

Enhancing The Curriculum

Steve Alley

We see a blend of biblical literacy in the children's ministry (CM) classrooms. Some children know the Bible stories, yet many of them don't. This is typical of what is happening across America. There are still some families where God's Word is taught, but the trend is moving away from that foundation. This trend is producing a greater Biblical illiteracy among our children.



There are two challenges that you may face regarding CM curriculum:

- You have purchased CM curriculum (and you have to be a good steward of the Lord's money) but you feel that the curriculum doesn't really address the "blend" that you see in the children who come to the CM.
- You do not currently use a CM curriculum, but you don't know how to find one that is the best for your children or the "blend" that you see in your community.

No matter what your curriculum situation is, you need to remember that the people on your CM team are your "living Bible curriculum." The Lord uses the CM team members to draw the children closer to Himself, not some printed paper that you purchase or download from a publisher. Using a curriculum is a good thing, but it is only a tool for your passionate, called CM team members to use. Ultimately, the children will remember the team members' examples and support; they won't go home and tell their parents all about the amazing curriculum!



Whatever curriculum you use, you need to train and empower the team to use the curriculum as a "springboard" in their ministry to the children. It is just a beginning. It gives them a "starting point" for the lesson. You should encourage the CM team to add their own creativity to it! The CM team needs to add their own creative pictures and stories to an otherwise "bland" lesson.

You can compare the curriculum to "white rice." It is bland and it needs some "sauce." Each teacher needs to seek the Lord for the "sauce" that will enhance the "taste" for the children. This "sauce" can be a drawing on the board, a personal story, or some other activity or experience that makes the lesson "come alive." Because they have never heard about the Bible, some children may not relate to the story in the curriculum. Rather than discard the curriculum, ask God to help you make the lesson personal or interesting to the children. He can do that! He's very creative!

Children need to be taught something that they can use right away. We, as teachers, must draw out of the passage something that applies to the children's lives! For instance, Joshua's story of the battle of Jericho has within it some rich "nuggets" of truth. Every child faces daunting "walls." Every child is asked to do something that they think is "stupid." Every child understands the concept of struggling with obedience. The story of Joshua has all of this within it. But it is up to the teacher, to draw it out and, with the Lord's help, create some interesting "sauce" to pour over the "white rice" of the lesson. This can be done through drawings, stories, discussions, role plays, etc.



There are three things that kids like: learning new things, fun challenges, and competitions. This is exactly what you must consider as you look at the lesson presented in the curriculum. Ask the Lord to help you "sauce up" the "rice" of the lesson in those three areas!

Adding “Sauce” To A “White Rice” Lesson

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We are “wired” to enjoy and learn from stories! Jesus used this powerful technique. Tell the stories with actions, facial expressions, and questions to the kids. Challenge the kids to apply the story to the lesson!



The curriculum may give you some pictures; add to them. Look for pictures that stir the kids from “Google Images.” Add a thrilling object lesson from science experiment web sites. The more visual or surprising, the better. Don’t over explain the experience, just do it and talk later!



Most people learn well by watching. Drama is visual. Create “start and stop” drama that has built-in discussions. If you can’t think of a way to illustrate the lesson, come at it through the “back door”! Demonstrate the opposite of the lesson!



In today’s noisy world, “just listening” is difficult and unusual. This makes listening to sounds or songs very valuable. Use songs or sounds that illustrate the lesson. Make sure to get approval for the songs beforehand.



Printed Lesson

Every printed lesson can be compared to a bowl of white rice. It may contain “the basics,” but it may need some “sauce” to make it more attractive or effective for children.