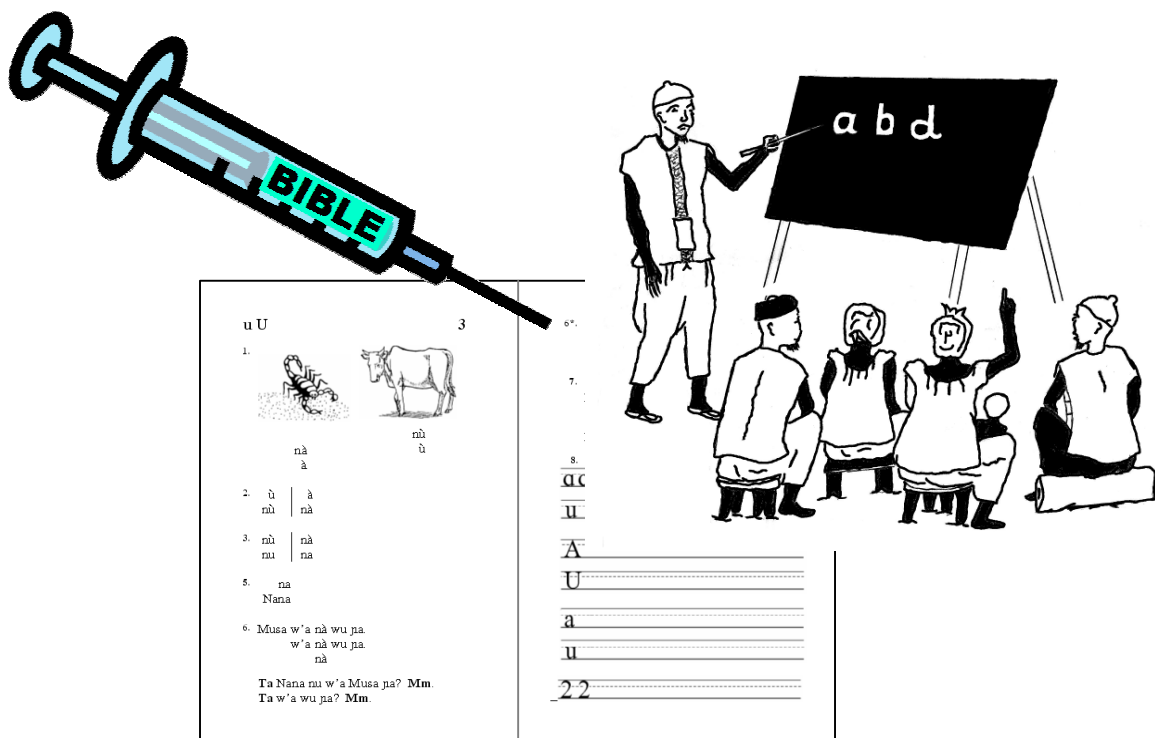

Literacy for Life - Teacher's Guide

Injecting a good dose of the Bible into your literacy programme¹

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Literacy for Life is all about injecting a good dose of the Bible into a traditional literacy programme.



Why run a Literacy for Life course?

Here are the aims of the course:

- To teach the participants to read in their mother tongue and to continue to make progress in reading.
- To encourage people to read God's Word in their own language, to help them to understand it and put it into practice.

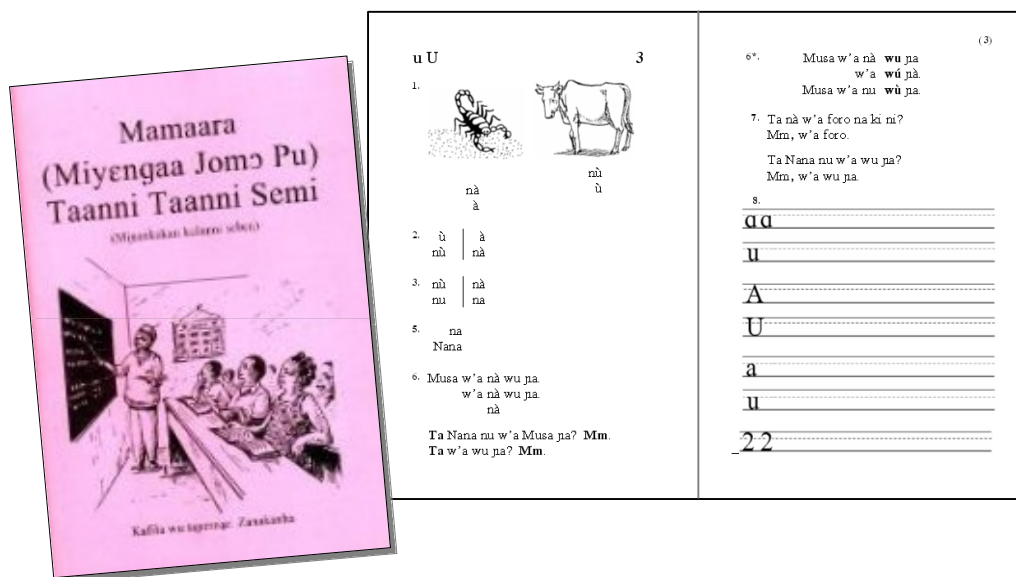
¹ This guide was originally published in West Africa in 2006 for a church-based literacy programme, launched just before the publication of the New Testament in the local language. The course is based on a similar idea from GILLBT, Ghana.

