

# **HOW TO BEGIN AN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) LITERACY MISSIONS MINISTRY**

The ethnic population in Kentucky continues to grow at a rapid rate. We are seeing large numbers of internationals come into all parts of the state.

The need for internationals to learn English language or improve their speaking skills provides an opportunity for your congregation to demonstrate and share the gospel. Beginning an English as a Second Language (ESL) Literacy Missions ministry will provide the opportunity to build relationships with people in your community who may never hear the gospel in any other setting.

## **BASIC TASKS IN ORGANIZING AN ESL MINISTRY**

### **1. Vote to recognize the ministry a part of church/association programming.**

This helps the church identify the ministry as a part of its corporate outreach, even if only one volunteer is serving in the ministry. Including the ESL ministry in the budget strengthens this relationship.

Each church or association structures its activities differently. An English as a Second Language ministry may be related to the Missions Committee, the Missions Development Council, the Woman's Missionary Union or Brotherhood mission action group, the Evangelism Committee, the Church and Community Ministries Committee, or any other group that seems most appropriate for your church or association. The most important thing is that the ministry has an identifiable connection to the church or association. This link provides both support and accountability.

### **2. Select a director.**

This position is crucial. The ministry director will provide support ministry for both students and teachers.

Experience has shown that an ESL ministry gets off to a stronger start if the director is selected before volunteers are enlisted and trained.

Job responsibilities

- Recruiting volunteer workers
- Providing training for workers
- Administering the ministry
- Supervising volunteers
- Evaluating the ministry
- Recognizing volunteers

### **3. Enlist teachers and other workers.**

- Write a job description or covenant before you enlist teachers.

A volunteer should commit to a minimum of nine months service. This gives time for the student to make progress and for a good relationship to develop. Commitment to a shorter time will not be as beneficial. A tutor should commit to:

1. Attend tutor-training events.
2. Teach at least once a week for nine months.
3. Prepare lessons based on the students needs.
4. Keep records of students' progress.

5. Report regularly to the student placement coordinator or program director.
6. Attend regular teachers meetings.
7. Contact students when they are absent and seek outreach opportunities to all students.
8. Pray for and with each student.
9. Share the gospel with his students.

- Review the church rolls for potential volunteers.

Don't limit your search to only those whose names come to mind. However, do make a list of those you think would be qualified and available.

- Personally contact potential volunteers.

There are many advantages to this. Volunteers can ask questions and get immediate response. They feel important because you singled them out and made a contact. Some qualified workers simply do not volunteer without being specifically asked, even when they would like to serve.

- Use ads in newsletters, bulletin inserts, posters, and handouts.

- Not all volunteers involved in the ministry will be teachers.

Some students may need help with transportation or have preschool children who must be cared for during the lessons. Other needs may arise that someone other than the teacher can take care of. Give others the opportunity to relieve the teacher of responsibilities beyond teaching

#### **4. Provide training for teachers.**

- Basic training.

Training workers is a top priority for literacy missions ministries. Basic training for teachers is available in a 16-hour ESL workshop. This workshop introduces volunteers to basic techniques of teaching English, available teaching resources, basic witnessing techniques, and Bible-teaching materials. NAMB-trained leaders conduct these workshops. Contact Rebecca Carnell, Literacy Consultant, Kentucky Baptist Convention, (502) 245-4101, x. 3409, or [Rebecca.Carnell@kybaptist.org](mailto:Rebecca.Carnell@kybaptist.org) for names of workshop leaders in your area.

- Continuing education.

The basic workshop is just that—basic. Providing continuing training for volunteers helps keep them motivated and fresh.

#### **5. Secure funding.**

- The best way to provide funding for the ministry is through the budget of the church/association.

- The student is usually asked to pay for his or her books.

This provides the student a positive investment in his or her learning. If the student cannot initially afford the materials, the church or a Sunday School class or other group may help with the costs of the books. However, it is better for the student to pay for the books, even if the payment is just fifty cents a week.

- The teachers usually purchase their own teaching manuals. However, some ministries provide the manuals for their volunteers.

- Supplementary materials can be purchased by the ministry.

## **6. Enlist students.**

Assigning one person (placement coordinator) to coordinate this task will make your ministry more effective. Even though the task is difficult, God is preparing students for you.

Pray for God to provide the students He has prepared for you.

Prayer is the foundation of Literacy Missions Ministry. God has and is preparing students for you. You, your prayer partners, and your church need to continually pray for the calling forth of students. Mention the need for students each time there are prayer requests. Often you will find that students have been praying for someone to help them learn.

### **Advertise**

Your printed materials (posters, business cards, newspaper ads, flyers, brochures) should include this information:

- free English classes for adults, beginners through advanced levels (mention the cost for books)
- trained volunteers
- phone number and times to call for further information

If there is a placement coordinator, it is best to list his or her phone number. If a home phone number is given, be sure there is an answering machine. Potential students often do not call twice!

- church name and address

## **7. Provide prayer support.**

Literacy Missions Ministry was founded and based on prayer. The effectiveness of your ministry will be directly related to the amount of time and effort invested in prayer. Work that seeks spiritual results requires spiritual preparation and effort.

• Each literacy missions volunteer should have at least one prayer partner. However, do not limit prayer partners to one. Being prayer partners gives opportunities for homebound people and people working full time to be a part of your ministry.

- Ask your prayer partners to pray for you and your students during the time you are teaching.
- At every opportunity, request prayer for literacy missions needs.  
At prayer meetings, Sunday School classes, mission prayer groups, and special prayer vigils, tell what the needs are and ask for prayer support.
- Report answered prayers.  
Keep a list of prayer requests and answers. Be sure to report these to the appropriate groups and to give honor to God for how He is working in the lives of people. Take time to thank people for their prayer support.

## **8. Inform the church/association about the ministry.**

Make at least an annual written report about the ministry to the church.

Meet with the pastor or staff person related to the ministry at least quarterly.

Regularly display promotional materials about the ministry.

## **9. Basic materials needed**

Available from NAMB 1-866-407-6262.

*Teaching English Language Learners the Good News Workshop Manual*

## **11. For further information**

Go to Kentucky Baptist Convention web site: [www.kybaptist.org/literacy](http://www.kybaptist.org/literacy), Mission Service and Ministries Department, Eric Allen, Director