

# EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM EVALUATION TOOL



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## HINTS TO HELP CONGREGATIONS USE THIS EVALUATION TOOL

1. Form a group to work on this curriculum evaluation. Prior to meeting, collect the necessary materials you will need to make a decision: your congregation's mission statement, curriculum outlines or samples, price lists and any other necessary material.
2. You might need two blocks of time to use this evaluation tool: one block to identify your congregation's/Sunday School's needs and another to choose the curriculum.
3. Pray together that God will guide your curriculum evaluation and decision.
4. Try to provide time for the group to sample the curriculum materials you have or to read through their outlines.
5. Use the Evaluation Worksheet at the end of this resource to note strengths and challenges for each curriculum as you examine them one at a time. Talk through your comments on each curriculum.
6. When a curriculum is chosen, it needs to support the congregation's mission statement and Sunday School needs.
7. Choose a curriculum that is flexible and adaptable to both your congregation and Sunday School needs.
8. Once you have chosen a curriculum, appeal to the congregation's creativity and generosity to find the necessary budget.

## PART ONE: IDENTIFYING YOUR CONGREGATION'S AND SUNDAY SCHOOL'S NEEDS

### Where do you begin?

Look at who is responsible for choosing the curriculum for your congregation. Consider using a cross-generational group that includes members of Christian Development and Worship committees; Church School teachers and superintendents; worship planners and leaders; older children and youth; and your minister(s).

### Have samples or outlines of curricula available that you wish to consider.

Use the "Curriculum Resource Chart" to help with this.

### Questions for the Group

Brainstorm together *before* you look at the curriculum samples and outlines.

#### 1. Faith Formation Goals

What are your congregation's faith formation goals? Make a list of the groups hope for faith formation especially within the Sunday School. What does your overall mission statement say about your goals. Keep this list visible to the group as you move ahead.

#### 2. Faith Community Needs

Who are the Church School learners in your congregation?

How do their needs affect the curriculum selection?

- What is your congregational setting? (rural/urban/inner city/cross-cultural/multi-racial, First Nations)?
- Who will take part in the program? (ages/genders/interfaith)?
- Are the participants of a particular age or stage?
- What are the special needs and interests of your participants?
- What broader community and global issues affecting daily life?
- What needs and interests will take priority in your curriculum selection?

#### 3. Faith Formation Process

Discuss how faith formation happens in your congregation. How will that affect the kind of curriculum the group chooses? What role might the following practices play?

- Spiritual Disciplines: Bible study, meditation, prayer.
- Worship and sacraments.
- Music, media, arts, drama, rituals, creed, symbols, technology.
- Relationships.
- Attention to the living human story.
- Social justice action.
- Community outreach.
- Care for the earth and it's creatures.

Other considerations?

## PART TWO: CHOOSING YOUR CURRICULUM

**Examine selected curricula samples and reviews, taking notes of the following benchmarks. Make your selection based on what you have identified as your congregation's faith formation needs, goals and practices. Use the Evaluation Worksheet at the end of this package and record your findings. Come to a consensus on your findings and make a selection.**

### 1. Theological Stance

Does the faith stance in the curriculum agree with your congregation's faith stance? With the faith stance of the Anglican Church of Canada?

- What does the resource say about God and what God is calling us to?
- How is the good news of God made evident in people's lives and the world in the curriculum? What is the place of scripture, creation, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the sacraments, tradition, and personal and community experience?
- What does the curriculum say about the authority of the Bible in the church's life and work?
- How does the curriculum regard the role of mission, justice, and stewardship in the church's life and work?
- What other questions do you have?

### 2. Interpretation of Scripture

How does the curriculum help participants find meaning from the biblical story? Which of these approaches do you prefer?

- Each participant is an interpreter. People encounter, interpret, connect to, and find meaning from the biblical story based on age, background, abilities and experiences in church and the world.
- Participants explore and interpret the biblical story in different ways. Perhaps the pre-set lectionary or church year themes.
- Lived cultural experiences and needs often provide a basis for interpretation, especially for newcomers.
- Meaning can be found in First Nations Traditional cultural Spirituality and Christian Spirituality.

