

Six Criteria for Choosing Resources for Teaching and Learning

1) **The Bible**

How is this material based on the Bible? Does it help learners and the church engage the Bible story as we believe it should be taught?

2) **Theology**

Does this material have a solid base of theological formulation? Is its theology clearly defined?

3) **Usability**

Is this material easy to use by lay teachers? Will the leaders find a structured method of preparation which will insure faithful teaching and learning?

4) **Creativity**

Does this material encourage the release of the creativity of leaders and learners? Does it push the teachers to expand the horizons of learners?

5) **Age Group Suitability**

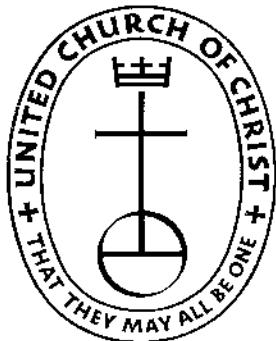
Are the individual lessons based upon the physical, psychological, and cognitive characteristics of the age group at which it is aimed? Will this particular lesson really appeal to _____ year-olds?

6) **Denominational Support**

Have persons from our faith tradition been involved in the creation and review of the resources? Do the theological and educational foundations of the resource reflect the connection of our local church to our denomination and the faith of the whole church?

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Adapted from "What Are We Teaching" by George B. Perrine



Questions for Analysis of Materials for Teaching and Learning

A. How is the material biblical and theological in rootage and style?

1. What references are there to the activity of God:
 - ! in history?
 - ! in Jesus?
 - ! as recorded in scripture?
2. In what ways is the good news of God's action evident:
 - ! through scripture?
 - ! through the person and work of Jesus Christ?
3. What activities are suggested that develop and deepen faith perspectives?
4. How are persons helped to reflect biblically and theologically on their experience?
5. What suggestions are made for learning how to act on their theological reflections?

B. How does the material affirm the faith community?

1. How are persons of all ages drawn into the faith community?
2. What suggestions are made for initiating persons into the heritage, ethos, values of the faith community?
3. What opportunities are provided for all persons to participate in the life of the faith community?
4. What ideas are suggested that would help equip persons for leadership in the life and mission of the faith community?

C. How is the material ecumenical in both context and thrust?

1. What is the approach to:
 - ! various Protestant traditions?
 - ! Protestant/Catholic relationships/understandings?
 - ! Jewish/Christian relationships/understandings?
 - ! other world religions?
2. What specific reference is there to the ecumenical movement?
3. How is the stewardship of the whole inhabited earth affirmed?

D. How does the material relate education and worship?

1. How is the centrality of worship in Christian education recognized?
2. In what ways are celebration and awe in response to God's goodness, judgment, power, and mystery provided for and encouraged?
3. How is the reciprocal relationship of worship experience and teaching about worship handled?
4. How are the teaching and learning aspects of worship handled?

E. How is the material concerned with people in their wholeness?

1. What activities and processes are used that provide for learner's participation in their own learning?
2. How is attention given to and balance achieved among cognitive, affective, and experiential learning?
3. In what ways are learners' developmental levels, life situations, and human relationships taken into account?
4. What attention is given to persons in special circumstances (for instance -- parents, single persons, persons with leadership responsibilities, professional church leaders both lay and clergy, and shapers of value and social structures)?
5. What expectations are there that learners are to act on the environment as well as be acted on by it?

F. How does the material affirm full humanity for all persons?

1. In what ways do the actions suggested contribute to:
 - ! personal growth?
 - ! social change?
2. To what extent are suggestions given for:
 - ! individual action?
 - ! group action?
3. In what ways are victims of injustice and persons with special needs considered?
4. What efforts are made to influence shapers of values and movers of societal forces toward socially constructive goals?

G. How is the material inclusive?

1. What process suggestions are included for interaction among persons of different:
 - ! racial groups?
 - ! ethnic groups?
 - ! socio-economic groups?
 - ! ages?
 - ! sex?
2. What evidence is there of inclusiveness through:
 - ! sharing one another's stories and traditions?
 - ! avoiding emphasis on homogenizing persons into a common mold?
 - ! avoid stereotyping of persons from different:
 - ! racial groups?
 - ! ethnic groups?
 - ! socio-economic groups?
 - ! ages?
 - ! sexes?

H. How in faithfulness to the gospel, does the material recognize and deal with conflict?

1. In what ways are personal and social issues seen as related?
2. How wide a spectrum of values and lifestyles is reflected? How is the tension among them dealt with?
3. What examples of conflict situations can be given? What techniques are suggested for dealing with conflict? To what extent do they reflect the gospel?
4. What major social issues are considered? How realistically are they dealt with?
5. What positive efforts are made to present persons as real people and avoid stereotyping?

I. How is the material open-ended and dialogical in educational style?

1. In what specific ways are learners encouraged to engage in their own inquiries and to pursue their own questions?
2. How, and at what levels, is dialogue to be achieved:
 - ! with God, in order to gain new perceptions of God's action?
 - ! with other persons, in order to engage divergent points of view within a climate of willingness to re-examine current perspectives on the Christian faith, the functioning of society, and the meaning and role of personal life?
 - ! and with oneself, in pursuit of insight, understanding, and responsibility?
3. What measure of success is used -- predetermined conclusions or open-ended inquiry?

J. How does the material suggest action and reflection?

1. What suggestions are given for persons to engage upon the action as well as study and analysis?
2. What suggestions are given for reflection upon the action suggestions?

These questions were developed by Shirley Heckman (Church of the Brethren), Robert Koenig (United Church of Christ), and D. Campbell Wyckoff (United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) from "A Stance Toward the Future," *Doing Church Education Together*, a 1978 JED publication, p. 5-12 and *Liberating Words, Images and Actions: Guidelines to Alleviate Stereotyping*, a 1979 JED publication.