

TUTORIAL
8.20

Developing Bible resources

This tutorial outlines a process to use when developing contextualized Foundational Bible teaching sessions and studies in a cross-cultural church-planting context. It also includes a personal testimony of developing Bible teaching resources in a real context.

Introduction

This Tutorial covers material from *Building on Firm Foundations, Book 1, Chapter 12 - Bible Lesson Preparation Process*. The Building on Firm Foundations lessons were originally written for church planting teams in tribal areas, which is reflected in these lesson development notes. However, these same lessons have been used in many different contexts around the world; not only in tribal areas, and you will find this lesson preparation process helpful to you whatever context you are working in.

Bible Lesson Preparation Process

Use this lesson preparation process when following the “Building on Firm Foundations” teaching plan.

A. Initial Study and Preparation

Ask the Lord for help, believing that it is His message that you are trying to communicate.

John 14:14; 1 Corinthians 3:7; Luke 1:37

Read Volume 1 of Building on Firm Foundations (BOFF).

Even if you have read Volume 1 previously, read it again before actually beginning lesson preparation. It is vitally important that you understand and are convinced that the underlying reasons for teaching chronologically are based on biblical principles. Only then will you be able to teach with conviction and persist when the teaching process may appear long and tedious.

Read the introductory chapters to the BOFF phase you are planning to teach.

Note the teaching goals for this particular phase so you can refer back to them when you are actually preparing the lessons

Read and study the larger volume of material of which this lesson is a part.

Read all the BOFF lessons for the phase or the book of scripture you are preparing to teach and also read in both the vernacular and your mother-tongue the scripture portions which will be covered in the lessons.

B. Understand individual BOFF lessons**Read the BOFF lesson and the Scripture portions for the lesson.**

Read the Scriptures in your own mother tongue, the vernacular and the national language.

Read through the lesson at least two times and more if necessary. Read several lessons ahead of the one you are preparing to teach so that you are aware of what is coming up in the future lessons.

Identify and think about the goals and themes for the lesson as taught in BOFF.

Note the goals and themes. Refer to them constantly as you prepare your lesson.

After studying each lesson, teach it in your mother tongue.

If you have no other opportunity, teach the lesson as daily devotions with your wife, children, or colleagues. If your fellow missionaries are also involved in the lesson preparation process, then take turns teaching lessons to each other.

C. Contextualize the lessons in the language and culture**Keep your target audience in mind.**

Be conscious of the level of education, capacity for listening to monologue and degree of biblical background of your future audience.

You may need to adjust the amount of information to be included in each lesson. Divide lessons if they are too long for the intended group or for the length of the sessions. However, be conscious that each lesson was written as a unit. If changing the length of a lesson is

necessary, then consider carefully if the lesson themes have been adequately covered. Also consider if the section you have covered can stand alone as one narrative unit.

Identify and mark in the lessons those points which could clash with the religious, cultural or world view of the people you are planning to teach. Write these in the lessons at the point where it would be necessary or most appropriate to address the particular barrier.

Prepare a lesson outline in the vernacular with lesson development notes.

This lesson outline should include the main content of the lesson, with all the major heading points in the vernacular. Include notes to yourself regarding illustrations, barriers, teacher's notes and teaching aides such as dramas, pictures, maps, charts, etc, that will be necessary for teaching the finished lesson. Check to see all that has been suggested in the BOFF lesson.

Write a word-for-word Bible lesson in the vernacular as a preliminary draft.

Your language ability and cultural understanding should be to a level where you can write a full lesson draft on your own. Although BOFF lessons are not for word-for word translation, they have been prepared with translation in mind. Check each point and the content of your lesson alongside the BOFF lesson to make sure you have included all the pertinent doctrinal themes, emphasis, illustrations and other suggested teaching aides.

Put a teacher's note following the cultural illustrations in the lesson which instructs the native teacher to think of other suitable cultural illustrations that will speak very clearly to his people.

D. Format the lessons

Keep the tribal teachers in mind when formatting the lessons.

Lessons should be prepared as though the tribal teacher is going to be the one teaching. All teacher's notes, cultural examples, etc., should be printed in a finished form suitable for the tribal teacher to follow. Decisions about formatting should be made in cooperation with tribal teachers as much as possible, considering what they prefer and what is easiest for them to use.

The BOFF lessons have been formatted with tribal ministries in mind. In addition, examples of lessons already formatted by other missionaries may be available.

