

Spiritual Growth Plans

A Spiritual Growth Plan is a way to grow closer to your dear Savior by making his Word and his work a bigger part of your life. God wants us to do this and he promises great rewards.

From the following list prayerfully choose items that you want to use in your personal plan or use other material that may interest you. Your pastor will gladly make suggestions. Make your list as long or as short as you think is reasonable and attainable. No matter where you are on your journey, challenge yourself to add something more.



1. Regular worship attendance, in person or with your congregation online
2. Regular participation in the Lord's Supper
3. Regular Bible study attendance
4. Regular Sunday School attendance for your children
5. Get your own study Bible to use
6. Teach Sunday School
7. Read your Bible – anything from a verse to some of the more in-depth reading plans as shown on the attached Ways to Read your Bible sheet
8. Memorize a verse each week and then meditate on it in your free minutes
9. Read a daily devotion (or at least a couple of times a week)
10. Have family devotion with your children
11. Help your children remember their Sunday School lesson, and/or prepare for next week
12. Listen to blogs sent out by wels.net, Time of Grace, or other WELS sources
13. Pray more often, asking God to strengthen your faith
14. Participate in some of the midweek Bible studies at your congregation
15. Read some of the People's Bible commentaries or books from the People's Bible Teaching series (often in your church library)
16. Review your catechism
17. Attend a Bible Information Class
18. Volunteer in your school or for projects at church
19. Ask your pastor a question each month

Make a list of your choice(s) and put the list in a visible place. Sometimes setting a deadline for yourself is helpful. Maybe share it with an accountability partner if that works for you. Begin to enjoy and crave your time with God. Over time, update the list.

Many Ways to Read your Bible



1. Read from cover to cover (don't lose interest as you go through some of the early books – hint, it may be OK to scan long lists of names)
2. Read the New Testament, then the Old Testament, a chapter at a time
3. Read the Prophetic books of the Old Testament (Isaiah through Malachi)
4. Read about Jesus' miracles
5. Make use of the Through My Bible in a Year, or in 3 Years, plans available in Meditations, on biblegateway.com, and on wels.net
6. Use a Verse of the Day from Biblegateway.com and meditate on it
7. Reading from a Chronological Bible can be an interesting change
8. Do a deeper dive in your reading:
 - a. What is God telling me?
 - b. What great people of faith are being talked about and what can I learn from them?
 - c. How would I respond if I were there?
 - d. How do I apply this to my life? Of what do I need to repent?
 - e. What ah-ha did I learn today?
 - f. How does this lead me to pray? Do I know someone who needs to hear this?
9. Do an even deeper dive in your reading by using a good resource to give new insight:
 - a. Read text in multiple translations at Biblegateway.com
 - b. As you read the passages, also read the notes in *An EHV Study Bible, Concordia Self-Study Bible* (NIV 11) and/or *The Lutheran Study Bible* (ESV)
 - c. Use the *People's Bible* and *People's Bible Teachings* possibly available in your church library
 - d. Refer to the *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* by Walter Roehrs and Martin Franzmann, possibly available in our church library
 - e. Read *Prepare the Way of the Lord: An Introduction to the Old Testament* by Andrew Steinmann and R Reed Lessing (good overview of the Old Testament)
 - f. Read *The Word of the Lord Grows, A First Historical Introduction to the New Testament* by Martin Franzmann (good overview of the New Testament)
 - g. Read *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim
 - h. Read *Bible History: Old Testament* by Alfred Edersheim
 - i. Use *Popular Commentary of the Bible* (KJV) available in the public domain at KretzmannProject.org
 - j. Refer to *Bible History Commentary*, Werner H. Franzmann
 - k. Use *The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Walter Elwell

How Do I Find Good Devotion Material?

There are many good devotion books available at NPH.net. Here are a few ideas to get you started.



1. Read *Forward in Christ* each month available at NPH.net
2. Read *Meditations* available at NPH.net
3. Get daily devotions from WELS.net, your congregation, or any of several other places sent to your Facebook page or your email
4. Make use of material online:
 - a. wels.net/serving-you/devotions/daily-devotions
 - b. wels.net/news-media/podcasts
 - c. timeofgrace.org written and video devotions, podcasts, as well as TV programs
 - d. wels.app
 - e. SistersExploringTheWord.com for blogs and Bible studies
5. Look at *What About Jesus?* whataboutjesus.com
6. Are you a first responder or family member? wels.net/serving-you/devotions/military-devotions is good for those in high risk, emotionally charged situations
7. Consider some of these books:
 - a. For *Such a Time as This* available at NPH.net
 - b. *Together with Jesus* by Richard Lauersdorf, or any of his numerous books
 - c. *Daily Reading from Luther's Writings*, edited by Barbara Owen
 - d. *On Giving Advice to God* by Daniel Deuschlander available at NPH.net
 - e. For Advent: *Behold I'm Coming Soon* by Bruce A McKenney, JP Meyer and James E. Rath
 - f. For Advent: *The Mom God Chose* by Sarah Habben
 - g. For Lent: *Up to Jerusalem* by John Braun

How Do I Find Material for Myself and My Children?

1. Recommendations for family focused devotions and connections
 - a. wels.net/serving-you/devotions/family-devotions
 - b. yfm.welsrc.net/download-yfm/parents-crosslink archives
 - c. wels.net/heart-to-heart-parent-conversations in WELS Connection
 - d. timeofgracestore.org/product/25/dig-in-family-devotions-to-feed-your-faith
2. Take your children to Sunday School – and be involved, help with memory work, do all you can to make sure your children are in heaven with you
3. “Heart to Heart Parent Conversations” feature in *Forward in Christ*
forwardinchrist.net
4. Consider some of these devotion books:
 - a. Get each child their own age-appropriate Bible
 - b. Young Children:
 - i. *Family Time, a Collection of 98 Bible Stories and Devotions*
 - ii. *Portals of Prayer for Kids* daily devotions
 - iii. *Bible Basics* at catechesisbooks.com
 - c. Older children:
 - i. *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones
 - ii. *A Collection of 98 Bible Stories and Devotions* available at CPH.org



Spiritual Growth Specifically for Teens



1. Material written by and for teens at wels.net/serving-you/devotions/teen-devotions/Parent
2. Become active in the youth organization at your church
3. Look at topical material and study material on *What About Jesus?* at whataboutjesus.com
4. Follow *What About Jesus?* on Facebook, twitter, etc.
5. Consider some of these devotion books:
 - a. *Stand your Ground*, Devotions for Teens by Teens
 - b. *Loved!*, Devotions for Teens by Teens
 - c. *50 Minute Bible Studies for Teens* by Clark Schultz

Especially for the College-aged Adults

In addition to all of the material for any adult:

1. Be sure to share your contact information with WELS Campus Ministry for their regular sharing of material wels.net/serving-you/Christian-life/campus-ministry
2. Become involved in WELS Campus Ministry on your campus
3. Start a Bible study group
4. Find Christian friends who share your beliefs in Jesus and salvation



Especially for Those Serving in the Military



In addition to all of the material for any adult:

1. Be sure to share your contact information with WELS Special Ministries to receive their material developed especially for you
2. Check out wels.net/serving-you/devotions/military-devotions
3. *The Christian Service Member's Handbook* available at NPH.com