

Book Selection Criteria

Fiction

1. Does the book engage and enlarge the reader's moral imagination?

In other words, does it encourage the formation of godly character and participate in truth as defined by Scripture. Does it clearly define good and bad, making virtue attractive and evil undesirable?

A Christian school library should include the best in Christian literature, history and Bible study, but at the same time, it must be recognized that many books worthy of study, while not overtly labeled as Christian, contain elements of truth, beauty and goodness. It must also be recognized that perfection is not attainable in literature and that every work of value is flawed and can be criticized in some way. Does the work as a whole achieve moral impact, and does it reflect an honest and penetrating view of life?

It should be noted that good literature is not marked by the absence of evil or darkness. Darkness is often necessary as a backdrop for light and goodness. Books that place evil in its proper context may be examples of literary excellence. However, works that glorify un-biblical thought, or employ it purely for entertainment purposes should be avoided.

2. Does the book display excellence in writing, artistic quality, and literary style?

Are the author and illustrator reputable? Does the story have meaning and significance? Does it invite critical or higher-level thinking?

3. Is the work both timely and timeless?

Does the work have permanence? In other words, does the book display both relevance in the present and enduring significance for the future? Is the writing appropriate for the intended age-level, yet universally appealing? Is there an element of enjoyment and delight that adds value to the selection? Will it add something unique to the library's collection as a whole?

C.S. Lewis said, "A children's story that can only be enjoyed by children is not a good children's story in the slightest."

4. Does the book support the school's curriculum requirements?

The collection should be sufficient in quantity to supply the demand placed upon it by classroom use in each area of study. Is the book of sufficient value in relation to its cost and need?

Non-fiction

1. Is the content accurate and up to date?

2. Is the material age-appropriate? Is the depth of coverage adequate for multiple levels of instruction?

3. Does the book support the school's curriculum requirements?

Does it increase the student's understanding of a particular period in history, or relate the way and view of life distinctive to a specific culture? Does it acquaint the reader with non-Christian concepts which have significantly influenced society?

Various points of view and different outlooks on life may be included so that students can be taught to live in and understand a diversified world from the Christian point of view.

Final notes:

The grammar school library collection will not include "controversial" fiction titles, i.e. titles that do not have a clear consensus in the Christian community as to their literary or moral benefit. Such works include the Harry Potter series, Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series, etc. As the value of such works in a Christian education is unclear, WCA does not wish to implicitly endorse these titles by including them in the collection. We believe that God has placed parents as the primary authority in a child's education, and thus we believe the decisions regarding such books should be left to the discretion of individual families.

The study of the "great books" of Western Civilization is at the heart of a classical Christian education. These books speak to our ideas about God, man, family, society, government, good and evil, and other important philosophical questions. In other words, they contribute to the "great discussion" in such a way as to have had an impact on Western civilization. Many of these books such as The Bible, Homer, Milton, and Shakespeare, reflect our Judeo-Christian heritage, if not an explicitly biblical worldview. Others, such as Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, do not. The latter are considered "great" because of their influence on culture, and as such will be included in the library's collection, even though their content would not be considered right and true. These books will be restricted to the Upper School library, where students will have sufficient training in God's word and possess the higher thinking skills to read with discernment.

Book Selection and Deselection Process

Over time, books will be removed, as well as added, to the library collection. This removal process is known as deselection and refers to the discarding of materials that do not meet the criteria stated above. This may be because the materials no longer function in the curriculum, are inaccurate or inappropriate, or have become damaged beyond repair. Every item in the existing collection and all donated materials should be subject to the same selection criteria as new books.

WCA has delegated the authority to select materials to the library coordinator, who is ultimately responsible for the appropriateness of the collection. However, it is not possible for the librarian to personally read and review every book coming into the collection. The selection process will be a “team effort” and the library coordinator will gather input from teachers, administrators, parents, and students in the process. Furthermore, when it is not possible to read and review a title in advance, the librarian will make selections based on reviews in professional and/or Christian publications and other respected input from Christian educators.

In short, we will make every effort to ensure that quality books are available in our library. However, we may not catch everything that might be objectionable. If your child brings home a book that you believe should not be in our library, please do not hesitate to notify the librarian. The librarian will review the material and try to resolve the issue informally by explaining the school’s selection procedure, criteria, and how the book fits into our curricular objectives. If the title is deemed inappropriate, the material will be pulled from the collection.

If the parent is unsatisfied with the outcome of the informal inquiry, he may complete the “Reconsideration of Library Materials” Form, available from the librarian. The complaint will be reviewed by the librarian, the grade appropriate teachers, and members of the administration as needed. Their decision regarding the appropriateness of the material shall be final.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Before a request can be acted upon, the following form must be completed. You should read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety.

Title: _____

Author: _____

Format (please circle): Book Magazine Video Other

Publisher or producer: _____

Copyright Date: _____

Person initiating request (Please print): _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Date request was initiated: _____

Have you received a copy of the school's policies and procedures regarding selection of library materials and the handling of materials that are challenged by an individual? _____

Have you read, viewed, or listened to the entire resource in question? _____

What do you believe is the theme or purpose of the material? _____

Is your objection to this material based upon your child's exposure to the material, your exposure to it, or upon reports you have heard? _____

What are your concerns about the material? State page numbers as necessary. _____

Does the material have any merit or value for a specific reading population or age group? _____
