

# Teach People to Read



## Description:

A demonstration, a reading puzzle and a story or video clip

## Aims:

- Realize that people need to learn to read so that they can read the Bible when it is translated into their language
- Appreciate the opportunity to read the Bible
- Pray for those who cannot read the Bible for themselves

## Audience:

Grades 2-6

## Space Needed:

Classroom

## Country/Area:

- Video from Asia
- Story from Ghana

## Minimum Time Requirements:

- |                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| • Demonstration        | 5 minutes  |
| • Activity page        | 5 minutes  |
| • Video and discussion | 8 minutes  |
| <b>or</b>              |            |
| • Story and discussion | 10 minutes |

## Scripture to Study:

Acts 17:11, 12

## Materials:

- Small piece of paper with these words written on it: "God wants everyone in the world to know how much He loves them. Some still wait! PASS THIS PAPER TO THE END OF THE ROW."
- My Volcano Adventure Resource CD available at:  
[www.wycliffe.org/Shop/ProductCatalog.aspx?Category=Children](http://www.wycliffe.org/Shop/ProductCatalog.aspx?Category=Children)  
**or...**
- Story from "Bitter Words, Sweet Words" (pp. 4-5 of this lesson)
- Instructions for "In One Ear..." (pp. 6-7 of this lesson)
- Digital projector, computer and a place to project video if you are using the CD
- Copies of activity page 10 for each child.
- Bible

If you have any questions about this lesson, please contact Wycliffe's Children's Communications Team at [childrens\\_resources\\_orlando@wycliffe.org](mailto:childrens_resources_orlando@wycliffe.org)

## Pre-class Preparations:

- On a small piece of paper write this: “God wants everyone in the world to know how much He loves them. Some still wait! PASS THIS PAPER TO THE END OF THE ROW.”
- Decide whether you will show the video “Wasi’s Story” from the resource CD (lesson 8) or tell the story, “Bitter Words, Sweet Words” (found on pp. 6-7)
- Make copies of activity page 10, for each child.
- If showing the video, set up computer and projector.
- Prepare to share a prayer request about literacy from your own experience or from <http://www.wycliffe.org/Pray/PrayOn/HowtoPrayfor/Literacy.aspx>

## Class Time:

### DEMONSTRATION

Play “In One Ear, Out the Other” (instructions on p. 5) and discuss the importance of being able to read God’s Word. Ask if they can read the Bible for themselves. Emphasize what a great privilege they enjoy.

### ACTIVITY PAGE

#### Ask,

What if no one had ever written your language before?  
Would you be able to just pick up the first book in your language and read it? Probably not. Someone would need to teach you to read.

#### Tell the class,

You are going to try reading English that someone wrote in a way that you probably have never seen before.

#### Give them the worksheet and say,

Can you figure out what this verse says? Why is it difficult?  
(The writing is “backward” and from bottom to top.)

#### Explain that people write some languages this way.

## Materials:

- Small piece of paper with these words written on it: “God wants everyone in the world to know how much He loves them. Some still wait! PASS THIS PAPER TO THE END OF THE ROW.”
- Copies of activity page 10 for each child.

## STORY OR VIDEO ABOUT LITERACY

### Introduce video or story by saying,

You all have learned to read at school, or you are learning right now. Why is it important to know how to read? The verse we just read gives you one reason (so we know what the Bible says to do). What is the most important thing that you could read?

### Read Acts 17:11, 12. Talk about how important it is to be able to read God's Word for yourself so that you can know what it really says. Tell the students,

We are going to hear a story about how reading God's Word can change a person's life.

Show the video "Wasi's Story" from the Resource CD, or read "Bitter Words, Sweet Words" story (pp. 4-5 of this lesson), or tell a story from your own experience about how reading God's Word in one's mother tongue has changed a life. Discuss the importance of reading God's Word. Ask,

- What difference did reading make in the life of the person in the story?
- What difference can it make in your life?

## PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO ARE LEARNING TO READ

Take time to pray. Share a specific literacy prayer request from your experience or from a Wycliffe prayer bulletin. Thank God for His Word in our language and for the ability to read. Ask Him to give those, who cannot read the Bible, an opportunity to learn about Him and to be able to study His Word.

## Materials:

- Resource CD or
- Story from "Bitter Words, Sweet Words" (pp. 4-5 of this lesson)
- Digital projector, computer and a place to project video if you are using the CD
- Bible
- Prayer request for literacy

# Bitter Words, Sweet Words

## Description:

a story to read or tell

**Aim:** to show the power of translated Scriptures in evangelism and church-planting

## Audience:

teenagers through adults, any number

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** none

## Scriptures to Study:

Hebrews 4:12 and  
2 Corinthians 3:14-18

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## Narrator's Script:

It is a hot, sunny morning in the Savannah grasslands of Ghana. Bakpando [bawk-PAWN-doe] village buzzes with excitement. A stranger has been spotted on the horizon! The villagers all know where he is heading because of the custom amongst the Konkomba people that all visitors must pay their respects to the chief. The chief's house is one of about twenty-five compounds in the village. Each compound is made up of several round, thatched huts linked together by a connecting wall to form a circle. Here the villagers wait. Who could the visitor be?

