

Curriculum Review Scorecard

Score up to three programs from 1 (poor fit) to 5 (great fit) on each point, from your own sample lessons, not from ads.

WHAT TO COMPARE	PROGRAM A	PROGRAM B	PROGRAM C
Program name			
Who teaches Me / video / app — does it fit our days?	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____
Parent prep time Minutes per week to get ready	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____
Teaching style Mastery or spiral; hands-on or workbook	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____
Scope & sequence Topics and order match our goals	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____
Faith content Matches what we want (publisher's own words)	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____
Cost per child per year Reusable parts, consumables, add-ons	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____
Try before you buy Free samples, placement test	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____
Return & resale Return window, condition rules, resale value	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ _____ _____
Total (out of 40)			

A score is not a verdict

One "1" on a deal-breaker (faith content, screen time, a budget you cannot stretch) rules a program out even if its total is the highest. Circle your deal-breakers before you add up.

One-Week Sample Test

Teach free sample lessons of your top two programs for five days each. Write down what happened, the same day.

Program 1

Program _____

DAY	MINUTES	PREP (MIN)	SMOOTH / OK / HARD
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			

WHAT MY CHILD SAID

WHAT I WOULD CHANGE

Program 2

Program _____

DAY	MINUTES	PREP (MIN)	SMOOTH / OK / HARD
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			

WHAT MY CHILD SAID

WHAT I WOULD CHANGE

Our decision

☐ Buy program 1 ☐ Buy program 2 ☐ Test a third option ☐ Wait and use free resources

BECAUSE

Read Reviews, Then Buy

Use the first two lists every time you read or watch a review. Use the last one before you pay.

Red flags in a review

- ☐ It only praises and never says who the program is **not** for.
- ☐ It shows no inside pages, only the cover and the box.
- ☐ It has buy links but no clear disclosure, or only a vague label like "affiliate link".
- ☐ The reviewer got the program free and does not say so.
- ☐ It calls a program "the best" without naming the child, grade or teaching style.
- ☐ It was written after a week, not after a term of real use.

Signs of a useful review

- ☐ It names the grade, the child and how long they used it.
- ☐ It shows real pages and a sample lesson.
- ☐ It lists downsides and who should skip it.
- ☐ It says clearly how the reviewer got the program and how they are paid.

REVIEWS I TRUST

Before you pay

- ☐ Teach at least one week of free samples.
- ☐ Take the placement test if the publisher offers one.
- ☐ Check the scope & sequence against your goals for the year.
- ☐ List what is sold separately (workbooks, readers, kits).
- ☐ Read the return policy: time window, condition rules, who pays shipping.
- ☐ Price the year for every child, not just one.
- ☐ Decide what you can reuse or resell next year.
- ☐ Write down your deal-breakers before you compare prices.

Where we looked

- ☐ Publisher samples
- ☐ Placement test
- ☐ Independent reviewer
- ☐ Video flip-through
- ☐ Parent group or co-op
- ☐ Friend who used it
- ☐ Library or used copy

BEST THING WE LEARNED

The rule that saves the most money

Buy one subject first, use it for a month, then buy the rest. A program that fails in week three is easier to return or resell than a full box.