

Five models for Christian Curriculum

1. Separate Bible curriculum

This approach places Bible instruction in separate compartments, such as a daily or weekly chapel service or set periods for Bible study which are slotted into the timetable, and treated as a separate subject. Memory verses are related to the Bible program and not connected to subject areas. The content of subjects like English, Science and the Social Sciences, resembles that of secular schools, and has no reference to God within the subject. The separatist approach is an outworking of our society's Greek thinking. The Greeks compartmentalized areas of education, and religion was placed in its own separate compartment, never to be integrated with other areas of learning. This is directly opposed to Biblical Hebrew thinking, where God was at the centre of all learning, and integrated into all areas of education.

2. The Christian Life Curriculum

This approach relies on the input of a teacher who is led by the Holy Spirit and competent in hearing the voice of God. There is interweaving of God or the Bible in the written curriculum. There may be an introductory statement to reinforce a Biblical World View, but English, Science and the Social Sciences for example, do not contain Biblical subject matter in their contents. It is left to the teacher to impart Biblical teaching as the Holy Spirit leads. The disadvantage here is that we may not be able to rely on every teacher, every day, to be in tune with what God is saying, and if God does speak into a particular subject, it is just for a temporary moment. If God had been allowed to speak at the curriculum development stage, God's perspective on that topic could have been used again and again.

3. The 'Bible insertion' approach

An example of this approach is the use of single Bible or memory verses that are tacked-on to the end of a lesson. The Bible verse would have some relationship to the content of the lesson. For example, a lesson on the solar system could be concluded with the Bible verse: 'The heavens declare the glory of God'. A study of trees could be linked up with 'Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree.' A Bible story may also be pulled out because its subject matter has something to do with the class topic. A study of sea creatures for example could be linked with 'Jonah and the whale'. This approach can have varying degrees of depth or shallowness, and the danger lies in selecting verses just because they include a related noun or verb related to our topic, and not really giving God's perspective or insight, and not really teaching us about God Himself.

4. Symbolism

Symbolism is the key tool of object lessons. It takes Biblical symbols and applies them to every day life. For example, a Science experiment where a jar is placed over a lighted candle shows that fire will be extinguished when there is lack of

oxygen. This can be related to a Christian needing the Holy Spirit as the source of life, every moment of every day. This approach has the advantage of helping the students to see and understand Biblical concepts in a visual way, and has a memorable impact. The only problem is that if this is the only way we integrate Biblical truth, the number of truths taught will be restricted to the number of symbols we can come up with.

5. Integrated God-centred curriculum

An *integrated* God-centred curriculum is far closer to the Biblical Hebrew approach than any other. And why should we desire to use a Biblical Hebrew approach?

Deut 11:18-19

Fix these words of mine on your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

The Hebrew approach is like a chocolate milk shake. Broken into its compartments we have cocoa powder, sugar, milk, and possibly ice-cream. The Greek approach would keep the four ingredients separated. The Hebrews would blend them all together, so that we can't even detect the separate ingredients. An integrated Christian curriculum would blend the person of God, and the words of God, into subject areas in such a way that we don't even notice the barrier between learning about God and learning about our world.

How can this be done?

1. Pray for God's perspective on curriculum.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the person of God.
3. Ask for revelation on what God is saying about the topic or subject area. What does this topic or subject area teach us about Himself? What does God want to teach us about Christian living, the Bible and our relationship with Him?
4. Relate God's character and nature, seen through the Bible and His creation, to the topics studied.