

Curriculum Review – *GodSpace Green*

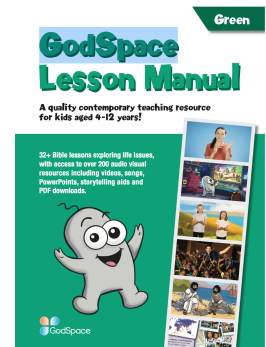
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Reviewed January 2022. Version 1.

RI Curricula are referred to by the Department of Education Qld as RI Program Materials.

Executive Summary

In 2019, the Multi-Faiths RI Peak Body Network commissioned an independent review of common curriculum materials used by Religious Instructors in Queensland Schools. The focus of the review was to assist Principals to be confident that curriculum materials comply with Department of Education Queensland policy requirements. This report is a review of the GodSpace Green curriculum materials used by many Christian Religious Instructors, against 15 policy areas of focus. The review purpose and process is outlined in a separate document on the website multifaithsri.org.au.



Outcome:

***GodSpace Green* is highly compliant with the relevant Department of Education Queensland policies.**

There are 8 themes, each with 4 lessons. The lessons are organised around important people and stories from the Bible, and how to apply principles for good living to everyday life. There is 1 instructor manual, with each lesson differentiated for 4 different age groups, each with lessons organised around the same idea and bible concept.

There are quality colour magazines for students with engaging activities aligned to each lesson. The instructor manual provides support for community members who may not be teachers to confidently organise themselves, and engage with students and schools in respectful and sensitive ways.

This edition has improved representations of inclusivity through illustrations and instructions to consider students with sensory sensitivities for key activities. This edition also has supporting videos with quality animations, Auslan instructions to communicate some key bible verses, and features an Indigenous artist.

- The main element in the 2021 edition where a Principal may wish to exercise caution is in the inclusion of these digital elements. Each student magazine has between 10-15 QR codes which link directly to videos on the private GodSpace Vimeo site. The publishers have provided additional information for this review about how they have managed the risks of unsafe use of the internet, exposure to inappropriate content, and tracking of private information, which is included in this review.

The commentary from lesson-by-lesson analysis and recommendations are provided in this report to support RI instructors in complying with Department of Education policy.

Review coordinator:

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Curriculum details

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GodSpace Green

GodSpace Green is a one-year program for instructors. It is published by Burst Christian Resources that is affiliated with Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT.

Instructor's manual with detailed instructions

- 231 pages.
- There are 8 themes, each of 4 lessons. These themes are organised as
 1. Discovering Who God Is
 2. Discovering God in Jesus' Parables
 3. Discovering Life with God in Jesus' Teaching
 4. God's Spirit – Alive and Active
 5. Peter – A life Changed by Jesus
 6. People Who Discovered God
 7. People Who Discovered Jesus
 8. Discovering Jesus from the First Christmas
 9. Extra lessons including Introductory, Easter, Anzac Day, and Book Week.
- Each lesson has differentiated plans and suggestions for four age groups outlined in the instructor's manual, with each age group having a separate student booklet. As the lessons are organised around the same idea and bible concept, the instructor can choose activities that are appropriate for the ages and interests of their groups.
 1. Explorers ages 4 - 6
 2. Adventurers ages 6 - 8
 3. Navigators ages 8 – 10
 4. Voyagers ages 10 - 12
- Each lesson plan contains information for the instructor about
 1. Aim, overview, bible verse and resources in an overview
 2. Big idea
 3. Lesson aim
 4. Learning Outcomes
 5. Lesson Notes
 6. Question activity – such as a game, song, show and tell
 7. Explore activities – such as a Bible focus with scripted teaching sections and links to visual aids or activity in workbook
 8. Discover activities - such as a prayer or song.

Student Magazines

- Quality colour magazines for students include engaging activities aligned to each lesson.
- The magazines have activities that are highly visual with engaging and inclusive illustrations, puzzles, opportunities to draw, and QR codes to engaging animations and Auslan videos.

Lesson by Lesson Review

- Reviewed as compliant.
- Reviewers noted that while these activities are compliant, RI instructors would need to take additional care with these activities.
- Reviewers indicated that caution should be exercised and that this lesson or part of the lesson may cause compliance concerns.

- Sections of this lesson were not compliant.
- N/A Not applicable.
- * Updates in new edition have addressed the issues raised.

The codes refer to the Infants manual (I), Lower Primary (LP), and Upper Primary (UP).

Unit	1				2				3				4				5				6				7				8			
Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
1. Appropriate age and lesson time																																
2. Supporting a cooperative arrangement. No leaving of materials																																
3. No proselytizing or promotion of outside school activities and publications																																
4. No activities or content that would cause harm to a child (physical, psychological or emotional well-being)																																
5. Supports and promotes a safe, supportive and disciplined learning environment																																
6. Responds to diverse learning needs – level and age																																
7a. A safe physical and cyber learning environment - supports wellbeing																																
7b. Fosters behavioural strengths																																
7c. Builds positive relationships (peers, staff, parents, community) and promotes positive social interactions																																
7d, e. Encourages inclusivity, diversity																																
8. Safe supportive environment, free from bullying, discrimination, harassment																																
9. Responsive to school behaviour plan, safe supportive and disciplined learning environment																																
10. Smart choices - healthy food and drink																																
11. Consistent with Code of School Behaviour																																
12. Risk - suggests undertaking an assessment and identifies where risk assessment is needed																																
13. Promotes responsible care and use of animals																																
14. Does not include activities using items that may cause allergic reactions																																
15. Supports effective communication between students, parents communities that is inclusive and valued																																

Review Commentary

Strengths

- 1. The instructor handbook is detailed and well designed.** The lessons are clearly outlined with scripted suggestions for instructors, that are in clear and child-friendly language.
- 2. The instructor handbook provides practical advice to support community representatives in their roles.**

Each lesson has clearly outlined learning outcomes, lesson notes and choice of activities. This is so that the RI instructors may choose appropriate activities based on the students' needs within the class. The introductory pages of each of the manuals provides reminders to get to know students, to respectfully acknowledge different views, and suggestions of what to say when students ask challenging questions.

