

Create an Alphabet



Description:

Alphabet puzzles and an example of a tonal language

Aims:

- Understand that many languages do not have an alphabet, so translators must create alphabets in order to translate the Bible into those languages
- Pray for translators as they develop alphabets for the languages in which they work

Audience:

Grades 2-6

Space Needed:

Classroom

Country/Area:

- Mexico
- India

Minimum Time Requirements:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| • Activity page | 5 minutes |
| • Creating an alphabet | 8 minutes |
| • Scripture discussion | 1 minute |
| • Make-believe alphabet | 3 minutes |
| • Prayer | 1 minute |

Scripture to Study:

John 20:30, 31

Materials:

- Copy of blank John 3:16 poster from page 4
- Copies of activity page 8 for each child (page 7 of this lesson)
- Computer with speaker
- *My Volcano Adventure* Resource CD available at: www.wycliffe.org/Shop/ProductCatalog.aspx?Category=Children
- Copies of "Alphabeti Spaghetti" activity sheet (page 6 of this lesson)
- Pencils
- Paper

If you have any questions about this lesson, please contact Wycliffe's Children's Communications Team at childrens_resources_orlando@wycliffe.org

Pre-class Preparations:

- Prepare copies of “Alphabeti Spaghetti” (page 6 of this lesson) and activity page 8 (page 7 of this lesson), for each child, and one blank John 3:16 poster (found on page 4)
- Place pencils at the center of each table.
- Cue up *Mazateco Audio #1* on the Resource CD (under lesson 3).

Class Time:

ACTIVITY PAGE

Show the children the blank John 3:16 poster. Explain,
This is how John 3:16 looks in more than 2,000 languages around the world. Many of those languages don’t even have a written alphabet. Often a translation team must create an alphabet before beginning a new Bible translation.

Distribute activity page 8. Tell the children,
No one has ever written anything in some languages. Translators write down the sounds of an unwritten language by using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Later the translation team can decide on the best way to write each sound in that language.

Complete the activity page together.

CREATING A NEW ALPHABET

Ask,
Do you think people would want to read a Bible written in IPA?

Allow children to respond before agreeing,
Probably not. They would want their alphabet to look like other languages in their area. They would want it to look “normal”. The translation team needs to work together with many people who speak the language to create an alphabet that works, an alphabet that makes the people feel good about their language.

Some languages can be kind of tricky to write down. Their words change meaning just because of the tone used to speak them. Some of them are so musical, that people can

Materials:

- Copy of blank John 3:16 poster from page 4
- Copies of activity page 8 for each child
- Pencils

Materials:

- Resource CD
- Computer with speaker
- Copies of “Alphabeti Spaghetti” activity (page 6 of this lesson)
- Pencils
- Paper

actually “talk” through music, or by whistling, without any words at all.

Play the Mazateco Audio from the resource CD, Lesson 3.

Ask the children,

How would you write down a language like Mazateco?
Would you find that job difficult?

Distribute “Alphabetti Spaghetti” and say,

This page shows an example of *Devnagri writing from India. Devnagri does not use tone to change the meaning of words, but what interesting writing to look at! Let’s try to figure out this code together. The words in the solution to the puzzle are actually English instead of Devnagri. The puzzle uses Devnagri letters to make English words.

Complete the “Alphabetti Spaghetti” worksheet with the children.

SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION

Read John 20:30, 31. Ask,

- How did John help people believe in Jesus? (He wrote down what Jesus did.)
- Do you think it would be easy to learn about Jesus if no one had ever written the Bible in your language? (probably not)

Pray. Thank God that someone wrote the Bible for you many years ago. Pray that God will enable translation teams to hear well and write down the sounds accurately using the IPA, and then choose a good final alphabet.

CREATE A MAKE-BELIEVE ALPHABET (optional)

If time allows, tell the children,

How would you like to try creating your own alphabet? It will be kind of like a code. Pick a symbol to stand for each sound that you hear in your name (or in John 3:16). Then use the symbols to write your name (or the verse).

PRAYER

Close by leading the children in prayer to thank God for His Word in their language. Pray also that He will give translators wisdom as they create new alphabets, so that they do a good job.

*Some people spell Devnagri like this: Devenagari. Both ways are accepted.

Materials:

- Bible
- Paper and pencils for the optional activity “Create a Make-believe Alphabet”

JOHN 3:16

Alphabeti

Spaghetti

Description:

activity page & craft that could tie in with lessons about India

Aim: to teach that different scripts are used in Bible translations

Audience:

child-ren grades 1-6, any size group

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment:

pencils, colored pens, scissors, gluesticks, copies of activity sheet, cardstock

Scripture to Study:

Psalm 119:130



Partners in Bible Translation
phone: 1-800-WYCLIFFE
1-800-992-5433

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Leader's Instructions:**Pre-class Preparations:**

1. In advance, photocopy enough activity sheets for everyone to have their own copy.
2. Collect enough cardstock to cut out backings for each bookmark.

