

## **Our Biblical Philosophy of Education**

Our business sells both Christian curriculum and non-religious curriculum. We represent several suppliers and a few distributors; some are Christian companies or ministries, some are secular. An example of “Christian curriculum” is the excellent MFB French program that encourages students to learn another language as a skill useful in missions opportunities. An example of secular curriculum are the textbooks from Pearson Education and Nelson Canada. We also write and publish some curriculum under the imprint of “Peppermint Stick Learning Company Inc.”. As evangelical Christians lesson material that we publish does have a Biblical perspective on specific issues if/when these come up within the topics (e.g. creation/evolution, ethics, environmental care, morality). However, we are different than most “Christian curriculum companies” in that most of the curriculum we write and publish does NOT integrate narratives about a Christian worldview or Bible verses into the main lesson. Generally, most resources are quite suitable for both Christian and non-Christian teachers to use at home or in private or public classrooms. (A more detailed explanation is written below.)

### **As owners of Peppermint Stick Learning Company Inc., we believe:**

1. Parents have the primary responsibility to teach and train their children to know the truth and encourage them to make wise choices in life.
2. Teaching and training of godly values in the home is a Biblical directive for the godly parent, whether or not a Christian parent also provides a child’s academic education. This involves:
  - a. teaching the Bible (for example, in daily family devotion time(s) and in life situations throughout the days and years) (Deut. 6:7, 11:18-21, Isaiah 38:19, Psalm 78:2-8, 89:1, 103:13, 145:4-7, Prov.10:1, 22:6, 29:15, 31:1, 26-27, Eph.6:4, Col. 20-21, 1 Thes.2:11-12)
  - b. living a holy life (1 Corinthians 1:2, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Titus 2:11-12, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15-16, 2:11-12, 2 Timothy 1:9)
  - c. being prepared to respectfully tell other people of the hope they have in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:15, 2 Timothy 2:24-25)
  - d. not allowing the ungodly values of the world to squeeze us into its mold (for example, in entertainment choices) (Romans 12:2, James 3:13-17, 1 John 2:15-17, 1 Peter 4:1-7, 2 Peter 3:14, 17, James 1:27c)
  - e. not learning details of pagan religious practices. Although a very basic understanding of other philosophies can be of benefit to know how to respectfully share with others the good news of Jesus Christ, care needs to be taken as to what information is given. The incorporation of humanistic psychology and philosophy in teaching spiritual truth from the Bible is also dangerous. (Deuteronomy 12:30, 7:26, Jeremiah 10:2, Matthew 6:13, Romans 15:17, 19b, Psalm 101:3, 6-7, John 14:23, 1 Corinthians 1:20, 2:4-6, 13-14, 3:19, 2 Corinthians 1:12, 1 Timothy 6:20)
  - f. being a thankful and grateful people in the home, in the world, and in their regular gathering together as believers, bringing honour and praise to their Lord and Saviour. (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Psalm 147:1, Titus 3:8, Hebrews 10:25)
3. Parents need to make the best education choice they can for each of their children, taking into consideration family values, learning styles, special needs, and other individual and personal matters.
4. Education should be considered a blessing and enjoyed as much as possible by the teacher and student. A daily dose of unhappy attitudes in “just get your schoolwork done quickly and then you can play” leads to a poor work ethic of living only for the weekend. While diligence is needed, a teacher needs to help a child enjoy learning as much as possible, rather than teaching that school is something to be endured. Academic schooling therefore should incorporate a variety and combination of effective and interesting methods for a student to take in information and present their knowledge. “Fun” should be part of all learning styles.
5. In today’s Canadian society and workplace, there is a general call to be especially literate in reading, science and technology, communication, and mathematics. Most home-based businesses or outside employment for future graduates will likely involve these fields of study and should the Lord tarry, Christians should be prepared to be generally literate in these fields, even if some are employed in other areas of work and ministry.

