

A Ten-Question Tool

FOR CHOOSING A CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CURRICULUM



Sorting, sifting, scrolling, and clicking your way through the abundance of available children's ministry curriculum options to determine what's best for your context can be an overwhelming and time-consuming task. But it's an important one! After all, the way we tell God's story matters, whether the learners are 3 or 103.

THE TEN-QUESTION TOOL WAS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT YOU IN THE CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. IT FEATURES TEN TOPICS TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING YOUR SELECTION; EACH WITH A QUESTION OR TWO THAT YOU'LL WANT ANSWERED BEFORE DETERMINING YOUR CHOICE.

Although the goal is to be able to answer "yes" to each of the questions, you'll want to place the most weight on the answers for #1 (Theology) and #2 (Scope and Sequence) because while you can adjust the curriculum to meet the other criteria, the first two items are the foundation upon which a strong curriculum is built.

We hope that this tool will give you clarity and save you time. Mostly we hope it will help you choose resources that will nurture a faith that engages the head, heart, and hands of your children.

Ready? Evaluate the children's ministry resources you're considering by using these ten questions:

#1 THEOLOGY

All curriculum is written from a particular theological perspective. Curriculum that lines up with Reformed theology interprets the Bible first of all as the story of God, and it approaches each story as part of the one story of God's redemption and restoration of this fallen world through Jesus Christ. You want to be careful about using curriculum that focuses on biblical heroes or morals or virtues or us more than it does on God, as well as those that present the gospel as a transaction between us and God rather than a gift.

ASK: Does the curriculum keep the focus on God? Is salvation presented as a gift of grace?

#2 SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Scope and sequence refers to the selection of stories included in a curriculum and the order in which they are presented. A thorough scope and sequence will include a broad span of Old and New Testament stories. Stories with major themes—creation, fall, redemption, restoration—will be told more than once and with greater complexity as children age their way through the curriculum.

ASK: Does each year build on the previous so that learners will have the opportunity to hear a broad span of both Old and New Testament stories while also hearing stories with major themes—creation, fall, redemption, restoration—more than once and with greater complexity as they age their way through the curriculum?

#3 LEARNING STYLES

When it comes to the ways people learn, one size definitely doesn't fit all. If what you teach is going to impact kids, it's important to pay attention to how you teach.

ASK: Are the sessions taught using principles of universal design—paying attention to multiple intelligences and varying abilities—so that all learners can be fully engaged?

#5 DIVERSE

God's family is diverse. Images and text in a curriculum should reflect—and celebrate—that diversity so that learners will grow in love and appreciation for all of God's children.

ASK: Do the images and the text reflect diversity in racial/ethnic groups, gender, socioeconomic status, family structures, age, appearance, and abilities?

#7 LIVING INTO GOD'S STORY

To nurture a faith that's deep and wide, a good curriculum creates space for kids to ask questions, wonder about God, and discover something new as they live into and out of God's story.

ASK: Do the sessions invite reflection by providing learners with the opportunity to ask questions, to wonder about God, and to discover new things?

#9 FAITH NURTURE AT HOME

Research shows the importance of the home in faith formation. Look for components that encourage and equip families.

ASK: How does this resource encourage and equip families to nurture the faith of children at home?

#4 CULTURALLY RELEVANT (AND FUN!)

While the message of the Bible never changes, kid culture does. It's important to tailor your teaching to your audience.

ASK: Do the sessions connect with children by paying attention to the culture in which kids are living today?

#6 LEADER SUPPORT

Leaders need to be encouraged and equipped too.

ASK: Do the sessions include background information and/or a brief devotional to inspire and inform leaders? Are training resources available and easily accessible?

#8 LIVING OUT OF GOD'S STORY

Children should feel called to join God's mission too! Look within a curriculum for opportunities for children to live out of God's story.

ASK: Do the sessions invite a response by which learners feel called and equipped to live out of God's story in a way that shows God's love in their community and around the world?

#10 FAITH NURTURE IN COMMUNITY

Just as the children of Israel were raised in a tribe where families were supported and in which intergenerational faith nurture occurred, so too your church community needs to be a supportive and faith nurturing "tribe" for its children.

ASK: Are there opportunities within each session for leaders and learners to develop meaningful relationships with each other? Are there opportunities for interaction with other members of the faith community? (Guest visits, service projects, celebrations, and so on.)

Comments? Questions? We're here to help.
Contact us at faithformation@crcna.org

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