- To show that God’s Word is relevant to our daily lives.
- To give people materials to use in a literacy course as well as at home.
- To motivate churches and their leaders to be more involved in literacy.

What materials do I need?

You will need the traditional beginner’s literacy primer. This is the book that is used to teach the letters of the alphabet and the reading of simple phrases in the language.

There is no Bible content in this book and so it can be used in both church and community contexts.



Alongside this, you will need a *Scripture Guide* book. This is the book put together especially for the Literacy for Life course.



For each lesson in the primer, there is a corresponding lesson in the Scripture Guide.

Each lesson contains:

- a few verses from the local language Bible translation;
- three questions on the Bible verses, the answers to which can be found in the text;
- a commentary on the text with a relevant application for daily life;
- a memory verse.

The same image from the primer

A few Bible verses

3 questions

Commentary/application

Memory verse

For example, in lesson 3 in the primer we have the word for scorpion and a picture of a scorpion. In the Scripture Guide we have chosen a few verses from Luke 11:

⁹ "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a **scorpion**? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

There are two levels to the course:

- **Beginner's Level** – for those who need to learn the letters of the alphabet.
- **Advanced Level** – for those who can already read but who need more practice reading so as to make further progress.

Teaching a Beginners' Level class

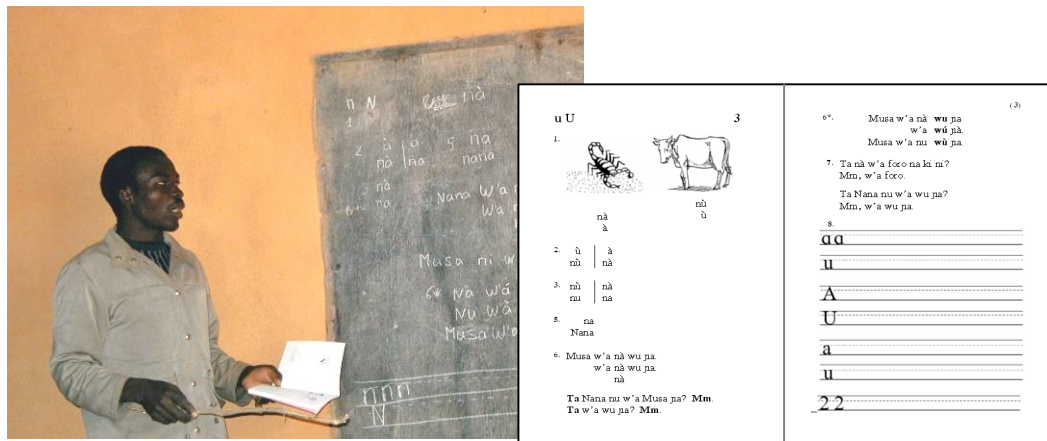
For the beginner's level, we teach the basic literacy primer and then at the end of each lesson we add a short Bible lesson. For example, if the lesson is just over an hour:

For the first 50 minutes: we teach the lesson from the primer

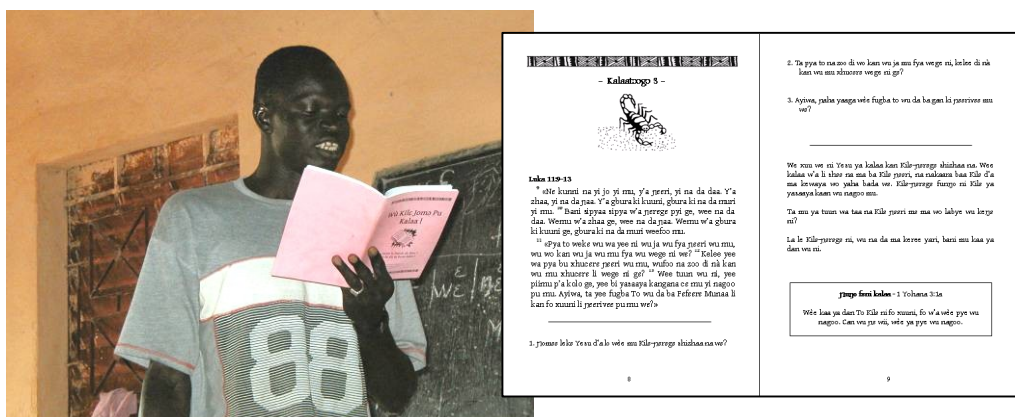
During the last 15 minutes: we teach the corresponding lesson in the Scripture guide

Here's how you teach the lesson:

1. For the first part of the lesson, teach the lesson in the primer as you would for a normal literacy class.



2. Before starting the second part of the lesson, pray or ask a participant to pray.
3. Read the Bible passage out loud. (Yes, it is the teacher who reads; the participants will not have a high enough ability to read the Bible verses yet for themselves.)



