



NO BIBLE SUNDAY?

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Bible reading resource

txt msgs frm God*

Description:

Use text messaging to show why people need to really understand the Bible

What's needed:

This script and the two following pages as OHP slides

Aim:

To help people feel what it is like to not quite understand a Bible verse

Time:

5 minutes

Instructions:

1. In advance, copy the following two pages onto OHP film.
2. Say: *"Most of us have never tried to read the Bible in another language. We just assume that someone who speaks more than one language will find it easy to understand the Bible in all of them. I'd like to try something to test that. Here is a verse from the Bible in a language spoken by a number of you in the congregation. I will put it up on the screen in a moment. As soon as you have read and understood it, please raise your hand."*
3. Project up OHP no 1.
4. Expect that teenagers will raise their hands almost immediately. Ask them to keep their hands up and give other people a few moments. A few more hands will go up. A lot of hands will stay down.
5. Ask: *"Who would like to read this for us?"* Let someone read out the verse. Say: *"That is right. This is Isaiah 40:31. It is simply written in text messaging, the language that people use on their mobile phones when they text each other. If you are one of the people who found this difficult to read, then just watch your children or grandchildren. Pretty soon you'll catch them texting a friend."*
6. Say: *"The frustrating thing about the languages of text messaging, if you don't use it much, is that you can almost understand it. You recognise words like 'not get tired' and 'wings'. You can figure out the occasional confusing bit like 'gro' and 'wil bcome'. But overall, it just feels foreign and confusing. It probably doesn't make you feel closer to God."*
7. Say: *"This is often how it feels to people who read the Bible another language. They may understand a lot of the Bible in the new language, but just a few of the words will be new and confusing. Let's see if just a few confusing words can make a real difference."*
8. Project up OHP no 2. Say: *"Here you see a verse that you should all be able to read – 2 Corinthians 5:20. It has 25 words in it. Let's imagine you have been learning English. In fact you are doing really well. You can understand almost 90% of everything you read! Wow! How many people here who speak French feel they can understand 90% of everything they read? Not many... So let's look at the verse. If you understand 90% of this verse, there will only be 3 words you don't understand. That shouldn't be too much of a problem, should it? Now you aren't going to have a problem with the simple and common words like 'we' or 'are'. Where you are going to have trouble is with the most complicated words. So which do you think are the three hardest words in this verse?"*

9. Let people answer. They will probably suggest words like ‘ambassadors’, ‘implore’ and ‘reconciled’. Cross out these three words.

10. Say: “Let’s read what is left. ‘We are therefore Christ’s..., as though God were making his appeal through us. We...you on Christ’s behalf. Be...to God.’ We have only lost three words, but the verse has lost almost all its meaning. You can see that you have to be close to totally fluent in another language before Scripture in that language can do you any real good. Otherwise you just end up feeling as if God is someone else’s God – he doesn’t speak **your** language.”

11. Proceed with the service.

* title and text scripture passage from **izit u genst da wrld?** © Scripture Union, 2001

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ppl dat trust da
Lord wil bcome
strong agen. dey
sor on wings lik
eglz. dey
run+not gro
weary. dey
walk+not get
tired

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We are therefore
Christ's
ambassadors, as
though God were
making his appeal
through us. We
implore you on
Christ's behalf: Be
reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)