

# How should we teach values education?

How is values education being taught in your school?

Is the true author of moral education, (the God of the Bible) being acknowledged or omitted?

The secular world is realizing that if good values are taught, then the outcomes will be better. Honesty in the school and work place is a desirable asset. Businesses become more profitable. Schools achieve better results. If kindness is taught, then again there are benefits...schools and work places become friendlier, happier and more peaceful.

How does God feel about this? If we imagine ourselves in His shoes, it is like seeing people rip you off, after you have written something very meaningful. It is like watching people taking bits and pieces of your work to suit themselves. It is like watching people pirate the essence of the information, without reference to the true author.

Then how should we do it? Should we teach moral values like kindness, patience, tolerance, friendship, honesty etc., and then 'bring the Bible into it'?

For the Christian school, God must be at the centre of the curriculum, rather than being brought into, or tacked on to the end of a topic of study. Knowledge of the Bible, without personal knowledge of the author, can lead to head knowledge. Students may change their values because of moral or even Biblical education, but how lasting will these changes be without a personal conviction of sin, through the Holy Spirit?

*"The most important knowledge a person can ever have is to know and experience the true nature of the person of God in one's life. Knowing the Bible does not necessarily mean that a person knows God in this way. If, in fact, the aim of the Christian life is to know God, then we come short if we make the Bible the curriculum. This does not mean to say that the Bible is rejected, but rather it takes its place as God's greatest tool for making Himself known to mankind." (Leighton Rudd, "God is the Curriculum")*

So this leaves us with three possible ways to teach values education:

1. Self- first...let's be good because it is a good thing to do. Being good will bring about a lovely peaceful and harmonious world.
2. Bible-first... let's find out what the Bible has to say about being good, and then try our best to do it.
3. God-first, (supported by what God has to say in the Bible)... I will do what God wants me to do because I love Him and want to serve Him. I know that He is pure and holy and the greatest authority in the universe, and He sets the rules that I must obey.

From a Christian perspective, values education can be taught meaningfully by exemplifying God's character and nature *through* the curriculum....character attributes such as 'God is Love'; 'God is Just'; 'God is Faithful'. Each character attribute demanded a response....kindness, love, fairness, faithfulness etc. being a response to who God is.

Examples:

The best way for a Christian teacher to teach 'honesty', is to first teach that 'God is Truth'.

What is our response to knowing that *God is Truth*?

The response is, to be honest and true, because God, the author of truth, requires us to live in truth and live by the truth.

To teach 'kindness'...first teach that 'God is Love'. Kindness flows out of God's love.

For some ideas on values education placing God up front, see the *Beacon Media* resource, "*Jesus First - A Guide to character development*"