As soon as the stranger arrives, everyone's curiosity turns to fury! They recognize him as a pastor and pastors are NOT welcome in Bakpando. Bitter words follow: "*Go away! We don't want to be preached at!*" The Konkombas have enough problems of their own without a pastor coming and upsetting things. Life isn't always easy in Bakpando: accidents happen, people get sick and sometimes die. When misfortune comes, the people believe that they must have offended one of their ancestor spirits or that someone has been working witchcraft on them. To try and remove the curse, they go to the local soothsayer who tells them which spirit is angry and what sacrifice they must offer.

But the pastor has not come to preach. Knowing that he would not be welcomed, he had asked God to show him how to reach these people. And God had answered his prayer! His words take the villagers by surprise: "*Would you like me to teach you to read and write in your own language, in Konkomba?*" The pastor explains that once they have learned to read, he will give them a portion from the New Testament to test their proficiency. Then they will be awarded certificates.

**Notes:**

The idea of learning to read is so exciting! About twenty men ask to be in the first literacy class. They are eager and meet together for lessons several evenings a week. They set up their classroom in the shade of a tree, with logs to sit on, and the wall of a hut as a blackboard.

As time goes on, the students want to try out their reading skills and begin to tackle some passages from the Bible. Their interest grows and grows until one day they say to the pastor: *“We like this matter. It is very sweet. We would like to follow this way.”*

What a turn around! The sweet words of Konkomba Scriptures transform the villagers’ once-bitter words, birthing the Bakpando church!

Now Bakpando is just one of many Konkomba villages where this has happened. Seeing these churches grow shows that giving people God’s Word in their own language is vital for evangelism and church-planting.

# In One Ear, Out the Other

**Description:** a game contrasting participants who pass a whispered and a written message

**Aim:** to illustrate the importance of having God's Word in your own written language

**Audience:** children grades 1-6, minimum 10 participants

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Equipment:** pen and paper; optional slide, transparency or poster of Romans 5:8

**Scripture to Study:** Romans 5:8, 2 Chronicles 34:14-33

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## Leader's Instructions:

### Pre-class Preparations:

1. On a small piece of paper write this: "God wants everyone in the world to know how much He loves them.

*Pass this paper to the next child in the row after you whisper the message to them. Don't let the children in the other rows see this paper."*

1. Optional: prepare a PowerPoint slide, overhead transparency, poster, white or black board of Romans 5:8

### Class Time:

1. Have the children sit in rows with a minimum of two rows with equal numbers in each row\*.
2. Explain that because this game has lots of whispering, everyone must be very quiet. Only those passing the message are allowed to speak. Explain that you are going to send a message down each of the rows, to see if the same message reaches the other end. When the person on the opposite end receives the message they must stand up in their place to show that they have finished.
3. Start at the far end of each row and whisper this message to the person on the end: "God wants everyone in the world to know how much He loves them."
4. When you get to the back row, explain to the one on the end that their message is going to be passed in a *different* way. Whisper the message, but also give them the written message to read. Tell them not to let the rows in front of them see the paper, but secretly read it and pass it down the line as they whisper.
5. When you have given the message to each of the rows, return to the front and wait for the message to be passed down to the opposite end. When a child is standing at the end of each row, ask each one, starting in front, what the message was that they received.
6. Now use the Discussion and Application Section below to explain why you've played the game.

### Discussion and Application:

1. Only those on the back row got the message right. Do you know why? It's because they were asked to play the game a little

differently. They not only whispered the message to each other, they had it written down as well! (“No fair”, the children protest? Hmm, that’s just like real life for over 2,000 language groups around the world! They don’t have the Bible written in their language. They just have to remember what someone told them. Is that fair?)

2. If you pass a message by word of mouth, it changes more and more as it gets passed on. The message you end up with is *not* the message that started out. But when the message is written down, and especially if it’s in the language you understand best, then the last person will get the same message as the first.
3. It’s like that with the Bible. The Bible is the book that tells us that “God wants everyone in the world to know how much He loves them.” It’s an important message and we can understand and trust it because it’s written down in our own language.
4. Ask someone to read out Romans 5:8, or show the one you have prepared, and discuss it.
5. Around the world there are still millions of people who have never heard, in their own language, the message of God’s love for them. Wycliffe Bible Translators believes that this message is more important than anything else on earth. They want everyone around the world to have a translation of God’s Word that they can understand well!
6. It’s a big job, and translators can’t do it alone. God wants all His people to team up and reach the world with His Good News. How can you help? You can pray and give. Could you write letters or emails to encourage people who are doing translation work? Could you go on a short-term trip with your parents? How about studying a foreign language as one of your classes? Take time to pray and ask God what He wants you to do to help get His message all around the world.

\*This activity works particularly well in a school assembly where children are seated in rows, with the youngest at the front and the oldest at the back. The youngest ones will not be able to remember such a long message, but will enjoy the activity anyway. The older ones will be able to read well and keep their paper “cheat sheet” a secret!

## Notes:



## Teach People to Read

Soon after the Bible translation team decides on a new alphabet, it begins writing simple stories that everyone already knows.

Translators immediately begin teaching people to read.

Next, they translate simple Bible verses, usually from the book of Luke. Teaching people to read right from the beginning solves many translation problems.



Try learning to read in a whole new way.  
 This verse comes from an English Bible  
 What is different about it? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Try to figure out how to read it.

***“.enola daerb no evil ton seod naM’  
 :nettirw si tI”, derewsna suseJ  
 4:4 ekuL***

Now find Luke 4:4 in the New International Version of the Bible to find out if you read it correctly.  
 Write the verse on the lines below.

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**Konso**  
 population:  
**150,000**  
 location:  
**Ethiopia**  
 Old & New Testament  
 in progress