



GTBC Children's Ministry

Vision & Curriculum Criteria

July 2017



Part 1:

Ministry Vision

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Vision



1 The church is not ultimately responsible for spiritually training our kids.

- Parents bear primary and final responsibility for their kids' theological training. It is not the church's job to spiritually raise our children. The church's Sunday School programs are expected to be supplemental to and supportive of parental training.
- We desire and expect our parents to be aware of what their children are learning in Sunday School, and encourage them to integrate the use of Sunday School "take-home" content throughout the week (along with other resources – such as sermon questions, etc.).

John 6:44

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.

Mark 1:15

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.

Psalm 51: 17

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalm 119:25

I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!

Vision



2 We must depend upon God to do what only He can do.

- We want the Lord to do what only He can do – to press Himself into the hearts, minds, and affections of our children as revealed by genuine faith and repentance.
- We want our kids to recognize the gravity, wonder, and joy of God and His saving work manifested in the gospel.
- We want our kids to wrestle with the weightiness of their sin in light of God's goodness, holiness, and righteousness – in such a way that draws them to the cross as their only hope and joy.
- We want them to see holiness as desirable, not merely dutiful.
- In an age-appropriate way, we want our kids to recognize that following Christ costs us all that this world values – but in following Christ we gain Christ Himself, which is everything.

Matthew 7:13-14

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

1 John 2:15; 3:14

Do not love the world or the things in the world...We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.

Psalm 40:8

I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.

Vision



3 Teach biblical truth with clarity, passion, and persuasiveness.

- We want to teach what the Bible says with clarity, passion, and persuasiveness in hope of putting our kids in the way of God's saving work described earlier.
- Direct your teaching with the assumption that while many of our kids have some knowledge of the Scriptures, most do not possess a transformative understanding of the gospel.
- We do not want to prompt the kids for a "decision," since this often elicits a positive response out of a desire to please.
- Apply the Scriptures to expose the fallacy that living the Christian life is simply knowing the right facts about God, or doing the right activities.
- We want our kids to live out a life of joyful obedience to God...not a life that 'trifles' with God while still pursuing self.



Jude 20-21

But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God...

Psalm 119:14

In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.

Hebrews 13:7

Remember...those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

Philippians 4:9

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things...

4 Your teaching must be an overflow of personal study and prayer.

- We desire teachers whose weekly teaching ministry will be an overflow of their own personal study and prayer.
- We do not want you to rely predominantly upon the curriculum to inform your instruction – but your own personal time in the relevant Scriptures.
- Besides laboring in the Word, we want our teachers to labor in prayer - prayer for the kids, prayer over their personal study, and prayer for the effectiveness of their instruction. We are not self-dependent. Truth and prayer are the means God will use to reach the hearts of our children.
- Remember, it is no more appropriate to begin your preparation Saturday night for Sunday afternoon than it would be for the elders to do the same with the sermon!

1 Corinthians 14:40

But all things should be done decently and in order.

1 Peter 5:2-3

So I exhort the elders...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Mark 10:43b-44

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

Vision



5 You do not labor alone, but have the practical support of the elders.

- We don't want teachers to feel 'trapped' by disruptive or disobedient conduct. It is not grace to tolerate conduct that impedes your teaching or ruins the sanctity of the environment.
- Teachers should feel the freedom to address conduct issues in the classroom, with parents, or ask the elders for assistance. In certain instances, it is acceptable to remove a child from the duration of the class and return them to the care of a parent.
- The elders are committed to praying faithfully for your personal growth and ministry. Please keep us informed of how we can be most effective in doing so!
- The elders want to make ourselves available to you in the event you'd like to discuss certain passages or doctrines, would like our input on the best way to approach certain topics, or simply would like to us to pray with you! Please reach out to us as needed!

Psalm 119:11

I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 37:31

The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.

