Using Sunday School Materials for Adult Fluency

by Marianne Fast

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Editor’s Note – Much of the basic lesson material for the New Ireland Regional Sunday School Program (see previous article by Garrett) was taken from Sunday School material developed for the Tungag language program. Marianne Fast was heavily involved in the development of that material and has used it, not only for children’s Sunday School programs, but also for adult fluency classes.

Background

I have been involved in the Tungag translation program since 1986. During these years, I have been made aware of the need for a Christian education curriculum, as well as materials, for use in the Sunday Schools in the United Church. In most congregations the Sunday Schools are run by people who are appointed by the church. Each congregation has a few teachers and a supervisor is in charge of one section (4-6 congregations). These teachers have no material, training or guidance on what to teach. I have heard teachers express frustration at the lack of any kind of help. In a typical Sunday School class, there is lots of singing (choruses in English, Pidgin and Tungag) and prayer, and a story is read from an English or Pidgin Bible. A few have access to books bought in Kavieng that give some lesson ideas, and they have used those, but the majority of teachers have nothing. In many congregations there are only one or two teachers and Sunday School is easily canceled if the teacher is sick or away.

In 1991 I began developing material. I worked together with a group of about 15 people (some of them Sunday School teachers) writing Bible stories with questions and activities to go with each story. We chose a list of stories and the group wrote stories of around 200 words each. They used the English Bible as their source text, and an outline I gave them of each story. We chose a theme and memory verse for each story (adapted from Teaching the Bible to Children). Each story has three questions: two “what” questions and one “why” question. The story and questions are accompanied by a writing activity such as unscramble words or sentences, fill in the blank, or word searches. The stories were compiled
into a book and the exercises into a workbook. The first book was published in two volumes; the storybook and the accompanying workbook. The second book contains 17 stories of Moses from Exodus and Numbers. It was published as one volume.

**Material**

*Angasik Ua* is the title of a series of Tungag Bible lessons. These lessons are being used in Sunday Schools on New Hanover and also for adult literacy fluency classes, as well as in homes. “Angasik Ua” means ‘Help Yourself’. The Tungag Preface was written to explain this title:

“The stories in this book, they help you to know about the people and about how God leads those people. Read them well and think about them. Then read the stories again and when you know them, tell some of your friends. So that lots of people will grow in their knowledge of God.”

**From the English Preface:**

“The series (of seven books) will contain a total of 145 Bible lessons, each consisting of a Bible story (with illustration), questions, memory verse, puzzle/activity, and the lesson theme. The books can be used by Sunday Schools, in vernacular schools, in Bible studies or in family fellowships. Its purpose is to provide Bible teachers with a curriculum that gives an overview of the whole Bible. A further purpose is to provide material for reading practice for readers of all ages, children as well as adults.”

The lessons chronologically cover many stories of the Bible. We observed that teachers often pick the familiar stories to teach, so we thought it was important to give the stories in chronological order, so that people get an overview of all the stories in the Bible and they learn how they relate to each other.

The 145 lessons are presented in seven books: (Books 3 and 4 are not published yet)

- Book 1, Genesis (22 lessons)
- Book 2, Exodus: stories of Moses, (17 lessons)
- Book 3, The Israelites in Canaan (23 lessons)
- Book 4, The Prophets (24 lessons)
- Book 5, Stories of Jesus I (20 lessons)
- Book 6, Stories of Jesus II (20 lessons)

The story is the main part of the lesson. The written activities are designed for the reader to further interact with the story and become familiar with it. The memory verses are chosen to support the theme of the lesson. The story, Scripture reference, theme and memory verse for each lesson have been put in a chart for easy reference. (See sample chart on page of previous article in this issue.)

The following is an overview of a typical adult fluency class using the above material. (ed.)

**How to teach an Adult Literacy Fluency Class with ‘Angasik Ua’**

1. **Motivational Activity**

To draw the attention of the students to the lesson, the teacher can show a picture or a thing that is mentioned in the story (like a branch, or a stone), or a model of a thing (a fish cut out of
paper, a boat made out of leaves). A short play (drama) could also be used. Take time to review last week’s lesson, and the memory verse.

