Christian ESL Resources
Compiled by Kitty Purgason, Biola University, April 2006

Setting Up a Program (And More)

Creating a Quality ESL Program, by Susan Burke (1998), published by Open Door Ministries (CRC Publications). Designed for churches interested in setting up an ESL program for immigrants, refugees, or international students, this is a step-by-step guide. Chapters cover training volunteers, choosing materials, testing students, and everything else needed for a successful ministry. Open Door also publishes Creating a Quality Basic Literacy Program (by Alice Beery and Gail Rice). Either a literacy or ESL program can be supported with Open Door’s student texts, which can be categorized as “graded” or “easy” readers written at a 3rd to 5th grade reading level. One series is called Life Stories and includes more than a dozen little books with dramatic and relevant real-life stories. Another series is Faith Questions. These four books include “Who is God?” and “Who is Jesus?” There is also the Open Door Bible Studies series, including leaders’ guides and four books on Jesus, four books on Exodus, and three books on O.T. characters living by faith. See www.crcpublications.org and click on “Faith Alive” then “Literacy/ESL.”

Handbook for Teaching Bible-Based ESL, by J. Wesley Eby, Beacon Hill Press. A step-by-step guide for churches wanting to establish an ESL ministry. Other helpful books in this series by Wes Eby include Life of Jesus Christ, What Christians Believe, and How Christians Grow, all written in simple English. (These were originally written in the 1980’s and are being revised and reprinted by Beacon Hill, part of the Nazarene Publishing House.) See http://www.nph.com/nphweb/html/bhol/contributor.jsp?contrib=1710

Teaching English Language Learners the Good News: A Guide for church-based ESL ministries, by Kendale Moore, NAMB. This text is produced by North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and can come with English lessons based on the book of Mark, online presentations on how to organize an ESL ministry, and a one-day live coaching workshop. For the online presentations see: http://www.impactbuilderpro.com/projects/76538/124467/. For the printed materials see: http://www.namb.net/site/c.9qKILUOzEpH/b.238436/k.CB C8/ESL.htm.

Bridge of Love
This is a curriculum that comes with a two-part training seminar for American churches interested in starting an ESL ministry among immigrants or refugees in their neighborhoods. The first five-hour workshop covers general ministry topics and the second one covers teaching methodology. For more information, see http://esl.davidministries.org/

Materials

Common Ground, by Michelle Ballou (1997-2001)
This three-level curriculum (beginning, intermediate, advanced) is designed to teach English and “character” at the same time, especially in international contexts (the author has experience in Central Asia). Each level can be covered in 16 two-hour lessons, either done intensively or over a semester. The language focus is on both conversation and pronunciation. Examples of topics (at the advanced level) are Trust – Friendship, Submission – Family, Ambition – Career, Mercy – Legal System, etc. Teacher’s manuals have everything to make teaching easy, even for a novice teacher. A typical lesson in the conversation section includes introductory questions, a story, response questions, reaction questions, role play, and application. See www.commongrounded.com

A Window to the World, by Doris Edwards (1998), published by the Jesus Film Project. This curriculum for beginning to intermediate adult students developing survival skills in English is based on the premise that students will first view the Jesus Film in their first language. Twelve lessons then have students view twelve segments of the film, from the birth of Jesus to the resurrection, tying each segment to topics, functions, and structures in English. For example, after viewing the scene where Jesus calms the storm, students learn the English related to weather, seasons, and adverbs of frequency. Each lesson (designed for a 2 1/2 hour block) has 12 steps, including presentation, practice, communication, listening, reading, and life application. The methodology is current and communicative; the teacher’s guide offers extensive help even for novice teachers. See www.jesusfilm.org/resources/window/index.html

English in Action (1998) and English in Action Storyteller (2004), by Wally Cirafesi published by the Navigators. The approach of English in Action, a student textbook (for beginning – intermediate learners), workbook, and teacher’s manual and training DVD (for novice teachers) is Total Physical Response, in which students act out each segment to topics, functions, and structures in English. Although not appropriate for students who need or expect grammar or other traditional instruction, TPR can be a fun, low-stress way of learning English. The lessons...
cover both Old Testament accounts that point to Christ as well as the New Testament stories of Jesus. Each lesson contains a numbered series of pictures and accompanying sentences (e.g., 1. Look at the burning bush, 2. Go closer to the bush…) followed by learning activities for conversation, listening, reading, and writing, as well as pronunciation and vocabulary. The teacher’s manual, besides an introduction to TPR and a guide to the lessons, also contains advice about developing an English outreach ministry through one’s church. Storyteller is Cirafesi’s newest book for intermediate learners. Each unit consists of a theme, two series of pictures that tell a story, one biblical and one contemporary (and relevant to ESL/EFL students) and a variety of follow-up activities covering all four skills. For example the theme of New Language and New Food features Daniel in Babylon; the theme of Prejudice features Esther. Available from http://home.navigators.org/us/dawson/