Make decisions early so that all the lessons are consistently formatted.

Consider the following points during preparation of initial lessons so that a consistent lesson template is available for all following lessons:

Use of icons: Be consistent with icons. Put teacher's notes in separate boxes. Mark review question headings with a large question mark. Use a book icon to indicate when it is time to read Scripture. Use an eyeball icon to indicate when the teacher has to show a picture or use a prop. Include a list of materials the teacher will need at the beginning of the lesson.

Breaking up the text: Use bold headings for each point. Don't have large areas of plain text.

Table of Contents: In a volume with a large number of lessons, the table of contents may not only include the title of each lesson but also a brief summary of what each lesson is about.

Lesson Outline: It is helpful to have a lesson outline, including major headings, at the beginning of each lesson.

Headers and Footers: Include on each page the lesson number, the title of the lesson, and the page number.

Other issues to consider: You will need to decide whether or not to add pictures (full or in thumbnail) to help the teachers.

It is recommended that you use numbers and not English alphabet letters (a,b,c) for lists or outline points.

Some lesson writers have developed a 'teacher's page' to lay out what needs to be done in preparation for teaching the lessons, such as gathering teaching aides.

E. Check the lesson with mother tongue speakers

Explain the purpose of the comprehension check to your helpers.

The mother tongue speaker's role (ensuring naturalness and clarity of communication), and your role (the authority for scriptural truth or biblical content) should be clearly explained. A relationship of trust and openness should be developed between you, the lesson writer, and the checkers.

Give your helpers a general overview of what the lesson is about.

Explain the general topic and tell the story, giving them an initial overview of the material.

Teach each point. Don't read. Teach.

Teach each point carefully, allowing them time to understand and think about the subject so they don't become lost in too large an amount of material.

Do a comprehension check.

Prepare comprehension questions about each point in the lesson and then ask them of the helpers.

Some lesson writers ask the mother tongue speaker to repeat the points back to them while they record them for future reference. If you do this, remember that your helper may not yet understand the overall theme or scriptural principles being expounded.

Identify any communication problems.

Consider possible reasons for any difficulties in communication; is it because of world view issues, grammar problems, discourse features not being used correctly, poor illustrations?

Discuss ways to improve communication clarity.

Ask for better ways to say, explain, or illustrate the problem areas you have identified.

F. Prepare the lesson for teaching

Complete the first draft.

This first draft is your preliminary draft including the changes you have made after checking it with mother tongue speakers.

Share the lesson with your tribal co-workers.

After you have taught more phases, you will be able to check this original first draft with more people. This should include reading or teaching the lesson and then asking what they understood.

Adjustments to the lesson should then be made based on their comprehension and suggestions.

Back-translate the required number of lessons for your consultant check.

Ask the church planting consultant which lessons to back-translate. If this is the first back-translation you have done, ask the consultant for guidance on how literal to be and how to handle proper nouns, etc. Send the BTs to the consultant for content check and arrange for a translation and comprehension check.

Practice teaching the lesson.

Teach the lesson to your partner, or at least teach through the whole lesson on your own as practice before teaching it to the whole group.

Revise the lesson after teaching.

Almost inevitably, some changes will be necessary after you teach each lesson to the people in the vernacular. Because of the burden of the work at this point, it is very easy to miss out on this step.

Have a plan for this first revision. Have a partner, spouse and literate tribal listeners (particularly those from the lesson checking team) take notes while you are teaching. They should note any mistakes in the lessons or areas which did not clearly communicate the thought you intended. Later, you will have to decide the reason(s) for this lack of communication and decide whether it necessitates a change in the text of the lesson. Consider also the various aspects of your oral delivery.

Make decisions about printing, distributing and publishing the curriculum.

Include the people as much as possible in the work of printing and publishing the lesson materials.

The first edition may be stapled loose leaf sheets. After lessons have been taught a few times and other necessary changes made, they can be printed in a more finished form. Initially, Phase 1 and the lessons for the other phases will probably be in small booklets. Later, phase lessons may be published in one or several volumes for easy storage and portability. Single lessons can be half-foolscap size and larger volumes could be A4 size. You should check to see what is most convenient for the teachers.

When there is a local church, then a good model is to pass on the lessons to the Bible teachers and maybe to others when they are first taught the material. It then immediately becomes theirs, and it is their responsibility to teach it to others. But outreach to others should be with accountability to the church and not left up to the individual to decide when, where and who he will teach.

