

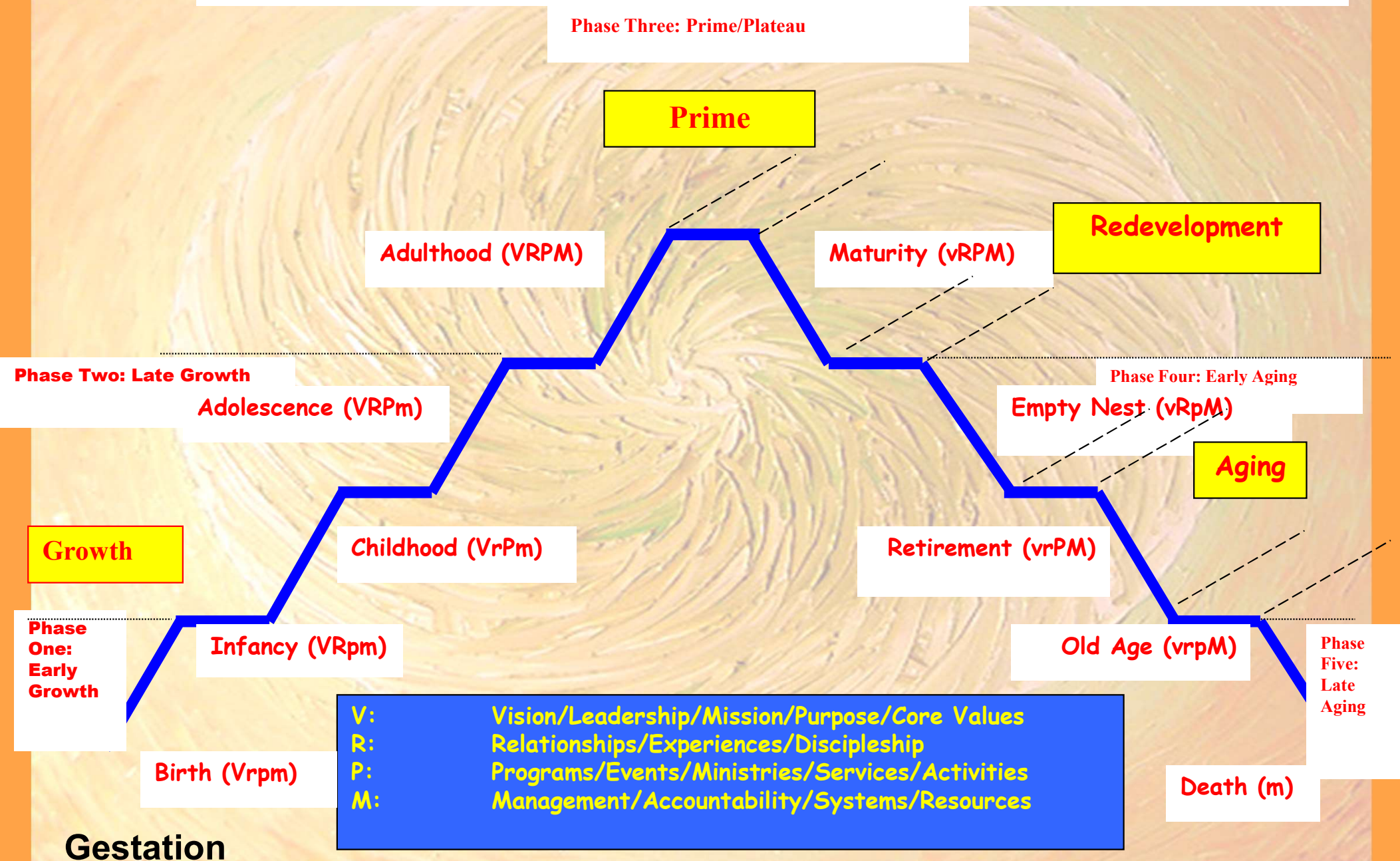




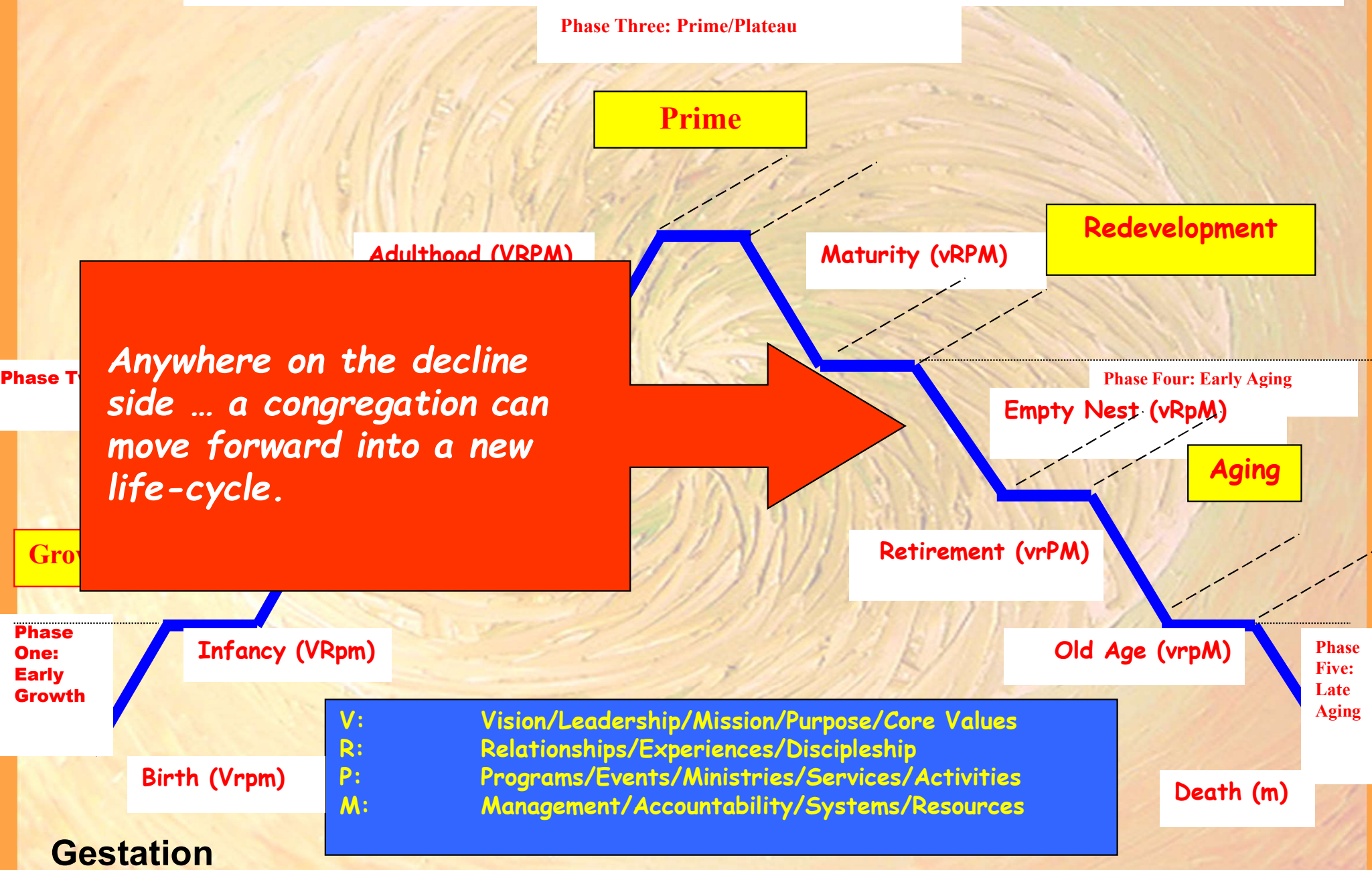
# **The Church's Life Cycle**

**and Stages of Congregational  
Development**

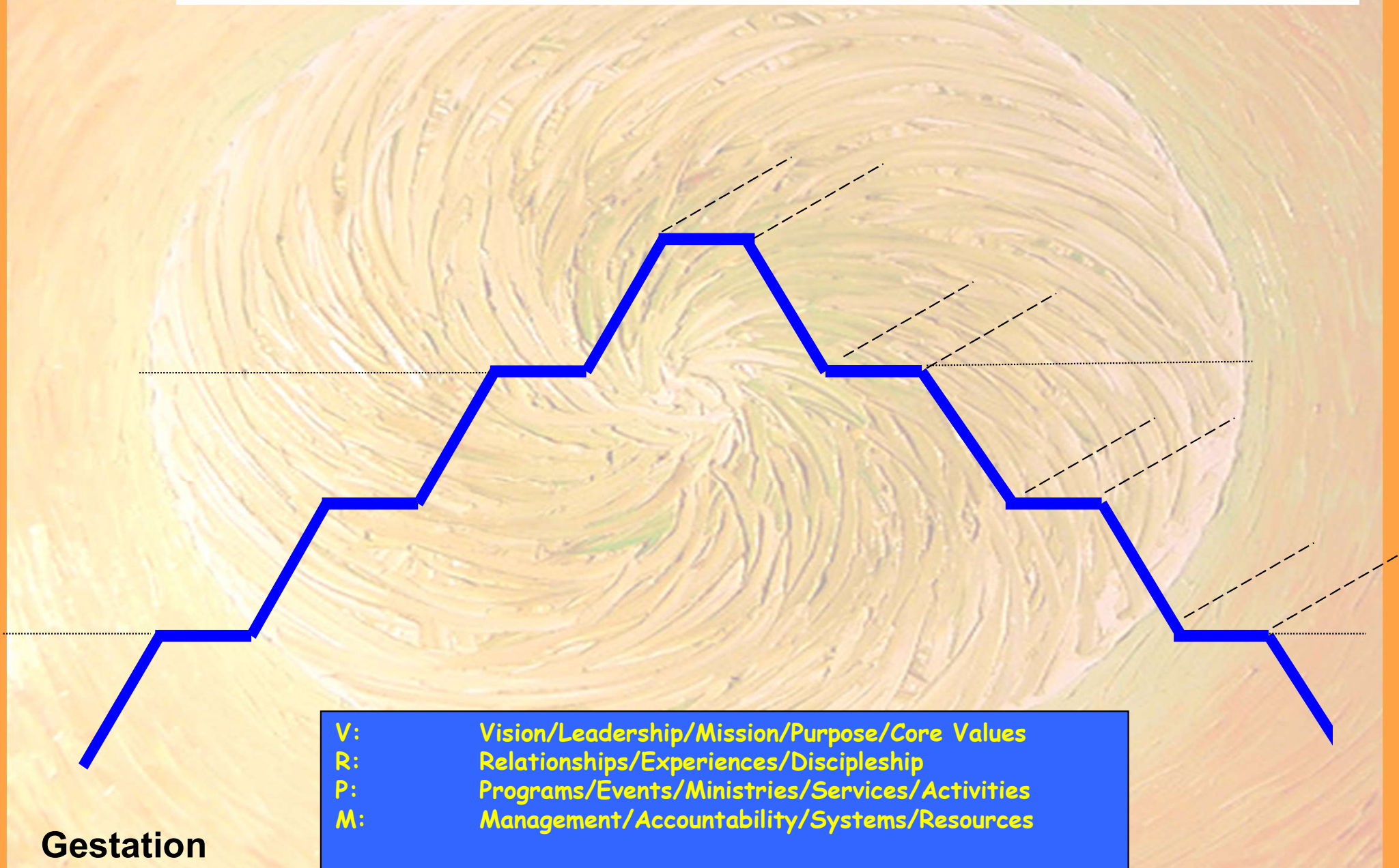
# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

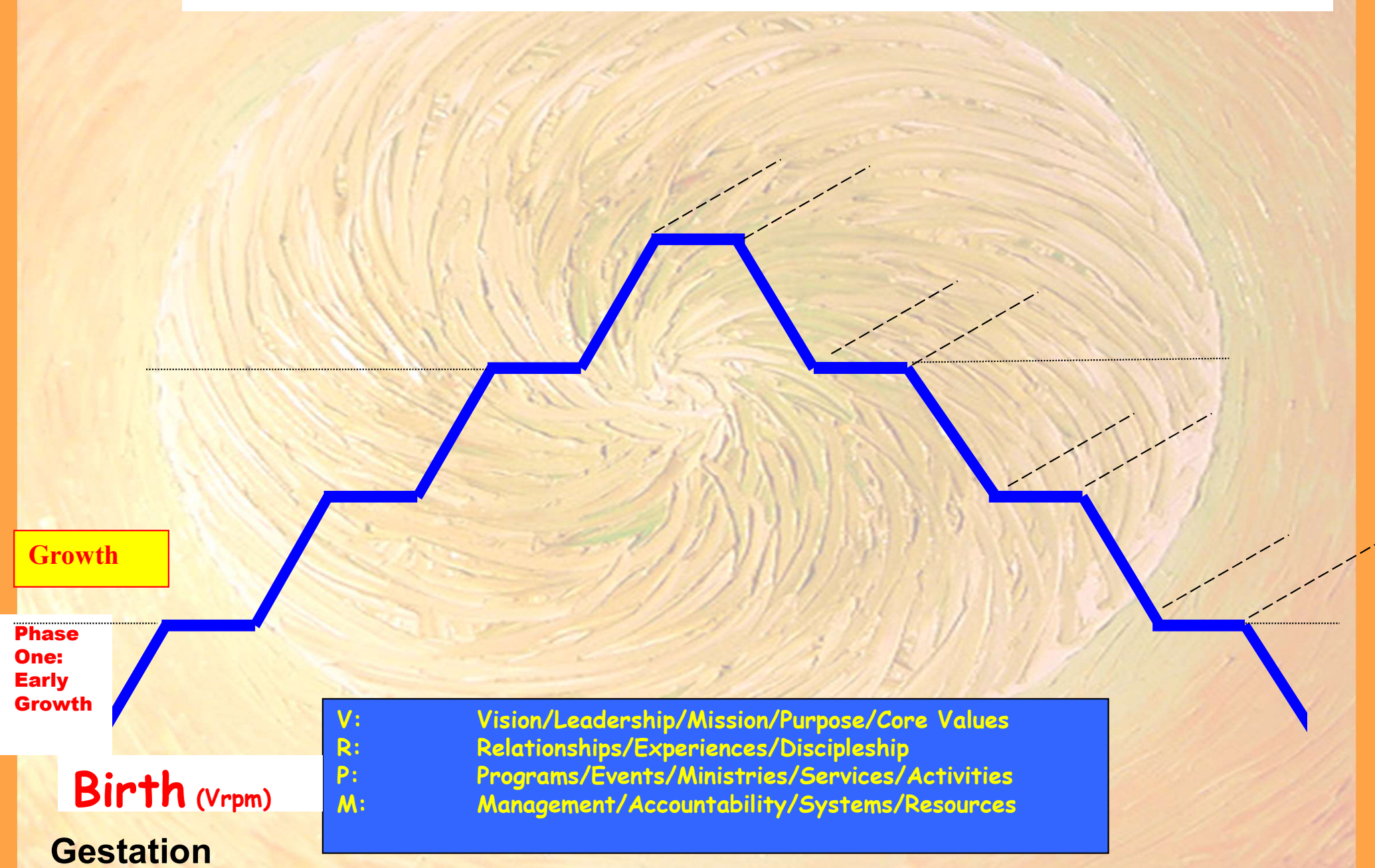


## The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

**Gestation is a preparatory phase before the launching of a new congregation. Gestation is that period of time, often six months to two years in length, when preparations are being made to publicly launch a new congregation.**



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

- Birth is the first six months to two years of the public life of a congregation.
- The Birth stage is driven by the expression of a passionate God-given *Vision* concerning the life of the newly emerging congregation.