Class Time:

1. Hand out activity sheets and pens and explain the first activity:
 - Figure out the three words: *apple, orange and banana*
 - Figure out this sentence: *God's Word brings life.*
 - Write your own name in Devnagri Script.
2. Hand out scissors, glue sticks and cardstock and explain the second activity:
 - Color the bookmark.
 - Sign your name in Devnagri on the bookmark.
 - Cut out the bookmark.
 - Glue it onto the card stock.
3. Pray together for the Jirel people. Pray that many will come to know Jesus as they read the New Testament and that a strong Jirel Church will grow.

Discussion and Application:

1. Ask the children where they plan to keep the bookmark so as to use it for a reminder to pray for the Jirel people. (*perhaps in their own Bible or in the Bible the family uses for devotions at dinner?*) Then they can lead the whole family in praying for God's work around the world!
2. Be careful to point out the difference between what the children have written (which is English written in a foreign script) and the verse on the bookmark (which is a foreign language *and* a foreign script). Otherwise they may try to decipher the 'code' on the bookmark when they get home and won't be able to do it.
3. The Devnagri script has been simplified for the purposes of this activity. Depending on where you live, there may well be children in the group who already know this script. If so, make the most of it! They may have specific prayer requests that add life and impact you never expected.

Here is the Devnagri alphabet. It looks a bit like spaghetti.

Wycliffe Bible Translators

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
अ ब च ड ए फ ग ह इ ज क ल म न
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
ओ प कउ र श ट उ व व कस य ज

Here are some English words written with Devnagri letters. Can you find out what they mean?

अ प प ल ए ओ र अ न ग ए ब अ न अ न अ

Devnagri letters are joined up together to make whole words. Each word looks like a clothes line with washing hanging on it. Here's a whole sentence. Can you work out what the message says?

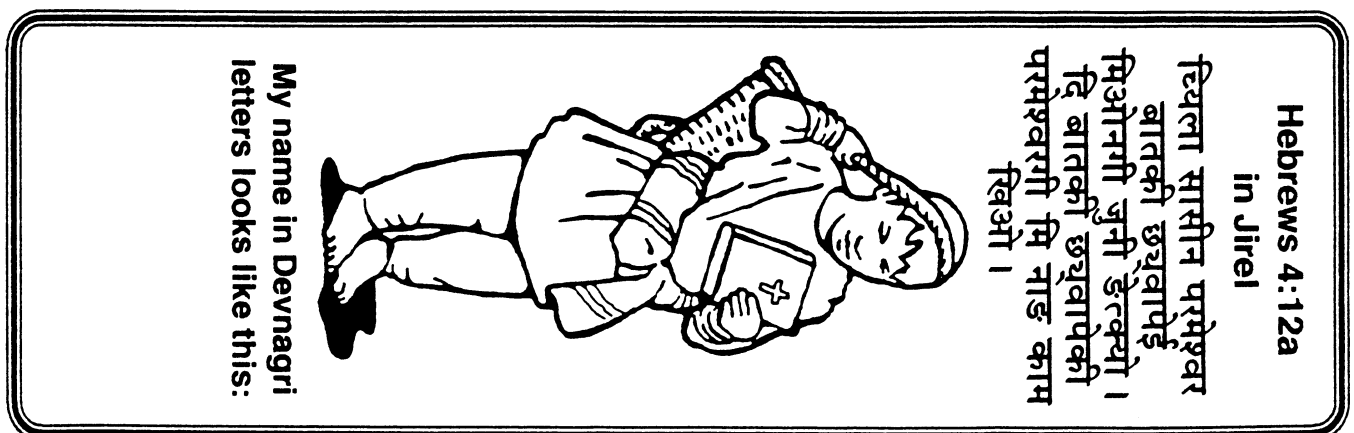
गओडश वओरड बरइनगश लइफए

Can you write your name in connected Devnagri letters?

Fact: The Devnagri script was first used to write the Hindu Scriptures. Devnagri means "the writing of the gods." Today this alphabet is used to write languages around North India.

Fact: The Jirel people of South Asia write their own language in the Devnagri script. Translators took 22 years to put the New Testament into the Jirel language. Now it has been published for the first time!

Here is a bookmark to color and keep:



To find out what this verse from the Jirel New Testament says, read Hebrews 4:12a

Create an Alphabet

Bible translators spend years with local people, listening carefully and writing down strange new sounds. They choose symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet to represent each sound.

The International Phonetic Alphabet has a symbol for every possible sound human beings can make. They decide on an alphabet that is just right for each language.

John 3:16 looks like this in the International Phonetic Alphabet ...

foɹ ɡad soʊ lʌvd ɪn wɔːld ʒæt hi

geɪv hɪz ɒnli bɪɡatŋ sʌn ʒæt hwuevə

bɪlɪvz ɪn hɪm ʃʊd nʌt peɪs bʌt

hæv evəˈlæssɪŋ laɪf (NASB)

FareFare

population: 551,000

location: Ghana

New Testament
completed 1986

Old Testament
in progress

Write one English word from John 3:16 on the blank above each phonetic word. Try to figure out which phonetic symbol represents each English sound.