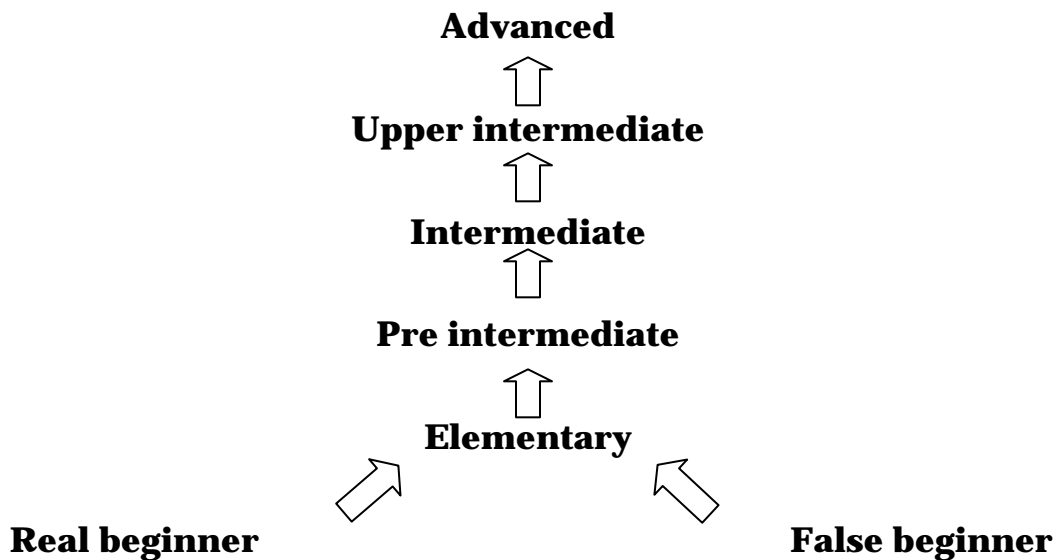


Reaching out to ESL Speakers

Why use ESL teaching as an evangelistic tool?

Matthew 25: 31-40

What are the language levels of your students?



These levels need to be assessed from the perspective of written and spoken language

Pitching the level right is crucial for both good English learning and effective evangelism.

The ESL Bible Study Leader as an English Language teacher

As an English language 'teacher', expect to take a variety of roles:

- Controller
 - Transmitting knowledge, answering questions, giving explanations and facilitating the group
- Organiser
 - Usually associated with activities: may be summarised as:
engage – instruct (demonstrate) – initiate – organise feedback
- Assessor
 - giving accurate feedback about language and facts
- Prompter
 - subtle encouragement towards an answer or in word finding
- Participant
 - this is particularly important to build rapport and is very appropriate at social events.
- Resource
 - being willing to assist in finding answers (both language and Bible based) but not being scared to say 'I don't know the answer to that but I'll find out for you'
- Tutor
 - you may need to act as tutor with specific students for specific issues (language related, culturally related and spiritually related)
- Observer
 - this helps track a students progress and assists with preparation and planning both in the realm of English learning and in terms of gospel explanation.

The most important factor is a willingness to shift from role to role as the situation demands it.

The danger in ESL teaching and Bible study is getting locked into the role of Controller because of fear or ignorance in the area of promoting interaction. The secret is to create a safe environment for the students where language is not a hindrance but a medium for building rapport.

In addition to this, expect to use yourself as a teaching aid through:

- Mime and gesture
- Language model – reading out loud
- Provider of comprehensible input – language which the students can understand but which is slightly above their own level of production

English learning requires both extensive reading and intensive reading programs. This is also true of any learning or understanding of God: this requires both extensive and intensive reading of God's Word.

Extensive Reading Program (for home reading)

Such a program could follow the following schedule:

- Approximately 3- 5 chapters a week of narrative,
- Approximately 1 - 2 chapters a week of epistle or prophetic literature,

Get them to read an allocated section each week and note any questions in the margins of their Bible for discussion and answering at the next Bible Study

A good reading program could include:

- ⇒ Jesus biographies – *Mark, Luke*, (narrative)
- ⇒ The Early Church - *Acts*, (narrative)
- ⇒ The gospel is worth suffering for - *Philippians*, (general epistle)
- ⇒ The beginning - *Genesis, esp Genesis 1-12* (narrative)
- ⇒ Living the good life – *Matthew's sermon on the mount*, (discourse/teaching)
- ⇒ Jesus is better than tradition etc – *Hebrews* (complex epistle/argument)
- ⇒ The dangers of syncretism - *Galatians*, (general epistle)

You can choose the reading schedule to meet the student's specific needs.

