

# Building Faith

A Ministry of Virginia Theological Seminary

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## 5 Questions to Ask When Evaluating Christian Education Curriculum

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### Taking Stock

If you're like most church educators, fall is when curriculum has been purchased, delivered, unpacked (or downloaded). You may be reading through them in preparation for your church's fall programming, getting excited about all the possibilities for providing children, youth, and adults meaningful engagement with Scripture and Christian topics. But I also imagine, if you're like most people, that this excitement and energy is clouding another crucial aspect of curriculum: **how you'll be evaluating these curriculum materials throughout the year.**

There's something about the word 'evaluation' that either brings terror or complete disinterest to the hearts of many church educators. Yet it is a critically important step as you guide the people in your congregation in their faith journeys. So I encourage you to view curriculum evaluation as an ongoing way to love and care for your parishioners. Then I invite you to put a reminder in your calendar (well before it's time to order next year's materials) to officially ask yourself – and selected staff, learners, teachers, and volunteers – the following questions about your current Christian education curriculum.

# 5 Questions to Ask When Evaluating Curriculum

## 1. Did you meet your goals?

In other words, did the learners and participants who were taught using these curriculum materials demonstrate the outcomes you had hoped for? Of course, to answer this question, you need to have an established purpose or goal. If you do not, be sure to create one for the coming year. It is not as terrifying as it sounds. A stated goal can be as simple as: *“The purpose of Christian education and formation at our church is to \_\_\_\_\_ as .”*

## 2. Was it a match for your age groups?

You know your groups best. So ask yourself and your colleagues: Were the curriculum materials age-appropriate for our learners? If not, can we make adaptations? Or do we need to consider a new resource for next year?

## 3. Which Bible version does the curriculum reference?

This is a basic question that is often overlooked. Were the curriculum materials compatible with the version(s) of the Bible that your congregation uses? If not, how will you remedy this for the future?

## 4. How much adaptation did you do?

Some adaptation of materials is always needed, but how much time do you have to do this? Ask yourself: did I use all or most of the subjects and topics covered in the curriculum materials? Or, did I need to pick and choose in order to make it work for the program? If you spent too much time adapting, it may be time to consider a new curriculum.

## 5. How much prep time is involved?

You know your teachers and volunteers. How much time are your folks willing to put into preparing to teach? How well does the curriculum support the needs of your teachers and volunteers? How much preparation did the materials require of you? The answers to these questions will influence your decision about using the same resource next year.

## An Ongoing Process

As you evaluate the curriculum materials your congregation is using, I hope that you will view this process as one of the ways that you bless your children, youth, and adults along their journeys in faith. For a more in-depth look at how to evaluate curriculum, I recommend Nancy Ferguson’s book, [Christian Educators’ Guide To Evaluating and Developing Curriculum](#).

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