

# Working with Curriculum

We know that our God is a God of order, therefore we must strive to have order in our lives and our ministry as well. No matter what size your church or Sunday School is, it is absolutely imperative that you have and use a yearly plan or a Bible curriculum. Whether purchased or created, the curriculum will bring order and structure into the Sunday School.

## What is a Curriculum?

The term **curriculum** refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. Curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which include:



- the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet;
- the units and lessons that teachers teach;
- the assignments and projects given to students;
- the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course;
- and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning.

In many cases, teachers develop their own programs or plans, often refining and improving them over years, although it is also common for teachers to use curriculum templates and guides to structure their lessons and courses.

## Why use a Curriculum?

1. **STRUCTURE**- A plan or curriculum will create unseen order in lessons by keeping the teacher organized. It also allows supervisors to check teacher's progress throughout the year.
2. **VARIETY**- Variety is refreshing! The Bible has many stories and we want to cover as many of them without repeating the same stories.
3. **PURPOSE**- It is important to see where we are going and a curriculum is like a map which leads us to our destination allowing us to meet goals or learning objectives.
4. **SIMPLE**- A curriculum makes the teacher's work easier and helps them prepare on time.
5. **CHALLENGING**- A good curriculum challenges the student and teacher to move forward and learn.
6. **REVIEW**- To review what was taught helps the student retain information better. Curriculums allow review to be teacher-lead.

## Finding a Curriculum

Though Timothy was a leader in a church, Apostle Paul reminded him of his purpose and aim. Use his advice to help you create the plan or find the curriculum your Sunday School needs.



### **2 Tim. 3: 14-17**

*“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

Before finding new materials or curriculums, it is wise to evaluate your Sunday School, your teachers, and your lessons.



- What are students learning?
- Are children excited to come to class?
- How well do teachers follow the current plan?
- Is the teacher creative in lesson planning, or repeating same stories and activities?

If teachers are not putting in effort into planning their lessons, a new curriculum will not solve problems. It may be that training teachers would be more beneficial than new materials.



## Choosing a Sunday School Curriculum

If you are choosing a curriculum to purchase for use, pay attention to the following things:

1. It must be Bible-based and Christ-honoring.
2. It must encourage students to come closer to God
  - Learning more about Jesus
  - Accepting Jesus as Savior
  - Becoming dedicated disciples
  - Sharing the Gospel with others
3. It must take students from where they are and move them forward
4. The teaching of the curriculum must agree with the general belief systems of your
  - a. church.
5. Be Age Appropriate (taking into account developmental abilities for children)
  - For Children: Non-readers or “Pre-Readers” (4-7)
    - ✓ Listen to Bible Story
    - ✓ Respond to story verbally (ask and answer questions)
    - ✓ Respond to story through planned activities such as worksheets, coloring, drawing, singing songs, or playing games

- Readers (7 and older)
  - ✓ Incorporate reading of the Bible (Bible stories)
  - ✓ Bible verse memorization
  - ✓ Writing, puzzles, age appropriate games
  - ✓ Learn to look through the Bible for answers to questions
- For Teens (12-18)
  - ✓ Hear Bible Truths and Read from Bible
  - ✓ Discuss how these truths apply to their lives
  - ✓ Learn to serve others and practice it
  - ✓ Gain a general overview of the history and teachings of the Bible
  - ✓ Develop disciplines such as Bible reading and prayer
  - ✓ Learn to teach others about Jesus

### **Secondary considerations in curriculum include the following:**

1. The curriculum should have some reasonable, overall approach to covering the material you wish to study.
2. Lessons should gradually build upon one another.
3. Individual lessons should be short, informative, and able to stand on their own.
4. The curriculum should not just teach Bible lessons, but also new skills and disciplines. Examples: Bible memorization, Bible drills, Bible doctrines, apologetics and defense of the Christian faith, how to witness to others, attributes of God, prayer, etc.
5. Can the worksheets or handouts be reproduced by regular copy machine or does each student need a book?
6. The curriculum must be very age-specific with activities and handouts that would challenge the student, but not overwhelm them.