

## Guidelines for Teaching Bible (Indicator 5.3)

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Schools and visiting teams sometimes struggle with state requirements and other competing demands on students' time. When the question is asked, "How do we fit everything in?" sometimes Bible is the only thing that is actually flexible!

ACSI holds several truths as central in terms of Bible instruction:

- 1) Students need to be taught foundational Bible knowledge as part of their Christian education. Unless they know the Word of God, they cannot apply it to their lives.
- 2) Knowing the words, concepts, Bible references, and even historical stories and facts is not enough. Students need to get to know the person of Jesus Christ and how he loves each one of us personally. Students also need to experience the personal disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, meditation/memorization, and service.
- 3) In addition, students need to know how to apply their Bible knowledge in various areas of their lives. They need to move from information to application and hopefully into discernment. This does not happen with paper and pencil assignments alone but with discussions, role play, journaling, activity in the community, and many other types of meaningful interactions between students and people who have become significant models and mentors in their lives. Hopefully these truths lead to changed lives which will be visible in character qualities we would describe as Fruits of the Spirit.
- 4) Finally, students need to see the truths of God's word in all other areas of the world, including the academics they are studying and as they prepare for the careers they hope to pursue. The biblical integration of their non-Bible class teachers should richly underscore the truths they are learning in Bible class and vice versa. A Christian worldview should be knit together by what they learn, hear, see, and process with their teachers, parents, and peers and through a personal relationship with God.

For all these reasons, ACSI includes Indicator 5.3 which states: **Bible content and instruction are required in the core curriculum.**

Compliance for this rubric states:

*Instruction is built on a well-developed scope and sequence. Bible curriculum includes all the elements described in Indicator 5.2. Instructional strategies are consistent with other courses.*

Exceeds Compliance states:

*Every student is in a Bible class four days a week or, due to a varied school class schedule, its equivalent instructional minutes. Every student has age appropriate opportunities for exercising spiritual disciplines, personal reflection, and character development on a regular basis related to their Bible.*

Since ACSI recognizes that all schools cannot or choose not to structure their Bible instruction exactly the same, leeway is granted on how Bible instruction is delivered. This statement is included in the rubrics:

*ACSI will accept alternative and innovative ways of meeting the Bible content and instruction requirement. The school's method can be approved for meeting (or exceeding) compliance in advance of an accreditation visit by submitting a description of the process the school uses to the team chairperson and ACSI regional office. The plan must include: goals, objectives and outcomes; assessment; and how it meets the spirit of the indicator and rubric.*

Schools ask, "How much flexibility do we have?" Here are some guidelines:

- 1) At a minimum, at least 50% of the semesters of instruction of any division (HS, MS, ES) needs to contain dedicated, single subject, Bible instruction. (For example, 4 semesters out of 8 at the HS.) It may include personal application, worldview, etc. but the primary focus of the class should be Bible (New Testament,

Old Testament, book studies, Apologetics, Life of Christ, scripture-based thematic studies). Some courses have names like Bible 10 and they are a mix of a study of scripture and Christian living. As long as the primary text is scripture, or the textbook used relies heavily on scripture, they would fit in this category. Courses like *Worldview* may be very scripture-based and fit in this category or it may be more issues-based and fit in the following category.

- 2) No more than 50% of the semesters of instruction of any division (HS, MS, ES) can contain only interdisciplinary studies. Examples might be (Marriage and Family, Cults, Bible as Literature, Bible and Current Events, Bible and the Middle East, Worldview Foundations, etc.)
- 3) Some states have very heavy academic guidelines for a high school diploma such as 4 credits in Science, 4 Math, 4 English, 4 Social Studies, and 4 credits in Misc. (such as Health, Speech, Computer, PE, Foreign Language, etc.) plus electives. If that is the case, then the school may have to allow more flexibility, up to 50% of its Bible credits, and allow a course like *Bible as Literature* to count as both a Bible requirement and English credit. The state only cares about the English credit. The school can allow it to fulfill the Bible requirement while still not double counting the credit.
- 4) Another example of a way to fulfill the situation in #3 above might be to allow the student to enroll in an additional Senior Seminar while completing their Senior Capstone Project. This might not take up an actual class period. (No credit, but it fulfills the requirement.) Two options might be: 1) Students would have to either show up once every week, or 2) Students would be involved in online discussions of the project as it develops. Schools could create other options that would also meet a one semester Bible requirement.

ACSI is not suggesting that teaching less Bible is recommended. This document was written to help schools who are struggling with the reality that students cannot take all required classes, four year of high school Bible, and enjoy a balanced selection of electives as well. We appreciate that students are gifted in multiple areas and may want to enjoy classes in art, music, computers, and other subjects. If the state requirements are so tight that students must choose between taking Bible and electives, then we must find ways to be creative. We do believe that a well-planned path of Bible instruction can include single subject courses as well as some creative and deeply biblical interdisciplinary options.

As we stated in the Rubrics Manual, it is up to the school to provide *“alternative and innovative ways of meeting the Bible content and instruction requirement”* along with *“goals, objectives and outcomes; assessment; and how it meets the spirit of the indicator and rubric.”*

This document is provided to assist schools and teams better assess compliance with Indicator 5.3.