

ReNew: The Green VBS

Reviewed by Jodi Belcher

ReNew: Snapshot



ReNew: The Green VBS is a VBS program that aims to help children care for God's creation. It focuses on the Parable of the Sower in Mark's gospel and highlights the connection between relationship with God and relationship with creation. The curriculum includes creative and environmentally attentive activities, and it encourages leaders and participants to incorporate green materials and practices into the VBS itself, particularly in selecting art supplies and decorating. The curriculum also offers opportunity to tailor the program to your community's environment and involvement in local creation care.

ReNew: The Basics

- **Theme:** Parable of the Sower and Caring for Creation
- **Publisher & date:** Sparkhouse, 2017 (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)
- **Intended ages/grades:** pre-K – grade 6
- **Format:** onsite with offsite activity possibilities
- **Number of sessions:** 5
- **Types of activities:** music, worship, Bible stories, games, ecological and creation care activities, art, snacks
- **Cost:** \$89.99
- **Video:** <https://youtu.be/fqvzGAbGgbc?si=uu7i4GIIYnY9IQwt>

ReNew: Scope & Sequence

- **Day 1: Planting Seeds**
Mark 4:1–9, Sower Went Out to Sow
- **Day 2: Taking Root**
Mark 4:1–9, Path and Birds
- **Day 3: Growing**
Mark 4:1–9, Rocky Ground
- **Day 4: Facing Challenges**
Mark 4:1–9, Thorns
- **Day 5: Living Together**
Mark 4:1–9, Good Soil

ReNew: Where It Shines

Connecting Christian faith with creation care ethics

The lessons in this curriculum are designed to help children perceive creation care as an integral part of living into Christian faith. Each lesson provides a question about God and an “eco-question” so that participants can engage the questions together.

Affirming children as active participants in caring for creation

Its main goal is to inspire children to actively care for creation in their personal lives, communities, and world. Toward that end, it starts from a powerful place of affirming children’s agency in their lives of faith and invites them into creation care opportunities.

Promoting eco-friendly approaches to doing VBS

This program enables the medium to be the message as well by encouraging and suggesting eco-friendly options for designing, decorating, and implementing VBS.

ReNew: What We Miss

More affordability for more congregations

While this curriculum is cheaper than a lot of new options, it may still cost too much for some communities with smaller budgets. However, the creation care theme of this curriculum may lend itself particularly well to partnering with another nearby congregation for VBS if the cost is too high for your community to shoulder alone.

ReNew: Overall Assessment

**A conscientious
VBS curriculum
for exploring and
prioritizing
creation care in
your own context**