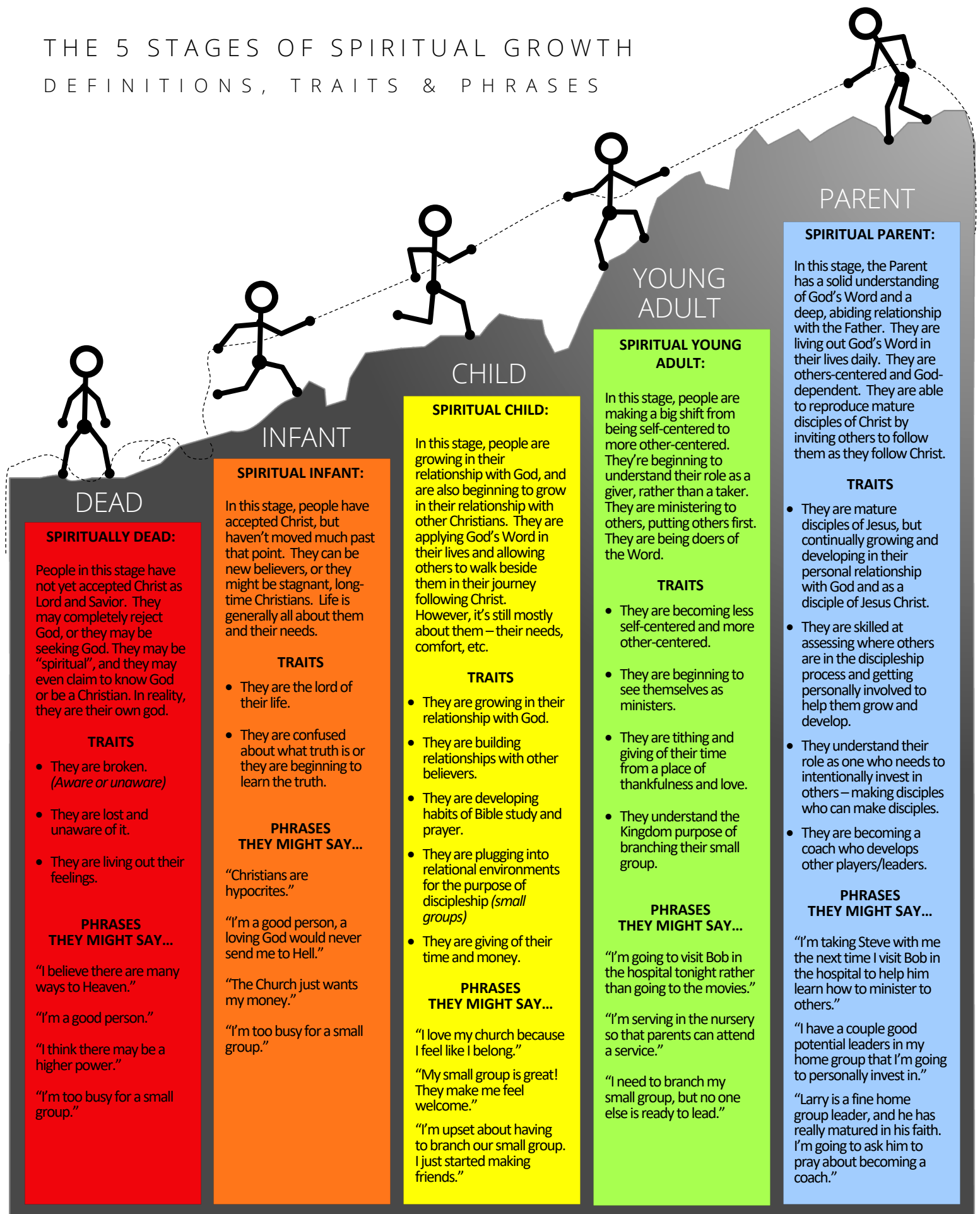


# THE 5 STAGES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

## DEFINITIONS, TRAITS & PHRASES



### DEAD

#### SPIRITUALLY DEAD:

People in this stage have not yet accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. They may completely reject God, or they may be seeking God. They may be “spiritual”, and they may even claim to know God or be a Christian. In reality, they are their own god.

#### TRAITS

- They are broken. *(Aware or unaware)*
- They are lost and unaware of it.
- They are living out their feelings.

#### PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...

“I believe there are many ways to Heaven.”  
 “I’m a good person.”  
 “I think there may be a higher power.”  
 “I’m too busy for a small group.”

### INFANT

#### SPIRITUAL INFANT:

In this stage, people have accepted Christ, but haven’t moved much past that point. They can be new believers, or they might be stagnant, long-time Christians. Life is generally all about them and their needs.

#### TRAITS

- They are the lord of their life.
- They are confused about what truth is or they are beginning to learn the truth.

#### PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...

“Christians are hypocrites.”  
 “I’m a good person, a loving God would never send me to Hell.”  
 “The Church just wants my money.”  
 “I’m too busy for a small group.”

### CHILD

#### SPIRITUAL CHILD:

In this stage, people are growing in their relationship with God, and are also beginning to grow in their relationship with other Christians. They are applying God’s Word in their lives and allowing others to walk beside them in their journey following Christ. However, it’s still mostly about them – their needs, comfort, etc.

#### TRAITS

- They are growing in their relationship with God.
- They are building relationships with other believers.
- They are developing habits of Bible study and prayer.
- They are plugging into relational environments for the purpose of discipleship *(small groups)*
- They are giving of their time and money.

#### PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...

“I love my church because I feel like I belong.”  
 “My small group is great! They make me feel welcome.”  
 “I’m upset about having to branch our small group. I just started making friends.”

### YOUNG ADULT

#### SPIRITUAL YOUNG ADULT:

In this stage, people are making a big shift from being self-centered to more other-centered. They’re beginning to understand their role as a giver, rather than a taker. They are ministering to others, putting others first. They are being doers of the Word.

#### TRAITS

- They are becoming less self-centered and more other-centered.
- They are beginning to see themselves as ministers.
- They are tithing and giving of their time from a place of thankfulness and love.
- They understand the Kingdom purpose of branching their small group.

#### PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...

“I’m going to visit Bob in the hospital tonight rather than going to the movies.”  
 “I’m serving in the nursery so that parents can attend a service.”  
 “I need to branch my small group, but no one else is ready to lead.”

### PARENT

#### SPIRITUAL PARENT:

In this stage, the Parent has a solid understanding of God’s Word and a deep, abiding relationship with the Father. They are living out God’s Word in their lives daily. They are others-centered and God-dependent. They are able to reproduce mature disciples of Christ by inviting others to follow them as they follow Christ.

#### TRAITS

- They are mature disciples of Jesus, but continually growing and developing in their personal relationship with God and as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- They are skilled at assessing where others are in the discipleship process and getting personally involved to help them grow and develop.
- They understand their role as one who needs to intentionally invest in others – making disciples who can make disciples.
- They are becoming a coach who develops other players/leaders.

#### PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...

“I’m taking Steve with me the next time I visit Bob in the hospital to help him learn how to minister to others.”  
 “I have a couple good potential leaders in my home group that I’m going to personally invest in.”  
 “Larry is a fine home group leader, and he has really matured in his faith. I’m going to ask him to pray about becoming a coach.”