

THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTORATE

CHILDREN'S WEEK 2024

11TH – 18TH FEBRUARY 2024

**"DISCIPLESHIP: GROWING INTO CHRISTIAN MATURITY"
(EPHESIANS 4:15)**

MHB 431

INTRODUCTION: It's that time of the year again. That time when the whole church turns attention on children. That time when children take the church by storm. That time when children exhibit their God-given talent, when the children tell the church that we are no longer the church of tomorrow but of today. I mean it's another Children's Week. HURRAAAAYYYYYYY

On behalf of the Children's Ministry Directorate, I wish to say a big thank you to God for the manifold blessings on all the children and their teachers. To those who joined the church triumphant, we ask God to give them eternal rest. For the rest of us it's all joy and we hit the buttons of celebrations. We also appreciate the leadership of the church from Conference Office to the Societies for the support and opportunity given to the children to showcase what we have. Finally, we thank our parents and guardians who have been there for us providing our needs and pushing us in all that we do to the glory of God.

THEME FOR THE CHURCH YEAR

Guess what? The Methodist Church Ghana has picked an awesome theme for 2024 and, it's all about growing up as a Christian. The theme is: ***"Discipleship: Growing Into Christian***

Maturity" (Ephesians 4:15).

GROWING UP: THE AWESOME GOAL OF LIFE

The term "grow" is a very positive and wonderful word in any language. To grow is like planting a tiny seed that turns into a beautiful, big, and strong plant with time, sunlight, air, water, and good care. It's not just about getting bigger; it's about getting wiser, learning new things, and becoming better in lots of ways—physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, and spiritually (Luke 2:52). Growth is a journey where we discover and improve ourselves. But growing isn't a one-time thing; it's a lifelong adventure. It doesn't just happen on its own; you must want it and work for it. Are you intentionally growing in your Christian faith?

What if you are going backward or not growing? That doesn't sound great, does it? To stagnate or shrink means no progress or improvement. Living things are supposed to grow, not stay still. We worry when a plant doesn't grow. Why? Because life's goal is to grow. Remember: Growth shows that something is alive. This is true for Christians too. We, as God's children, are supposed to grow to show we are alive in the Lord. How can we do that?

DISCIPLESHIP: THE KEY TO GROWTH IN CHRIST

We've been talking about being a disciple for a while now, but this year, our focus is on **growing as disciples**. Discipleship is the process by which God's children mature in their relationship with Him. Being a disciple is like being a student of Jesus. It's how we learn and become more like Jesus. Jesus said, "*A disciple is not above his teacher...It is **enough for the disciple to be like his teacher...***" (Matthew 10:24-25, ESV). So, the result of discipleship is Christlikeness; that is, the transformed life we talked about last year.

Remember: You can't really grow into a strong Christian without being a disciple. When you decide to be a disciple, you're choosing to become more and more like Jesus every day.

KNOWING AND UNLOCKING CHRISTIAN MATURITY

Christian maturity is a call we must answer. Christian maturity is: (1) **not about how old you are**; You could be a Christian for a long time and still have more to learn. (2) **not about appearance**; Some people may look spiritually mature or appear honourable, but they might not be mature in Christ. (3) **not about achievement**; You can accomplish much in the church, without being mature in your faith. (4) **not about academics**; Your academic achievement does not make you mature. (5) **not the mere possession of spiritual gifts**; (6) not theological Having degrees in things concerning the Bible doesn't automatically make you spiritually mature. You may be blessed with many gifts, but you may not be matured in Christ.

What then is Christian maturity? According to Paul, being mature in Christ means (1) **being connected to Him**, like branches to a vine (John 15:1-2). It's not about looking good on the outside; (2) **it's about growing on the inside to be more like Jesus**. Being mature means (3) **getting better at being kind, loving, and helpful**. (4) It's about **making choices that show you follow Jesus' example**, (5) **treating others the way you want to be treated**.

HOW DO YOU GROW IN CHRIST?

TOOLS FOR THE CHRISTIAN MATURITY

God wants us to become more like Jesus and grow up in our faith (1 Peter 2:2). *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 3:18). He wants us to be mature, as in Hebrews 6:1 - *"Let's press on to maturity"* (CEB). God's ultimate plan for us is to be like His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

One of our action songs gives us **tools for growth**:

1. "Read your Bible, 2. Pray every day. If you want to grow!"