Growth

Phase  
One:  
Early  
Growth

**Birth** (Vr<sub>pm</sub>)

Gestation

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

- Infancy is the three to five years following the Birth stage when *Vision* and *Relationships* are dominant.
- The expression of discipleship patterns that focus on worship, spiritual development, and the formation of warm and rich relationship patterns or a sense of true community in the congregation characterize infancy.
- Healthy patterns of worship, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and ministry and missions are established during this stage.

Growth

Phase One:  
Early Growth

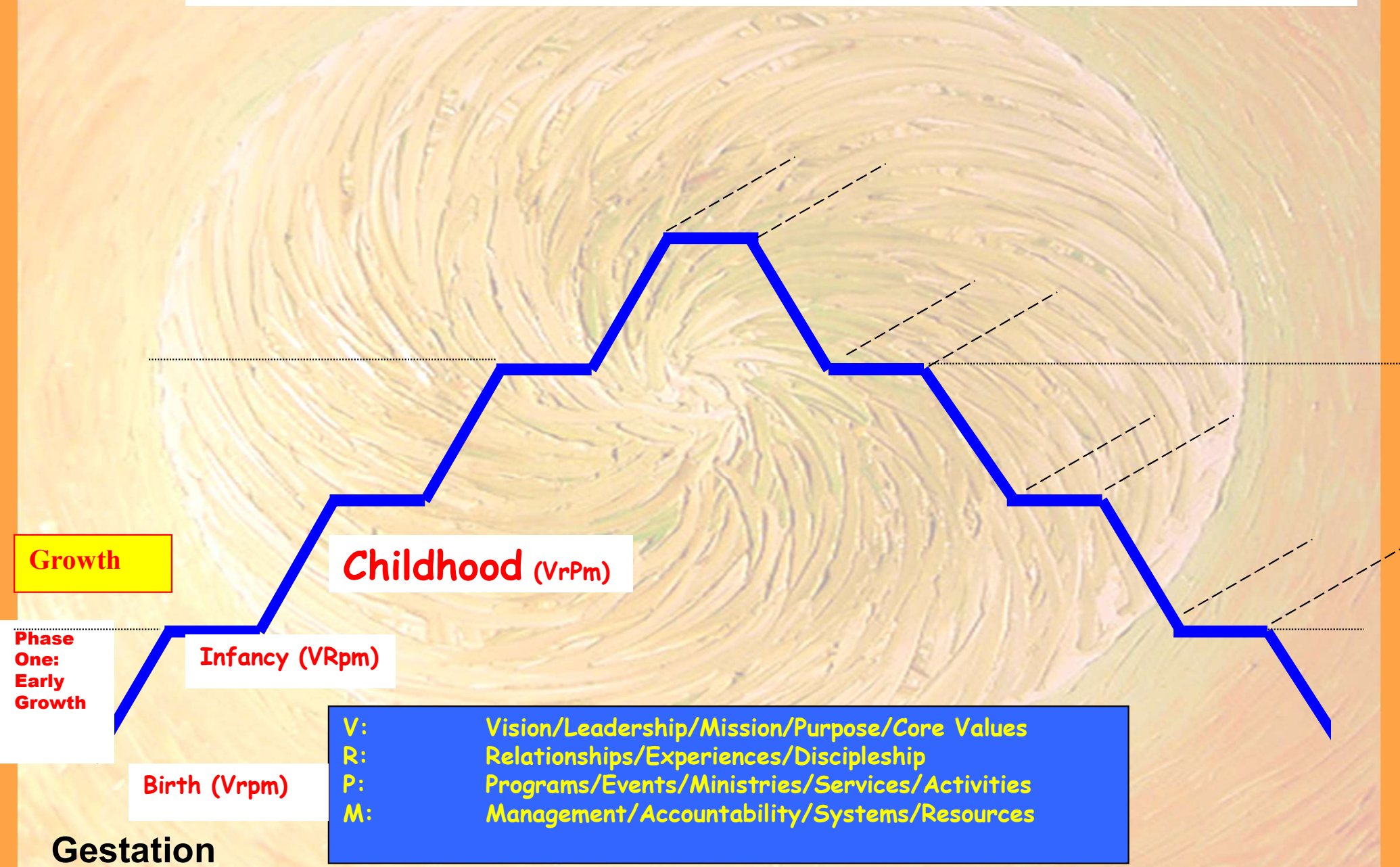
Infancy (VRpm)

Birth (Vrpm)

Gestation

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
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# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

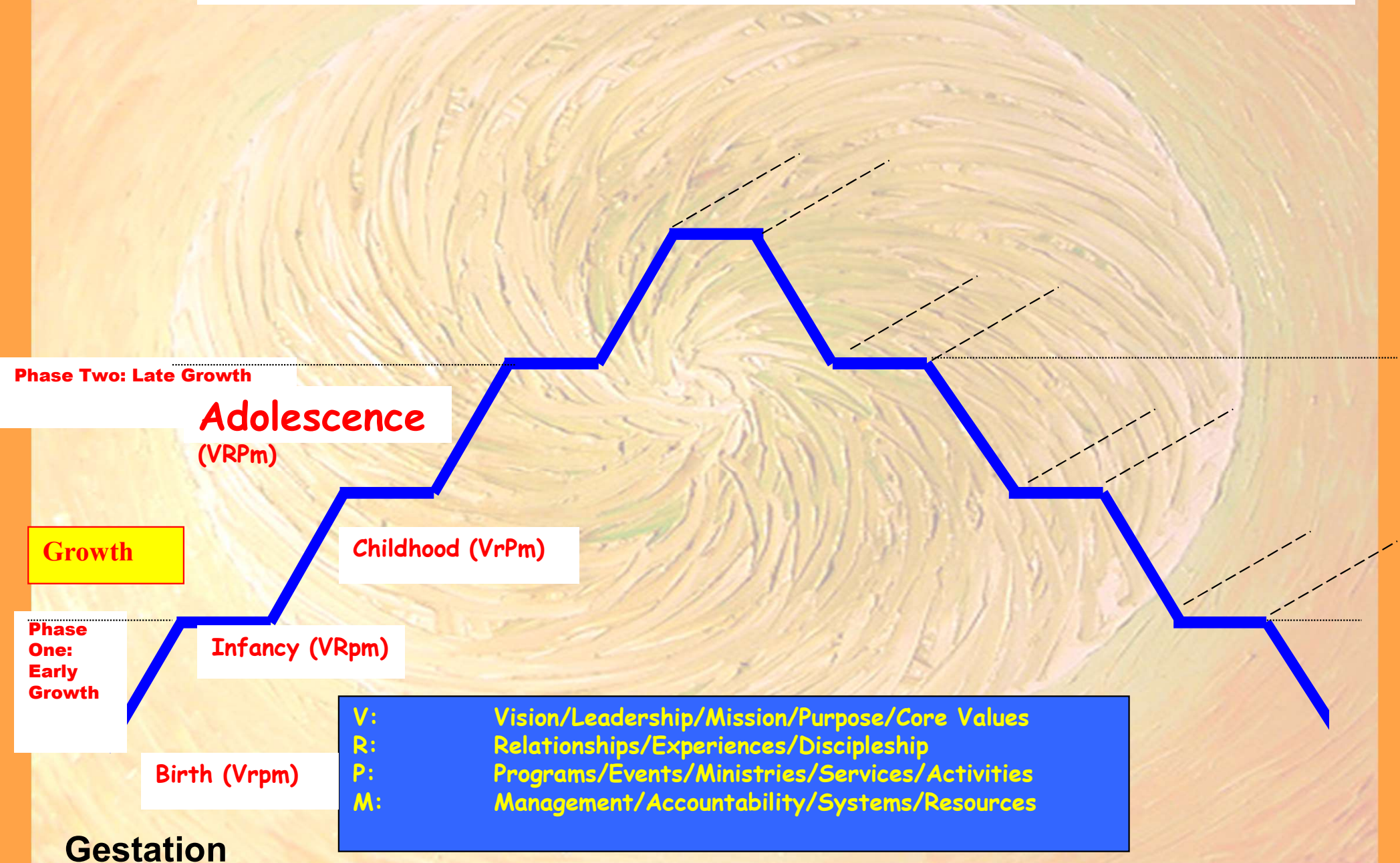


# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

- Childhood usually begins around five to six years after the Birth of a congregation, lasts for five to six years, and focuses on *Vision* and *Programs*.
- Childhood is initiated by the realization that the congregation is succeeding, but that its programs, ministries, and activities are unorganized and not developed in a form that will allow the congregation to reach its full kingdom potential.
- The energy that was going into the development of deep, meaningful *Relationships* is now focused on developing and implementing the Programs structure for the congregation.



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

- Adolescence begins around 10 to 12 years after the public launching of the congregation, and is a stage where *Vision, Relationships, and Programs* are all emphasized.
- It is also a time of some chaos as people begin to multiply the dreams they have for the future of the congregation, and the core dream or vision of the congregation may appear fuzzy.
- The longer Adolescence lasts, the more the congregation begins to realize they must address the *Management* systems of the congregation.



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

- Adulthood is when all four organizing principles—*Vision, Relationships, Programs, and Management*—are all fully developed.
- The congregation is ready to soar as a fully development spiritual community with great resources and the proper balance or alignment of these resources.

**Adulthood (VRPM)**

**Adolescence (VRPm)**

**Childhood (VrPm)**

**Infancy (VRpm)**

**Birth (Vrpm)**

**V:** Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
**R:** Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
**P:** Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
**M:** Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

**Growth**

**Phase One:  
Early  
Growth**

**Gestation**

**Phase Two: Late Growth**

# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Adulthood (VRPM)

Adolescence (VRPm)

Childhood (VrPm)

Infancy (VRpm)

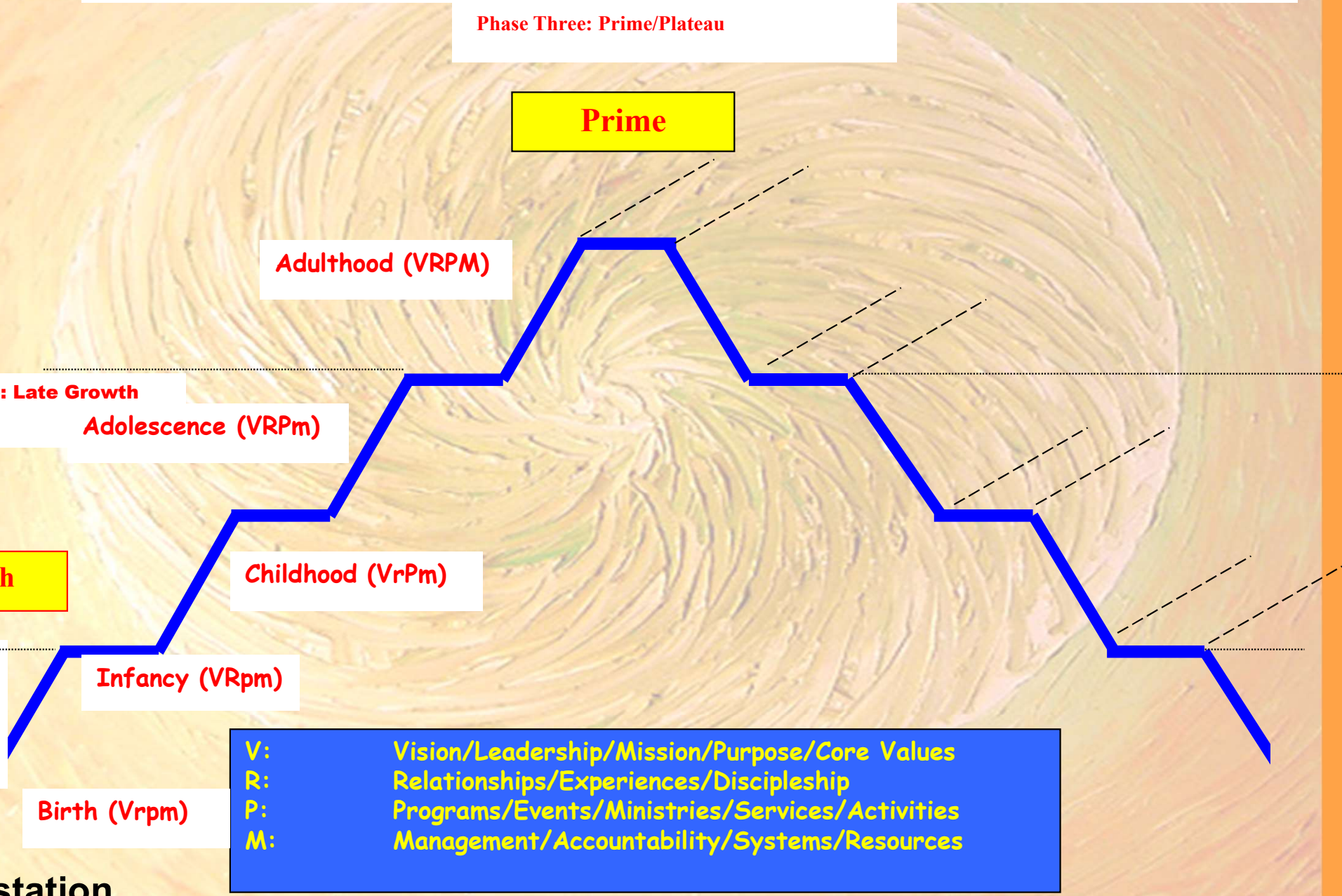
Growth

Birth (Vrpm)

