>W</b>	-	<b>Warmth</b>	We love each other and value friendship

<b>I</b>	-	<b>Involvement</b>	Everybody participates (No question 2 silly!)
<b>N</b>	-	<b>Nurturing</b>	We expect to grow and become like Jesus
<b>G</b>	-	<b>Generous</b>	With our whole lives
<b>T</b>	-	<b>Trust</b>	One another and the Leaders
<b>O</b>	-	<b>Open 2 challenge</b>	Godly challenge bring Godly change
<b>G</b>	-	<b>Good attitude</b>	Towards one another/Leaders/Church
<b>E</b>	-	<b>Encouragement</b>	Speak/behave in an encouraging way
<b>T</b>	-	<b>Teaching</b>	We will love, learn and live the Bible
<b>H</b>	-	<b>Heart 4 worship</b>	Our whole lives will be worship to God
<b>E</b>	-	<b>Engage</b>	100% committed/consistent esp attendance
<b>R</b>	-	<b>Relaxation</b>	Time for fun/laughter together

All these activities are about BELONGING TO THE CHURCH. This forms the 'B' of BREAD: BELONG TO THE CHURCH.

## COMMITTED LEVEL

### Step 2 Course

This Course is the gateway to the committed level. It is all about DEVELOPING as DISCIPLES and offers each young person a special teaching pack ('Toolbox') for them to work through in their own time supplemented with a special CD, making them more interesting and easier for those who do not find reading that much fun. Support is offered through the LIFE Group system. The five topics are:

1. HOW2 Have A Quiet Time
2. HOW2 Study The Bible
3. HOW2 Tithe
4. HOW2 Memorise Scriptures
5. HOW2 Pray

All these activities are about DEVELOPING AS DISCIPLES. This forms the 'D' of BREAD: Develop as Disciples.

## CORE LEVEL

### Step 3 Course

This Course is the gateway to the core level of commitment. It is all about ACTIVATING our gifts and points young people towards some practical exercises that will help them identify their gifts and do something with them (GIFT MOT see below). This Course also provides training in biblical Leadership principles.

## **GIFT MOT (Measure Our Talents)**

This pack helps the young person identify their gifts and where they might use them. It is given out during the Step 3 Course. If the young person wants to pursue this, we encourage them to complete it and arrange a time to sit down to talk it through and see what their next step will be.

## **Student Leadership**

A young person may find that their gifts will fit into the existing structure of the youth work. For example, some will get involved with our Creative Arts Team (eg Street Dance, Direct Acting etc), preaching and teaching in our different youth events, putting together sessions for the LIFE Groups, playing in the Youth Band and more. Others serve in the adult Church as Stewards, members of the Worship Team, P.A. support etc. There is always room for new Holy Spirit-anointed initiatives. Any young person involved in setting up a new ministry must have attended the Step 3 Course. We expect ALL of the Young People to participate fully in the life of the youth ministry and to be fully integrated into the adult Church by participating in meetings, understanding the overall vision and direction and building relationships with the key members of the Church's leadership team.

All these activities are about **ACTIVATING OUR GIFTS**. This forms the 'A' of **BREAD: Activating our Gifts**.

## **CORE TO CROWD**

### **Step 4 Course**

This Course helps Core Youth Members move back out to reach the Crowd. It consolidates on all that has been covered in the Step 1-3 Courses teaches and goes on to teach more about evangelism and mission. We will encourage each young person to consider pursuing a short-term mission experience at some point. We have links with a Church in Lusaka, Zambia and are looking at how we might develop further these links so young people can see and experience life in this part of the world. However, there are many other excellent agencies offering short-term and gap year discipleship training experiences for young people.

### **Child Protection**

We are committed to making sure all young people in our care are safe, properly cared for and free from harm or abuse. The Church has a clearly defined Child Protection Policy and all our Team Members are Police Checked.

### **The Team**

There is a wide mix of age and experience in the Team and includes people who are single, married and parents to small children or adult children. All of the Team are volunteers and bring to their roles their Christian faith in the workplace and at home. We have teachers, a qualified youth worker and a Counsellor as well as an IT expert, someone who works for Gloucester Council and more! Each person knows what it is like to be a Christian in the real world and has a genuine heart for young people and the challenges they face today.

The Team is led by James Hennah (LL.B. (Hons), PG Dip. Counselling, MBACP) who has been the Church's Youth Worker for over ten years. He has a great deal of pastoral care experience with teenagers and he is also a qualified counsellor working in a secondary school one day a week. If you would like any more information about the work, please get in touch with him in the Church Office 0117 9478441 or use the contact form.