That is a simple recipe for becoming more like Jesus—reading the Bible, talking to God every day in prayer. If you really want to grow, that's the way to go!

There are other tools too. **3. Go to church regularly (Hebrews 10:25)** so that you can understand the Bible you read and then share fellowship with other Christians. **4. Obey what God's word tells you** or apply what you read from the Bible to your life (be a practical Christian). **5. Witness or share your faith with others in love.**

Well, it's like going to school, and reading your textbooks to pass. The growing Christian learns from God's Word, talks to Him through prayer, thinks about His love, and shares that love with everyone around. It's like becoming a real-life superhero, just like Jesus did, spreading love wherever you go. That's what Christian maturity is all about!

SIGNS OF GROWING INTO MATURITY

In the text, Paul drops some two important hints on how to know you're growing in Christ. He says, *"Instead, speak the truth with love, and we'll grow in every way to be like Christ, who is our leader."*

1. Speaking The Truth In Love: One sign is about talking truthfully but doing it with kindness and respect. It means when we're growing up, we should make friendships based on being truthful and nice. This is very relevant, because we always struggle with peer pressure and societal expectations. Remember, always tell the truth, but say it with love. Some tell the truth but out of envy. Others also tell the truth out of hatred, jealousy, or envy. Others speak the truth to prove that they are better than others. Not so with us.

2. Becoming Like Christ In Every Way: Another sign is trying to be like Jesus in everything we do. He is our example for how we should talk, behave, love others, believe in God, and stay pure

(Timothy 4:12). It's like having Him as our role model. Jesus, during His time on earth, always talked to God, followed His advice, took part in Christian gatherings, didn't conform to the patterns of this world, said no to temptations to sin, and influenced others in a positive way.

ARREST THE SITUATION: The CMD selects some social issues affecting children and treats them over the year. All previous topics treated are still relevant but our focus this church year is on the following: **Sale of children, child prostitution, child marriage, online child exploitation (pornography), online occultism (including those on television doubling money. They end up courting you to visit their abode and draw you into it), and Safeguarding.**

MY TWIN OUT THERE/MY CHILD OUT THERE: With the endorsement by EGPC, 'MY TWIN/CHILD OUT THERE' programme takes off in full swing. We entreat every church member to own this project to clothe the less privileged children at Christmas.

The programme seeks to encourage children and parents to donate brand new clothes and shoes to children in rural communities. When they buy clothes for their children, they buy extra and donate it to the CMD which is added to the Christmas gifts sent to rural Societies. It also seeks to encourage every church member including all organizations to contribute to this worthy course.

OPERATION 50-50: This is the flagship programme of the CMD on membership drive in accordance with the Church's strategic plan projection of growth. The 'Operation 50-50' is aimed at increasing the membership of the children to equal that of the

adults by the year 2026 with the slogan '**One Child for Jesus... And another one for Jesus**'. This year the Directorate is intensifying the campaign to witness to every child everywhere and to bring them into the saving arms of Jesus and into the church. Each child is to bring another child, and each Sunday School Teacher is to bring at least two children every year. This is the only means we can introduce our children to evangelism. We are using the Children's Week as the starting point.

The following is how the programme runs:

- i. Training of children and teachers to memorize the five (main) verses put together for the salvation message (at least 20 minutes every Sunday)
- ii. Special days as set by each Society depending on availability of time for demonstrations on how to witness using the verses and the wordless book/colours/fingers.
- iii. Teachers going out with children to supervise witness on Saturdays at 4:00-5:00pm (or as time may permit during vacation periods)
- iv. Following up on the children won for Christ by teachers.
- v. Children won given special tuition on Sundays till they are integrated into their respective age class.

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING: Issues concerning child protection and safeguarding have received international attention. Rights of the child are being trampled on daily basis. Sometimes the church is blamed in some quarters. Deliverance sessions in which children under 'anointing' confess being witches among others are now issues of concern under Safeguarding not because of the confessions but the physical treatment meted out to them during the casting out and the stigma that may follow them after the session. These fall under

different shades of abuse and character defamation and assassination.

We also question where the children worship. Are they safe there? Is the children's meeting place the storeroom of the church where broken tiles, glasses, iron rods and other sharp objects are kept? Can the church rise to the defense of the child in these situations? The child is voiceless when they are under abuse. We stress on responsible rights of the child and their responsibilities. The child must feel safe within the church environment.