### 3. Faith Formation Approach

Which approach do you think will be best when enhancing faith formation?

- The uniqueness of each person's spiritually and being is affirmed.
- Attention is given to participant's questions, concerns, needs, insights and life experiences.
- Material takes into account the whole person – thinking, feeling, acting, loving, hurting, and being creative.
- The freedom and ability of learners and leaders to make decisions and choices is honoured.
- Learners are told what to believe and what faith-life choices to make.
- Material connects to daily living.
- Material connects to worship and other church activities.
- Personal, faith, social justice, community, creation, and global issues are interwoven.

- Material is flexible and adaptable to different contexts and cultures.
- Material is inclusive of other races, cultures, family structures and economic and social patterns.

#### **4. Faith Community Involvement**

Does the curriculum material encourage participants to:

- Become involved in the life of the church – worship, justice(outreach), community life?
- Connect learning and worship?
- Experience daily life and relationships as places for ministry?
- Share faith stories and experiences?
- Make choices for discipleship action?
- Learn to take responsibility for the earth and its creatures?
- Discover their gifts?
- Learn to take responsibility for their lives in their wider community?
- Respect, learn about and talk with other faiths?

Other considerations?

#### **5. Content**

Examine the curriculum content, which do you prefer?

- Bible story based (with pivotal seasons of the year highlighted)?
- Lectionary passages and Christian year based?
- Faith and life issues and themes connected to biblical story based?
- Community-based, with the biblical story connected to the First Nations Traditional and cultural spirituality?

Other considerations?

#### **6. How the Curriculum Presents Itself**

##### LEADER'S GUIDES

- Are instructions clear and easy to follow?
- Do learning activities carry out the intended themes and goals?
- Is the Curriculum attractive and easy to use?
- Is consideration of the learner an important part of the curriculum?
- Does the curriculum suggest a variety of learning and worship activities: arts, music, drama, research, visuals, puzzles, models etc.?
- Does the material meet the needs of people with different intelligences and learning styles?
- Does the material include music and audiovisual resources?
- Are enrichment resources suggested for leaders and learners?

## LEARNER'S MATERIALS

Are learner's materials:

- Attractive, colourful and easy to use?
- Hands-on?
- Inclusive and visual?
- Suited for the intended age group?
- Connected to the children's life experiences?
- Connected to worship and other faith community activities?
- Inclusive of a variety of activities and learning approaches and suited to different intelligences and needs?
- Interwoven with personal, community and global issues and concerns?

Other considerations?

## TAKE HOME MATERIALS

Does the take-home material:

- Provide attractive hands-on interactive activities to connect family and church spirituality?
- Each lesson provide ways for the Christian parent to be involved during the week in the child's discipleship development?
- Take account of the issues above?

## **7. Budget**

- Is adequate budget available to meet the faith formation needs of children and youth in your congregation? How will you be creative in acquiring additional budget if needed?
- Does your congregation have an ongoing budget for additional resources such as children's books, music, audiovisuals, and craft supplies? Who might you approach for additional resources such as CD or tape players and computers?

# AN EVALUATION WORKSHEET FOR CURRICULUM CHOICES

The following worksheet lists features and components that will help you to evaluate curriculum and provide information about the wisdom of the group's particular curriculum choice.

Name of curriculum reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>I. Curriculum Features</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Theological criteria		
Interpretation of scripture		
Faith Formation approach		
Organized around Bible stories, lectionary passages, themes to connect with scriptures		
Assumptions about the nature and role of the church		
Connection among worship, learning and other church activities		
Leader/learner methods used		
Role of leaders		
Role of learners		
Leader support		

<b>II. Curriculum Components</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Appearance and usability		
Materials for leaders		
Sessions outlines		
Hands-on material for learners		
Take-home material		
Music, visuals, audiovisuals		
Other: What I like best about this curriculum Challenges I see in using this curriculum.		