

# Beacon Media curriculum implementation

## Our goals

### To provide:

- a financially viable Christian school, which uses the Beacon Media curriculum as a foundation, and a school that is affordable to the average Fijian family
- high quality education
- small class sizes, with maximum of 25 students per teacher and minimum of 16 per teacher
- a clean, attractive and inspiring learning environment

Our teachers are the key. In employing a teacher, we will look for someone who:

- has a heart for children
- loves and serves the Lord
- is a team player, a servant, teachable
- hard working, willing to sacrifice time and effort
- has a teaching qualification
- has a good reference
- is excellent in their ability to run a classroom
- able to teach groups of different levels in the one class

We will therefore respect our teachers. Wages paid to teachers may be less than offered in the government system, but conditions are much better.

Teachers will submit a copy of their qualifications and a history of their teaching experience. These will be filed in the school office.

## Making our school financially viable

- One teacher per class of 16 - 25 students
- This may mean that composite classes are necessary, e.g. Composite Years 1 and 2 (one teacher) and Composite Years 2 and 3 (one teacher)

We may place the children in ability groups for M

aths and literacy rather than Year Levels.

Group work will be important, (not always whole class teaching). The teacher will train the class to work independently on an activity while conducting intensive work with one small group.

## Teaching Assistants

The primary school may employ at least one teaching assistant to take one-on-one sessions for students who are behind the standard in literacy and mathematics. Teaching Assistants must have completed the Beacon Media Teacher's Aide training courses in literacy and numeracy. They will be paid less than a fully qualified teacher's salary.

# Kindergarten

Beacon Media schools with kindergartens will adopt the YWAM curriculum, with adjustments made to run parallel with the Beacon Media God-centred thematic curriculum.

The curriculum will be predominantly play-based, giving children free choice activities for at least 2 hours per day. This encourages children to make choices and decisions and become independent learners. It is important that children develop this skill as a prerequisite to our Primary school education, where there will be group work, and where children will need to learn how to work responsibly and independently while the teacher is working with a group other than their own.

In kindergarten, group times with specific instruction from the teacher should be limited to 15 minutes at any one session.

## **Play-based learning**

Play-based learning is essential in the early years for developing a child's sense of inquiry... wanting to find out about the world around them. This develops the essential motivation for learning, necessary for success in ongoing education.

Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, intellectual, and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development.

As children play, they learn to solve problems, to get along with others and to develop the fine and gross motor skills needed to grow and learn.

A play-based learning environment will consist of a number of centres where children can choose to involve themselves independently in activities which have been set up for them. They will interact with other children as they involve themselves in the activities.

## **Play centres to be set up on a permanent basis:**

- Collage / box construction
- Painting (painting tools, type of paper, colours of paint can be changed)
- Playdough (can be varied by adding different tools such as forks, rolling pins etc.)
- Home corner (can be varied by adding different kinds of pretend food; kitchen utensils, dolls and dolls clothes)
- Blocks or other hard construction materials such as plastic bricks
- Reading Corner
- Puzzles
- Dramatic play (dress ups), puppets

Some of the above could be combined in the one area, e.g.

- Painting and collage/box construction
- Home corner and playdough
- Reading corner and puzzles (both quiet activities)

## **Flexible play centres to be changed on a regular basis**

Allow space in the room for two or three other play centres that will change throughout the year. Examples:

- YWAM creation theme activity centres
- Shop
- Manipulative activities such as threading, picking up small objects with tweezers / tongs
- Shape and colour activities

**Rules for play centres:** The children can learn that only a certain number can be present at one play centres. The teacher can monitor this. If too many are wanting to play at one centres, the teacher can suggest another activity until there is a free space.

**Tip for the teacher:** monitor the interest level of the flexible play centres. If children have grown tired of using it, change it. If they are still enjoying it, keep it up for a while longer.

### Kindergarten store room

The kindergarten will have a store room where items and equipment for play-based learning centres can be stored systematically in labelled baskets. A good way to create more storage is to put shelves going up the walls using brackets, where there is no structural problem preventing this. The reason why storage is necessary in this way is to enable only about half of the play/activity-based materials to be out at any one time. The rest are stored away and brought out periodically so as to stimulate the children's interest with something new each week.