Vision



6 Additional clarifications:

- We ask that teachers commit to the weekly cadence of the ministry for the entire school year. (Exceptions, of course, include occasional scheduled absences or unforeseen emergencies.)
- Scripture memory is an important discipline we want to instill in our kids. As important as it is, Scripture memory serves our gospel-centered goal. It is not the goal in-and-of itself. Do not emphasize quantity over genuine understanding.
- The elders would like you to teach from the ESV or NASB. This is because these (formally equivalent) translations are best for the nature of study that needs to precede your teaching, and it's most effective to teach from the version you studied.
- If possible, email parents 2-3x during the school year to explain where you're at in the current study, expectations for homework assignments, and how parents can most effectively support and pray for your class.



Part 2: Curriculum Criteria



1 Cor. 15:3-4

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

1 Christ-centered and gospel focused.

- Emphasizes the person and work of Jesus Christ as the ultimate purpose and substance of Scripture.
- Emphasizes the cohesion and unity of Scripture as a single, progressive storyline, not a collection of 'fragmented' pieces.



2 Tim. 4:3-4

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

2 A biblically complete gospel.

- Emphasizes creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.
- Presents the full character of God, not one attribute distorted over and above another.
- Doesn't advocate "easy believism" or "cheap grace".
- Doesn't advocate or ask for a moment of "decision," but explains and encourages authentic faith and repentance.



Matt.12:43-45

When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first.

3 Teaches doctrine, not moralism.

- Aligned to the conviction that to know doctrine is ultimately to know God, and therefore, doctrine is the most practical thing in the world.
- Does not weaken or dilute doctrine in the name of age-appropriateness.
- Doesn't reduce OT Scriptures to moral lessons, but properly exegetes Christ, the gospel, and other truths as appropriate.



2 Tim. 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

4 Exegetical soundness and Scriptural prominence.

- Lessons drive a direct encounter with the text of Scripture, and all commentary is exegetically faithful.
- The text of Scripture is prominently and plainly positioned as the source of all teaching.
- Scripture memory verses well-aligned to the text under study.



Matt. 5:20

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

John 3:36

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

5 Encourages authentic conversion, not Pharisaism.

- Seeks to quicken the heart, soul, and mind, rather than building lists of do's and don'ts.
- Presents salvation as the doorway to progressive sanctification, not an isolated event.
- Emphasizes that authentic conversion cultivates obedience to Jesus Christ, changing our life in observable ways.

John 6:65

...no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father.

John 8:24

...unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.

Luke 13:3

...unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.



6 Affirms that both salvation and sanctification are supernatural works of God.

- Emphasizes that salvation is solely the work of God's initiative, without diluting man's accountability to repent and believe.
- Emphasizes that sanctification is no less God-enabled than salvation.



Psalm 4:7

You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119: 161

...my heart stands in awe of your words.

7 Affirms the necessity to draw close to God by drawing close to His Word.

- Emphasizes that progressive sanctification is enabled by an intimate relationship with God's Word, prayer, and fellowship with God's covenant people.
- Presents obedience as a joyful desire, not a burdensome duty.
- Emphasizes that our relationship with the Word fuels the "want to" of our obedience.



1 John 4:19

We love because He first loved us.

Matt. 11:25-26

"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children [ignored and under privileged]; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

8 Stirs us to love all people in imitation of His love for us.

- Encourages children to cultivate a heart for the weak, oppressed, and outcast – valuing the worth and dignity of all people because they are fellow image-bearers.
- Doesn't confuse our age of "tolerance" with the Spirit-enabled compassion of Jesus Christ.

James 3:1

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Psalm 22:22

I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you...

Psalm 40:10

I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness...



9 Encourages teacher edification and growth.

- Weekly teaching is an overflow of the teacher's personal interaction with the materials throughout the week.
- Curriculum materials edify both teachers and children.
- Material edifies and challenge teachers at all levels of Christian growth.
- The curriculum is not so 'pre-packaged' that it encourages or enables teach preparation without direct study in the Word.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.



10 Structure and content encourages parental involvement.

- All age groups are studying the same thing at the same time.



11 Additional considerations:

- The following items are much less significant than the prior criteria, and will only be considered as tipping points if all else is equal:
 - Materials available for all age groups within our children's Sunday School ministry.
 - Each age group builds upon, extends, and reinforces truths from earlier age groups.
 - Limited cost for yearly consumables.