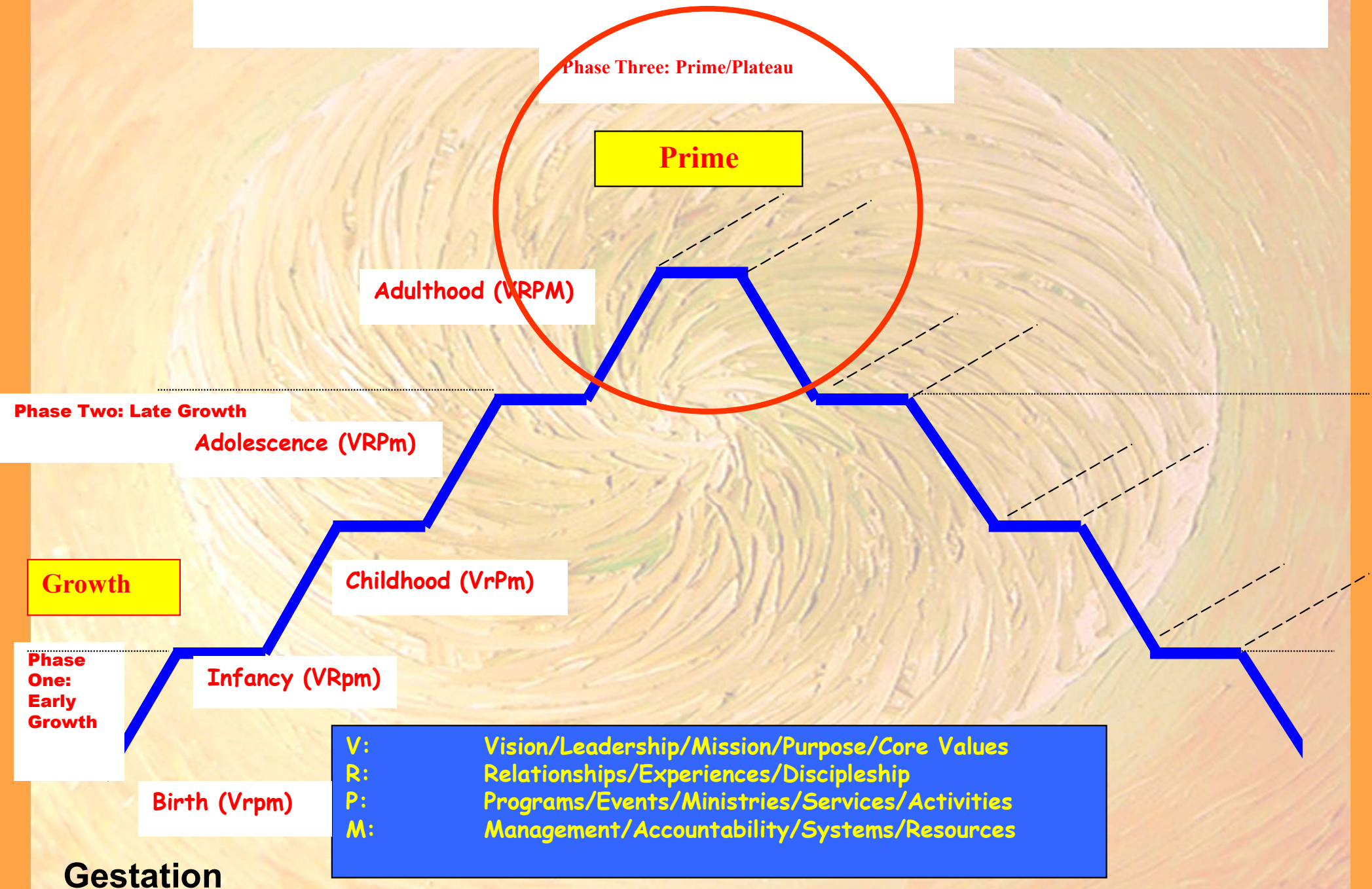
Phase One: Early Growth

Gestation

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
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P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
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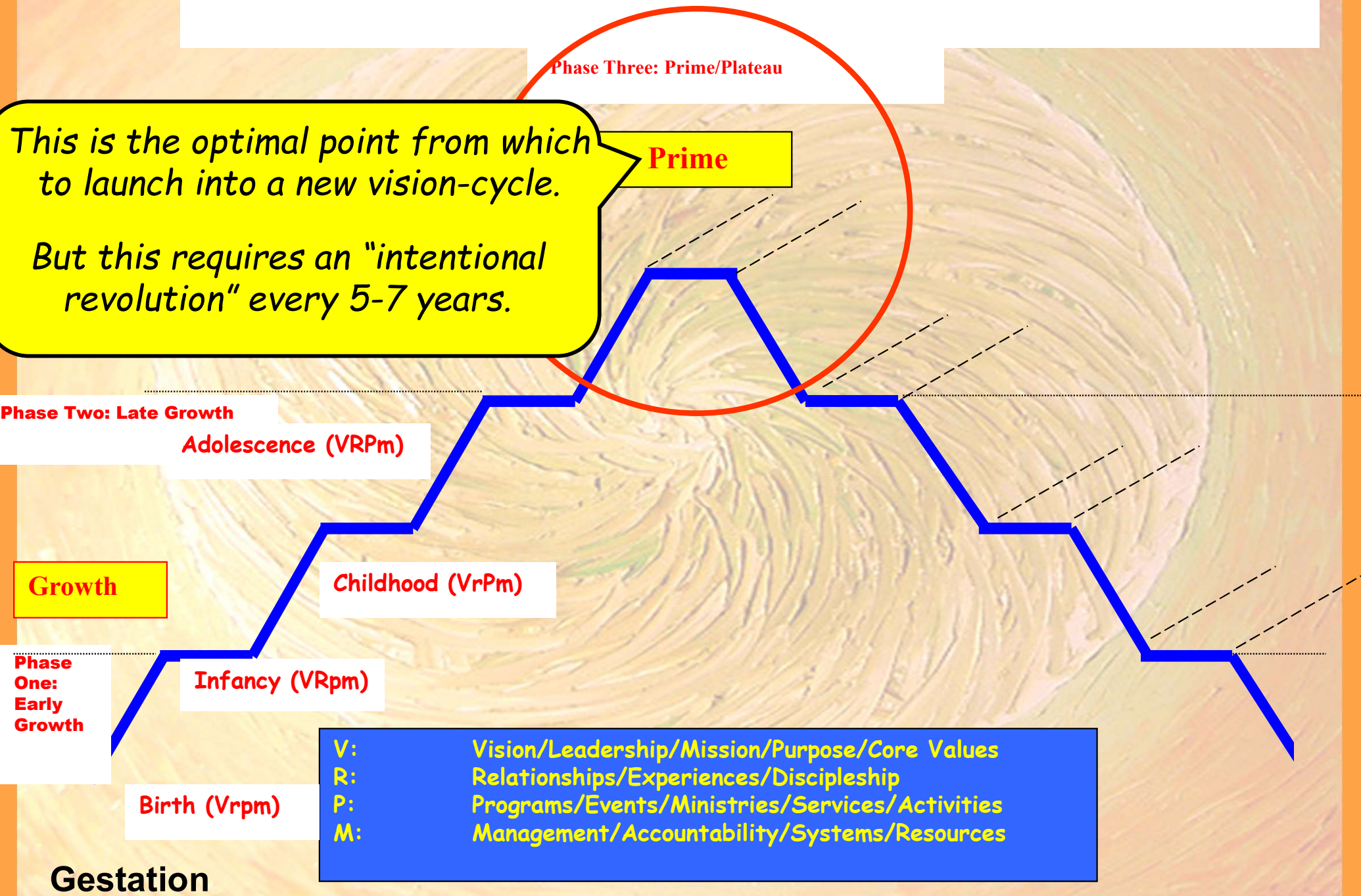


# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development





# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



# Time to Soar!

Often, however, congregations do not soar because of one or both of the following reasons:

- First, their fantasy of what it would feel and look like when they arrived at Adulthood does not match what they see. So, they are waiting for something else to happen.
- Second, they may feel that what they have done is enough, and they may relax and begin to become complacent about their spiritual and strategic journey.

# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Adulthood (VRPM)

Maturity (vRPM)

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence (VRPm)

Growth

Childhood (VrPm)

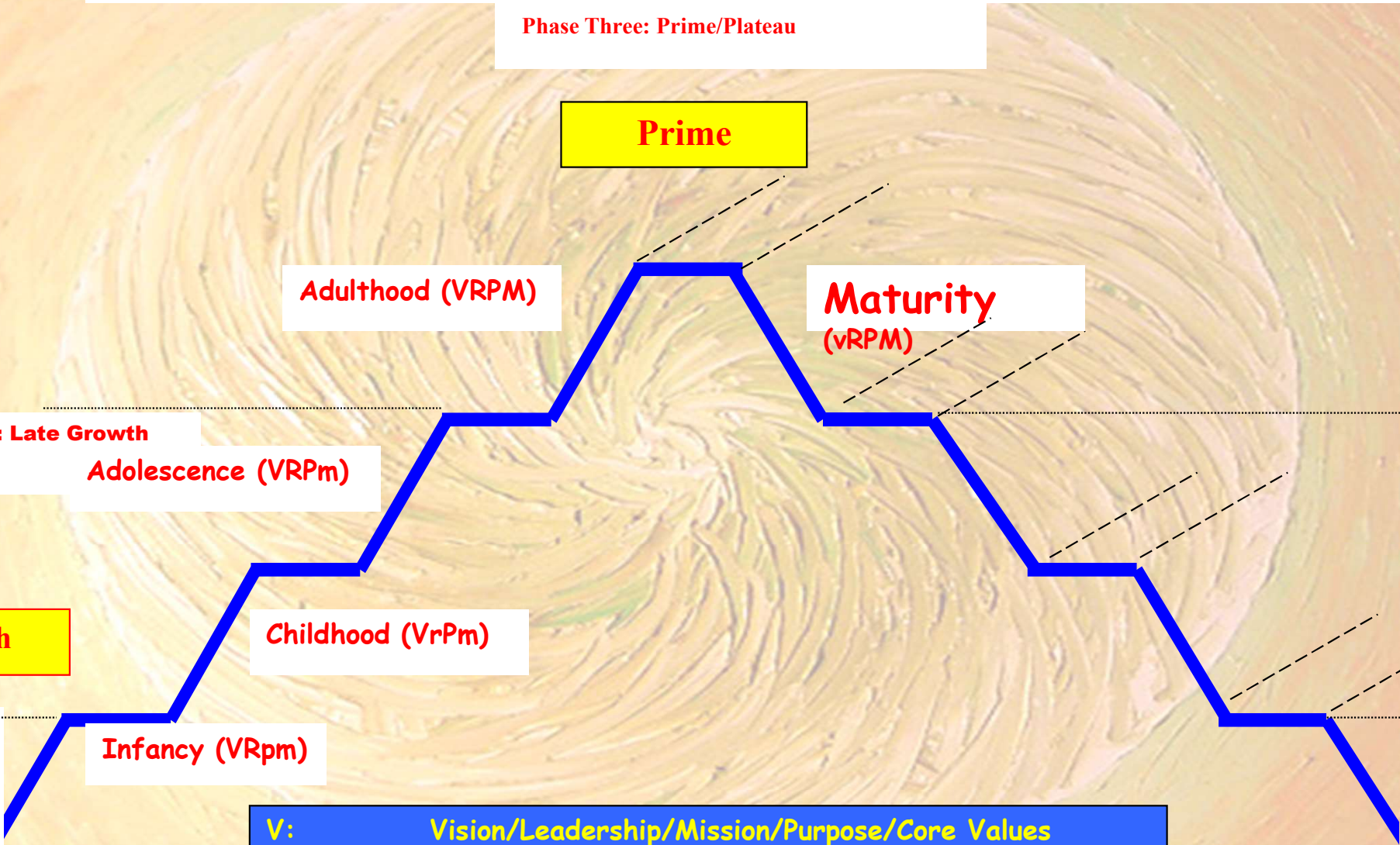
Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy (VRpm)

Birth (Vrpm)

Gestation

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Redevelopment

Adulthood (VRPM)

Maturity (vRPM)

Adolescence (VRPm)

Childhood (VrPm)

Growth

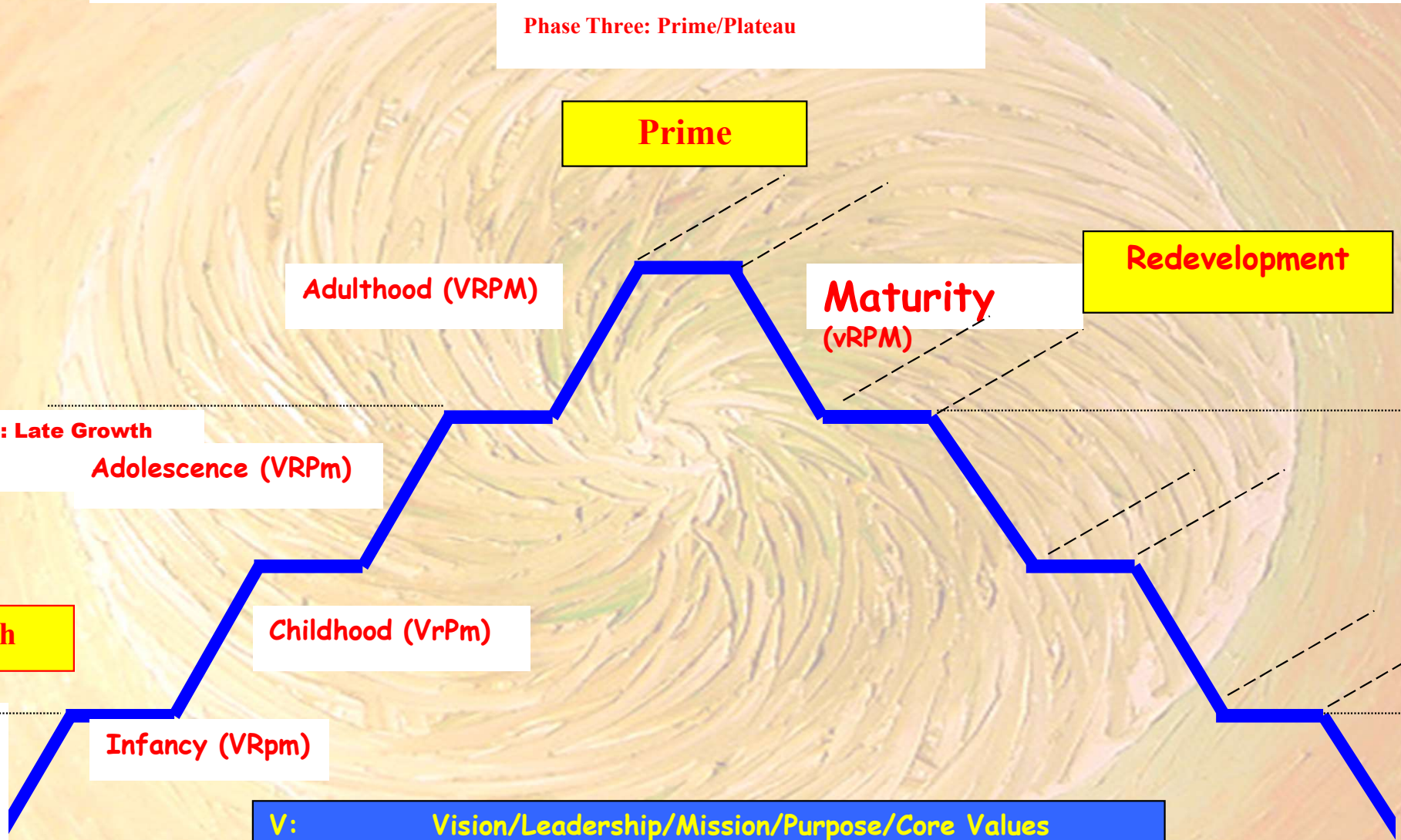
Infancy (VRpm)

Phase One: Early Growth

Birth (Vrpm)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Gestation



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

- Maturity is when *Vision* is no longer dominant or fully developed. The congregation is no longer living out the vision that God has given them. They are, instead, living out the patterns of *Relationships, Programs, and Management* they have developed.
- Without the fueling and driving aspects of *Vision*, the congregation is being motivated by *Management*.
- At the same time, *Maturity* may be a very high quality stage in the life of the congregation. There continues to be a crescendo of quality, even if *Vision* is diminished.