G. Extra materials

Consider translating or preparing introductory materials from Volume 1 and the introductions to each book of the BOFF series as discipleship tools for the tribal Bible teachers.

Always keep in mind whether or not anything you, as the initial church planting team, have used is reproducible or accessible by the local tribal church for future outreaches. Any extra materials that you use to

teach (props for dramas videos, pictures, maps, or others materials) should either be provided by you for future tribal church planting teams or be easily reproducible by the tribal teachers.

Bible resources for the Tugutil:

A personal testimony from John Sharpe

In thinking back to my own experience of being involved in curriculum development, we were one of many church planting teams who were firmly committed to using Trevor McIlwain's *Building on Firm Foundations (BOFF)* lessons as the model for evangelism. At that time the early edition of *BOFF* books had just been released and wonderful reports were coming in of the fruit being seen from those works using the approach for Church planting.

In developing the initial lessons for the Tugutil work, I had the great privilege of working with an amazing young man who though illiterate and monolingual, had a wonderful hunger to learn and better understand the world beyond where he lived. He also had an amazing capacity to learn new things and a wonderful memory.

In preparing lessons I would first study the English lessons from the *BOFF* book and while doing that I was also teaching them to our 9-year-old twin daughters. Obviously that required them being contextualised for 9 year olds but I would also be constantly thinking about how that truth could then be contextualised for the tribal people so that it would really connected with them at a worldview level. This is the reason why it's vital to first gain an understanding of their worldview; sadly something that isn't always done with many who are working to cross-culturally communicate God's Word. Once I had the lesson contextualised and ready in English, I would then translate it to the best of my ability into the tribal language.

Then with both in hand I would sit down with Habiana and read the newly translated Scripture portions through to him several times, for that particular lesson. I would then explain enough of the bigger story to ensure that he understood the overall context. My co-workers were also hard at work translating the Scripture portions required for each lesson. Habiana and I would then work on improving my translation of the lesson and I would read and reread those portion of the lessons until we were both satisfied that it was communicating correctly. We would also prepare comprehension questions for each lesson and Habiana's answers would give me a good appreciation of whether



our lessons were on track.

The next step with Habiana was to then read to him smaller portions and get him to paraphrase them back to me in his own words. This was to ensure that the lessons flowed naturally in the language. We would then go through the entire lesson and once he felt it was communicating well, we would record



Habiana on tape. I would then take that recording to my wife Betty who would transcribe it. Then I would meet with the other two teachers on our team and go through the lesson thoroughly checking it out for content, key terms and illustrations and consider the possibility of using drama if it really fitted the particular lesson we wanted to teach.

Something that we didn't do that we should have, was to have Habiana sit in those meeting and then run those changes past him and get his final approval of the lesson as it was about to be delivered to the people.

We would then record whoever was teaching that lesson on to a cassette tape and make copies that would be distributed out along with Global Recordings hand wind tape players. Many would also come to our houses at night and listen to the recorded lessons over and over.

At that time we were teaching, our consultants required that we had a minimum of 20 lessons fully prepared before we commenced teaching, just to ensure that continuity in delivery of God's Story would not be interrupted by unforeseen delays - of which we had many. Over time as the believers grew in their understanding, those lessons were revised and much improved by the believers themselves.

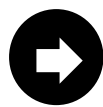
In all my life I have never experienced anything as thrilling as seeing God's Narrative progressively unfolded to people who previously knew nothing of it and then witnessing their lives being transformed before our very eyes. It's certainly an experience that I hope you also, one day get to enjoy.



DISCUSSION POINTS

Developing Bible resources

1. In what specific ways were John, Betty and Habiana equipped (specific skills, abilities, understanding, etc.) for their particular roles in Bible curriculum development for the Tugutil church?
2. As you engaged with the lesson development process outlined in this tutorial, did you feel that it is a process that would produce faithful initial teaching lessons for the church? Is there any part of the process you might add to or change? Why or why not?



ACTIVITIES

Developing Bible resources

1. Read *Building on Firm Foundations Volume 1, Part 2 - Chapter 10, Developing and Teaching Phase 1 Lessons. Chapter 11, Lesson Layout.*

(Building on Firm Foundations Volume 1 is available for download on AccessTruth.com. We recommend you take time to read this whole volume as it has helpful advice and foundational principles for anyone considering teaching God's Word)