There is a clear emphasis on the use of appropriate language and respect for students by the RI instructors. Sensitivity to student experience is shown throughout, for example where a video references bushfires, (p.g. 79) instructors are advised to ask the advice of a head teacher or principal about appropriateness if the school is in a fire affected area.

- 3. The resources promote inclusion and diversity in engaging and sensitive ways.**

The resources present diversity as a strength. For example, there are videos where children teach Auslan versions of bible verses, the work of Indigenous artists feature, and illustrations of students represent a range of ethnicities and include a student in a wheelchair. Where there are activities that involve props (balloons, or playdough), instructors are reminded that some students have sensory sensitivities. In addressing a lesson about managing worry through trusting God (lesson 10), there is a reminder that some students may experience anxiety daily. Students are represented as creative, with student lego creations featured. The focus of each lesson teaches character strengths such as being helpful, welcoming new people, not judging, and forgiving others.

- 4. The lessons have a variety of interactive learning activities.**

- A number of different teaching strategies are suggested to elicit student engagement and interaction, such as using visual aids, songs, puppets, drama, crafts, and real-life case studies.
- Uses age appropriate language for students to explain biblical stories and implications. Scripts for instructors to use with puppets are age appropriate and engaging.
- Each lesson contains numerous options for the teacher to select from depending on the diversity of each class. Options for songs and PowerPoint resources are high quality.
- Lesson plans are clearly scaffolded. All lessons are planned for an indoor classroom with no specialist equipment needed. The usual resources that children would have and regularly use in their classrooms are used such as glue, scissors, pencils, crayons. They are low risk.

Considerations

- 7. Use of QR codes and links to media.**

Throughout the student magazines there are QR codes that provide links to engaging animations, Auslan videos, and an interview with an Indigenous artist. Schools will have different levels of access to student digital devices, and media management policies, and will need to evaluate and advise how to manage instructor and student access. Correspondence with the publishers confirms that

- Teachers manual QR codes: Each Unit has a media QR code (8 in total) which link teachers directly to the media available for that unit on the Lesson Downloads portal on the GodSpace website. This is a closed section of the website available for subscribers only.
- The student magazine QR codes: Each student magazine has between 10-15 QR codes which link directly to videos on the private GodSpace Vimeo site. The use of QR codes rather than web links means students only interact with the specific content and are not using browser or search which could lead to potential risk. QR codes will only direct students to a single private video link on Vimeo. Vimeo is set to only show the video connected to the QR code. Vimeo will not preview additional videos or provide links directing students away from this video. Students will also not be able to comment on the videos or interact with others in any form through Vimeo.
- The QR codes are generated by paid subscription by the company QR Code Generator. This company has been chosen because it caters for the amount of scans required by the GodSpace

product and also because it has catered for educational settings in the past. The QR code generator uses dynamic QR codes which track the following information:

- a. The number of scans to each QR
- b. The location the scan occurred (country)
- c. The time the scan was made.
- d. The type of device used to scan the QR code.

This data is anonymous and no personal data is collected from the person/child scanning the code. The data is stored within the user account. The company QR Code Generator has confirmed that the only data collected is the data available and stored in the user account managed currently by Zenos Media. They have confirmed that this data (listed above) can be deleted at any time by the account user and is not stored elsewhere by the company, thus users (Zenos Media) have control over the collected data.

The Vimeo account (the destination of the QR codes) does not track the personal information of those viewing the videos. Vimeo records the amount of views made to each video.

The overall risk of using QR codes is minimal. This risk could be equated to or deemed less than directing students via weblink to a website such as Mathletics or Reading Eggs.

Commendations for publishers:

- The publishers were highly responsive to suggestions for small improvements in the pre-publication phase.

Policy Compliance

The curriculum materials are highly compliant with the 15 policy areas of focus identified in collaboration with the Department of Education policy advisors, drawn from:

- The Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.
- The Department of Education's Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment Procedure
- P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
- Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework
- Inclusive Education Policy
- Statement of expectations for a disciplined school environment
- Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools
- The Code of School Behaviour
- Managing Risks in School Curriculum Activities
- Animal Use in Queensland state schools
- Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools
- Parent and Community Engagement framework

The curriculum materials offered many opportunities for students to consider issues and develop values that are identified as desirable educational goals within the Australian curriculum. Some of the strengths of the curriculum in helping students develop as responsible, caring and global citizens are outlined. The activities that were noted as considerations are flagged as blue in table 1, while activities requiring some greater caution have been noted with an orange flag and are explained in detail. These cautions could be addressed by the publishers in future editions, and easily adapted by instructors to ensure current policy compliance.

Chapter 5 - Section 76 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 requires that materials are for Year 1 students or older ages. While the GodSpace Green manual does have lessons for kindergarten ages 4-6 these lesson materials may support Year 1 instructors to differentiate their activities. They would not necessarily imply that RI classes would be conducted with Prep students.

Overall Comment from the review team:

GodSpace Green is an innovative and well-considered resource that aims to provide clear scaffolding and appropriate pedagogies for non-trained teachers (ie instructors who are volunteers in school classrooms). The lessons are appropriate for primary-school children. The lessons provided ample opportunities for all children to get involved and contribute through discussions, reflections and activities.