Once you have assessed their needs, a good tool for selecting appropriate books of the Bible for them to read is Fee & Stuart's *'How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour'*

If they want to access a simple English translation and commentary for home reading, refer them to <http://www.easyenglish.info/tee/> or visit www.biblegateway.com (CEV or GNB versions) and give them a print-out of the relevant book from the site.

Alternatively you could buy a box of 20 paperback CEV or GNB Bibles from The Bible Society (<http://www.biblesociety.com.au/>) for about \$120 and give a Bible to each participant as a gift

Intensive Reading /Listening Program

The Bible Study Group is an opportunity to develop and work on intensive reading and listening skills

1. Develop reading sequence

eg Mark 1& 2

Activity: Reading to confirm expectations: 'Jesus Christ the Son of God'

Skills: Predicting, Reading for gist, Reading for detail

2. Chose a reading /listening option

Options include

- ⇒ Teacher reads the passage out loud – listening emphasis / may need to read out loud twice
- ⇒ Students take turns reading the passage out loud – reading emphasis / watch out for those who prefer to listen and those who prefer to read
- ⇒ Students read the passage silently - I rarely use this but can be good in more advanced groups

3. Review vocabulary

Options include:

- ⇒ Highlight and review key vocab words and culturally specific ideas such as synagogue, Sabbath etc (this works best with a new group as many students find it difficult to acknowledge a lack of understanding until they feel 'safe' in the group)
- ⇒ Get the students to note words and ideas they don't understand as the passage is being read and discuss meanings

4. Activity to assist observation

Options include:

- ⇒ Using highlighters and pens to highlight repeated ideas or words while the passage is being read aloud
- ⇒ Completing a table list or chart which identifies or contrasts key ideas or arguments.
- ⇒ Sentence diagramming – this is useful for passages containing complex arguments. It involves breaking the passage into phrases and laying it out to expose the logic. (see example)
- ⇒ Read and summarise. This is particularly helpful in narratives and for passages with clear ideas in subsections

5. Activity/Discussion to assist interpretation

Use a complementary activity to assist in interpreting the information identified during observation

6. Activity/Discussion to assist application

The roles of the leader/teacher:

- ⇒ Organiser – explain the purpose of the reading and give clear instructions about how to achieve it and how long they have to do it.
- ⇒ Observer – give them time to read without interruption.
- ⇒ Feedback organiser – organise feedback re things learned – in pairs and to group
- ⇒ Prompter – when students have read the text, prompt them to notice specific features in the text

Errors to look out for

- L1 interference eg sin
- Developmental errors – overgeneralisation of new rules

Preparing and Writing ESL Bible Studies

Exercise 1

Compare the following two Bible Studies on Philippians 1: 1-11.

- One was written for a group of English Language Speakers
- The second one was rewritten for an ESL group

1. *List the differences*
2. *Why do you think these changes have been made?*
3. *What things are consistent between the 2?*
4. *Why?*

Study 1: Philippians 1: 1 – 11

Read Acts 16: 11 – 34 aloud.

Explain that this is the beginning of the church in Philippi and these are some of the people Paul is writing to.

Ask: from this passage:

- What is the church like
- What are the people like?
- What is the city like?
- What sort of thing would you write to them?

Read Philippians 1: 1 – 11

Hand out Worksheet

Work on this individually (or in pairs)

Share answers & discuss points of interest

Think about Paul as a leader of these people

- What are his underlying principles in the whole passage?
- What would he pray for us?
- Therefore what should we do in response

Pray

Philippians 1: 1 – 11 - Worksheet

<i>What does this passage tell us about Paul?</i>	<i>What does this passage tell us about the Philippians?</i>

Study 2: Philippians 1: 1 – 11

Explain that Philippians is a letter written by Paul to the church at Philippi.