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Regarding books that we write and publish:

Some books that we publish have very little or no Biblical content. Our academic curriculum can easily be used in a variety of home school, private school, or even public school settings. Unless it is a Bible study book, we do not tend to integrate Bible verses or a Christian discussion on every page like some Christian curriculum companies do unless it is clearly indicated in the product description. However, we do not compromise our Statement of Faith and Philosophy of Education and do write from such a Christian perspective when issues arise.

Some books that we publish include some Biblical content, for example, supplementary/related lessons in the appendix. We do also write/publish some Bible Study curriculum in a series called “Sweeter Than Honey” which is appropriate for home or ministry use. The cursive handwriting curriculum is Bible-based and there is a suggested Bible memory verse program within Printing Lessons for Primaries. A section of “Our Big World and People” (grade 2 world geography) teaches about Christian missions.

Why do we not tend to integrate academic lessons with Bible verses? (answer copied from a few years ago)

Some Christian publishers choose to mention religious material throughout the lesson paragraphs and/or put a Bible verse on every page (e.g. on drill sheets, in nature lessons) for the purpose of teaching that God should be thought of throughout everyday activities. We agree that God should be of first importance and that a Biblical worldview is for all days of the week, not just for “Sunday”. We just don’t think that integrating Bible-related material into every topic is necessary for this to be understood and in fact, are cautious with this approach.

Some of the verses used ARE good and may remind students of who God is and His ways. Many godly people are happy to choose this kind of curriculum and it can be academically sound. But at the least, parents who like to use the “integrating-the-Bible-into-schoolwork” approach SHOULD check the verses that their children are reading in their schoolwork since sometimes, the meaning of the Bible verse is pulled out of context. (We personally have used some of typical home school curriculum for brief periods during the past 7 years and have sadly found this to be true in some cases.) Some of these companies have excellent intentions and desire to use repetition in order to teach children to connect what they learn to learning about God. Some secular companies add Bible verses to their products in order to reach a Christian market. However, for us, we have chosen not to generally teach in this integrative manner, mainly because we do not want to apply the Bible in a way in which it was not originally intended (e.g. misapply, stretch, or distort the purpose the Scriptures were written for). We carry very few “school-subject” products that have Bible verses throughout the pages.

The main problem we see with integrating Scripture verses into every school subject lesson: Sometimes, when people randomly look for a verse to try to “fit” with a specific topic (rather than the other way around—take a verse and think of what God wants you to learn from it), not only is that a poor method of learning how to read and apply Scripture, but it does have the possibility of having a strange result. Here’s a funny example: We bought a set of “Thank You” cards the other month with Bible verses inside. On one of the cards, this verse was written “Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness... 2 Samuel 2:5”. If you see the verse in its context/original purpose and continue reading the rest of the verse, you will find out that David is thanking people for burying dead King Saul more respectfully—not exactly a verse I’d want to apply to a friend who has recently shown kindness to me! Here’s a more serious example: Some popular authors on Christian doctrinal matters try to “prove” their points by quoting the Bible randomly out of context. Used in this manner, anyone could try to make the Bible say almost anything. But as Christians, we should hold to the higher standard of taking the Bible as a whole and applying it in its context and teaching children the right meaning as we go through the Bible itself. (Of course, there is value in topical Bible studies and also to the area of apologetics but that involves more intense study into verses that are used to prove what the Bible teaches as a whole. Lesson outlines for studies of these kinds of matters are sometimes found in the appendices of PSLC curriculum. See next paragraph.) To summarize our perspective, Bible application is best taught when we go step by step through the Bible, rather than trying to pull verses here and there to match some school topic that is not specifically addressed in the Scripture. Children will copy our example of how we apply God’s Word – the question is – do we want them to find a verse here and there to authorize vague points or do we want them to read the Word and understand its original intent?