**Maturity**  
(vRPM)

**Redevelopment**

**Birth (Vrpm)**

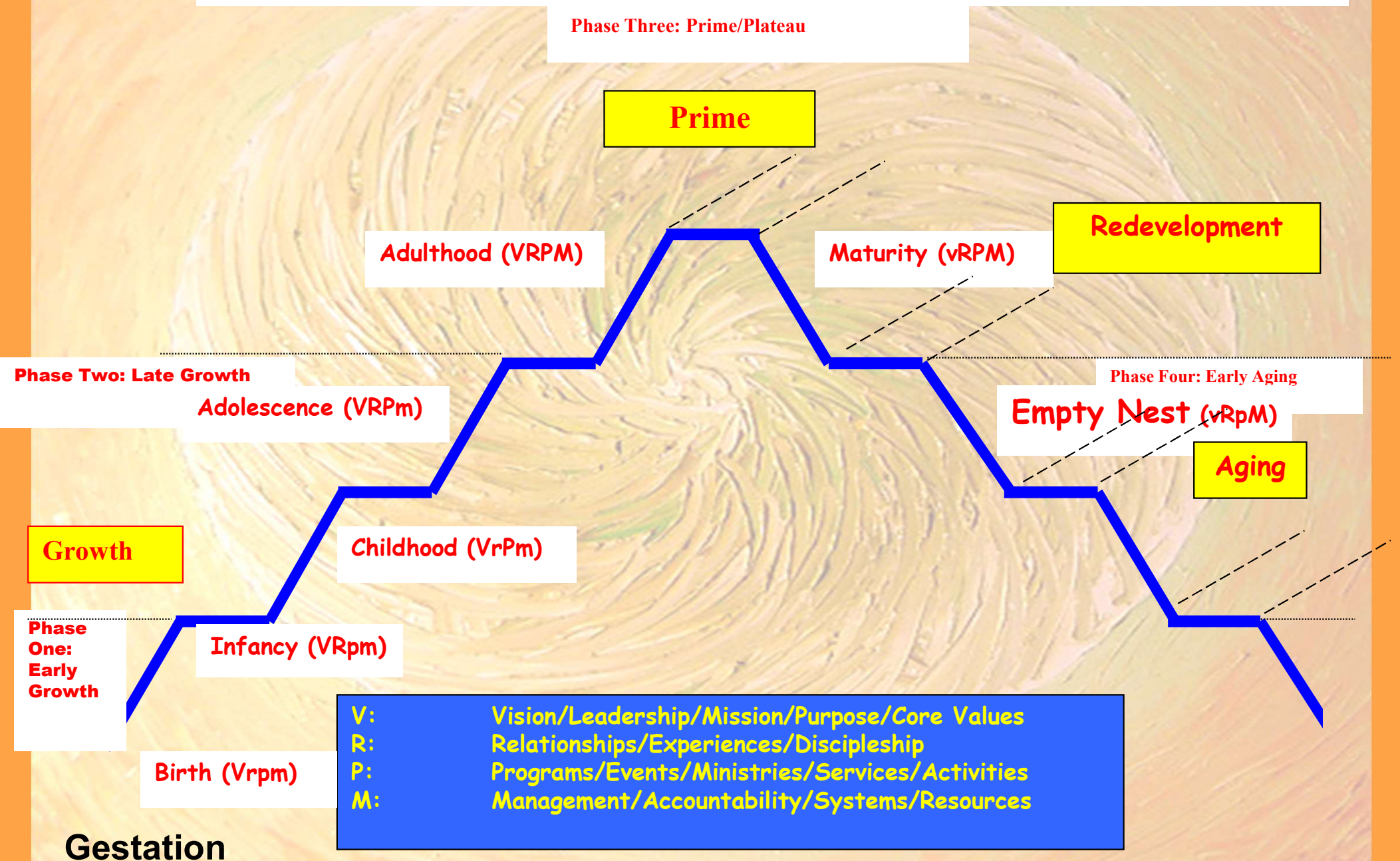
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**R:** Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
**P:** Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
**M:** Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

**Gestation**

PH

PH  
E  
E  
Growth

# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

- Empty Nest is when *Vision* and *Programs* are no longer dominant or fully developed. The congregation is experiencing disintegration of the quality and quantity of programs, ministries, and activities.
- *Management* is driving the direction of the congregation.
- *Relationships*, while still vital, are turning increasingly inward in their focus.
- Empty Nest represents what can turn out to be the angriest stage of the life cycle for a congregation.

(M) **Redevelopment**

Phase Four: Early Aging

**Empty Nest (vRpM)**

**Aging**

**Growth**

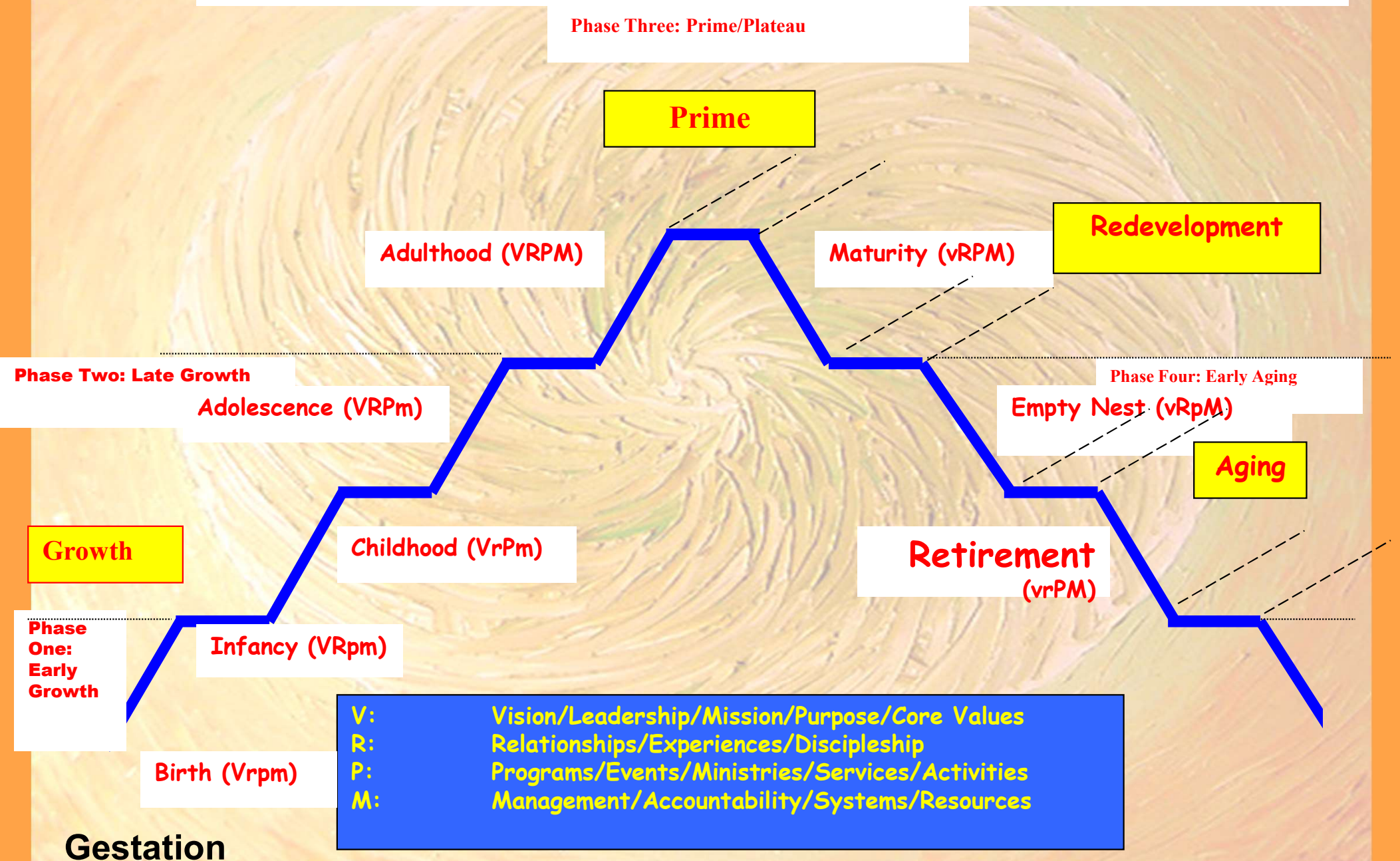
**Phase One: Early Growth**

**Birth (Vrpm)**

**Gestation**

**V:** Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
**R:** Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
**P:** Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
**M:** Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development





# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

- Retirement is when *Vision* and *Relationships* are no longer dominant or fully developed.
- *Management* is driving the direction of the congregation.
- *Programs* are once again dominant as congregations seek to revitalize their programs, ministries and activities.

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Redevelopment

Stability (vRPM)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Aging

Retirement (vrPM)

Use/Core Values

R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Birth (Vrpm)

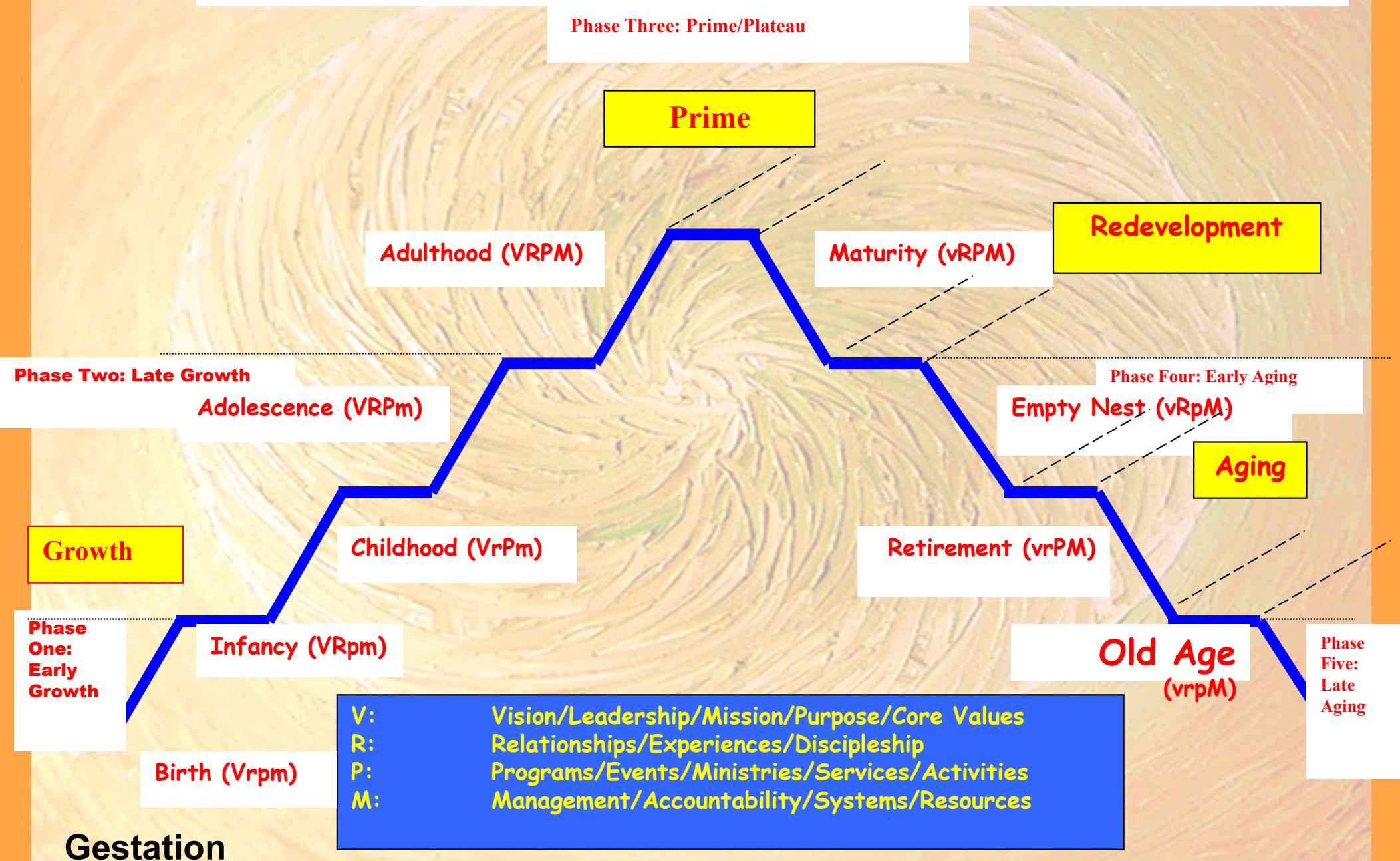
Growth

Phase One: Early Growth

Gestation

Phase Two: Late Growth

# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

• Old Age is when *Vision, Relationships, and Programs* are no longer dominant or fully developed.

• *Management* is the only factor that is still dominant or fully developed. As such the habit or pattern, generally at a mediocre level, drives the direction of the congregation.

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Redevelopment

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest: (vRpM)

Aging

(vrPM)

Old Age  
(vrpM)

Phase Five:  
Late Aging

Adolescence

Infancy (VR)

Birth (Vrpm)

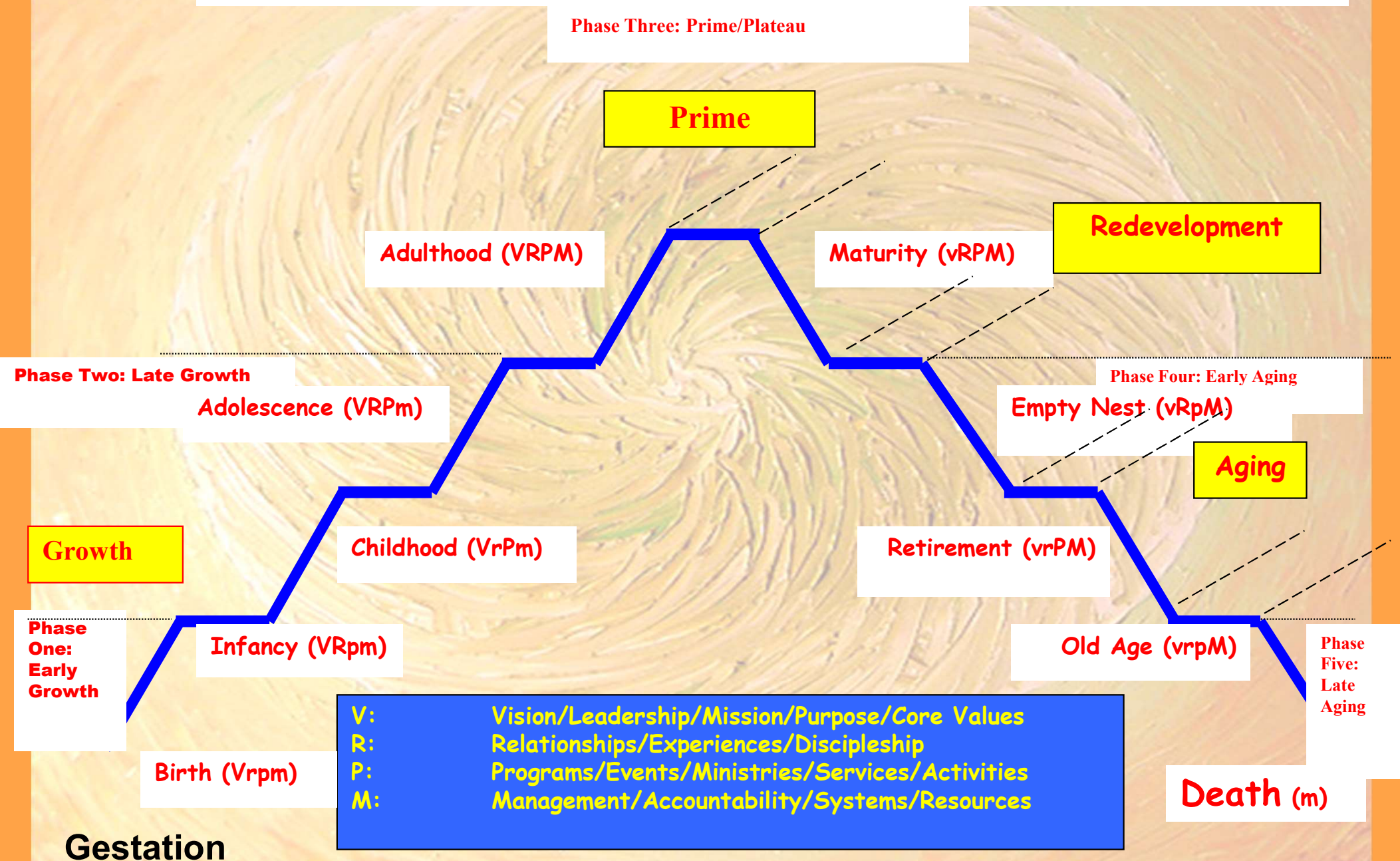
Growth

Phase One:  
Early Growth

Gestation

Phase Two: Late Growth

# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Redevelopment

If a congregation never redevelops, then it will die.  
 Death is where a congregation ceases functioning as a Christ-centric faith community with regular worship, discipleship, and fellowship activities.

