

## Miracle Grow

Bring kids forward - have them stand tallest to shortest.

I've always been enamored with growth since childhood. I remember standing in the door frame getting measured every year on my birthday to see how tall I was getting.

I always imagined what I would look like when I got older, what my job was going to be, what my wife was going to look like, what my kids would look like, and of course, how tall would I grow to be.

It was always like a competition- kind of like our kids here - You always want to be the tallest. It was like that with my family. Always a competition. You see, I have two older brothers - and they were always taller than I was so I really wanted to catch up to them, grow faster and faster.

Then there were the times I couldn't wait a year to get measured so I went up to the door frame and had my mom measure me. Guess what - I didn't grow hardly at all - I stopped growing. Talk about scared - I thought I was going to be short forever!

Well, I finally did catch up to my brothers - and now I surpassed both of them. I am now about an inch taller than them and about 5 inches wider.

Let kids go.

My wife and I moved into a new home in January and you know what you always get when you move to a new home? Plants. Lots and lots of plants. Probably about 15 different plants. They were beautiful. I loved looking at them and imagining what they will look like as they grew bigger.

Well, I wasn't blessed with a green thumb. My dreams of watching those plants grow died about 4 days after our open house. That's right, about 4 days. Don't think I'm that bad. I mean, I watered them, I talked to them gave them sunlight, but they just died.

I cannot take care of plants. A few years ago my boss asked Shirley and I to house sit for him and water his plants. He never told me, but I believe we killed a couple of his potted flowers.

I can't explain it. I will follow specific directions to the 'T' and still kill the plants.

But I like plants – I like to watch them grow – I like to watch kids grow and mature.

But I have learned my lesson – I can't control either. I can't control how big a kid grows, nor can I control how big a plant grows. I can't understand growth – but I do love watching things grow. My daughter Kristine used to be about "this big" when I brought her home from the hospital. Now look at her – she is almost 5 feet tall – and she is only 10!

The bible talks about the mustard seed. It is the smallest of all seeds – but it grows to be the greatest of all the shrubs – it puts forth large branches so that birds can make their nests in it. Wow – an itty bitty seed grows into the greatest of the shrubs.

If nature grows because it is a living breathing thing, should other things grow as well? Let's look at our church – isn't it a living breathing thing? Is our church alive? What a good question. Some of you may have thought it was dying off a year or more ago. But as our New Testament story relates today, it was only sleeping. Nothing is dead if God doesn't want it dead. No matter what you may think, this church is a living, breathing entity that just needs a little help.

We were discussing this type of death this last week while we were preparing our door hangers. We were reflecting on how this church is actually 9 years old now. That's right, 9 years old. But a new church start. For some reason it never grew. Now we can point to this reason or that reason, but I think the ladies I was working with hit the nail on the head. They told me that the church never had any Miracle Gro.

That was it! I knew it the second they said it – no Miracle Gro.

So, last week I went out and got.... Miracle Gro®

So now we have our Miracle Gro – we are ready to grow our church. I am not quite sure how to use this – how do we grow the church using this. (READ BOX) Let's see – it says to fill the feeder with Miracle Gro and then attach it to a garden hose and spray over a 500 sq ft area. Now, am I supposed to spray all of you or just the cafeteria?

Hmm.. Maybe Miracle Gro isn't right. But it's name is Miracle, and I think we could use a little Miracle. Let me look on the other side of the box....

All Purpose Plant Food. Okay – let's think of us as the plants, and the bible does tell us that we feed off of God and His Word so God and His Word will be the Miracle Grow.

So let's look at this box again thinking about it in these terms:

(These are true features of the product)

Double feeding action – you get fed through your roots and your leaves - Ears and heart?

Miracle-Grow is Safe for all plants

Guaranteed NOT TO BURN when used as directed

Starts to work INSTANTLY

Promotes quick, beautiful results

Helps plants reach their maximum growth potential by giving two of their most important requirements – food and water.

All purpose

Apply every 7 to 14 days

It is never too late to start feeding

Plants need regular feed to flourish throughout the season

So maybe some miracle grow is exactly what this church has needed.

The church, all of you, have done a wonderful job keeping the doors open, setting up committees, getting organized and inviting your friends, family and neighbors. Many of you have worked countless hours in an all-but thankless struggle for this church. And I thank you for your dedication and support so far.

We've been watering the church, standing it up against the door frame seeing how it has been growing – but now it is time to add some Miracle Grow.

So, how do we apply this Miracle Grow?

We read earlier that we can spray it all over the place. Reach out to a lot of people. This is like what we are doing right now. This Thursday, we are direct mailing information about our upcoming message series to 20,000 homes. A group of us went out and hung 500 door hangers on homes around the school, and the NW Explorer will be including information about our series. So we are reaching out to many people at once. We are using the attachment that hooks on to our hose to reach as many people as possible.

It also says on the box we can use it on individual plants. That is the next step. This is an area I feel we have done pretty good at up to this point, but should be aware of it. What I am talking about here is about the people who actually may come through that door either by our marketing, by personal invitation, seeing the signs or some other reason. We need to be prepared to show that we are friendly, welcoming, and non-judgmental. We have been good about this – we just have to make sure it is on the top of our mind and always aware of it.

Sure, we don't have a youth group, a formalized Sunday School, or other features of bigger churches, but we will. We will add these as we grow.

We might not have certain programs, but we can offer some things the bigger churches have a hard time offering – close community, the ability to be involved, and the ability to be heard.

Even when we are out on the streets, it helps for us to remember our church, that we are Christians. Be open to share our church with others that you meet. This sermon series that starts next week is a good way for you to bring someone that has never been to church, or someone that has only been a few times to join us here. It is titled Basics of Faith and will address questions like: Who is God, Who is Jesus, What do Christians Believe, What Exactly is Holy Communion and much more. There may be many of you here today that may have some of these questions. I pray that this sermon series helps answer some of those.

In today's society there is so much going on. Nuclear threats, terrorist threats, wars and rumors of war. There are a lot of scared people out there who are looking towards something more. Looking at trying to find some understanding to the world. Why are things the way they are. Is there really a God out there? Where can I get answers?

God is touching their hearts right this second. We need to be able to reach out to these people.

I have no idea how many people will respond to our door hangers, our mass mailing or the NW Explorer section. It may be zero. It may be 50. I have no idea. But if it is zero, that doesn't mean we are just going to give up. As a kid, when I got measured, if I didn't grow one day, did I stop measuring myself? No – not at all. I just waited a little bit and tried again. That is why we are having three larger outreach campaigns this year. Right now, October and December. We are trying different approaches, different themes and a lot of prayer to reach out to as many people as we can and to give you a special reason to invite a friend. I know it isn't easy inviting someone to church, but if there is a special event, it makes it easier.

We have to remember, no matter how hard we try, only God can make it grow. This is why all of our committees start with a prayer – asking for God's help in making the right decisions to help our church grow to its full potential. This is so critical. Our committees starting off with prayer is good, but we need more. We need everyone to pray for this church. Pray that we keep God the focus of our church. We keep to the bible in our ways and actions as a church.

We need to work together, each and every one of us, to spread a little Miracle Grow, God's Word, God's Love, God's Grace, to those who haven't experienced it yet.

I have the box of Miracle Grow, but I can't use it by myself. It is more than one person can handle. But together, all of us, with God in the center, we can use it on our church and watch a Miracle happen.

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We meet at the Quail Run Elementary School  
4600 Cortaro Farms Road  
1 mile East of I-10 on Cortaro Farms Road  
Services are at 9:30