

# Our Curriculum Philosophy for Sunday School for Adults

Since the underlying philosophy of a curriculum shapes the literature produced by it, every user of Sunday School publications from DiscipleGuide Church Resources should know the publisher's philosophy. Pastors, other Sunday School leaders, teachers, and even students **will understand the literature better when they know the publisher's reasons for putting the curriculum together as it does.** Furthermore, knowing this philosophy can also help potential customers make their purchasing decisions.

DiscipleGuide, as an agency of the Baptist Missionary Association of America, attempts to operate by the following fundamental principles in designing its adult Sunday School curriculum. The philosophy for other age levels, too, is consistent with these principles, though the specific needs of various age groups may require some adaptations of them.

## Definition of Purpose

***In Sunday School the church engages in effective study of God's Word in order to know its teachings and apply them to Christian living. All curriculum plans and the work of all personnel aim toward this fundamental purpose.***

Secondary purposes and characteristics also help to make Sunday School what it is or should be. (1) It consists of multiple classes organized according to the age of the learners. (2) It emphasizes teaching by church-elected lay persons. (3) It functions as a vehicle for evangelism and church growth. (4) It assimilates new members into the church by giving them a place to belong. (5) It affords opportunities for small-group fellowship.

The overriding purpose of Sunday School, however, is **to expose people to God's Word so that they will know it doctrinally and will live by it.**

## Reverence for Scripture

Everyone who contributes to curriculum planning and production must regard the Bible as God's inspired revelation of truth for faith and life. This includes the management team of DiscipleGuide Church Resources, who establish policies for the Sunday School literature; the staff editors, who lead in the planning and production of the literature; curriculum committees, who are members of BMAA churches enlisted to advise and assist the editors and writers; and the literature writers, who are members of BMAA churches.

Every unit of study in the adult Sunday School curriculum aims toward interpreting and applying Scripture properly.

## The Priority of Scripture

Every step in curriculum planning and production begins with Scripture.

The Compass Curriculum plan as a whole attempts to impart a comprehensive knowledge of and obedience to the complete Word of God.

Quarterly units within the seven-year curriculum designate bodies of Scripture in proper balance to one another, given the overall scope and message of the Bible.

Focused quarterly themes, even when they are topical in nature, are geared to unfolding scriptural truth.

The foundation of every lesson is a Bible text, and the selection of that text is the first step in the process of planning the lesson. From that point onward the message for today in that text controls all lesson planning and writing.

### **Accuracy of Interpretation**

The following questions guide in all curriculum planning and writing. They are approached in the order listed:

1. What did the inspired writer mean at the time of writing this Scripture portion? Who were the original readers? What did the words mean to them?
2. In view of the answer to the first question, what does the Scripture portion mean today?
3. In view of the answer to question 2, how can the quarter or lesson be made applicable to today's adults? How can this truth for life be reflected in the lesson focus, in the wording of displayed elements (title, central truth, life-response statement, and key verse), and in the further development of the study?

### **Application of Philosophy**

Every lesson — whether it be presented as an essay for reading, a study guide to be followed in personal devotions, a discussion guide, or a classroom presentation — is developed in such a way that the above principles will be carried out. The basic pattern of development (i.e., the outline, the steps of study, or the classroom activities) keys on the major emphases of the Bible text and, when needed to properly reflect the truth of God's Word, related scriptures.

**In summary**, themes of quarters and lessons and the development of those themes reflect the original intent of the writer of the Scripture portion in view and are presented in a contemporary manner that teaches what God says through that Scripture portion to an adult today.

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