Phase Four: Early Aging

Adulthood Nest: (vRpM)

Aging

(vRpM)

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

Death (m)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence

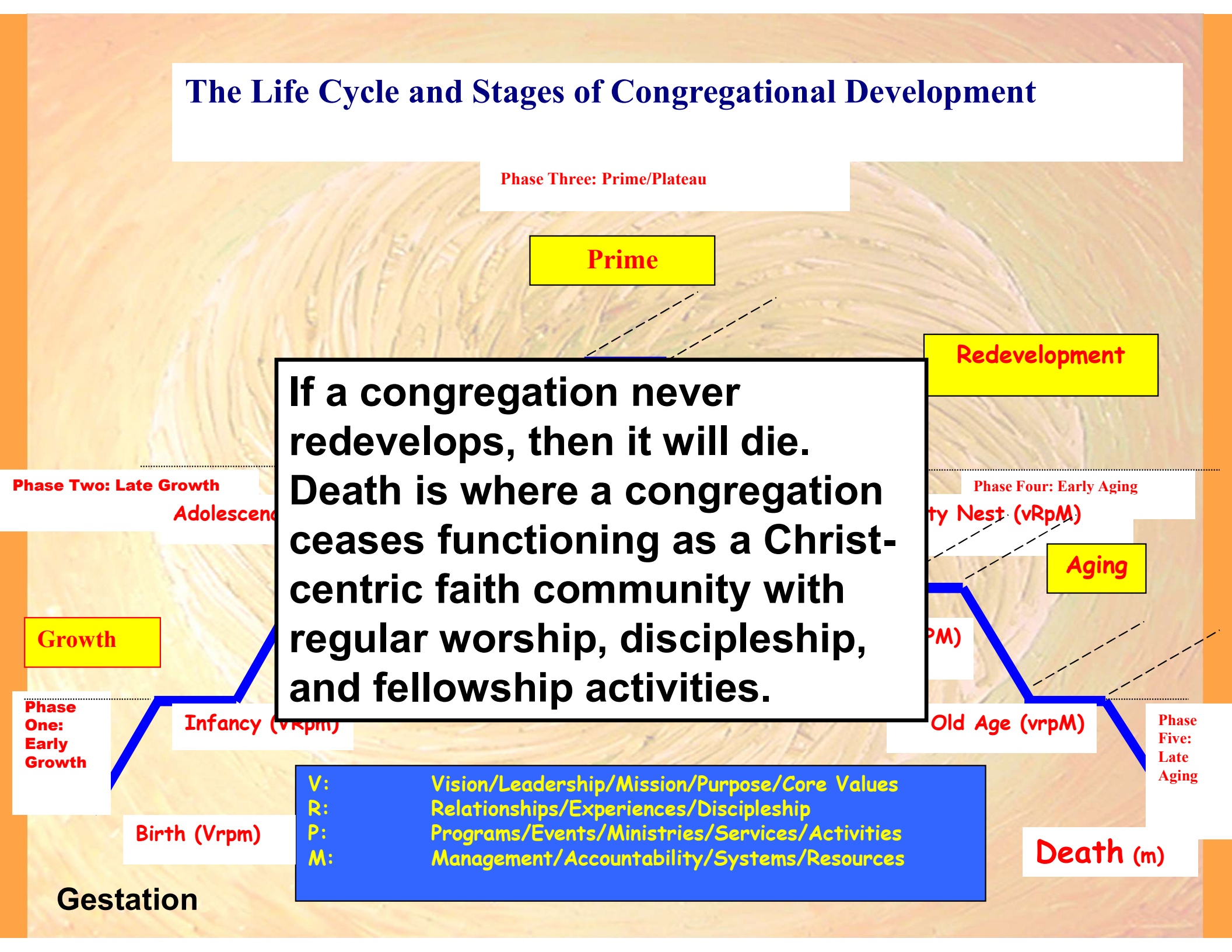
Growth

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy (vRpm)

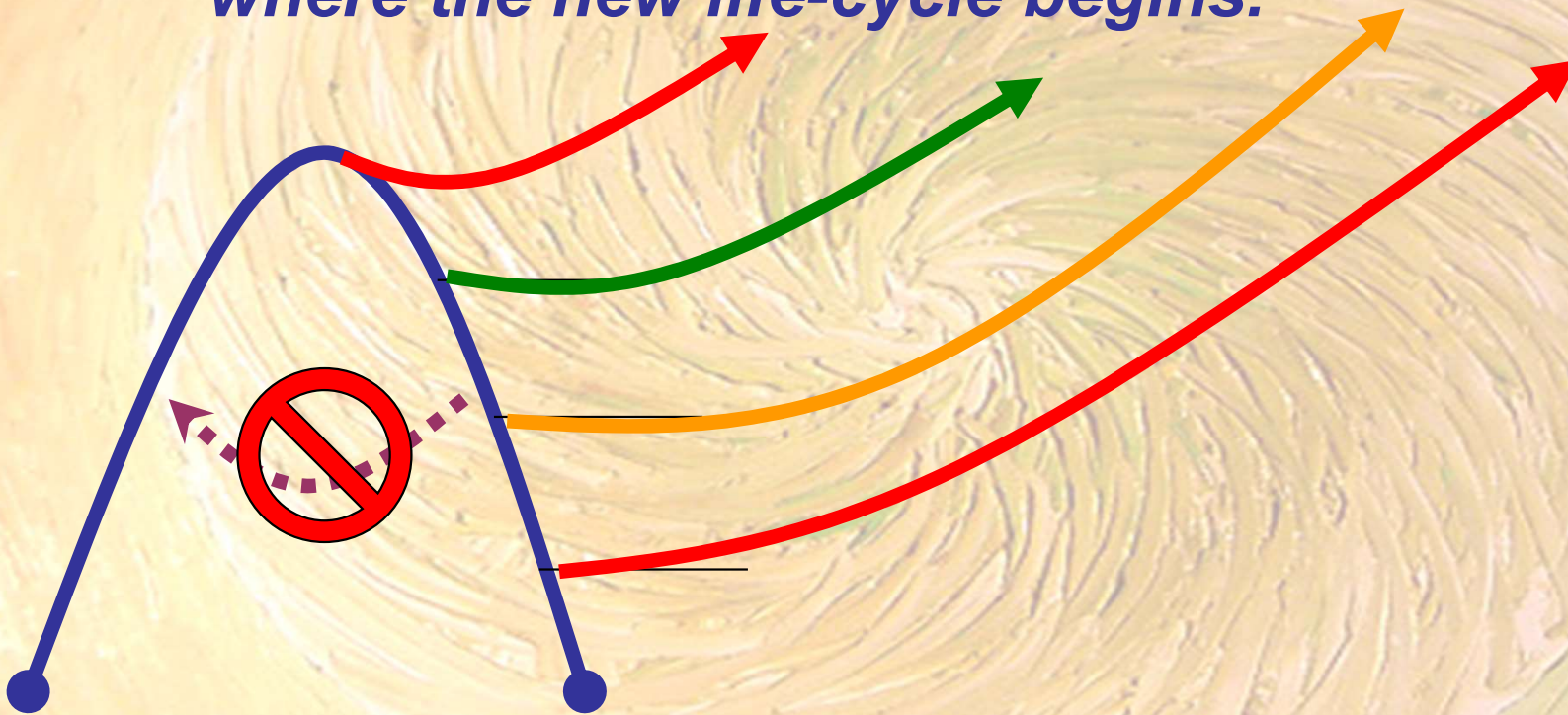
Birth (Vrpm)

Gestation



***Movement is always forward ... into  
a new cycle***

***Where redevelopment begins from, determines  
where the new life-cycle begins.***



***The history of a congregation is the history of  
the succession of partial life-cycles over time.***

# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Redevelopment

Adulthood  
(VRPM)

Maturity  
(vRPM)

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence  
(VDPm)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

**Process Theme:** Resurrection  
**Rate of Change:** Radical  
**Time Frame:** 6-18 months  
**Destination:** Birth

Aging

Growth

Retirement  
(vrPM)

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy  
(VRpm)

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

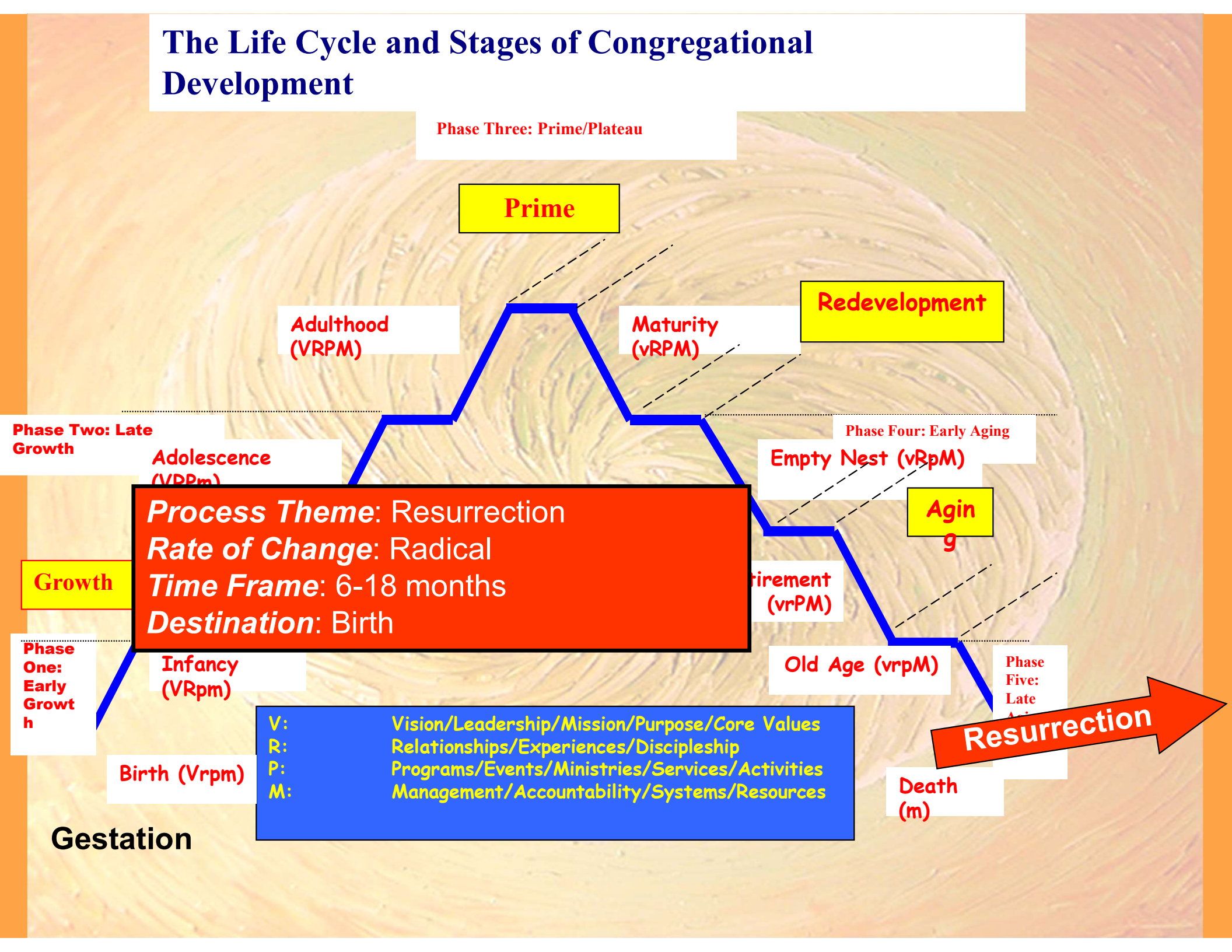
Birth (Vrpm)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Resurrection

Death  
(m)

Gestation



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Adulthood  
(VRPM)

Maturity  
(vRPM)

Redevelopment

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence  
(VDPm)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

**Process Theme:** Reinvent  
**Rate of Change:** Radical  
**Time Frame:** 18-36 months  
**Destination:** Infancy

Growth

Aging

Retirement  
(vrPM)

Reinvent

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy  
(VRpm)

