Guidelines for Curriculum Writing

***Immerse yourself in the Bible story.***

* Study the scripture text.
* Consult a Bible commentary when you have questions.
* Pay special attention to how the story exemplifies the session’s Faith Link or Key Ideas.

***Write a clear, engaging session.***

* **Write using language that we speak and is easily understandable by both teachers and students.**
* **Explain processes and instructions carefully and completely.** If you are suggesting a game or craft, try to play or create it yourself to find out if it works.
* **Write from a deep understanding of faith formation.** While we value biblical literacy, Shine understands faithfulness and faith formation to be more important than acquiring biblical facts.
* **Know the developmental characteristics of the children or youth who will be recipients of the content you are writing.**
* **Do research to uncover interesting facts and shape creative activities.** Use books and websites as you create fresh and engaging activities but find reliable sources and observe copyright laws. For Bible facts and theological information, use Bible dictionaries and theological reference books, as well as internet sources.
* **Make it your own.** Shine does not print copyrighted song lyrics, prayers, or craft ideas. It is your responsibility to come up with unique and engaging ideas. If a story is adapted from another source, always include the source as a reference. The use of AI is permitted only as a brainstorming tool.

***Provide helps for the teacher.***

* **Bear in mind the diversity and ability of teachers.** Some have been teaching for a long time while others are relatively new and inexperienced.
* **Avoid religious and denominational jargon.** Along with our publishing denominations, there are over 17 other denominations that use the Shine curriculum.
* **Plan sessions so teacher preparation is generally less than an hour.** Avoid complex activities with many needed supplies or ones that are continued over multiple sessions.
* **Judge the length of the session.** Expect that a typical session will last 45–60 minutes. Roughly speaking, allow 5–10 minutes for Connect, 20–25 minutes for Encounter; 15–20 minutes for Explore; and 5 minutes for Bless.
* **Think outside the box!** Aim for engaging experiences that will nurture children’s growing faith. Avoid activities that seem overly school-like. Research learning modalities and how they can help teachers meet the needs of a variety of children. Come up with fresh options for familiar stories and new twists on overused ideas.

***Write with a lens of awareness.***

* **Demonstrate an awareness of the racial and cultural diversity that exists within churches and communities.**
* **Be sensitive to differing abilities and circumstances among children and youth.** From the start, design learning activities that are accessible for a wide variety of learners. Do not assume all families are composed of a mother, a father, and more than one child. Explain idiomatic language and cultural references.
* **Display awareness of regional diversity.** This curriculum is used in Canada and the United States. Measurements are given in both standard and metric systems (1 cup / 250 ml). Material should be relevant to both urban and rural churches.
* **Use rich and balanced God language**. Convey the fullness of God in the language you use. Shine avoids gendered pronouns for God whenever possible.