



SEASONS FOR GROWTH®

- Supports young people to understand and manage the issues they experience because of the loss of a parent or significant other through death, separation or divorce
- Assists young people to understand that the reactions associated with their losses are normal
- Educates about the grief process
- Develops skills for coping, problem-solving and decision-making
- Builds a peer support network
- Helps restore self-confidence and self-esteem
- Draws on extensive research in developing a sound educative response to loss and grief.

Change and loss are issues that affect all of us at some stage in our lives. At Mary MacKillop School we recognise that when changes occur in families through death, separation, divorce or related circumstances, young people may benefit from learning

how to manage these changes

effectively. Mary MacKillop offers a very successful education program called Seasons for Growth. This program is facilitated in small groups and is based on research that highlights the importance of social support and the need to practise new skills to cope effectively with change and loss. The program focuses on issues such as self-esteem, managing feelings, problem-solving, decision-making, effective communication and support networks.

Seasons for Growth is an eight week program with each weekly session lasting for 40 -50 minutes.

The program concludes with a "Celebration" session. Following on from the program, groups have the opportunity to meet for two further sessions to build on their earlier learning. A number of staff have been trained as facilitators of this program.

- No season lasts forever
- Each season is good, unique and important for our growth
- The seasons affect individuals differently, but our attitude is important
- Each season challenges us to find ways to adjust to differences
- Each season has its own story; there are easy days and difficult days
- Seasons have their own unpredictability and that is normal
- Seasonal change is often silent, gradual and unseen.

Seasons for Growth relies on activities, strategies and techniques from an educational and cognitive behavioural framework. This approach to learning encourages young people not only to value who they are and the particular 'story' they have, but also to modify their thinking, attitudes, beliefs and constructs about life and to 'take charge' of their behaviours.

The program emphasises the important role of thinking, questioning, deciding, doing and re-deciding. The learning process underpinning Seasons for Growth includes acquiring and practising new skills, learning new ways of thinking and acquiring more effective ways of coping with change and loss.

