

HOW TO EVALUATE CURRICULA

DETERMINE IF A STUDY IS RIGHT FOR YOUR GROUP

There is no 'one-size fits all' curriculum that will meet the needs of every group in every situation. This document highlights several questions you can ask to determine if a curriculum will meet your needs for a particular group, at a certain time and place. No curriculum will meet all of these criteria perfectly. Decide which criteria are the most important to you and choose a study that is strong in those areas. See the [Curriculum Review Rubric](#)

WHAT SIZE IS YOUR GROUP?

Will you be teaching a large, medium, or small group? Will the activities provided in the curriculum work well for that size group? See [Tips for Adapting a Curriculum for Group Size](#)

WHAT FORMAT WILL YOU USE?

Will you be presenting your Bible Study in-person, online, or in a hybrid format? Most curriculum is designed for in-person teaching. Does your curriculum provide directions for teaching online? See [Tips for Teaching Online](#)

HOW EXPERIENCED IS YOUR CLASS?

Are you teaching students who have been studying the Bible for years, or students who are attending their very first Bible Study? Is the curriculum written in way that is not too simplistic for experienced learners or too overwhelming for beginners?

WHAT VIEW OF SCRIPTURE IS STATED OR IMPLIED IN THIS CURRICULUM?

- Does the study recognize the Bible as the inspired word of God but also acknowledge that it is written through human authors?
- Does the study take the Bible seriously but not literally, or does the study view the Bible as a book of inerrant facts?
- Does the study recognize the Bible as a theological document or does the study suggest that the Bible is completely accurate both scientifically and historically?

IS THE STUDY WELL ORGANIZED?

- Are ideas presented clearly, helping participants understand how each idea fits within the themes of this book of the Bible?
- Does the study demonstrate how the themes of this book of the Bible fit within the Bible as a whole?
- Do the lessons build on each other and follow in a logical order?
- Do the activities and discussion questions for each lesson help clarify the point of the lesson?

HOW COMPREHENSIVE IS THE STUDY?

- Does the curriculum cover the entire Bible book or does it cover only certain parts of the scripture?
- If the study only covers certain parts of the scripture, are the important themes of the Bible book discussed?
- If the study is topic based does the curriculum discuss the most important points of the topic?

DOES THE STUDY ENGAGE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES AND VOICES?

Do the lessons include the voices of the marginalized? Does the curriculum provide information from the perspective of people of different races, cultures, genders, social locations, sexual orientations, and identities? Does the study encourage participants to evaluate ideas and situations from multiple viewpoints? Does the study leave room for participants to share ideas from diverse perspectives and voices?

DOES THE STUDY ENCOURAGE GROWTH?

Does the study encourage participants to ask questions? Does it provide participants with opportunities to think carefully about why they believe what they do? Does the study offer participants new ideas to consider?

DO THE ACTIVITIES APPEAL TO MULTIPLE LEARNING STYLES?

Does the curriculum provide activities for the different ways people learn such as:

- Working with others,
- Understanding ourselves,
- Using language,
- Using math and logic,
- Representing things spatially,
- Understanding the natural world,
- Moving one's body,
- Learning through music?

See [Tips for Appealing to Different Learning Styles](#)

IS THE CURRICULUM INTERESTING AND ENGAGING?

- Does the curriculum provide information that is interesting and relevant to the topic?
- Does the study engage the participant in learning activities or are the lessons presented solely in a lecture format?
- Do the activities draw the participants into the learning process and allow each participant to contribute to the learning of the group?
- Are there a variety of different types of activities or are the activities repetitive?

HOW WELL DOES THE STUDY USE SCRIPTURE?

Is the study based on scripture or on the confessions of the church? Does the study at least refer to scripture or the confessions of the church? Or is scripture largely absent from the curriculum?

IS THE CURRICULUM THEOLOGICALLY SOUND?

Is the theology (stated or implied) of the curriculum consistent with Reformed Theology?

- Does the curriculum recognize the importance of scripture as our way of knowing who God is and our resource for understanding our Christian faith?
- Does the study affirm God as triune, one God in three persons?
- Does the study affirm God as creator of all things? Does it recognize God's presence in and involvement with God's creation?
- Does the curriculum affirm Jesus Christ as our redeemer, and recognize Jesus as both fully divine and fully human?
- Does the study acknowledge the Holy Spirit as our sustainer, present in the church and in the world?
- Does the study recognize salvation as God's gift of grace and not something accomplished through human efforts?

See [Characteristics of Reformed Theology](#)

DOES THE STUDY ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY INVOLMENT?

- Does the study encourage participants to think about societal problems and injustices?
- Does the study encourage participants to be involved in the community at the level of direct service (meeting the immediate needs of the community)?
- Does the study encourage participants to be involved in the community at the level of social change and justice work (working to improve the societal conditions that cause the immediate needs in the community)?

IS THE CURRICULUM FOCUSED?

- Does the curriculum focus on specific ideas or does it seem scattered, including information that isn't relevant to the topic?
- Do the activities and discussion questions support the main ideas of the study or do they stray off topic?

See [Tips for Focusing Your Curriculum Using the Propositional Teaching Method](#)

DOES THE CURRICULLUM PROVIDE PLENTY OF SUPPORT FOR LEADERS?

- Does the curriculum provide supplemental reading for the leaders or point the leaders to additional resources?
- Does the leader's guide provide tips on handling difficult conversations or make suggestions for navigating issues that may come up in discussing the readings?
- Does the curriculum provide multiple ideas and options for lesson planning?
- Do the lesson plans include a variety of activities and discussion topics for leaders to choose from?

DOES THE CURRICULUM MEET THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS?

- Does the study allow for fuller engagement of learners with diverse physical, emotional, social, and neurodiverse learning needs?
- Are there optional activities that can be used to allow for participation within a learner's abilities?
- Can the process, product, or environment of the activities be adapted to allow for participation within a learner's abilities?
- Can activities be adapted for visual, sound, touch, or space-related sensitivities?
- What additional supports can be incorporated for adapting or completing a task?

See [STAR Support Map](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Gardner, Howard, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1983

McKim, Donald K, *Introducing the Reformed Faith: Biblical Revelation, Christian Tradition, Contemporary Significance*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001