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

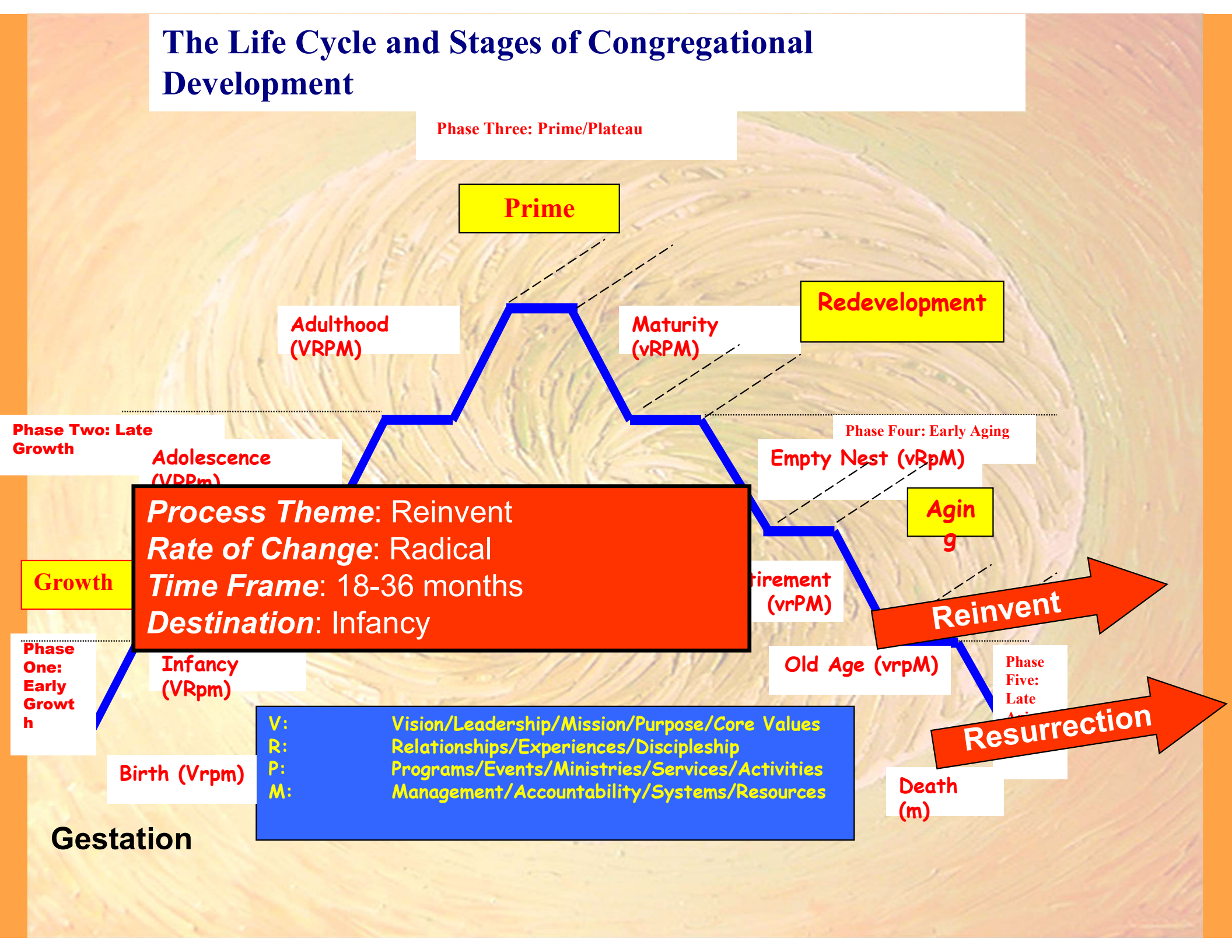
Resurrection

Birth (Vrpm)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Death  
(m)

Gestation





# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Adulthood (VRPM)

Usually Only Possible With significant Outside help

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Aging

Retirement (vrPM)

Reinvent

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

Resurrection

Death (m)

**Process Theme:** Reinvent  
**Rate of Change:** Radical  
**Time Frame:** 18-36 months  
**Destination:** Infancy

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Adolescence (VDPm)

Infancy (VRpm)

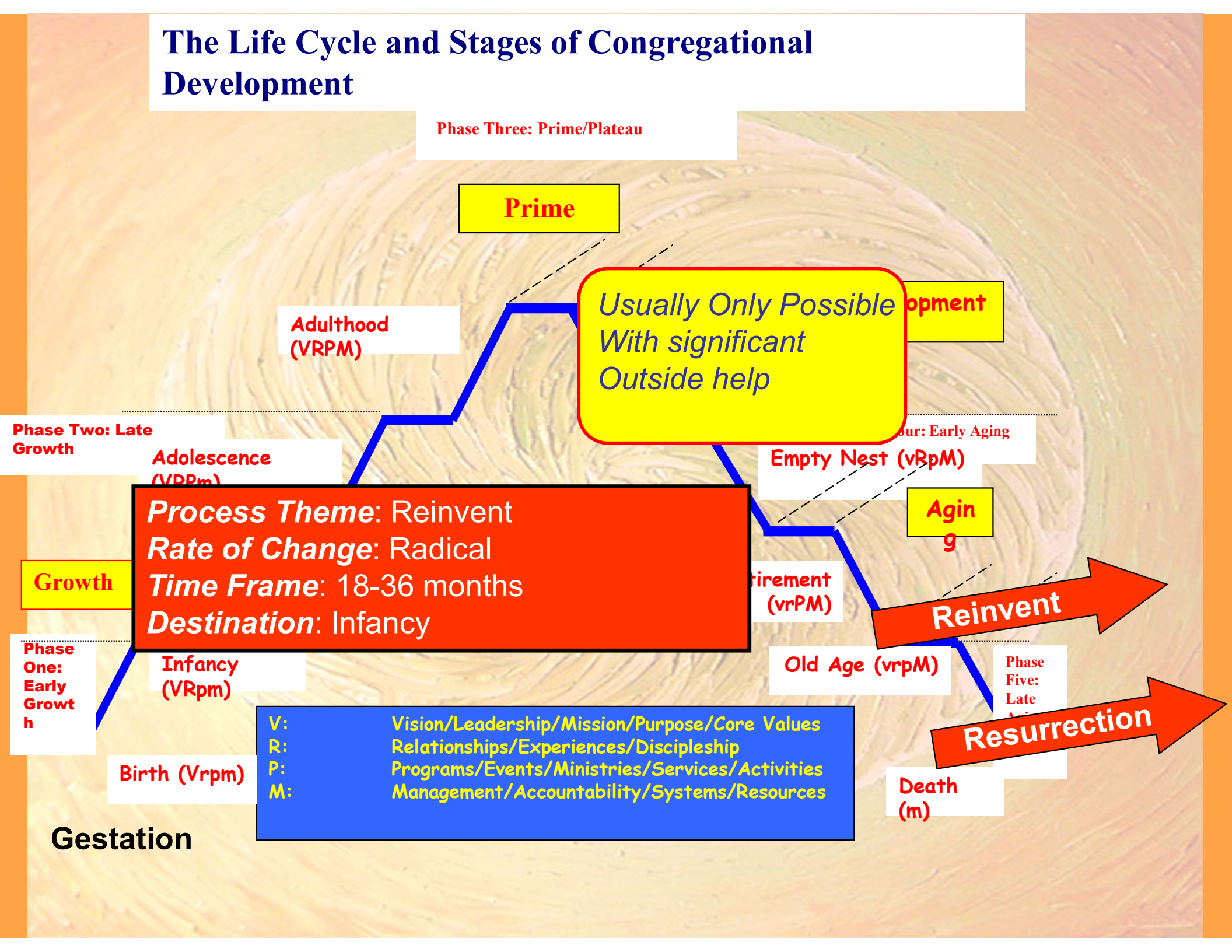
Birth (Vrpm)

Gestation

Growth

Phase Two: Late Growth

Phase One: Early Growth



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Redevelopment

Adulthood  
(VRPM)

Maturity  
(vRPM)

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence  
(VDPm)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

**Process Theme: Renewal (R)**  
**Rate of Change: Discontinuous**  
**Time Frame: 3-5 years**  
**Destination: Adolescence**

Growth

Renewal

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy  
(VRpm)

Retirement  
(vrPM)

Reinvent

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

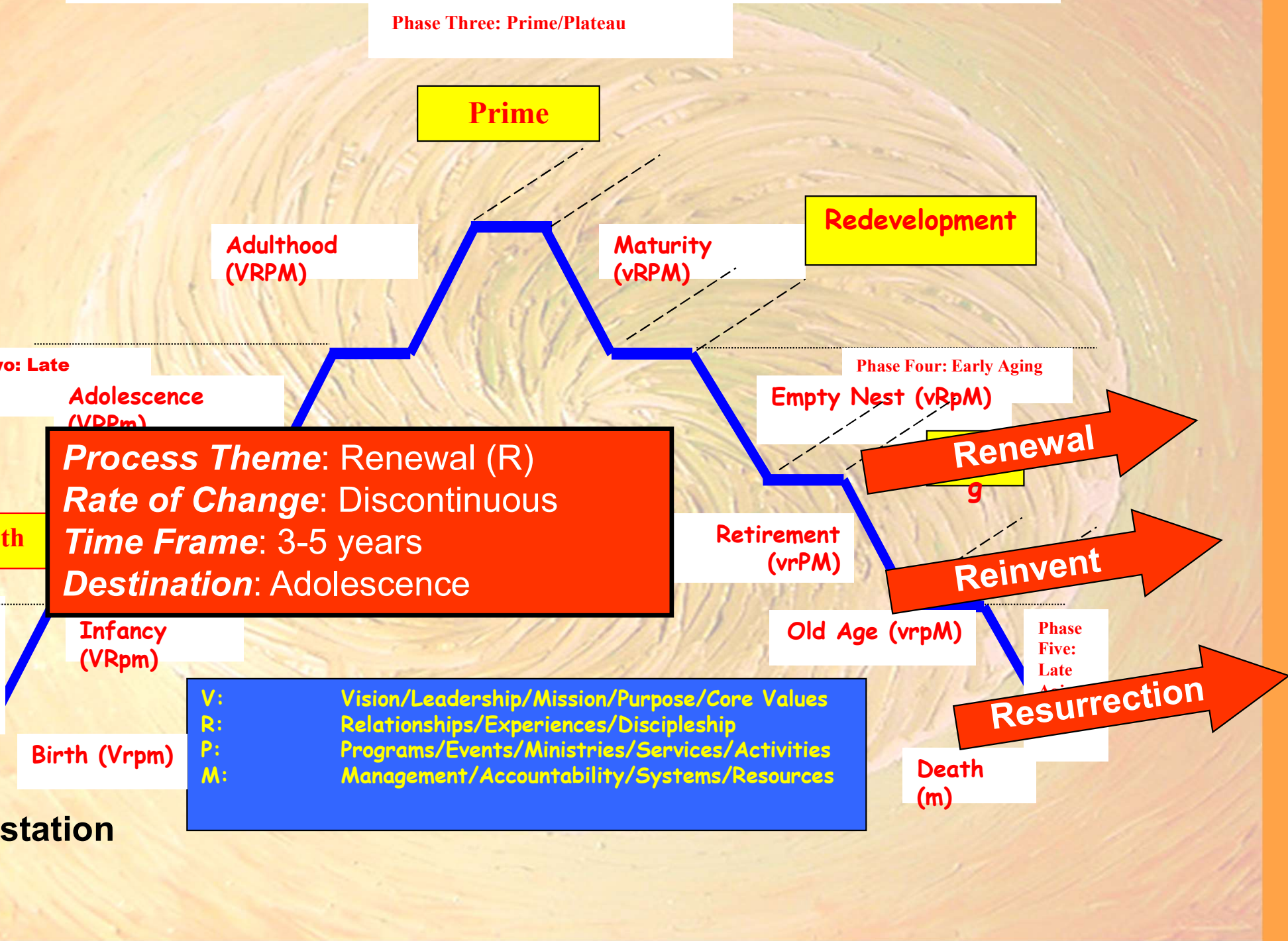
Resurrection

Birth (Vrpm)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Death  
(m)

Gestation



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

## Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

**Process Theme:** Renewal (R)  
**Rate of Change:** After three or four unsuccessful attempts - **Radical** (doing things that have never been done and getting rid of things that have always been done)  
**Time Frame:** 3-5 years  
**Destination:** Childhood

Redevelopment

## Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Renewal  
Renewal

Reinvent

Resurrection

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five:  
Late

Death (m)

Adolescence (VRPm)

Childhood (VrPm)

Retirement (vrPM)

Infancy (VRpm)

Birth (Vrpm)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Gestation

Growth

Phase Two: Late Growth

Phase One: Early Growth

# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

**Process Theme:** Revitalization (P)  
**Rate of Change:** Continuous  
**Time Frame:** 18-36 months  
**Destination:** Late Adolescence

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Redevelopment

Adulthood (VRPM)

Maturity (vRPM)

Revitalization

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence (VRPm)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Renewal  
Renewal

Growth

Childhood (VrPm)

Retirement (vrPM)

Reinvent

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy (VRpm)

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

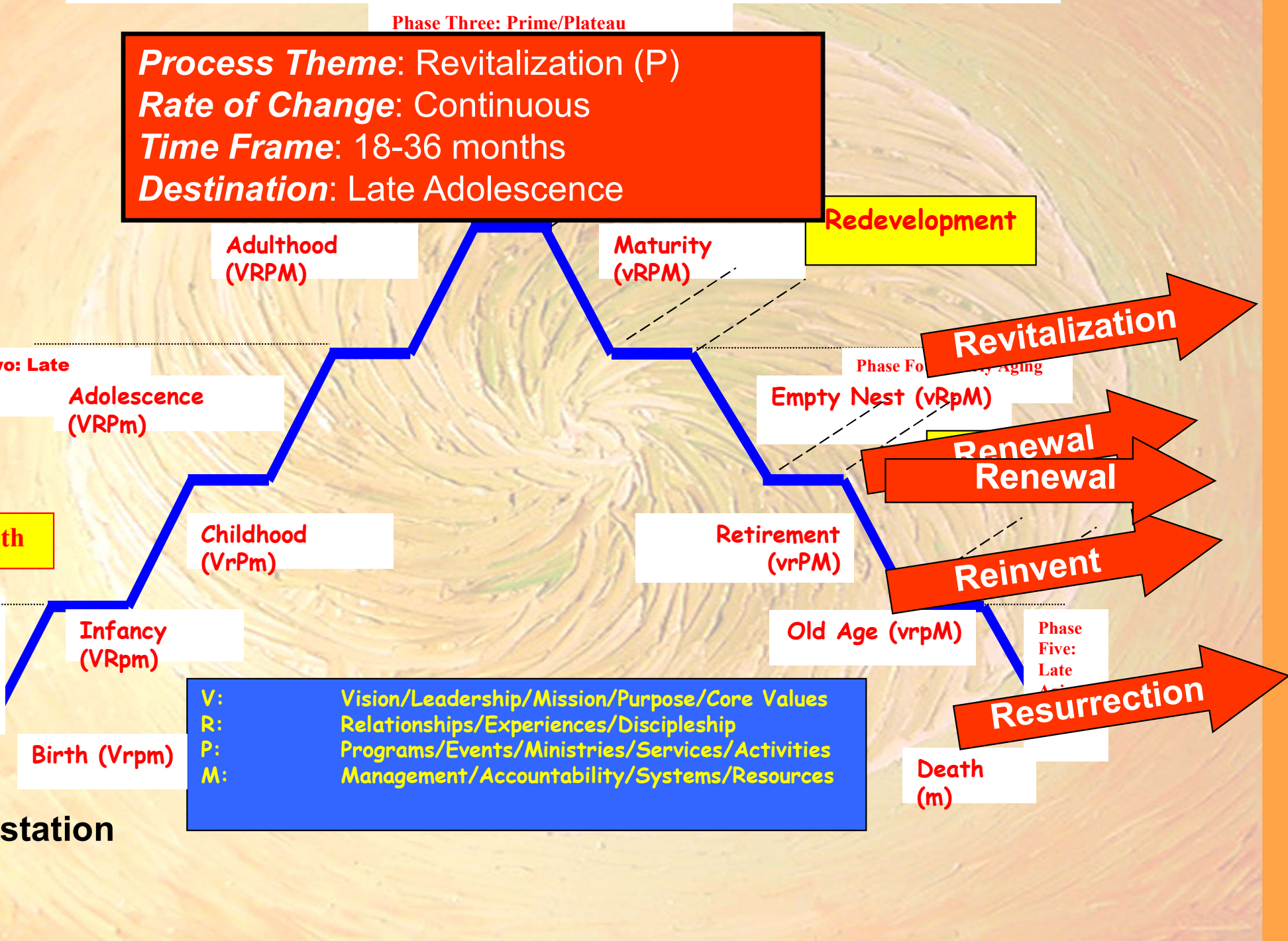
Resurrection

Birth (Vrpm)

Death (m)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Gestation



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

**Process Theme:** Revitalization (P)  
**Rate of Change:** Continuous  
**Time Frame:** 18-36 months  
**Destination:** Late Adolescence

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Redevelopment

Adulthood (VRPM)

Maturity (vRPM)

Revitalization

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence (VRPm)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Renewal  
Renewal

Common Empty Nest Symptom – Nostalgia...

