

## Curriculum used in Families Ministry over 10 years

Choosing what to use to engage and teach children within the church is often difficult.

There are many different curricula available, all with their own pros and cons.

When choosing a curriculum, it's important to think about a few things:

- What is the focus of your children's group/program? Fun? Bible engagement? Relationship? Discipleship?
- What is the age range and size of the group?
- What is the training, capability and capacity of leaders?
- Will your children's ministry connect and intersect with the adult teaching and preaching plan?
- What resources are available for families to use at home to connect during the week?
- What audio/visual resources are available?
- What other resources do you need (craft, games, activities)?

Below are a number of children's ministry curriculums that we have used during my time in Families and Children's ministry at Emmanuel Uniting Church.

### **Dig In** – <https://www.group.com/childrens-ministry/sunday-school/dig-in/>

We used this curriculum for almost 5 years, changing the scope and sequence around to suit the needs of our preaching series at the time. Worship and Sunday school are aligned biblically and thematically, and we provide resources for families to Dig in at Home.

We started with the Life of Jesus and used others from there.

- Digging into the Life of Jesus <https://digin-resources.group.com/products/digging-into-the-life-of-jesus/>
- Digging into the Bible in One Year <https://digin-resources.group.com/products/digging-into-the-bible-in-one-year/>
- Digging into the Heart of God <https://digin-resources.group.com/products/digging-into-the-heart-of-god/>
- Digging into Foundations of Faith <https://digin-resources.group.com/products/digging-into-foundations-of-faith/>
- Digging into Epic Teaching of the Bible <https://digin-resources.group.com/products/digging-into-epic-teachings-of-the-bible/>

We found that formatting the lesson outline was difficult sometimes, but I loved that we could give anyone who needed access to the materials to find them themselves. We gave access to all our preachers, and Sunday school leaders so they could pick and choose what they wanted to use.

We used the Videos in worship (replacing the traditional kids talk slot) and used the social media tiles and take-home pages on our church website for families to use during the week. Our minister also adjusted the take home materials for adults so they could be used in adult study groups during the week.

### **Children's Ministry Deals (CMD!) - <https://www.childrens-ministry-deals.com/>**

Children's Ministry Deals produces curriculum that teaches kids Bible lessons in a way that is intentionally fun and engaging. We have purchased and used many of these, in different settings across Sunday School, Worship, Boys' and Girls' Brigade. There is a large range to choose from, which vary in length (usually 4-6 weeks). Each vary in price, and you can often get large bundle deals for quite cheap, and they often give them away for free. Each lesson generally includes a memory verse, skit, object lesson, large group game, lesson outline, discussion question and parents' sheet. We used a mix of superhero ones for our **How Christians Grow** series (see below).

### **The Story - <https://www.thestory.com/>**

We used this one as a whole of church and was a really good overview of the Bible for everyone. There's a whole heap of free resources, and books to purchase for all different ages.

### **How Christians Grow – <https://www.actheology.edu.au/publication/how-christians-grow-spiritual-transformation-for-life-by-andrew-prince/>**

We developed and borrowed materials from CMD for a series of Character studies and Spiritual formation practices based on the book by Andrew Prince for our whole church (including Worship, Sunday School, Adult Explore Groups, Boys' and Girls' Brigade and Playgroup). Andrew also presented at our Intergenerational Family Camp to kickstart our season of Growing.

### **My Friends - <https://powertochange.org.au/church-movements/myfriends/>**

We used material developed by Power to Change based on the My Friends course for a series for the whole church including Worship, Sunday School, Adult Explore Groups, Boys' and Girls' Brigade and Playgroup.

### **Orange - <https://thinkorange.com/curriculum/>**

We say we're an "orange church" (where yellow is the church and light, red is love and the home, and where they combine is orange) and have used the concept of orange in our Children's and Family's ministry for years. We've also used Orange VBS for Day Camp with great success, and will use their children's curriculum for the first time this year. New life Churches have been using orange for years and love it! Additional resources and a personalised parent cue app are also available.

### **Saddleback Kids Videos - <https://www.youtube.com/@SaddlebackKids/playlists>**

The Saddleback Kids **Stories of the Bible** Videos are fantastic! We've used them in so many settings. Our kids know them so well they started writing their own Hey-O stories. Seriously, check these out!

They have heaps of other videos and curriculum too.

**Lost Sheep Books - <https://www.lostsheep.com.au/>**

When Jesus wanted to change lives, he told stories and that's what Lost Sheep do too. Some of their stories are about Jesus, some are by Jesus, but all of them point to Jesus. They take the spirituality of children seriously but also believe the gospel is fun.

Lost Sheep create resources to assist parents, teachers and children's workers build the faith of kids in Australia and around the world.

There are over 30 stories that can be used. Church membership packages range from \$99 to \$229 depending on church size. Individual storybooks, activity books and digital downloads including PowerPoint versions are also available. There are a range of Lost Sheep books available to borrow through the [Trinity Theological Library](#).

**Spill the Beans - <https://www.spillthebeans.org.uk/>**

We used old versions of this in between other curriculum when we chose to use the lectionary. I think it's been recently updated, with new writers. It was an ok low-tech option for us to use at the time.

There are so many options available, and it can be overwhelming to choose. This list is just a start, to continue looking you could also check out this [Sunday School Curriculum Overview](#) by Debbie Kolacki of PRC - Practical Resources for Churches [www.prcli.org](http://www.prcli.org), and [Choosing a Curriculum](#) from the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT.

If you'd like some help, or want to talk through our experiences, reach out by email at [Jessica.pinkerton@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:Jessica.pinkerton@ucaqld.com.au)