

Criteria for Book Selection

Listed are questions to consider in determining whether a book should be included in the church library. They apply for purchased as well as donated books. (See additional note below on donated books.)

1. Does the book agree with the teachings of our church? (Is it consistent with the mission of our congregation?)
2. Does the book meet a need in our library?
3. Is the subject matter presented in an interesting way?
4. Is the book written at an appropriate level for the age group it is intended to reach?
5. If the subject matter is one in which information changes often, is the copyright date a recent one? (Note: Don't just check the date of printing, check the COPYRIGHT date.)
6. Is the text easy to read? (Size of print, color of pages).
7. Is the book one of the best on this subject? (If this is hard for you to judge, you may check if the title is on a church library recommended book list from NPH or on one of the lists printed occasionally in the WELS-CLO newsletter.)
8. Is the book one which is not easy to obtain at the public library? (Our members' taxes are already paying for those books. However, there may be no library easily accessible to the members.)
9. Is the style of language contemporary, especially in children's and youth books
10. Are illustrations or pictures up-to-date, if appropriate for the type of book being considered?

Paperback vs. Hardcover

If funds are extremely limited, paperbacks are the least expensive way to get the most books on the library shelves. If a hardcover is an extremely valuable book or if it is used frequently, it is worth the expense even for a very small library and perhaps even if it is also available in paperback. Other hardcover or more expensive books may be added as the collection grows. Hardcover books have the advantage of being more durable than paperbacks. Some paperbacks have print that is quite small.

Donated Books

Use the same criteria for deciding whether or not to accept a donated book as you use for deciding whether or not to purchase a book. If the book is not worth the time and expense involved in getting it on the shelves or the space it will take on the shelves, then it's not worth accepting even if it's free. Is the book musty, in need of repair, water damaged? (You may decide to be a little more lax with some of the questions if you are just beginning the library, such as, is it the best in the field; SOMETHING in the field may be better for now than nothing at all). Compiling a wish list from which members may donate new or used books prevents the problem of weeding through many unacceptable books and questioning whether some are appropriate for the church library.