4. Tell the participants that you will ask a few questions on the Bible passage. Before reading the questions, read the passage again a second time.
5. Read the first question and let the participants answer.
 - If the participants do not know how to answer a question, try to help them find the answer for themselves. In most cases, it can be found in the verses that you have just read, so it might be useful to re-read a portion of the passage again.
6. Do the second and third questions in the same way.
7. Read the commentary.
 - In a beginners' course, you will not have the time to add a lot to the commentary. It is not the time to preach a sermon.
8. Learn the memory verse together.
 - There are many ways to teach a memory verse. If the verse has several phrases, you could, for example, get different groups of participants to repeat different parts of the verse before putting all the parts together.
 - There is no need to write the memory verse on the blackboard. At the beginners' level, most participants would not be able to read it.
9. Pray.
10. Put it into practice!

*Do not merely listen to the word,
and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22)*

Teaching an Advanced Level class

For the advanced level of Literacy for Life, we don't use the basic literacy primer. The entire lesson is based on the lesson in the Scripture Guide, and so is essentially a form of small-group Bible study.

There are two ways of organising an Advanced course:

Weekly Course

One lesson per week
in the regular programme of the
church
*- for example, every Sunday afternoon
or every Wednesday evening.*

Intensive Course

Two or three lessons per day
for two weeks.
*- for example, two weeks in February
(during the dry season)*

Here's how you lead the lesson:

1. Arrange the chairs or benches in a circle.
 - You don't want to be standing in front of a blackboard. Put yourself at the same level as the other members of the group.
2. Pray or ask someone to pray.
3. Read the Bible passage:
 - Read round the group, one verse each, or ask someone to read the whole passage.
 - If the participants have difficulty in reading well, help them. Encourage them and be patient.
4. Read the passage a second time.
5. Ask someone to read the first question. Attempt to answer it together.
 - Encourage the participants to give their own answer, rather than telling them the answer yourself if they hesitate.



- If the participants do not know how to answer a question, try to help them find the answer for themselves. In most cases, it can be found in the verses that you have just read, so it might be useful for them to re-read a portion of the passage again. You could give them a little help, for example, “Have a look in verse 10!”
6. Ask and look for answers to the second and third questions in the same way.
 7. Ask someone to read the commentary.
 8. Ask questions of the group that help them better understand the Bible passage and its application for their lives. Here are examples of questions you could ask. (They are just examples: you are not obliged to ask these same questions!) :

“Do you have any questions on what we have just read? Is there something that you don’t understand or something you would like to understand better?”

“What do you think God wants to say to us today from what we’ve just read?”

“How is this message relevant to you in your life? How is it relevant to your family? To our church? To our community?”

“What sorts of things can we do practically to put into practice what we’ve seen in God’s Word today?”

“Give an example of a situation in your life where you really need to hear and put into practice what you’ve learned today.”

9. Ask a participant to read the memory verse.
10. Learn the memory verse together.
 - The goal is that the participants leave the lesson having memorised the verse, so help them to learn it well.
 - In an intensive course, where there are several lessons a day, you might want to choose a fewer number of memory verses, rather than expecting people to learn three or four a day.

11. Pray.

12. Put it into practice!

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22)



Why study the Bible in small groups?

In a lot of churches, the only way of teaching is the sermon in the Sunday morning service. The pastor speaks and everyone else listens. Even though it is the most common teaching method, other methods can also be valuable in the life of the church.

If you can get the people together in small groups to study the Bible and encourage everyone's active participation, you'll see there are lots of advantages:

- In a Sunday sermon, it's not easy to know if people have really understood. They leave the church thanking the pastor for "a good sermon" but he doesn't know to what extent he has communicated effectively. In a small group, however, you can ask the members questions. By listening to their answers, you know if they have understood or if there is something you need to explain better.
- After the Sunday morning service, it's not always possible to ask the preacher lots of questions, but in a small group if someone has a question there is time for him or her to ask it.
- In a Bible study, we help the participants gain confidence in reading the Bible for themselves. In looking for the answers in the pages of their own Bible, they see that it is not too difficult to understand. They are encouraged to read it more themselves at home.
- When the pastor preaches on Sundays he speaks of the application of the Word in daily life. But this application is often quite general; it isn't very specific. It's not possible to say exactly what each individual should do. But in a Bible study, the group members have the opportunity to speak in far more detail. Together they can reflect on the application and ask themselves the question: "What does God want me to do in my life after having heard this teaching from his Word?"
- As brothers and sisters in Christ, we each have something to contribute. Each of us knows the guidance of the Holy Spirit who enlightens our minds and directs us in the truth. We can learn a lot from what we share and discuss together.
- If someone is tired it is a lot easier for them to stay awake in a small group where they have the opportunity to participate, discuss and ask questions. And also, when we are actively involved we remember more of what we learn. It's discouraging if someone sleeps when you're teaching the Bible, isn't it? So look for effective ways of holding people's attention and stopping them from falling asleep.