Growth

Childhood (VrPm)

Retirement (vrPM)

Reinvent

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy (VRpm)

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

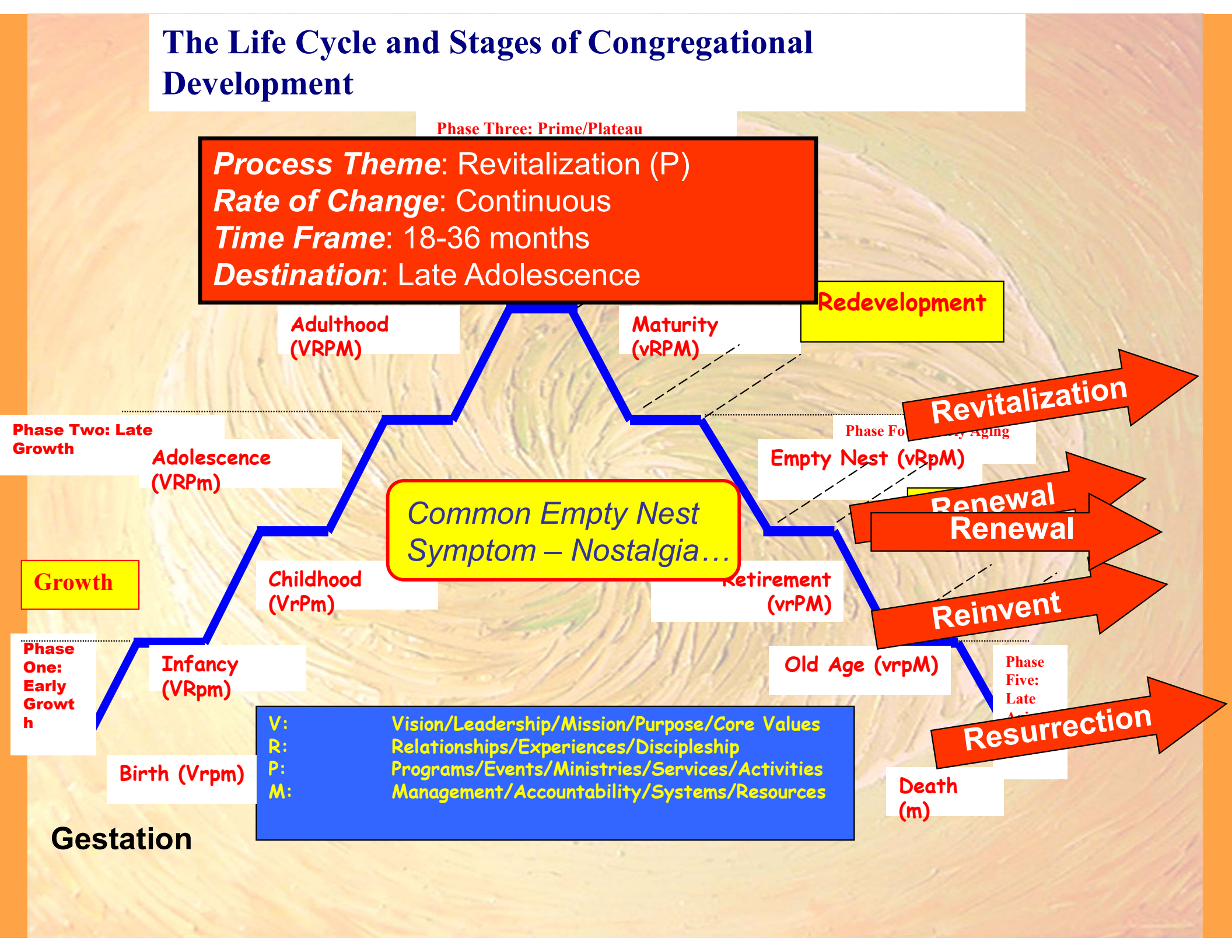
Resurrection

Birth (Vrpm)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Death (m)

Gestation



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

**Phase Three: Prime/Plateau**

*Process Theme:* Revitalization (P)  
*Rate of Change:* Discontinuous (significant change)  
*Time Frame:* 18-36 months  
*Destination:* Adolescence

Redevelopment

(VRPM)

(vRPM)

Revitalization

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence (VRPm)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Renewal  
Renewal

Growth

Childhood (VrPm)

Retirement (vrPM)

Reinvent

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy (VRpm)

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

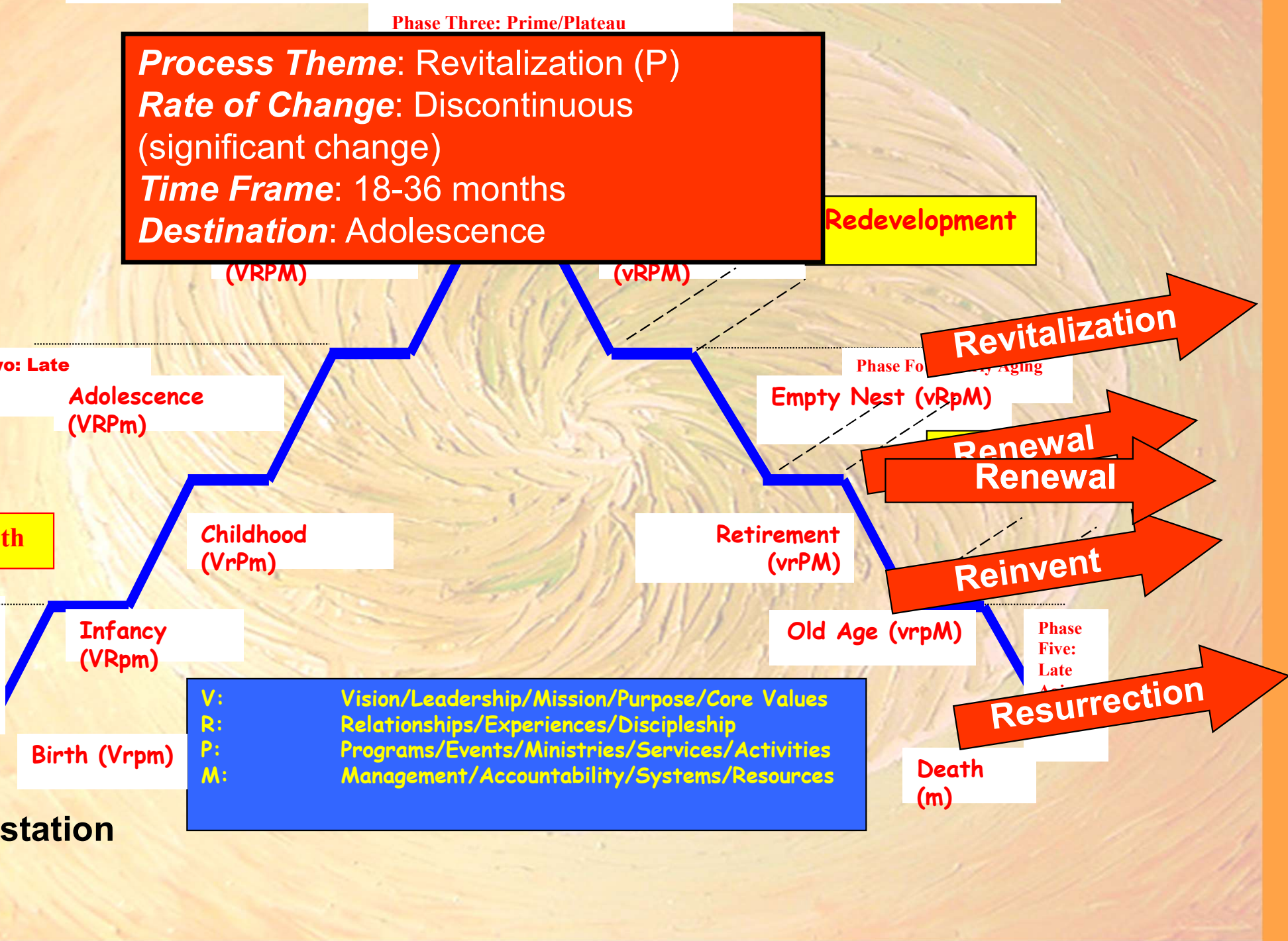
Resurrection

Birth (Vrpm)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Death (m)

Gestation



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

**Phase Three: Prime/Plateau**

*Process Theme:* Revitalization (P)  
*Rate of Change:* Discontinuous (significant change)  
*Time Frame:* 18-36 months  
*Destination:* Adolescence

Redevelopment

(VRPM)

(vRPM)

Revitalization

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence (VRpm)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Renewal  
Renewal

Common Empty Nest Symptom – Anger...

Growth

Childhood (VrPm)

Retirement (vrPM)

Reinvent

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy (VRpm)

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

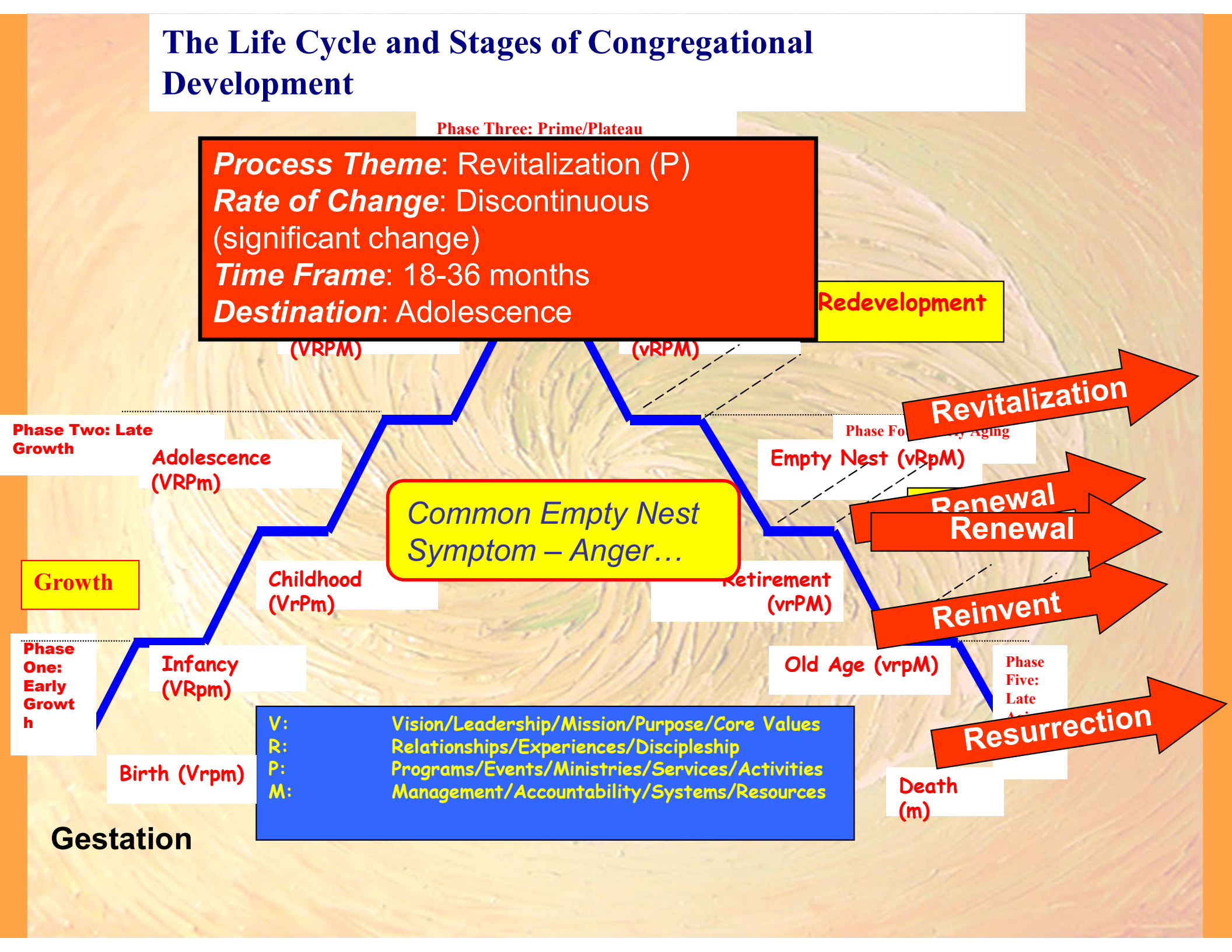
Resurrection

Birth (Vrpm)

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Death (m)

Gestation



# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Adulthood  
(VRPM)

Maturity  
(vRPM)

Redevelopment  
Revisoning

Revitalization

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Renewal  
Renewal

Retirement  
(vrPM)

Reinvent

Old Age (vrpM)

Resurrection

Death  
(m)

**Process Theme:** Revisoning (V)  
**Rate of Change:** Continuous (incremental changes over a controlled period of time)  
**Time Frame:** 6-18 months  
**Destination:** Adulthood

V: Vision/Leadership/Mission/Purpose/Core Values  
 R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship  
 P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities  
 M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources

Infancy  
(VRpm)

Birth (Vrpm)