### Expectation of skills to be mastered in the kindergarten year

- Cutting
- Perseverance (*Ask children to try hard to do something that they find difficult*)
- Drawing a recognizable human figure
- Forming a circle in a group. *Give instructions to stand up and hold hands.*
- Counting to 10 (or 20) *This can be done in group time, where the number of children in the group can be counted each day. Later, ask a child to be a 'clever counter', and they can come out front and use a pointer to count the children.*
- Recognize their name written on a card, and later, write their name. *An idea for name recognition: make name cards. In group time, hold up cards one at a time to indicate when that child can go to an activity, e.g. one child at a time goes to get their snack or an activity as the name cards are held up.*
- Learning the initial sounds of pictures or objects, *e.g. show three pictures or objects: an apple, an orange and a banana. Ask, "Which one starts with the 'a' sound." At this stage don't use letter name.*

## Primary School

### Necessities for the Primary school

- Photocopier/printer (stored in a room that is not too damp)
- laminator
- library books
- student reading books (and laminated story cards)
- art equipment
- sports equipment
- Blackboard/whiteboard

- Portable easel, which can also hold sheets of paper using bulldog clips.

## **Library books and student reading books**

There should be adequate storage.

Categories:

Non-fiction – stored on shelves with cardboard titles of subjects that correlate with our God-centred curriculum topics.

Picture story books – available for teachers to read regularly to the class

Levelled reading books – can be distributed in classrooms or in one central place in the library from which teachers can borrow for their students – *at the right level!*

### **Reading cards in sets**

5 or 6 story cards of the same title in a manilla folder, taped up the short sides, makes a set. Folders are labeled, e.g. Level 1, story title, and number of copies. These manilla folders of sets of titles go in baskets, one per level, clearly labelled, and these sit on a bookshelf, with curtain across and are not accessed by children.

A set of 5 or 6 story cards provides for a group of children, each child having a copy of the same title. Note that we do not print levelled stories for the whole class, because not everyone in the class is at the same level.

### **Take-home reading books**

These are books of single titles (not multiples) that go in baskets labeled “Take-home books”, e.g. Levels 1-3; Levels 4-6; Levels 7-9 etc, (broad-banding).

### **Teacher’s resources**

#### **Non-fiction books and picture story books**

Teachers should select these from the library and take into the class where they can be treated with care. Note that when a particular topic is being studied in class, e.g. “space” – the teacher finds non-fiction books from the library shelves and takes into the class for use for the duration of that topic, then returns the books to the library.

#### **Sports equipment**

Balls, skipping ropes, bats etc.

#### **Art supplies**

Flat storage for paper

Glass jars with sealable lids for paint

Scissors, glue, collage materials etc.

Make a list of things that could be sent from home to boost art supplies, e.g. egg cartons, yoghurt pots, pieces of fabric, small cardboard boxes for box construction.

## About printing student worksheets and resources

We need to limit throw-away work sheets or work books because excess printing makes education expensive. Students should write answers to questions in their exercise books and not on throw-

## The curriculum

### Literacy

Components of Beacon Media literacy lessons:

1. Handwriting or printing
2. Phonics
3. Reading
4. Writing (written expression)
5. Speaking and listening

### God-centred curriculum (GCC)

GCC is a thematic approach to learning, in this case, based on the attributes of God's character and nature. It encompasses Bible lessons, and the integration of Biblical teaching into Science, Social Studies, Health, Art, Music, Thinking Skills and parts of Literacy.

A full GCC curriculum is available on [www.beaconmedia.com.au/Fiji](http://www.beaconmedia.com.au/Fiji) Curriculum OR go to the home page [www.beaconmedia.com.au](http://www.beaconmedia.com.au) and scroll down half way to 'specific curriculum packages' and select curriculum for Fiji. Please be familiar with this webpage,

GCC is based on 10 attributes of God's character, and the Bible passages and stories related to these:

Love, Protector, Saviour, Pure/Holy, Creator, Wise, Servant, Protector, Truth, Lord & King

### Bible Program

There is only one lesson per week set out in the Bible curriculum. This lesson can go over a couple of days, even a revision on the second day, retelling the story. The student work book has a page per week. This could also take a couple of sessions. There are also values set out in the God-centred curriculum. If the teacher runs out of devotional material, there are plenty of suggested Bible stories and passages to accompany the theme in the Teacher's topic guides.

