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Accessible Apologetics: Curriculum Review



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Apologetics, the defense of the truth of the Christian faith, is an essential component of Christian education. Its value for believers is twofold: first, to strengthen faith by showing the reasons and evidence for what we believe, and second, to equip us to share the truth with others.

Bringing apologetics into the curriculum at church may seem a daunting task, especially if you're starting from scratch or have no trained apologists in your church. That's where Mikel del Rosario's [Accessible Apologetics](#) program comes in. Mikel's ministry is accurately described in the title of the course: *accessible* apologetics. That is, apologetics training that is readily available and usable for teachers and pastors in the local church, and readily understandable for ordinary people in the church who may or may not have heard of this "apologetics" thing before.

I've been following Mikel's work with interest for a while now – he's an graduate of the apologetics program that I'm finishing up now, Biola University's MA in Christian Apologetics, which is an outstanding interdisciplinary program that equips its graduates for outstanding work in ministries of teaching, speaking, and writing. I'm impressed with the quality of his work, both in the Accessible Apologetics program and in his speaking ministry; he does a great job of connecting the top-level apologetics work being done today with the local church and individual believers.

Let's take a look at the Accessible Apologetics curriculum.

It's divided into five units, each of which has two sections (allowing for Accessible Apologetics to be easily run as either a five- or ten-week complete course). The first thing that I noticed is the well-thought-out progression of material. The first unit, which serves as an introduction, addresses the questions of "What is Christian Apologetics?" and "Why Defend My Faith?" This is an outstanding way to begin! As a college professor myself, I know that if my students don't understand the reason why we're covering a subject, they're unlikely to really connect with it. Too often, those of us who are excited about apologetics forget that our brothers and sisters may be encountering for the first time the ideas that we now take for granted. They may think that apologetics is just for pastors or teachers, and they may never have thought about how apologetics can

help them share their faith. By these introductory lessons, Mikel covers valuable ground and establishes the value of apologetics for each person in the class.

The next unit, Faith and Reason, is again very well chosen for its place in the curriculum. In today's culture, swamped with messages about relativism and told by the secular media that faith is just private opinion, it's essential that Christians address the questions of "Do Faith and Reason Mix?" and "How Do I Know That Christianity Is True?"

The third unit moves toward specific apologetics questions. "Is God Real?" is the right question to ask – too often, people make assumptions when they talk about Jesus with unbelievers. If someone doesn't believe that God is real, then talking about miracles and Jesus as the Son of God is ineffective. "Why Does God Allow Evil?" tackles one of the most challenging questions that both Christians and skeptics deal with. Both of these sections could be used as stand-alone classes as well.

The fourth and fifth units continue the focus on specific apologetics questions: revelation, why we can believe what the Bible says, whether the Gospels are history, and whether Jesus really rose from the dead.

My assessment of the content of the curriculum: Excellent!

What about presentation? That's where Accessible Apologetics really shines. This is a complete instructional package, and by complete I mean *complete*. As a fairly (cough) detail-oriented instructor, I can see just how many hours of work went into each and every lesson. We're talking double-digit numbers of hours, folks. Per lesson. Seriously.

Each lesson includes:

- A PowerPoint presentation for the lesson.
- Student lesson outlines with blanks, definitions, and works cited.
- Clear objectives.
- Detailed notes for the instructor.
- Detailed descriptions of necessary preparation for teaching.
- Specific lesson plans.
- Options for covering the material in either one or two sessions per lesson.
- Discussion questions.

But wait! There's more! This Apologetics Guy has made this a labor of love. There are a number of small-but-important features. For instance, there are clear overview notes (very helpful in planning). The full text of key Scripture quotations is printed in the lecture notes, so that you don't have to flip back and forth to your Bible as you're teaching. The content is footnoted so you can follow up Mikel's references to the source material. We even get suggestions for sample bulletin inserts and reminder and follow-up emails, as well as ideas for Facebook updates and Twitter updates (if your church is into social media!). As someone who has organized church events, I can attest that this would be a major stress reducer.

I want to highlight one last feature of this curriculum, perhaps the most impressive of all. It's very easy for teachers to focus on just one mode of presentation, like a PowerPoint. However, people learn in different ways. Some people learn best by listening (auditory learners). Others learn visually, while others learn best by discussion in small groups (interpersonal), or by reflecting on their own (intrapersonal), or by body movement and physical activity (kinesthetic learners). The best lessons are those which engage more than one mode of instruction, so that every learner is able to connect with the material in different ways.

The Accessible Apologetics curriculum effectively includes a variety of instructional methods that target different modes of learning – visual, auditory, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and kinesthetic (bodily). There are PowerPoints to go along with lectures; discussion questions; suggestions for physical games and hands-on activities; memory verses; and handouts that help encourage productive note-taking.

In short, Accessible Apologetics lives up to its name. I don't know of anything like it currently available: a complete instructional package, with solid content and sound pedagogy, ready to use out-of-the-box. Well done, Mikel!

You can check out Mikel del Rosario's blog here: [Apologetics Guy](#).

Go directly to the [Accessible Apologetics page here](#).

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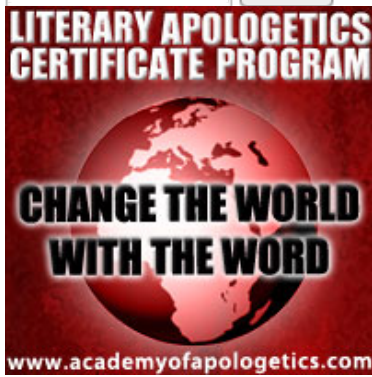
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