CONCLUSION: On behalf of Conference, I would like to wish you all a remarkable and successful celebrations. We hope to Grow into Christian maturity where we remain pure and spotless when Christ is done with His new creation perfectly restored in us.

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VERY REV KENNETH ARTHUR-SARFO

DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTORATE

CHILDREN'S WEEK 2024

11TH – 18TH FEBRUARY 2024

**"DISCIPLESHIP: GROWING INTO CHRISTIAN MATURITY"
(EPHESIANS 4:15). THEME HYMN: MHB 431**

SUGGESTED PROGRAMME FOR THE WEEK:

SUNDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY 2023

**Launching: Educating Church members on celebration /
Reading of Presiding Bishop's Message**

The Children's Week celebration is launched with Prayer and Announcement of the Programme in all Societies at the Divine Service. The children are presented at the latter part of the divine service, or a Family Service may be held in the evening to begin the weeklong celebrations.

Children's Service/Sunday School Teachers should confer with Minister(s) and the Leaders Meeting in planning the programme for the week.

For the adults and the youth to patronize the programme, they must be well educated and informed to support the Children and Teachers fully.

**NOTE: CONFERENCE HAS DIRECTED THAT NO OTHER
PROGRAMME IS FIXED DURING THE CHILDREN'S WEEK**

TO ALLOW THE CHURCH FOCUS ON THE CHILD, AND THAT MUST BE RESPECTED AND ADHERED TO BY ALL LEVELS OF THE CHURCH.

DAY 1 MONDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY 2024

Sing MHB 431

Talk on the Theme: **"DISCIPLESHIP: GROWING INTO CHRISTIAN MATURITY" (EPHESIANS 4:15)** - By a Minister, a Leader, or an invited Speaker.

(Read The Director's Message and discuss it).

Read EPHESIANS 4:14-15 to begin the programme.

To be chaired by Leaders Meeting

DAY 2 TUESDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY 2024

Read EPHESIANS 4:14 to begin the programme.

TALK SHOW: Invite a speaker to address any of the following issues Sale of children, Child Prostitution, Child Marriage, Online Child Exploitation (pornography), Online Occultism. and Safeguarding.

To be chaired by Men's Fellowship, Women's Fellowship and SUWMA

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY 2024

PRAYER NIGHT Read EPHESIANS 4:15 to begin.

Topics:

- For the Children's Ministry
- For Missionaries and their families
- The Presiding Bishop and the Executive
- For Parliament to speed up the passage into law the Proper Human Sexuality and Ghanaian Family Values Bill
- For the various Children's homes
- All Diocesan Bishops, Lay Chairmen, and all workers in the church
- Good government policies for children - For Abused and vulnerable children
- Against maternal deaths - For Parents and Guardians

To be chaired by the Prayer Tower, Christ's Little Band, Guild, Leaders

DAY 4 THURSDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY 2024

PREACHING CONTEST NIGHT

THEME: SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

TEXT: EPHESIANS 4:14-15 (This text runs through all levels)

HYMN: MHB 431

This programme is to be moderated by the Minister/Caretaker, Lay Preachers as may be applicable, and the teachers.

Select some children to prepare on the given theme. Find a panel of 3 judges.

The winner for the Society will later compete with other winners in the Circuit **before the end of February 2024** under the supervision of the Superintendent Minister and the Circuit

Sunday School Superintendent on the Theme: **CHRISTIAN MATURITY IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD**

Winners for the Circuits will be presented at the Diocesan level for another context in **March 2024** under the Supervision of the Bishop, CMD Coordinator and Diocesan Officers.

THEME FOR THE DIOCESAN CONTEST:
THE IMMATURE CHRISTIAN

Winners for the Dioceses will also Compete in **April 2024** at the Connexional Level.

THEME FOR THE CONNEXIONAL CONTEST:
"DISCIPLESHIP: GROWING INTO CHRISTIAN MATURITY"

DAY 5 FRIDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY 2024

TALENTS NIGHT

Read **HEBREWS 6:1** to begin the programme.

Let the children display their God-given talents. Please make sure the programme does not turn into another gospel rock show. The talents should vary including comedy, poetry, singing, playing of musical instruments etc.

