

# The Living Curriculum Six-Point Checklist

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The Living Curriculum “is a philosophy, a process and a program of spiritual support to assist children, teens, families and the church community.”

It seeks to draw the lesson from the student through experiences, stories and creative expression. Through the living curriculum approach lessons are created that will relate to real issues in a person’s life and through a process of questions & discussions, helps them to connect with God and their indwelling Christ spirit.

## A Living Curriculum

- Lives in the question
- Uses the vehicle of story and/or experience
- Is issue based
- Is engaging
- Is an adventure
- Elicits creativity
- Involves everyone
- Always has debriefing

## Unity Worldwide Ministries Educational Philosophy

Myrtle Fillmore believed our mission was not to “entertain the children, but instead, to draw them out.” The Living Curriculum is an approach or philosophy which affirms that the curriculum—that which is to be learned or known—lives within the adult, child or teen, themselves. It moves us past the belief that teachers have all the answers and need to impart them to the students. Instead, there is a realization that all of us are uniquely unfolding on our spiritual path, having access to the Spirit within.

**To assist in creating a meaningful, effective experience or lesson using the Living Curriculum philosophy, here is a six-point checklist as a guide:**

### 1. The Issue

Identify which issue, theme, or need is currently active in your group's lives.

### 2. The Intention

Write a brief intention, keeping it open-ended to allow for the outcome to be different for each individual. Start with words like: “to explore, discover, understand, experience, examine, feel or share.” All parts of the lesson reflect and reinforce the issue and intention to be explored.

### 3. The Story

Choose a story, movie passage, song, Bible story, or experiential activity that will introduce the issue/theme and help the participants connect to it. Find a method to explore the issue or theme in order to make it relevant, for example: “wonder questions,” e.g. “I wonder what (the character in the story) thought/was feeling when ...,” role-playing, puppets, visualization, meditation, etc. The purpose is to move into the heart space rather than analyzing. Any lesson connects better

when the participants can have a common experience or see themselves in the story. Then, the discussion is more apt to stay focused on what they have shared together.

- Our lessons are based on issue because real life has issues.
- We use stories that help our children/teens figure out how to make their way in life, move into life with grounding principles are their foundation. This gives them insight into how to step into life in a more powerful way.
- The stories help us find common ground for our issues.
- The tension in the story is about real life.
- Use the Bible to illustrate modern issues from our daily lives.
- The stories are our mythology and contain universal wisdom.
- You are every character in the story.

#### **4. The Questioning Strategy**

Use open-ended questions, worded to avoid yes/no answers, to progress from safe, “out there” answers to more internal “in here” answers. There are five types of questions to use:

- What is happening in the story? (Stay with the facts and save interpretation for later.)
- How do you see this experience in the world? (Ask a bridging question that looks at how it is showing up in school, community, or the world.)
- How do you see this experience in your daily life? How do you see yourself in this character? (Share personal stories both factually and from the heart, deepening community.)
- How are you going to use this experience in your life? (Putting principle into practice)
- How would you like it to be? (Seeing with the eyes of Christ, making different choices)

#### **5. Creative Experiences**

Choose an open-ended activity to awaken the story within, for example: art activities, music, movement, games, journaling etc. Expressing spirituality is a multi-sensory experience.

#### **6. Sharing**

Allow time for participants to share, if they choose, what the experience awakened in them. Encourage action related to the story. Also encourage them to continue exploring the issue or theme on their own by asking them to take a particular action that is related to the story. Help them to make the lesson relevant to their lives.