



LOVE JESUS • grow in faith • CHANGE THE WORLD

Why are you passionate about children's faith formation?

I believe faith is a lifelong process for all of us as we continue learning ways to live and be followers of Jesus in our world today. Children observe and learn about faith when they interact with those who are followers of Jesus. Jesus himself invites us to learn from him. At a very young age children start small learning to pray, be invited to hear the stories of Jesus and trust God as we begin nurturing the inner life of the spirit. In our church and at home, we can help build trust in who God is by using teaching materials that consistently point children toward age-appropriate spiritual markers that help build a solid foundation that calls them to be followers of Jesus in everyday life and to share joy and hope with those around them.

Why does your church use Shine?

When we purchase this very user-friendly curricula, we can be confident that we are teaching beliefs that our church supports. With other curricula I often need to comb through materials to be sure that we aren't straying from our core beliefs.

What sets SHINE apart from other curriculum?

Teacher guides provide an essay for each lesson, including background information about the Bible story with reflection questions and prayer for our busy teachers as they prepare to teach each week's lesson. Shine curriculum teaches the Bible story with use of their SHINE bible storybook and uses a variety of "wonder questions" to encourage conversations about the story and our own personal life experiences. These open ended "wonder questions" are a big plus that helps children be part of the story, and with teacher promoting allows them to verbalized ways to live out what was learned from the story during the week. SHINE emphasizes spiritual practices of worship and prayer, includes media connections in a variety of ways to enhance each lesson,

includes follow the Story cards for a weekly review and has a component in each lesson that teaches Jesus' way of peace in the world. It provides a variety of explore options each week for teachers to use in their classroom settings that gives alternatives for children who learn in different ways.

Shine has a digital component which allows families who may need to be at home due to illness or absence to teach lessons at home. Teaching kits are now available in both print and digital formats. The way our church uses this is to provide a printed product for all families, those who attend in person and for those who are still at home. Families at home have access to the digital *SHINE at home* so they can use mini lessons while also having the printed children's age-appropriate activity and Story Bible book that can enhance the at home lesson.

Why do you believe it is important for children to be taught Sunday school from an Anabaptist perspective?

We seek to continue raising up generations of children who want to share Jesus with others. Through using Anabaptist curriculum we invite our children to seek God's way of peace and reconciliation through the love that Jesus demonstrated within our communities where we live, go to school and work.

What comments have you heard from teachers or parents about why they value SHINE?

Our church did online children's lessons for two-thirds of 2019 and 2020 and only began in person lessons in September of this year. We are thankful that online digital as well as printed children's materials were and continue to be provided by Shine. The time and energy they have given to continue revamping, changing and upgrading this curriculum speaks to their listening process from leaders, teachers and parents who use SHINE in denominations who seek teaching Jesus' way of peace and reconciliation.



Lenora Bell
Director of Children's Ministry
Harrisonburg Mennonite Church