

Kids' Ministry Training Video 2: Choosing Material

With so many curriculums available, it can be hard to decide which is best for your church. The following is a list of areas that may be helpful to consider when selecting a children's ministry curriculum for your group.

Vision & Values

- Vision:** Does the curriculum fit with the vision of your church?
- Values:** Does the curriculum enable leaders to operate within the values of the church?

Theology

- Beliefs:** Does it teach content which is in alignment with your church's theological beliefs?
- Childhood:** Does it deliver lessons which are in alignment with your church's theology of childhood?
- Accuracy:** Has the content been made age-appropriate, while still maintaining theological accuracy?
- Grace:** Does it point to God's grace, Jesus' salvation and the Holy Spirit's power, or is it suggesting we earn our salvation?

Learning & Engagement

- Learning Styles:** Does it include a variety of learning styles - listening, discussion, and hands on activities?
- Application:** Is there an opportunity for kids to open the bible for themselves, and apply it to their lives?
- Transformation:** Is learning purely intellectual, or does the material aim for heart transformation?

Scope & Sequence

- Approach:** Does the material progress chronologically through the Bible? Or are they topic-based?
- Length:** How long will the curriculum last? Is material for a term only, or for birth through high school?
- Repetition:** Is the material repetitive, or are kids engaging with new stories and content?

Age-appropriate

- Child Development:** Is it appropriate for the developmental stages of your group?
- Faith Development:** Is it appropriate for the various faith development stages of your group?
- Transition:** Does it provide good transition between age groups?

Family Engagement

- Engagement:** Does it help parents engage with and take interest in their children's learning?
- Responsibility:** Does it support parents in taking responsibility for their child's spiritual nature?

Practicalities

- Size:** Does it work with the number of children you have?
- Format:** Is it designed for big groups, small groups or a combination?
- Budget:** Does it fit within your allocated budget?
- Resources:** Do you have the supplies and equipment available to make it work?
- Volunteers:** Does the program require additional leaders, and do you have sufficient volunteers?
- Preparation:** Is the amount of preparation required practical for your volunteers?
- Adaptation:** Can it be adapted to meet the opportunities or limitations of your context?

MODULE ONE: GETTING STARTED

It's rare that you will find the perfect curriculum, so perhaps the most important question to ask is: "Can it be adapted to meet the opportunities or limitations of our context?"

When you source a new curriculum, it can be helpful to go through each of the above checkpoints to determine what makes it a great fit, and which areas might need to be adapted. Having worked through this list, you might determine that you need to add in some more hands on activities, reflection spaces or find a way to help parents engage in the material, or find two extra leaders to facilitate effective small groups.

Decide which of these areas are most important to you (and you are not willing to compromise) and what changes you are prepared to make.

Further Reading:

<http://www.discipleblog.com/2012/12/childrens-curriculum/>

<http://childrensministry.com/choosing-a-curriculum/>

Wholly Kids - guiding kids to life in Christ. LifeWay

Think Orange Reggie Joiner

Questions for Your Team

- Go through the list and use the checkpoints to assess your current curriculum.
- Are there any areas that we need to adapt in our current curriculum? How will we do this?
- What should we remember to specifically look for when choosing our next curriculum?
- How can we better engage and equip parents to take the lead in the nurturing of their child's faith?