Look at a map and locate where Philippi is

Read Acts 16: 11 – 34 aloud.

Explain that this is the beginning of the church in Philippi and these are some of the people Paul is writing to.

Ask: from this passage:

- How long had the church been meeting when Paul and Silas left the city.
- What are the people like? What were their back grounds? (the Jews such as Lydia and the gentiles such as the jailer and his family)
- What is the city like? (esp v12)
- What sort of thing would you want to write to them to encourage them if you were Paul?

Read Philippians 1: 1 – 11

Hand out Worksheet

Divide the group into 2 and get each group to study the passage closely to find out the answers to the questions for one column.

They can work on this individually or in pairs.

Share answers & discuss points of interest

Think about Paul as a leader of these people

- What does he show is important for him in the whole passage?
- What would he pray for us if he was our teacher today?
- Therefore what should we do in response?

Pray

Philippians 1: 1 – 11 - Worksheet

<i>What does this passage tell us about Paul?</i>	<i>What does this passage tell us about the Philippians?</i>
Who does he say he is?	Which group of Philippians is Paul writing to?
Where is he at the moment?	What have the Philippians done to make Paul thank God for them?
What is his attitude to the Philippians?	Why does Paul say that the Philippians have a 'special place in my heart'? (v7)
What he does he pray will happen to the Philippians?	What does Paul pray will happen to the Philippians?
What does this tell us about what Paul thinks is important?	What does Paul's attitude to the Philippians tell us about their relationship with him?

Read Matthew 6: 22-24

Setting the context

The 1st part of Matthew 6 reminds us of the importance of avoiding hypocrisy as we express our relationship with God.

- It reminds us that as we 'hunger & thirst after righteousness' we should not be distracted by wanting recognition from others. In other words it tells us what we should avoid.

The 2nd part of Matthew 6 follows on from this, by setting a context for what we should do and how we should behave in order to demonstrate that we are already citizens of God's Kingdom.

- In this section Jesus outlines 2 characteristics he wants the citizens of his kingdom to have. The first is absolute loyalty to the values of the kingdom and the 2nd is commitment to complete trust in God
- The passage immediately preceding this one looks at loyalty to Kingdom values in terms of treasure and this passage looks at this same idea in terms of light and service

Exercise 2

What are some exercises or activities you could use with this passage to help an ESL observe the meaning of these 2 stories?

Share your ideas with the rest of the group.

Using Bible Study material

'The Story of a Kingdom' Bible Studies /Readings found at [www.http://www.sok.org.uk/](http://www.sok.org.uk/) were designed for International University students.

I have found them a useful basis to build ESL Bible study sessions on.

Exercise 3

Work your way through the 'In the Beginning' Bible Study based on 'The Story of the Kingdom' Chapter 2.

As you look at the study, keep in mind the 3 stages of successful Bible Study:

1. *Observation*
 2. *Interpretation*
 3. *Application*
- a. Mark what phase each exercise is promoting and what skills the ESL reader would need to use complete the work sheet or to answer the questions.
 - b. Why has the SOK reading been positioned where it is? What purpose is it serving?

Story of the Kingdom: Study 2 - In the Beginning

Read Genesis 1: 1 (CEV)

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth

Ask:

- What does this sentence tell us about God?

Listen to Genesis 1: 1-31 read aloud (CEV)

- While you listen, write down any words, phrases or ideas that you hear repeated

God saidand that's what happened

Evening came and then morning – that was the day

And God looked at what he had done and saw that it was good

Ask:

- What do these statements tell us about God?
- What do they tell us about how creation happened?
- What do they tell us about what creation was like?

Read SOK Chapter 2 up until the 1st Summary Statement

Application:

Read Hebrews 11: 1-3

- What does this passage say about faith?
- In the light of this, discuss what Genesis 1 means for us today.

REMEMBER!

"That we pervade the world with the cross is not so important as that we, while doing so, be pervaded by it."

