

Bible and English Lesson Guidance Notes

- The Bible is the central focus of the lesson, and learning tasks are built around a passage or theme. The first aim of these lessons is to explain and model the Gospel so that people have an opportunity to respond to Jesus. The second aim is to develop learners' language skills. These lessons provide the added benefit of being able to bring students with different levels of language ability together around the Bible as the focal point. When publicising and delivering the classes, be up-front about what the classes involve.
- Classroom support assistants are necessary to make multi-level group work successful. Involve these support assistants as much as possible in whole class, small group and one-to-one work. They also have a key role in establishing a welcoming, supportive and lively atmosphere. Support the assistants and involve them in the planning and delivery of the sessions.
- The lesson outlines are there as a guide. You know your students best of all, so adapt, differentiate, remove and add tasks as appropriate. Consider their language levels, spiritual background, gender and overall size of the group (some tasks require a larger group of students). However, be led by the Holy Spirit, and teach the full Gospel. Be yourself and teach from your heart: share what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you personally about the passage or topic. Enjoy the class. Teach with passion and humour, and enjoy spending time with the students; this way, they will enjoy the lesson too.
- Vary the style, pace and length of time that you spend on each lesson activity. Ensure that you have good mix of fast-paced games and competitions, slower-paced discussions and written activities, where appropriate. Do not allow games to become over-competitive. Make sure that tasks are fun and interactive (with minimal 'teacher talking time') and that they help learners to achieve the specific learning aims of the session. Do not rush through tasks but do not let activities drag on. Move on from a task whilst students are still interested in it. However, do not abandon a successful task before the group has achieved anything, however small. You will probably find that you need to spend at least 15 minutes reading the passage and discussing the vocabulary, and 20 minutes discussing and applying the learning in the text, with 5 to 10 minutes of feedback.
- Groups for discussion can be formed according to language level, spiritual understanding, languages spoken or gender. In one lesson, you might want to deliberately mix students up so that you have a good variety of people in each group. In another session, you might feel it is important to make sure that the students in each group have a similar amount of spiritual understanding. Often, you might feel it appropriate to have a beginners' language group and a more advanced group.
- Do not be restricted by the discussion questions and do not set too many questions for your group. Ask other open-ended, thought-provoking questions that come to mind, and allow students to raise issues that they want to discuss. As long as they do not try to sidetrack the discussion with unhelpful 'red herrings', address the issues that arise, *always* involving the students and asking for their thoughts. Utilise learners by inviting them to contribute and share their personal experiences and testimonies. Learners are usually unplanned resources that can add enormously to a session. Students should always be able to apply their learning to their own lives: this is the purpose of the lesson. When it comes to studying the Bible passage or theme, keep the learning simple, but make sure it is *deep*.
- The discussion feedback notes are intended to *guide* you in explaining different elements of the Gospel in a clear way. Highlight only those points that the Holy Spirit wants you to get across to your students (including insight that is not covered in the notes). Be aware that you will need to further simplify your explanations when communicating with people who are beginners in the English language: make key points briefly and clearly, using visual techniques to aid understanding.
- Use a Bible translation that has clear and natural language. The New Century Version is very good and can be downloaded from sites such as www.crosswalk.com. Watch out for American spellings and make appropriate changes.

- 🌍 Cover all that you do in prayer: pray as you prepare, pray for the students and pray with your team. Pray at the start and end of each session, inviting students to pray (in their own language or in English) if they are happy to do this. Some will want to pray but will need encouragement. Although students generally have great respect for the teacher and expect him or her to lead, it is important to encourage the believers to participate as much as possible.
- 🌍 Be prepared *not* to follow your plan! Once you have your plan in place, and the students arrive, be prepared to be flexible. It is quite possible that the activities you have planned are not appropriate for the students who have unexpectedly turned up. Adapt your ideas and be flexible according to the Holy Spirit's leading and students' needs (language levels and spiritual understanding). Try to have one or two extra ideas up your sleeve about how learning tasks could be easily differentiated or changed altogether, but do not plan five different lessons! Pray as you plan, and trust God's leading in all you do.
- 🌍 Make sure that you have a 10 to 15 minute break half-way through the session so that people can stretch their legs, have something to drink and have time to get to know one another. Be available out of class so that you can get to know the students and support them practically and pastorally, as appropriate. We run a weekly social drop-in alongside the classes, which provides great opportunities for building relationships and meeting learners' other needs.