



part 1 of 2—

Tailoring the Curriculum for MY Class

by Jean Lawson

Curriculum Writer and Sunday School Teacher

Your new teacher's guide has just arrived. You thumb through it to check out the new unit themes. The topics look good, but as you look closer at the lessons, you realize you will never be able to cover all the material in your short class time. Perhaps some of the activities just won't work in your class, or maybe they require materials which you have no access to.

Don't despair! Here are some proven ways to adapt the lesson to fit your class needs and teaching style.

Know Your Curriculum

Curriculum publishers have the challenge of presenting lessons that will meet the needs of a great variety of classes, teachers, and students. Classes vary in size, supplies available, and equipment. Teachers have varying degrees of Bible background and teaching experience. Students come from different backgrounds and are at different places in their spiritual understanding and Bible knowledge.

In a curriculum that will meet your needs, you will find more activities than you will have time for. You will find more material than you can teach. You will find more resources than you can use. These activities and resources will be relevant to the lesson, not just

an entertaining way to pass time. This kind of curriculum has everything you need to adapt the lesson to your class.

Know Yourself

Certain teaching methods are uncomfortable for some teachers. It might be difficult for you to lecture. Maybe you don't like to do complicated craft projects. Perhaps you don't care for active games.



Just as there are some teaching methods you may not like, you will greatly enjoy using others. It might be doing experiments that have an application to the lesson. Maybe you like illustrating key points on the chalkboard or using object lessons. When you look through a lesson, you'll be drawn to activities which appeal to you or that you can easily find supplies for.

While it is important to select

activities you are enthusiastic about, it is also good to use a variety of activities in each class. Consider the activities your students may enjoy and learn from. They may not be activities you particularly care for, but they may be just the thing that makes the lesson come alive to your students.

Know Your Students

Your students and class situation are unique. Curriculum publishers can provide a variety of teaching methods and activities for a variety of students and teachers. It is the teacher's experience with the students and the class as a whole that makes him or her the best person to select activities and teaching methods for the class.

Your students may not have a church background. They may have little Bible knowledge and spiritual understanding, or your students may have a rich spiritual heritage with a strong spiritual understanding. Your class may be a girls' or boys' class or a mixture of both. You may have one age-level or several.

The activities you select will depend on whom you are teaching. These activities should fit your class, encourage the students to learn more quickly, and apply the lesson to their lives.

Questions for Further Study—

1. Why does a teacher guide provide more activities than you can use?

2. What should you do to prepare the curriculum to meet the needs of:
 - ◆ your class?

 - ◆ your students?

 - ◆ yourself?



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A Two-Step Lesson Preparation Plan

Step 1: Become Familiar With the Lesson

Collect all the items from the resource packet and student books for the lesson you are working on.

Look at the *Objective* and the *Life Application*.

Glance through the student books and the posters from the resource packet. Listen to the songs and skits on the CD for the lesson.

Read through the lesson, the Bible passages, and the suggested activities. As you read the lesson, underline the key phrases under each point. Highlight or asterisk activities you might consider using to teach the lesson.

Step 2: Develop Your Lesson Plan

Write out your teaching plans or mark your teacher's guide, using the notes column.

Determine from the objective on the first page of your lesson the one thing you want your students to understand, do, or feel.

Write out the Bible passage and key verse you will use as the reference points for your lesson. Read these, and ask the






Holy Spirit to be your teacher as you prepare to teach the lesson to your students.

Look at each activity, and decide which will best involve the students in your class. At least two options are provided for each segment of the lesson. You



won't have time for all the activities listed. Not all of them will be appropriate for your class or be comfortable for you. Choose the ones you want to use. You may want to bring in ideas from other resources or past experiences. The curriculum is not your only resource for helping you teach the lesson.

To be sure you provide variety through the class time, you may want to choose activities—

-  for the beginning of the class, giving a lead into the lesson as students arrive;
-  to involve the students in the main points;
-  for review to allow the students to go over the material again and to evaluate whether they have grasped the lesson;
-  for application to help the students take the Bible knowledge and personalize the message;
-  for the students to do while you present the point. For example, you may have them draw a picture while they listen to a skit on the CD or while you have a discussion with them. You may choose to print a copy of the skit from the CD for the students to perform rather than listening to it.

Estimate How Much Time Each Activity Will Take

Be flexible during the lesson. Some activities may take more or less time than you had planned. Select an additional activity, in case you have time in class. When each activity is

directly related to your objective, it won't be a great loss if you don't have time for all of them. Your lesson will already have been taught.

Only you can effectively take the curriculum in your hands and

tailor it specifically to your students. May God guide and teach you as you make preparations to teach your Sunday School class.

Questions for Further Study—

1. What is the first thing you should do when you receive your curriculum?
2. If your teacher guide does not include an objective with each lesson, what criteria should you use to create your own lesson objectives?
3. What criteria should you use when deciding which activities to use and which not to use?
4. What should you do if you run out of time during your class period?
5. What should you do if you have time left over during your class period?



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