Reinhold Schneider "Las Casas before Charles V"

Useful References

General Bible Study Leadership Resources

- Karen & Rod Morris: *Leading Better Bible Studies* (Aquila Press) 1997
- Colin Marshall: *Growth Groups* (St Matthias Press) 1995

Easy English Bible Translations –

Good translations to use include:

- The Contemporary English Version (CEV)
- The Good News Bible (GNB)

These may be bought cheaply from The Bible Society (<http://www.biblesociety.com.au/>) in boxes of 20 for about \$120 and given to participants as a gift

OR

They may be accessed on line at www.biblegateway.com

Alternatively simple translations of most books of the bible with short commentary inserts to explain difficult vocab and concepts can be found at <http://www.easyenglish.info/tee/>

Some useful resources for Elementary and Pre-Intermediate levels can be found at:

Chronological Bible Storying

<http://www.centralbaptist.net/page33.html>

Developed by Gary and Evelyn Harthcock for ESL work in Asia, these Bible stories are useful to trigger discussion or to lead into more in depth Bible study using a simple English translation. They could be used in a regular ESL class setting.

Bible Studies –

<http://www.easyenglish.info/>

On- line Bible Studies developed by Wycliffe Associates (UK) – more for pre intermediate up than elementary levels

Some useful material for Intermediate, Upper Intermediate and Advanced levels can be found at:

Bible Studies –

<http://www.sok.org.uk/sok.html>

'The Story of the Kingdom' This group of studies works systematically from Genesis through the Revelation using Goldsworthy's framework –

'God's People in God's Place under God's Rule' and is great for building good skills in Biblical theology

<http://www.easyenglish.info/>

On-line Bible studies developed by Wycliffe Associates (UK)

Evangelistic Bible Studies –

<http://www.christianityexplained.com/>

<http://www.christianityexplored.com/>

Simple Bible Explanations –

<http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/2wtl/>

Appendix:

How to Write an Effective ESL Bible Study

Guidelines you can use to complete a study at home

Bible Study preparation:

To prepare well you need to :

Read ***the passage***

Read the passage ***in its context***,

Read the passage in its context, ***in its book***

Read the passage in its context, in its book, ***in its biblical category***

Read the passage in its context, in its book, in its biblical category, ***in its Testament***

Read the passage in its context, in its book, in its biblical category, in its Testament, ***in the Bible***

To do this, I recommend you read the passage at least 3 times.

This is YOUR opportunity to observe the passage

1. Read the passage once.

After this 1st reading...

Ask:

- **Who** are the participants in the story/letter etc?
- **Where** are the events?
- **When** did the events take place? Look at the context in which the passage was written
- **What** is the focus of the text?
- **How** is the action or argument presented/processed?
- **Why** does the writer indicate he is writing the passage/
- **So what** is the result or climax of the text?

2. Read the passage again.

After this 2nd reading...

Look for whether things happen in past present or future / whether things are descriptions, commands or statements.

Examine how the writer persuades

Observe how the writer develops his thought

- logical relationships
- cause and effect
- the means used to get to an end
- general statements
- the progression of ideas or actions
- comparisons and contrasts

Look for emphasis

- repetition
- figures of speech (eg Gal 5:12; Ex 19: 4)
- proportion
- contrast
- comparison
- illustration

Look for the connective words or phrases

- eg therefore, since, if... then etc

3. Read the passage a 3rd time.

After this 3rd Reading...

Ask questions of the text

‘How is this idea related to that idea?’

‘What is not said?’

‘What else is involved in this?’

‘How can this be true when...?’

‘If this is so, could it be that...?’

Then ask:

What questions can I ask or activity could we do to help people to grasp what I have just found out?

4. Interpretation:

Ask:

- ⇒ Are there any key words or ideas?
- ⇒ What do they mean and why are they important?
- ⇒ How does the message in this passage fit into the overall message of this book /the Bible
- ⇒ What sort of questions need to be asked to make sure we understand the passage
- ⇒ Would it help clarify context or meaning to cross-reference to another passage in the Bible?

Then ask:

What questions or exercises will to help the group discover this for themselves?

5. Application:

Ask:

- ⇒ How does this message apply to the people in this group
- ⇒ How should we (the individuals in this group) respond to what the text says
- ⇒ What do we need to change in our lives (both in thought and in action)

Then ask:

What questions or exercises will to help the group think through these questions and work out how to apply them in their daily life?

6. THEN . . . write the Bible Study!!!!

7. FINALLY . . . check the language and simplify the sentence structure and vocabulary to a level which is suitable for your group