### Thinking skills

Will be conducted at least once a week.

### Art

Art is important!

It can overlap with other subjects, such as the theme-based subjects and literacy (making books)

Minimum of two art sessions per week.

## Thematic student books or Research cards

These are information cards for Science, Social Studies and Health (Year 3 and above). These follow the God-centred curriculum themes. These can be used for researching a topic when non-fiction library books are scarce. All Research cards have activities for the students to do and there is no need for them to copy the information.

Research cards can be laminated, stored in a similar way to the reading cards, and used over and over again.

## Mathematics

Our Maths cards are for class teaching as follows:

Levels 1-3: Kindergarten

Levels 4-6: Year 1

Levels 7-9: Year 2

Levels 10-12: Year 3

Levels 13-15: Year 4

Levels 16-18: Year 5

Levels 19-21: Year 6

There is only one card per week provided. It is up to the teacher to make up similar examples and write them up on the board for the other days. However one day could be set aside for applied mathematics such as practical measuring, weighing, working with money etc.

For children who are struggling with basic concepts, there is “Maths for Greater Understanding”, (see website).

Be aware of providing practical hands-on equipment such as counters, number lines, number charts, beads etc.

## Classroom management

Teachers will work through a set of classroom rules with the students. These can be written and illustrated in the form of a Big Book for students to read periodically. Where possible, make the rules positive rather than negative, e.g.

- Attentive listening when the teacher or another speaker is speaking
- Walk inside a school building. Running is for outside only.
- When it is time to work at your table, stay in your seat and only get out of your set if you have permission from the teacher.
- Hands up if you want to say something in class
- Only speak kind and wholesome words

If a child disobeys the rules, he/she should have one warning. On the second misdemeanor, he/she will be given “Time out”. This is when the student has to give up 5 minutes of their free time at lunch or recess, sitting on a particular chair, (not at their normal desk). Teachers will have to take turns to supervise students doing time out.

The teacher must play their part in running a stimulating and interesting learning environment. If students are motivated, they will respond and there will not be as many discipline problems. Teachers should be aware of students' attention span and not keep them working on one activity for too long. The teacher should be flexible enough to change plan if the students are becoming restless. Long sessions of lecturing by the teacher should be avoided. The students should never be without something useful to do

## The Beacon Media vision for learning

- To make learning interesting
- To raise the interest level so that students are motivated to learn
- To help students to think creatively

We do not encourage lots of copying from the board or sheets of paper stuck on the walls, as we see in the Government system.

We avoid long sessions where the teacher does all the talking.

We encourage discussion, we ask questions and we encourage the children to ask questions

Be prepared, with good planning and preparation of work in advance.

Our Beacon Media model schools will set the example for other schools.

## Sample time table (example only)

8.00 – 8.15	Work or activities for students who come early
8.15 – 8.45	Devotions, Bible lesson and prayer
8.45 – 9.00	Hand writing
9.00 – 10,00	Mathematics
10.00 – 10.30	Recess
10.30 – 12.00	Literacy (Read a story to them; Read a Big Book together; Phonics; Guided reading; BREAK, writing)
12.00 – 12.30	Lunch
12.30 – 12.40	Thinking skills or Show and Tell
12.40 – 1.15	Thematic studies 3 times per week (Science, Social Studies, Health); Vernacular language once a week; Buddy reading once a week; Music once a week
1.15 – 2. 20	Art two or three times per week; PE two or three times per week
2.20 – 2.30	Pack up; give out take home books

**Simplified timetable that can be written on the board or a chart for the students to follow:**

8.15 – 8.45	Bible lesson, values and prayer
8.45 – 9.00	Hand writing
9.00 – 10,00	Mathematics
10.00 – 10.30	Recess
10.30 – 12.00	Story, Big Book, Phonics; Guided reading; Writing
12.00 – 12.30	Lunch
12.30 – 12.40	Thinking skills or Show and Tell
12.40 – 1.15	Thematic studies, Vernacular language, Buddy reading or Music
1.15 – 2. 20	Art or PE
2.20 – 2.30	Pack up; Take-home books