

Choosing Sunday School Curriculum One Youth Worker's Tools . . . Shared With You!

1. Give the people what they ask for!

Survey your youth participants and teachers. What do they like about what they are using now? Do they want more activities? Are the activities boring? Are the lessons rooted in reformed theology? Does it feel too cheesy? Do participants and teachers want a discussion model or one a model that engages the arts? Do they want lectionary or theme based? Are your youth biblically literate and want to engage on a deeper level, or are many of your youth reading the Bible for the first time?

2. Get some help!

Ask a couple of key leaders, teachers, and participants to form a small committee or task force to help you look through several curriculums available. Develop or find an evaluation tool to guide the study of curriculum.

3. Evaluation Tool

I evaluate curriculum in the following categories

- Theological Evaluation
- Biblical Evaluation
- Educational Methods Evaluation
- Teacher Use Evaluation
- Practical Evaluation

*A full example of an evaluation tool with specific guiding questions can be found at the bottom of the quick sheet.

4. Who are the key players in Sunday school curriculum?

You will need to decide if you want a curriculum that is a series or that is annually published with new lessons. Examples of series and annually published curriculum:

- **Tweens**
 - Presby Youth: The Best of We Believe and Faithfully Asking Questions, quarterly curriculum, (tweens, younger youth, older youth) Congregational Ministries Publishing, PC(USA)



Quicksheets

Fast and Fabulous Ideas for Youth Ministry

32

- Connect, annually published, (Tweens, 4th–6th grades) Sparkhouse, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (a denomination in partnership with the PC(USA))

• Younger Youth

- Feasting on the Word Curriculum, lectionary based, annually published (youth and young adult) Congregational Ministries Publishing and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, PC(USA)
- Presby Youth: The Best of We Believe and Faithfully Asking Questions, quarterly curriculum, (tweens, younger youth, older youth) Congregational Ministries Publishing, PC(USA)
- SeasonsENCORE, published annually and lectionary based lessons, (ages 12–14 and ages 15–18) Seasons of the Spirit, Canadian publisher with writers from multiple denominations and countries, including the PC(USA)
- Encounter—annually published, (Junior High/Middle School and Senior High) Cokesbury, Methodist *They also publish several topic-based short series.*

• Older Youth

- Faith Questions, 4-or 6-week studies (older youth, adaptable for all age youth) Congregational Ministries Publishing, denominational curriculum publisher of the PC(USA)
- Feasting on the Word Curriculum, lectionary based, annually published (youth and young adult) Congregational Ministries Publishing and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, PC(USA)
- Presby Youth: The Best of We Believe and Faithfully Asking Questions, quarterly curriculum, (tweens, younger youth, older youth) Congregational Ministries Publishing, PC(USA)
- SeasonsENCORE, published annually and lectionary based lessons, (ages 12–14 and ages 15–18) Seasons of the Spirit, Canadian publisher with writers from multiple denominations and countries, including the PC(USA)
- Encounter—annually published, (Junior High/Middle School and Senior High) Cokesbury, Methodist *They also publish several topic-based short series.*
- Sticky Faith Teen Curriculum with DVD: 10-Lessons to Nurture Faith Beyond High School, (high school youth) Fuller Youth Institute

• All Age Youth

- Professing Our Faith: A Confirmation Curriculum, 8-week or 32-week sessions (all age youth, confirmation) Congregational Ministries Publishing, PC(USA)

- **INformed: Adolescent Development Resources:** order individual lessons, several topics available (adaptable for all age youth) Congregational Ministries Publishing, PC(USA)
- **Re:Form, 40-sessions,** (all age youth, confirmation) Sparkhouse, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (a denomination in partnership with the PC(USA))
- **Re:Form Traditions, 4-sessions,** three versions to choose from Lutheran, Reformed, and Methodists, (all aged youth, confirmation) Sparkhouse, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (a denomination in partnership with the PC(USA))
- **Re:Form Ancestors, 15-sessions** from the Old Testament and 15-sessions from the New testament, (all aged youth) Sparkhouse, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (a denomination in partnership with the PC(USA))
- **Echo the Story, 12-sessions,** (all aged youth) Sparkhouse, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (a denomination in partnership with the PC(USA))
- **Live Curriculum,** several topics with multiple sessions, (all age youth) Group, Christian publishing, not affiliated with a denomination
- **Individual studies for download on Bible, theology, contemporary issues, popular culture, spirituality, and Christian living,** (all age youth) The Thoughtful Christian.com, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, writers are from a variety of denominations
- **Faith Weaver—**annually published, (all age youth) Cokesbury, Methodist
- **Spice Rack,** order a 3-month, 6-month, or 12-month subscription of lessons annually published, (all age youth) By Mark DeVries of Ministry Architects
- **Spice Rack,** order individual lessons from over 300-lessons (all age youth) By Mark DeVries of Ministry Architects
- **Age Not Specified**
 - **Nooma Videos** by Rob Bell, 24-short devotional films with reflection guide, (no age specified) Flannel, non-profit of Christians, not affiliated with a denomination
 - **Sticky Faith Every Day: 8-Weeks of Noticing God More,** (not specified which age youth) Fuller Youth Institute

5. Too many options . . .

First, narrow down the options for the committee or task force. Give each person on the committee or task force one to three curriculums to evaluate and report findings back to the committee.

6. Make a choice!

You need to make a choice to choose curriculum for the year or for multiple years.

- If you choose an annually produced curriculum, it is the most suitable for using it for multiple years.
- If you choose a series curriculum, be sure to choose a series or multiple series that covers the year or multiple years.

That's it! With the reports and help of the committee or task force, choose curriculum that will work best for your youth Sunday school. You can choose based on the committee's advice, or you can allow the committee to vote on a curriculum together. Most likely, you will need to have the church's session approve the new curriculum, so bring members of the committee or task force with you when presenting the new curriculum to session. Finally, when you implement the new curriculum, you now have a small group of leaders, teachers, and participants who know the curriculum and can share this exciting new curriculum with others to get them involved.

7. Keep your notes

Save the committee or task force's reports and notes on the curriculums for future use and reference. It may come in handy if the curriculum chosen does not end up working out as desired or when you need to choose new curriculum next time.

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Theological Evaluation

Resource name, publisher, & publishing date.	Are each person in the Trinity engaged?	How is God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit presented visually and characteristically?	How is God's grace shown?								

Practical Evaluation

Resource name, publisher, & publishing date.	Does the goal, purpose, and mission of the resource match that of the church and faith tradition?	How much does it cost?	Do the lessons give more detailed or more general instructions for the teachers?	Would you recommend this resource?