

Building teenage Christian maturity (‘The baby step principle’)

This video training session is primarily for volunteer youth leaders to use at a time which is convenient to them, ideally as a group, though it could be used by individuals. The structure of the session allows for a flexible length depending on time and situation. The following notes are to guide the person leading the session, but do not assume any previous training experience.

If your time is limited, try to ensure you cover the parts **in bold**. However, feel completely free to alter the session, add your own questions and make it work best for your situation.

This session addresses the challenges of discipling young people and building spiritual maturity in them, encouraging leaders to look for small steps in the right direction before giant leaps. **You should allow at least 20 minutes for this session but if you have 30-40 minutes, it could be helpful.**

The speaker is world-renowned youth ministry trainer, Dr Duffy Robbins, Professor of Christian Ministries at Grove City College, Pennsylvania.

OPENING DISCUSSION (5-10 mins)

You might want to read out the information above and ask someone to pray. Then discuss one or both of the following questions:

- *Think back over the past year and identify something that really encouraged you about your young people spiritually.*
- **What discourages you most as you look to see your young people develop spiritually?**

VIDEO

Duffy offers some thoughts on how teenage spiritual maturity often develops most from small steps.

- Play video *Building teenage Christian maturity (‘The baby step principle’)* (4 mins)

DISCUSSION (10-20 mins)

Use some or all of these questions as appropriate to tease out the most useful learning for your situation, and then identify useful steps to apply this to your ministry:

- **Do you think we tend to value the “giant steps” over the “baby steps” when it comes to our young people’s spiritual growth? What place is there for each of those in your context?**
- *Someone read again Colossians 2:6-7. What is most helpful here as you apply these verses to your young people? What sort of growth does it describe?*
- **Duffy suggests some ways to disciple our young people by encouraging them to take “baby steps” of commitment, following Jesus (online presence, tidiness at home). What other ways might you encourage your young people to take baby steps (think of specific people and issues).**
- *Duffy refers to the phrase that is repeated in Scripture in places like Genesis 17, Joshua 1 and Deuteronomy 4: “Take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you.” In what ways can you help your young people to see following Jesus involves a lifetime of this kind of faithfulness as God leads them?*
- **How can you reshape your programme or approach to promote and celebrate the “baby steps” as well as the “giant steps” of spiritual growth?**

Take some time to pray together and, if appropriate, make a commitment to take 2-3 practical steps together to put this into action.