



**Appendix H:
Quality, Biblical
Curriculum:
9 Questions
We Ask as
We Choose
or Create**



Key Teaching Resources: Quality, Biblical Curriculum

Creating or Choosing Curriculum

As we develop or purchase curriculum we ask 3 groups of questions:

The first four key questions we ask:

1. Is it sound theologically? Is it God-centered?
2. Is it developmentally appropriate for the children?
3. Does it reinforce key truths about God in different ways?
4. If the answer to any of these is not a whole-hearted yes, then we also ask: how hard would it be to make it these things?

These questions are summarized by “Two Dead Men and a Diamond”

Dead Man #1: Martin Luther

Luther spoke of theology—the study of God—as not just dry, heady stuff, but how you live and how you die. Children want to learn real, solid truths about God because He created them to know Him. They want to know about the world, God and His great plans for the world and their lives. Teaching biblical truth is how they can know these things.

Dead Man #2: John Bunyan

Bunyan spoke of reaching people through the gates to their heart. We want to use every gate we can to reach the children. The eye gate, the ear gate, the hand gate, the feet gate, even the stomach gate. The more gates used, the better the chance for the learning time to be enjoyable, understandable and memorable.

A Diamond

The great Puritan preachers meditated upon a single truth from many different facets, seeking to expand their knowledge of God and the implications and applications of this knowledge to their lives. We strive to lead children in thinking upon God in ways that might expand their own understanding of Him, and help them see implications and applications of this knowledge to their lives. We find that curriculum which reinforces the same biblical truths in different ways and at different levels helps to achieve this goal.

The next question we ask is:

5. Are the response activities “conduits of truth” or are they “time fillers”?

Conduits of Truth

There are many curriculum on the market which seek to teach Biblical truths to children in a way that is understandable, enjoyable and memorable. However, we have found, especially in the response activity area, that you need to look closely to see if the activities help the children retain the key, biblical truths of the lesson we most want them to remember.

So, when we create or look at a curriculum, we are not only looking for enjoyable, age-appropriate activities, but at whether these activities are filled with truth or whether they just fill the time. Those which are filled with truth are what we call “conduits of truth.” A conduit of truth activity is one that uses

For example, if the lesson was on Noah's Ark and the children were asked to pair up and mimic animals entering the ark, the children may have a great time, but only go home making elephant noises. This game would not be a conduit of truth. But, if the children were asked to pair up and mimic animals entering the ark, but asked to freeze each time you blow a whistle, then you ask them a question related to the day's story for them to answer, then you have made the same game into a conduit of truth. You are using the enjoyable-ness of the activity to provide an opportunity to reinforce the biblical truths you want them to understand and remember.

Then we ask:

6. How well does it fit us?

7. Does it include resources for parents to use with their children?

8. Is it cost-effective? Re-usable?

1. How well does it fit us?

- a. the attendance patterns of our children
- b. the staffing and abilities of our teachers

Particularly:

- It is easy to follow? How much teaching experience is needed to teach this curriculum well?
- How much preparation is involved?
- What kind of preparation is involved? (choosing and shaping activities or creating activities?)
- Does the curriculum build upon itself, requiring consistent attendance of same kids and the same teacher/s?
- Or, can the lessons stand alone, being effective with kids who have patchy attendance, with visitors, and/or a rotation of teachers?

2. Does it include resources for parents to use with their children (both those whose children attend a class at church and those whose children don't attend the church class but they want to teach these truths at home)? This is important, since class time with the children is very small compared with the teaching time and opportunities parents have with their children. If parents have a way to reinforce the truths taught in the classroom, there is a much higher chance they will be understood and remembered.

3. Is it cost effective? Re-usable? Does the curriculum rely on single-use materials or can they be reproduced and used again with another group of children without additional expense?

The final question we ask is:

9. Does it fit into the teaching emphases set out by our elders?

1. Chronological study of the Bible (OT/NT overviews)
2. Prepare the children to gather together with the church body
3. God's One Big Plan of Redemption/Missions
4. Biblical Theology

It can be amazing curriculum, but if it does not fit with what they want us to teach the children, then we will have to pass on it. We trust our elders' God-given vision for our children!