

External Review of Spirituality for Kids: Winning the Game of Life Level 1
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Reviewed Level 1: Strengths and Developmentally Appropriateness

Introduction:

This reviewer was provided with access to the online lessons and videos, and the workbooks *Level 1 Winning the Game of Life Guidebook, Lightbook and Family Activities*. A curriculum designed for middle childhood learners to support the development of social emotional learning through deepening their understanding of spiritual fulfillment as something within all of us. The reviewer proceeded to watch the video lessons in order and review the materials for the strengths of the program, potential challenges, and consider the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum. In this first installment of the review the reviewer assessed the strengths, language choices, and examined the ways in which the lessons are appropriate for the targeted age band as well as provided recommendations to expand the learning for middle childhood children.

Strengths of the Program:

In reviewing the *Spirituality for Kids* curriculum, there are many positives throughout the lessons and workbooks. The materials are easily acquired in either a home, school, or community setting as well as inexpensive. Directions are easy to follow making it accessible and equitable to a variety of settings, populations, and learners. Lessons build upon each other, allowing the teacher or parent a way to continuously promote a new skill or concept while reinforcing previously learned lessons. The curriculum offers a variety of entry points through hands on activities and reflective journaling that offer participants a way to apply concepts to their own lives. Although there are some places where this can be developed further, the format of the Guidebook and Lightbook offer a clear path for expanding and growing the curriculum to continue to support the social emotional learning of middle childhood childhood (6-12yrs) and potentially for early childhood (3-5years) and adolescence (13-18years). The curriculum is at its strongest when connecting with lived experiences that engage the body and mind in concrete ways to develop spiritual fulfillment.

Developmental Appropriateness: Middle Childhood 6-12years

Throughout Level 1 of *Playing the Game of Life*, children are asked to watch a video, engage in an activity and complete reflective journals that ask children to examine their own actions for ways to access and develop their Light. Lessons combine elements of engagement that seek to connect with a variety of learners and circumstances. The activities are developmentally appropriate for the targeted age however, there are some lessons that could push participants further to explore where in their own lives they might grow, develop, or access their own light for spiritual fulfillment. Children in middle childhood 6-12 years old learn through hands on interactions. They require scaffolding that connects experiences from their own life in order to consider abstract ideas. They need to first experience a concept in order to think about how that

idea may be applied to themselves. This age band learns best through opportunities that support industry and competence. They rely on adults in their life to help them connect, discuss, and grapple with changes occurring in their bodies, minds, and social circles.

The activities in Level 1 strive to find ways to connect children to the material in meaningful and engaging ways. In many ways the curriculum is successful. Lesson 4 I am a Key Player, builds lessons by asking children to choose Light qualities and discover concrete ways to implement throughout a child's day. Children are asked to consider how a quality might help them with a challenge and finally identifying an action. The building of this lesson is an excellent example of supporting how this age band learns best from identification within oneself, to examination for use with others to implementing in one's own life. In Lesson 6 My Choices the family activity Cloud Nine again provides a concrete way for children to engage in the concepts of Light qualities and Opponent Voice. The hands on creation of the art piece engages children in the process again of identification and action. The addition of the poem provides a different way to visualize, hear, and imagine the Light working in their own lives, meeting the needs of various learners. Since this is a family activity it might be useful for the all members to make their own and share times when each person used their light quality or a time when they listened to their opponent voice. Reinforcing the learning through further exploration and discussion with others. Lesson 10 How to Share: the video of the story of the two squirrel brothers is well done. The story emphasizes the message of how to share without expectation or reward. The animation is simple yet engaging and fun to watch. The inclusion of self care strategies feels timely and important that in order to continue to share our own Light we have to find ways to care for and replenish ourselves. This is an important message. These are a few examples of where the curriculum excels and provides a learning opportunity that meets the developmental needs of the intended age band.

Next Steps

This concludes the first part of the review. Next steps include a review of the materials to address developmental appropriateness of Winning the Game of Life Level 2.