Faith Encounters I and II, by Gail Thiessen, of Providence College and Seminary, Canada. Book 1 “Living by Faith” has 21 units based on the Old Testament characters from Hebrews 11 while Book 2 “Believing in Jesus” has 24 units based on John. Material is photocopiable and also available on CD (for those who like to travel light). Thiessen used a task-based approach, emphasizing real-life use as well as reading and writing for intermediate level learners. A handout describing the process of creating these materials can be found at http://www.cetesol.org/archives/CELT-Materials/TiessenLapp-DesigningBibleBasedCurr.pdf and the book can be ordered through http://prov.ca/bookstore/tesol.aspx

Adventures in English, Exploring English, and Adventures in Business. These materials have been developed for the Evangelical Free Church of America for use in their Outreach English Classes, part of their short-term international missions strategy. Adventures in English is a two-book set for multi-level classes (high beginning-intermediate) focusing on conversational English. Book 1 covers 12 topics such as family, communication, food, occupations, and sports. Book 2 contains reading sections on the life of Christ. For students of lower English proficiency, there is an entry-level book which covers basic vocabulary and grammar on the same 12 topics. Exploring English is similar in goals and format. Here the 12 conversational English lessons cover marriage, communication, agriculture, employment, etc., and the reading book includes as nine Old Testament accounts as well as three from the life of Jesus. Adventures in Business has eight conversational English lessons focusing on business and eight conversational Bible lessons. Business vocabulary, idioms, and cultural information are included. See http://www.efca.org/international/shortterm/outreachenglish.html

Just out: Discoveries in English is a 12-lesson curriculum using reading lessons from the New Testament.

Bible Studies for New English Speakers by Joan Dungey (Cedarville College), R & J Productions. These materials are in their third edition. The main book consists of 26 lesson plans to give teachers lots of “hands-on activities” to do with students using the Bible as their text. Activities include charts, timelines, maps, songs, jazz chants (with Bible content), discussion, vocabulary (both everyday survival vocab and specialized Bible vocab) and several others. Dungey suggests that students at the beginning level use the American Bible Society’s Good News for New Readers booklets with Scripture portions at 2nd-3rd grade reading levels, or other easy-to-read versions. Supplementary materials include lessons for zero-level students, workbooks, a book of holiday lesson plans, and a video training guide. See www.eslbible.com

Helping Internationals Succeed with English (HIS English), by Dayle Burkhart. This series by a missionary with Greater Europe Mission consists of 3 levels with 9 lessons each, providing practice and communication activities for conversational English classes. See www.hisenglish.com/

Passport to the World, published by Literacy & Evangelism International. This ESL series has student texts, teacher’s notes, and audio tapes. Level 1 features the alphabet, pronunciation, common conversations, and a selection of Psalms or Proverbs. Level 2 features spelling and grammar, with some Old Testament stories and “familiar hymns.” Level 3 focuses on reading and writing, with New Testament passages and “gospel songs.” Level 4 features an annotated version of Luke for ESL learners. LEI also does training for those interested in English Language Ministry and has staff dedicated to this in California and Oklahoma (or you can use their training DVD). See http://www.literacyevangelism.org/eslworld.htm

Storyteller’s Bible Study for Internationals (2nd ed.), by Bill Perry. This 12-lesson study of O.T. and N.T. accounts takes students from creation to the cross and includes the gospel. It can be ordered from Multilanguage Media (see below).

A Year of Sundays: Bible Lessons for ESL Learners, by Nancy Kimzey Dempsey. More than 50 lessons, covering the traditional Bible stories of the O.T. and N.T., claiming to be written for ESL students. See http://www.nextsunday.com/nextsunday/web-content/bookstudy/bk_yeasundp.html

Parable of the Bridge, by Barbara Farah
This illustrated story was written by an ESL teacher from New Hampshire for her Bosnian students. It’s available in
both bilingual and English only versions. See

Bible Studies

available at http://lifeenglish.net. Designed for
international students with no experience of the Bible or
typical Bible study methods, these workbooks assume a
fairly high level of English but still try to keep things
simple and clear. The lesson format includes a schema-
building introduction, a text with annotations, thought-
provoking questions about the text followed by “live what
you learn” questions, and additional resources. Janet
Payne is associated with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship
and has had extensive experience with international
students. Her website includes not only the Bible study
workbooks, but also a leader’s guide and other useful
links. Other Bible study materials suitable for
international students can be found at
http://www.internationalstudents.org/materials.htm

Passport to the Bible is a study guide designed for
international students with advanced English and limited
biblical knowledge. It has four parts (Meeting God, Who
am I, Good News, and Experiencing God) and covers a
variety of OT and NT Scripture passages. Order from

Theological English – Seminary

Audience

Exploring Theological English: Reading, Vocabulary, and
Grammar for ESL/EFL by Cheri Pierson and colleagues,
Wheaton College. For intermediate or advanced student,
this book, currently being piloted, fills a unique niche.
For more information, contact
cheri.pierson@wheaton.edu.