To be chaired by the Choir, Singing Band and Any Singing Group in the Society

DAY 6 SATURDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY 2024

MORNING: **Float** led by the Brigade Band, Brass Band, or any available instrumentation for a float/ distribution of gospel tracts. Visit to Hospital, Children's Ward, General cleaning exercise, visitation to children at home, Health Walk/Health Screening/Sensitization on Sanitation, etc.

You can also organize games with sister churches or at the Circuit level.

EVENING: Open-air evangelism (Crusade)

To be organized by the Evangelism Committee, Leaders Meeting, Local Preachers, MYF and the Teachers.

Prepare a child to preach while Ministers, Caretakers, Stewards, Evangelism Coordinators with the Teachers supervise and help as may be necessary.

DAY 7 SUNDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY 2024

Thanksgiving Service:

Church Parade and Fund-raising in support of Children's work.

The Preacher should preach on the **Theme: "Discipleship: growing into Christian maturity" (Ephesians 4:15)**

(with focus on Speaking the truth in love, growing into Christ the head).

Prepare children to preach, lead liturgy, do the readings, and give the announcements. Children can serve as ushers at the service.

NOTE: Diocesan Coordinators, Diocesan Sunday School Superintendents to submit a detailed report on the celebration to the Children's Ministry Directorate, Methodist Headquarters, Accra.

Disbursement of the funds raised is as presented below as approved by **Conference 2020**

Diocese 10%

Circuit 25%

Society 65%

TOTAL = 100%

HYMN SHEET

MHB 431

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling;
All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesu, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart.

2 Come, Almighty to deliver;
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above;
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

**3 Finish then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee.
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

MHB 400 (Tune: *Cape Coast Varsity*)

1 Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

2 Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

3 Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee

4 Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

MHB 550

1. O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels Thy blood
So freely shed for me.
2. A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne,

Where only Christ is heard to speak;
Where Jesus reigns alone.

3. A humble, lowly, contrite, heart,
Believing, true and clean,
Which neither life nor death can part
From Him that dwells within.
4. A heart in every thought renewed
And full of love divine,
Perfect and right and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine.
5. Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
Come quickly from above;
Write Thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of Love.

MHB 286

1. Holy Spirit! hear us;
Help us while we sing;
Breathe into the music
Of the praise we bring.
2. Holy Spirit! prompt us
when we kneel to pray;
Nearer come and teach us
what we ought to say.
3. Holy Spirit! shine Thou
On the Book we read;
Gild its holy pages
with the light we need.
4. **Holy Spirit! give us**
Each a lowly mind;
Make us more like Jesus,
Gentle, pure, and kind.
5. Holy Spirit! brighten
Little deeds of toil;

And our playful pastimes
Let no anger spoil.

- 6. Holy Spirit! help us
Daily by Thy might,
What is wrong to conquer
And to choose the right.**

MHB 314

1. Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
Tender and true,
Out of the heart of the Father above,
Streaming to me and to you:
Wonderful love,
Dwells in the heart of the Father above.
2. Jesus the Saviour this Gospel to tell
Joyfully came,
Came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell, Sharing their
sorrow and shame:
Seeking the lost,
Saving, redeeming at measureless cost.
3. Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
Why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
Home, weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love,
Dwells in the heart of the Father above.
4. Come to my heart, O Thou wonderful love!
Come and abide,
Lifting my life till it rises above
Envy and falsehood and pride:
Seeking to be,
Lowly and humble, a learner of Thee.

MHB 273

1. Come down, O love divine,

Seek Thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with Thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.

2. O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let Thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while
my path illuming.

**3. Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.**

Na ma ɔɔ kɔnkrɔn
ɔnye m'egudo atar,
Na ma menhyɛ ahobɛadze wo ase
Ahobɛadze 'koma a ɔdze no ho to famu
Na ɔdze nyinsuwa kyir 'noara n'esinto

4. And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Where-in the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling.

MHB 124

1. See amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below,

See the tender Lamb appears,
Promised from eternal years.

*Hail, thou ever-blessed morn!
Hail, redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.*

2. Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies;
He who throned in height sublime
Sits amid the cherubim.

3. Say, ye holy shepherds, say
What your joyful news today;
Wherefore have ye left your sheep
On the lonely mountain steep?