In PSLC-published curriculum, we do include a Biblical application on issues if the Bible speaks to that specific topic and gives direction; this is usually presented in the optional lessons in the appendix. Be assured that matters of truth and morality are taught from a Biblical perspective in PSLC books and that any secular-produced books that we distribute should not have much or any offensive material. However, we do not teach things like “A is for apple” (the fruit) - and then say that the Bible says we are the “apple” (not a fruit) of His eye” or put Bible verses with numbers on it for math lessons. We believe that children raised in godly homes will “get the point” (e.g. in family devotions and by the example of parents) that God is ever-present, all-knowing, all-powerful, worthy of worship, personally cares for their daily needs, and therefore, needs to be Lord of their everyday lives (worldview, character, etc.). The priority for us then, is to encourage families to read the Bible and make application to daily life when they are taking the time for studying it, rather than

studying a school subject that isn't particularly taught in the Holy Scriptures (e.g. math) and then trying to find a Bible verse with vocabulary that "matches" with the lesson. There is something special and sacred (set apart from the ordinary) about God's Word and His name (Psalm 138:2). And as servants of God, we want to be careful to correctly handle/use the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Regarding the content of resources we write/publish and those we distribute:

In practical application of point # 2 of our Philosophy of Education, we purposely look for resources which have no or minimal content relating to the following: violence, lust, greed, rebellion, anti-God philosophies, evolution, mysticism, fairy-tales/mythology, the graphically sensational themes, and similar content. We try to be prayerfully discerning in our choices and desire to be "family-friendly" in what we offer.

Children learn very well when taught with authentic and real-life based experiences. Why not use themes of nature, play-time with toys and pets, helping family members, discovery of what happens when, sheer delight with daily life adventures, etc.? Such themes do not need to be presented in a boring fashion either—we're not in favour of dull lesson material or methods at all! Many of us can remember a dry-as-dust textbook, a hard-to-endure monotone professor (or one who talked so theoretically/philosophically high in the clouds beyond our interests at student-age), or an author who was intoxicated with his own verbosity providing "thought" for the tedious assignments we were subjected to - to chow down somehow and spit out academic proof we had learned from such - we certainly do not want to repeat that style!

Imagination is wonderful when used tastefully, for example, to embellish a tale to make it funnier or more descriptive in beauty, however sometimes Christians forget that not all forms of imagination or so-called artistic expression are "good"—it has been affected by the sin nature (Genesis 6:5). The old saying, "Garbage in, garbage out" applies to home school choices as well... It is alarming that some people think that they are "vaccinating" children by using and discussing popular rotten literature for the goal of keeping them from making bad choices in real life. And the amounts of that type of literature expected to be digested on a yearly basis seems larger in some home schooling situations than in secular classrooms. It is also distressing to see the wasted time that both classrooms and families can spend on learning worthless themes that just blow away like fluff in the wind. (E.g. I recently was given unit study curriculum to look at - all about "clowns".) We encourage everyone to choose to learn from good things that ARE good to begin with, as well as from things that are more meaningful and valuable to the present and future of the student.

Q: Why do you try to follow the educational standards set forth by a secular government in your curriculum?

A: Home schooling teachers make a commitment to be responsible for the academic education for their children and in doing so, give a strong impression to the government that the education provided at home will meet or exceed expectations in skills and knowledge covered. Of course, there is the flexibility to choose various methods, resources, perspectives, timing, etc. of how that is accomplished and the opportunity of teaching extra subjects our individual families deem important (e.g. music, sports, phonics, spelling, penmanship) but the commitment does indicate that the home schooled children will receive an equivalent or better education in the academics from the parents. Teach good reading skills and how to express oneself effectively through writing. Keep up with upper level math skills and science topics beyond just a nature study or only learning the four operations (+, -, x, ÷). Communicate a good understanding of your own country's history and geography. Being able to speak/read basic French is a good idea. General computer skills are also a good idea.

We are aware that many public schools are not effectively meeting standards themselves but that is no reason for home schoolers to lower good academic goals. We are also aware that government "standards" have continued to add perspectives/topics to reflect a more anti-Christian philosophy and these "standards" would NOT be ones we would encourage anyone to comply with. The above paragraph refers to the normal skills/topics of traditional academic subjects, not to the infiltration of anti-God/anti-Bible ideas.

For what that Bible teaches Christians to be like in response to a secular government you can read Acts 5:29, Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Titus 3:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-17.
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