Dictionary of Theological Terms in Simplified English
(Debbie Dodd) and accompanying Workbook (by Cheri
Pierson). Available from EMIS at the Billy Graham
Center in Wheaton College, IL:
http://bgc.gospelcom.net/emis/books.htm. These are
must-have books for any non-native speakers who study
theology in English.

Bible Translations

Contemporary English Version
An easy to read version (5th-6th grade level), inexpensive
paperback copies of this Bible are available from the
American Bible Society at http://bibles.com

New International readers Version (NIrV)
Easier to read than the regular NIV, inexpensive
paperback copies of this Bible are available from the
International Bible Society at http://ibsdirect.com

Miscellaneous

EasyEnglish, produced by Wycliffe Associates, U.K.
“Easy English” is a form of simple English, including
helpful guidelines for materials writers and web
designers. Their website contains Bible commentaries
and other materials that have been written in EasyEnglish.
These are free to download and use at
http://www.easyenglish.info [They also sponsor and are
linked to the Good News English course, a free on-line
course for beginners, based on the Bible.]

Speechtree.com

One of the challenges of doing conversational English is
knowing what to talk about. The “speechtree” website is a
great resource with more than 100 conversation topics. It
is connected to “Talktime,” a model for ministry with
international students involving conversation in English,
started by a church in Bellevue, Washington supported by
International Students, Inc. For each topic, there is a
whole page of specific questions very helpful to get the
conversation flowing, along with (optional) related Bible
verses. Topics are divided into abstract themes (such as
age, beauty, freedom, panic), academic matters, daily life
(e.g., advice, hospital, internet), hobby topics (e.g.,
movies, travel), holidays, nature, personal history,
personal values (e.g., decision making, forgiveness),
relationships, work, and world & culture. [A model for
conversational ministry which is more directly based on
the Bible is “Let’s Start Talking.” The website
www.lst.com describes their model, as well as resources
such as conversation guides from Luke and Acts.]

An “easy-English web magazine for the world” is how
the site describes Soon. Run by an evangelical ministry
with goals of clear, but respectful outreach through
English, the home page draws students in with, “What-
ever you are searching for, Soon is the magazine with the
answers: advice on visiting Britain, learning English,
interviews, problems of life, sex, science, religion, stories
and poems.” A link titled “What is the world’s best-
selling book?” tells readers about the Bible. Interviews
with famous people present Christian movie stars and
Olympic athletes. “Easy English True Stories” use this
popular format to present testimonies such as that of an
Azeri youth trapped in a subway fire who prayed for
safety. “Current Affairs: the stories you don’t hear”
include an account of the Reconciliation Walk in which
Christians asked forgiveness for the crusades. Other links
are less explicitly Christian, but popular with visitors:
advice columns, interactive greeting cards, pen friends, etc.

**Story of a Kingdom**, www.sok.org.uk/sok.html
The purpose of this website and the accompanying materials is to explain the Bible in a simple and understandable format. It grew out of a Bible study for international students at an Irish university. Consisting of 44 chapters, it is also available in other languages.

**Individual teacher websites:**
- **www.transtemp.com/esl**
  Janet Payne’s (she’s with Intervarsity) website includes ESL workshops, annotated lists of resources, and her own materials (noted above).
- **http://www.danasaito.de/pages/lessons.htm**
  Dana has lessons she calls “Talking Pictures” based on Bible verses (and other resources).
- **http://members.tripod.com/jrmeads_515/**
  Joanne Meads used to work out of Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church. Her web-page, though not recently updated, may have something of interest to you or your students.

**Sources**
Direct from publisher, as noted, Amazon or your favorite on-line source, or Multilanguage Media at http://www.multilanguage.com/esl/ESL.htm

**Other resources which U.S. churches would appreciate:**

**Information about literacy and TalkTime lessons and resources:**
- http://literacynow.info/resources/esllit.html#talktime
- http://www.proliteracy.org/

**Information on reaching out to international students:**
- http://www.intervarsity.org/ism/
- http://www.isionline.org/
- http://www.acmi-network.org

Find original document at: churchesl.pbworks.com/f/Christian+ESL+Materials.doc