4. As we watched at dead of night,
Lo, we saw a wondrous light;
Angels singing peace on earth
Told us of the Saviour's birth".

5. Sacred infant, all divine,
What a tender love was thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this.

**6. Teach, O teach us, Holy Child,
By Thy Face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble Thee,
In Thy Sweet humility!**

O Nyame Ba kyerekyere hen
Wo suban a odwe no,
Ma yensua Wo mberhoadze,
Na yenye de mber Owo tse.

MHB 858

1 Tell me the stories of Jesus

I love to hear;
Things I would ask Him to tell me
If He were here;
Scenes by the wayside,
tales of the sea,
Stories of Jesus,
tell them to me

2 First let me hear how the children.
Stood round His knee.
And I shall fancy His Blessing
Resting on me.
Words full of kindness,
Deeds full of grace
All in the love-light
Of Jesu's face

3 Tell how the sparrow that twitters
On yonder tree
And the sweet meadow-side lily
May speak to me
Give me their message
For I would hear
How Jesus taught us
Our Father's care.

4 Tell me, in accents of wonder,
How rolled the sea,
Tossing the boat in a tempest
On Galilee;
And how the Master,
Ready and kind,
Chided the billows,
And hushed the wind.

5 Into the city I'd follow the children's band,
Waving a branch of the palm tree
High in my hand;
One of His heralds,

Yes, I would sing
Loudest hosannas,
"Jesus is King!"

6 Show me that scene in the garden,
Of bitter pain;
Show me the cross where my Savior
For me was slain;
Sad ones or bright ones,
So that they be
Stories of Jesus,
Tell them to me.

MHB 799

1 The fields are all white,
And the reapers are few,
We children are willing,
But what can we do,
To work for our Lord in His harvest?

2 Our hands are so small,
And our words are so weak,
We cannot teach others;
How then shall we seek
To work for our Lord in His harvest?

3 We'll work by our prayers,
By the offerings we bring,
By small self-denials;
The least little thing
May work for our Lord in His harvest,

4 Until, by and by,
As the years pass at length,
We too may be reapers,
And go forth in strength
To work for our Lord in His harvest.

MHB 850

1 Looking upward every day,
Sunshine on our faces;
Pressing onward every day
Toward the heavenly places

2 Growing every day in awe,
For Thy name is holy;
Learning every day to love
With a love more lowly

**3 Walking every day more close
To our Elder Brother;
Growing every day more true
Unto one another.**

4 Every day more gratefully
Kindnesses receiving;
Every day more readily
Injuries forgiving.

5 Lord, so pray we every day,
Hear us in Thy pity,
That we enter in at last
To the holy city. Amen.

NOT PART OF THE ONE IN THE MHB

***6. Leaving every day behind
Something which might hinder;
Running swifter every day,
Growing purer, kinder***

MHB 862

1 Wisemen seeking Jesus,
Traveled from afar,
Guided on their journey
By a beauteous star.

2 But if we desire him,
He is close at hand;
For our native country
Is our Holy Land.

3 Prayerful souls may find him
By our quiet lakes,
Meet him on our hillsides
When the morning breaks.

4 In our fertile cornfields
While the sheaves are bound,
In our busy markets
Jesus may be found.

5 Fishermen talk with Him
By the great North Sea,
As the first disciples
Did in Galilee.

6 Every peaceful village
In our land might be,
Made by Jesus' presence
Like sweet Bethany.

7 He is more than near us,
If we love him well;
For He seeketh ever
In our hearts to dwell.

CAN 280

1 Mepɛ mesua Jesus:
Ɔyɛ ayamyie;
Obowui agye m'nkwa
Wɔbɔɔ N' mbeamuduam'

2 Sɛ moka Jesus ho a
Obetsie m'asɔr,
Ɔbɛma mo ho atsew
Ɔdze m'bon bɛkyɛ m'

3 Mòbòdwen Jesus hò:
Oyè ɔdò dódow
Otse N'ahenguam' hò
Ohwè m'ase hà
4 Sè mò wèrè twer Jesus
Sè mèyè Nè pè a
Nna m'ahom bèka m'hò
Biribiara nnkèyè m'

5 Yamyiefo pa Jesus
Nkyè Oeesuo me nsam'
Na ewiei n' Ɔaagye m'ato
Ɔman papa n' mu