Phase One: Early Growth

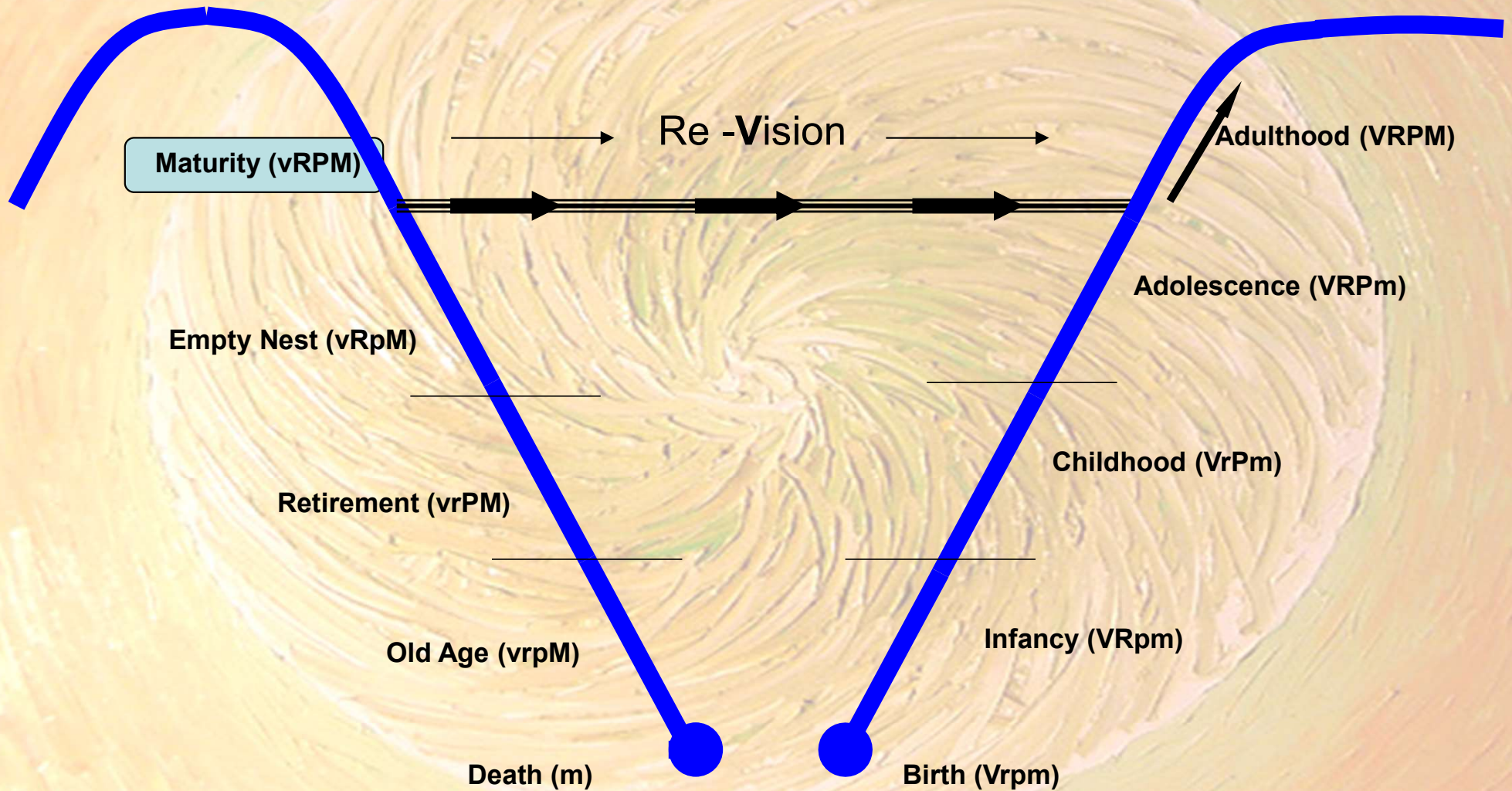
Gestation

Phase Four: Aging

Phase Five: Late

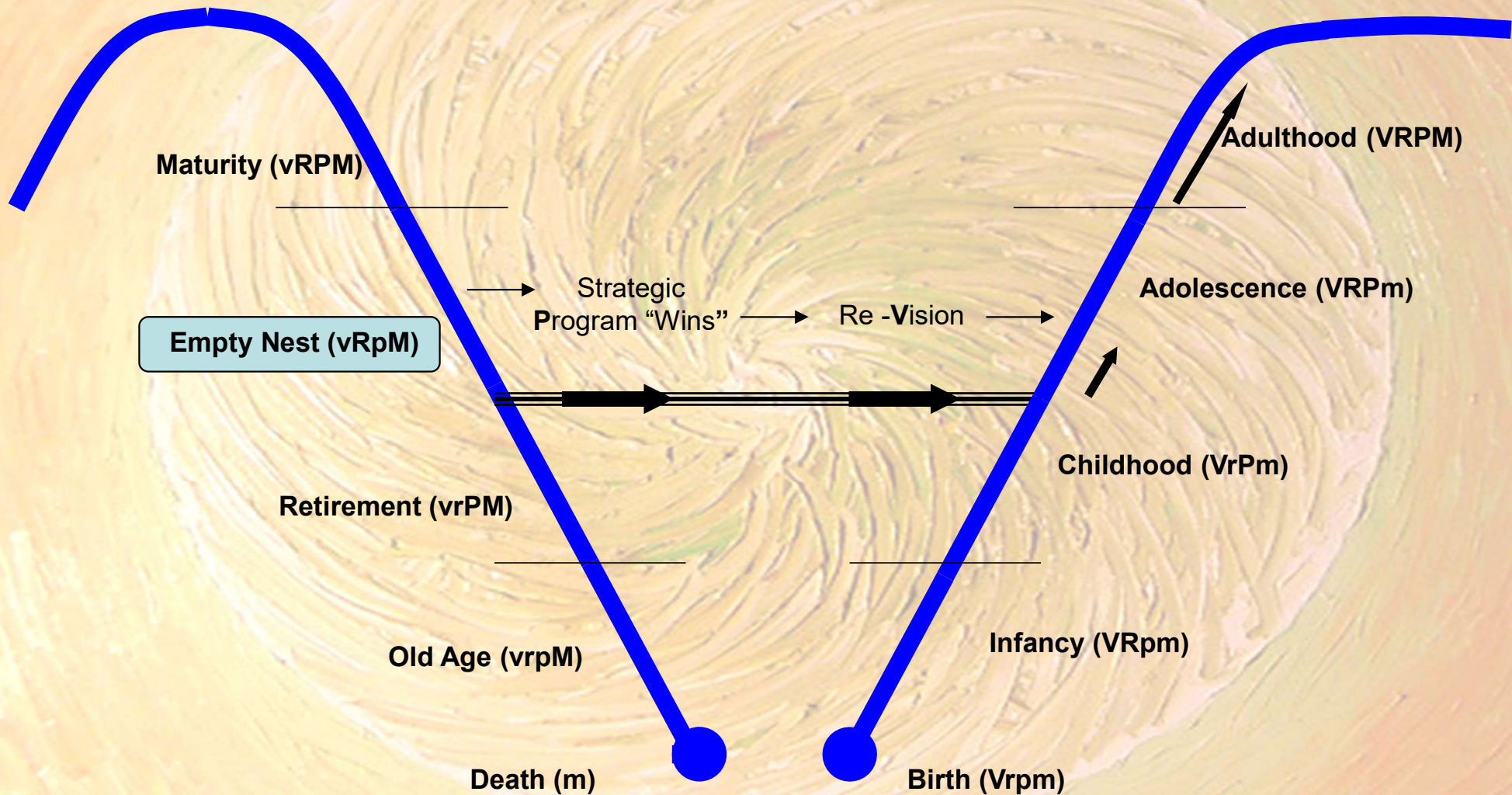


# The Redevelopment "Bridge"



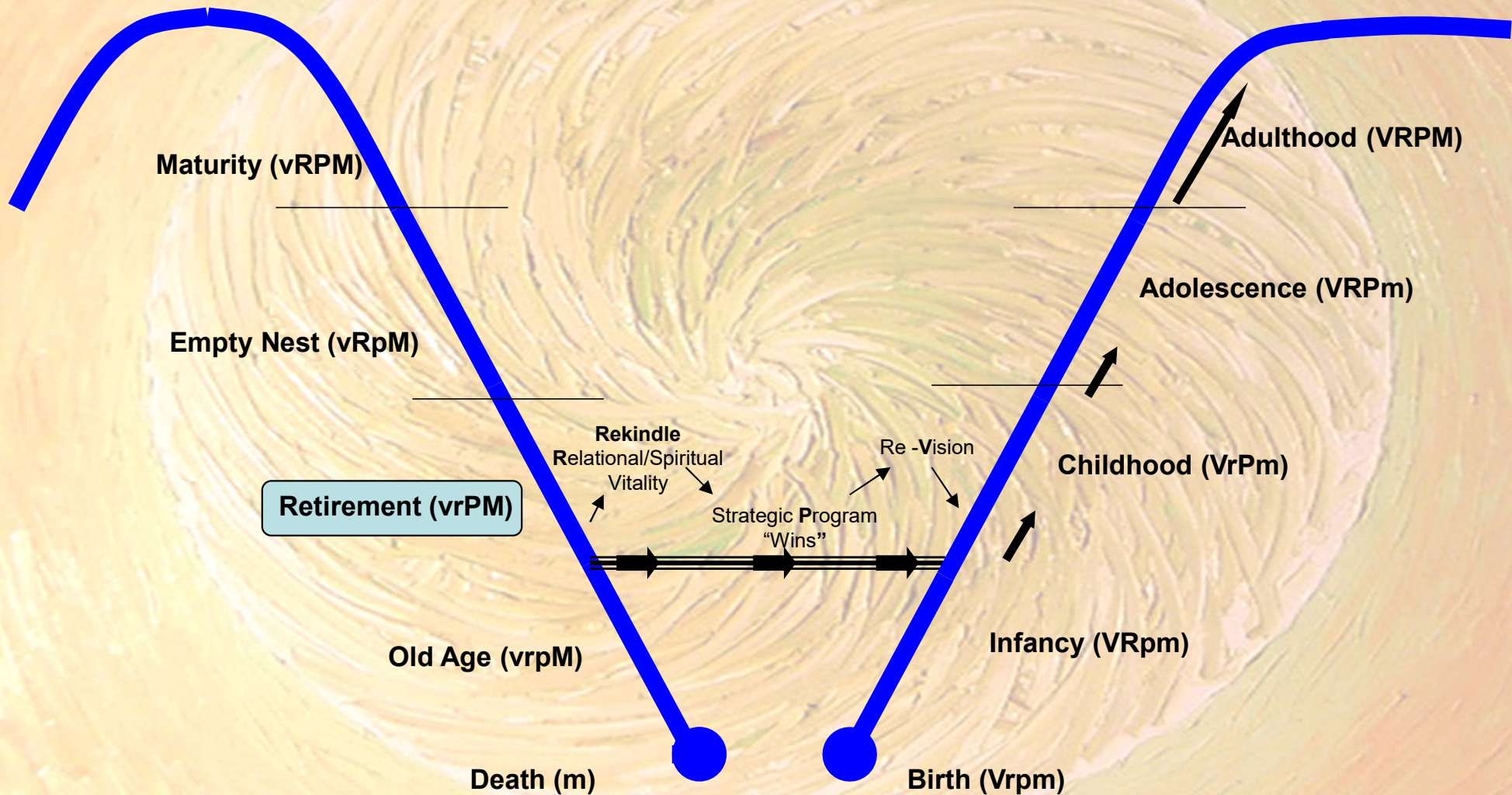
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**R: Relationships/Experiences/Discipleship**  
**P: Programs/Events/Ministries/Services/Activities**  
**M: Management/Accountability/Systems/Resources**

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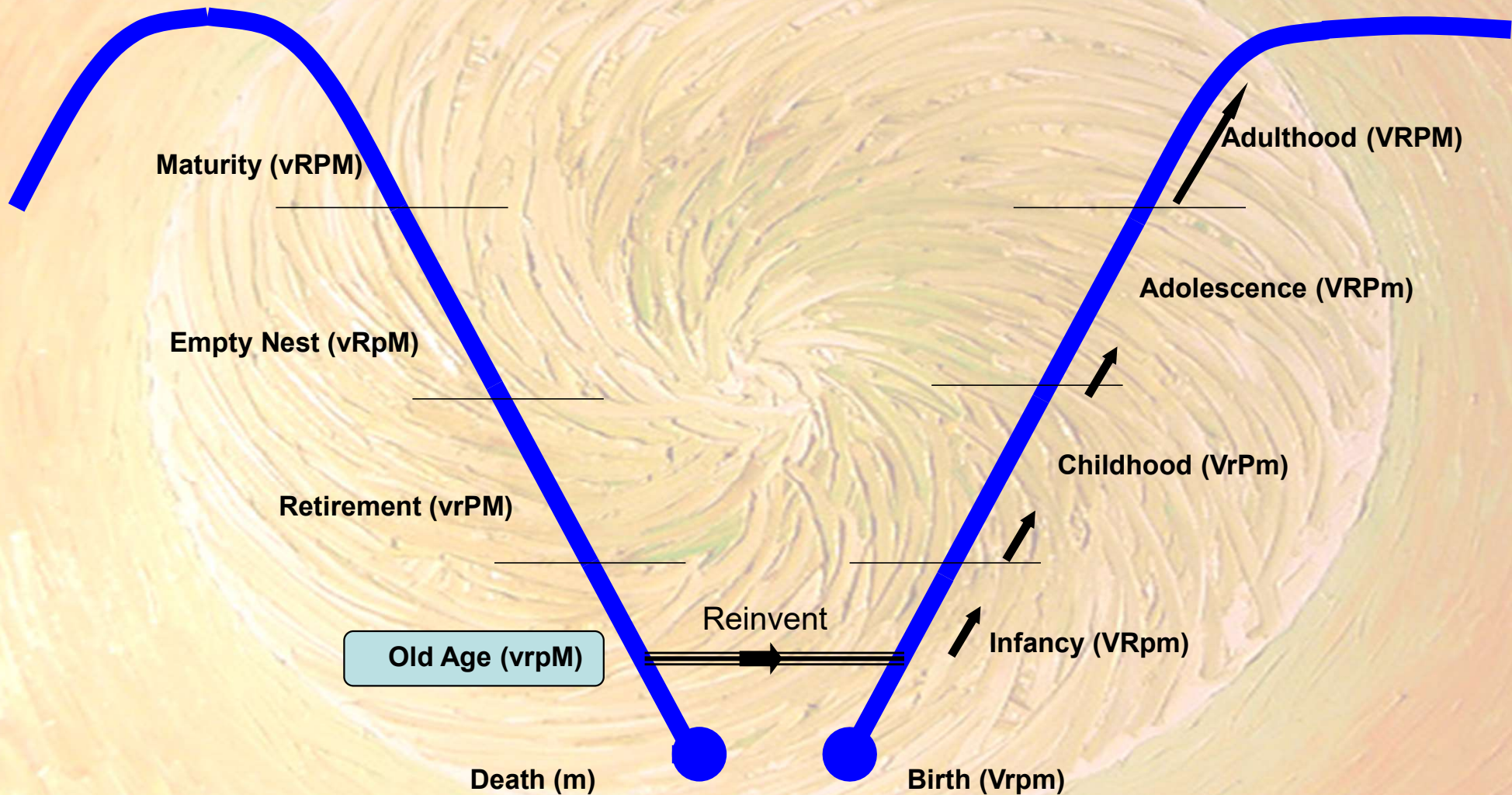
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# The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development

So, where is  
your  
congregation?

Phase Three: Prime/Plateau

Prime

Redevelopment

Adulthood (VRPM)

Maturity (vRPM)

Phase Two: Late Growth

Adolescence (VRPm)

Phase Four: Early Aging

Empty Nest (vRpM)

Growth

Childhood (VrPm)

Retirement (vrPM)

Aging

Phase One: Early Growth

Infancy (VRpm)

Old Age (vrpM)

Phase Five: Late Aging

Birth (Vrpm)

Death (m)

Gestation

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