



The Partnering Stage

In the **Partnering Stage**, children (usually between the ages of 8-12) begin seeking greater independence and responsibility. It's a natural shift that invites caregivers to move from doing for their children to doing with them. This stage is full of opportunities for shared learning, growth, and connection. As children explore their own abilities, they also begin to see how their actions contribute to their families, communities, and faith journeys.

Just as Jesus invited His disciples to walk closely with Him, this stage is about guiding side by side—modeling character, offering encouragement, and providing room for mistakes and victories alike. By partnering with your child, you're helping him or her discover purpose, confidence, and a faith that's both personal and active.

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

Matthew 4:19

Tips for Caregivers

- Children notice when their efforts make a difference—affirm what they contribute and remind them that their work matters.
- Offer feedback that motivates growth rather than perfectionism; your words can nurture confidence and resilience.
- Avoid comparisons between siblings or peers—celebrate each child's unique strengths and gifts.
- Encourage new challenges that stretch their faith, skills, and sense of responsibility.
- Be patient and present. Growth takes time, but your steady encouragement reminds them that progress matters more than performance.

Growth Model



Plant

Children begin identifying areas where they want to grow or improve, showing curiosity about their abilities.



Root

They start exploring new activities and learning how to measure success in healthy ways.



Growth

They gain confidence in both their strengths and struggles, learning the value of perseverance.



Fruit

They take initiative to grow their skills and serve others without being prompted, reflecting maturity and responsibility.

Activity: Helping Children Try New Things

STEP 1 (The Why)

This activity helps children recognize that their abilities are gifts from God—and that growth often happens when they step outside their comfort zones. By identifying both strengths and struggles, children learn that God is present in every part of their story. The goal isn't to eliminate difficulty but to approach it with faith, curiosity, and persistence. When they see their progress as part of how God is shaping them, they begin to understand that every skill, effort, and challenge can be used for His purpose.

STEP 2 (Activity Directions)

1 Moving Towards Growth

- Cut out a large green, a large yellow, and a large red circle from construction paper.
- Starting with the green circle, work together to make a list of activities your child enjoys and feels confident doing.
- For the red circle, talk with your child about activities he or she dislikes, feels unsure about, or is afraid to try. Note those down on the red circle.
- For the yellow circle, choose one or two activities from the red circle that your child would like to work towards improving and becoming more confident in. After choosing an activity, take a moment to brainstorm small, practical steps or changes your child can make to work towards improvement and growth and note those down. End this step by praying for perseverance and patience through the growing process.

2 Post and Encourage

- Post these circles in a visible spot to help your child remember the steps he or she can take towards growth and to help you remember to keep him or her accountable. If you notice your child seems to be discouraged, take time to pray and provide encouragement, reminding him or her that growth takes time and effort, and that's part of what makes it so beautiful and worthwhile!

3 Celebrate the Growth

- As you see your child putting in effort and improving in activities from the red circle, celebrate together! You could do this by going out for a treat as a family, giving a high-five, or simply encouraging your child by saying something like, "Look how God is helping you grow!" The focus should be on perseverance and faithfulness—not perfection.

Encouragement

This exercise isn't about measuring success; it's about nurturing confidence and perspective. When you help your child name strengths, face challenges, and celebrate progress, you're equipping him or her with resilience and faith that will carry him or her into the next stage of growth. Keep cheering your child on—God is shaping his or her character in every small step forward."