2. Story Reading
   a. The teacher reads the story from the vernacular Bible, if possible. If no vernacular Scripture available, skip this step and go to b.
   b. Hand out the books and allow time for the students to look through the story quietly.
   c. The teacher reads the story aloud while the students follow quietly along. Read slowly and fluently; try to avoid making mistakes.
   d. The teacher and the class read the story aloud together.
   e. The students read the story: small groups, or individual students take turns reading a sentence, or a paragraph.

3. Questions
   The teacher has prepared two or three questions to ask orally. Then the students answer the questions from the workbook. Students can make up more questions to ask each other.

4. Theme discussion
   a. Ask a question that leads to the theme. Pay close attention to the answers. Once the theme is mentioned in their answers, then introduce the theme.
   b. Divide students into groups. Give each group one or more Bible references to look up and discuss how they are related to the theme. Students may share real life experiences in their groups.
   c. When the discussion is finished, the teacher makes a summary of what was discussed.

5. Memory Verse
   a. Read the memory verse aloud two times. Discuss how it relates to the theme (if you have not done this under 4). Look up the verse in the vernacular Bible (if available) and find out what the context is.
   b. Everyone reads the memory verse together from the workbook. Then close the books and say it from memory.
   c. Think of a good way to teach the memory verse. The students write the memory verse in their notebooks.

   Here are some suggestions:
   1. Disappearing words. Write the words of the memory verse on the blackboard, say the verse several times and let the students say it several times. Then erase a word and let them say the verse again. Continue erasing words and repeating the verse together until they know the verse from memory.
   2. One is gone. Write the words (or groups of words) of the memory verse on cards (coloured paper or cardboard). Put up the cards for all to see, then do the same as above. Instead of erasing words, take away a card each time they say the verse.
3. Give the cards to the students and let them put the cards in the right order.

4. Go around the circle. Give one word or group of words to an individual or a small group. Let them practise just saying their words. Then go around the circle: Say the whole memory verse by letting each person or group say their word in the right order. You need to practise doing this fast, without too many pauses.

5. Write the memory verse in the sand, or with sticks or shells on the ground. (Do this with short verses.)

6. Activities

   Do the activities from the workbook. The students should write the answers in their notebooks.

Results

Report of Fluency Reading classes in Umbukul (submitted by Getruth Tauan, September 1999)

Eleven Fluency Reading classes were held in three villages; Umbukul, Metemaung and Taun. They were held on Thursday evenings, in the church building of each village. The lessons were taken from the Bible Lesson Book “Angasik Ua, Tutapongai”. (vol. 1, lessons 1 - 11)

Attendance averaged between 20 and 30 people, including children. It was not consistent; sometimes it was high and sometimes low.

Content of the Classes

1. Motivation: This was a short time to focus people’s attention on what the lesson was about. We didn’t do an activity every time.

2. Reading the Story: Everyone was involved in this. The class was divided into groups and each group had to read, the men, the women and the children. Sometimes this was funny, because some people could read well, some people didn’t read very well; some read fast and some read slowly.

3. Questions: After each story there were some questions. The questions came from the story and the people answered them. Sometimes we asked them to come up with some more questions from what they had read.

4. Memory Verse: We taught people the memory verse each week.

5. Theme: each lesson has a theme, and this led to a discussion time, which helped everyone to know about God’s Word. Sometimes this discussion took place in the big group and sometimes they discussed things in small groups.

RECOMMENDATION: It would be good to continue with the fluency reading lessons, because a lot of people do not read fluently yet. We also recommend to use some more different materials for the fluency class.

References

Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake. He went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came to them, walking on the water. When the disciples saw him, they screamed in terror, thinking he was a ghost. But Jesus spoke to them at once. “It’s all right,” he said. “I am here! Don’t be afraid.”

Then Peter called to him, “Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come to you by walking on water.” “All right, come,” Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he looked around at the high waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted. Instantly Jesus reached out his hand and grabbed him. “You don’t have much faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?” And when they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. Then the disciples worshiped him. “You really are the Son of God!” they exclaimed.
1. Why did Jesus stay behind on the mountain?
2. What did Peter look at that made him start to sink?
3. Who did the disciples say that Jesus was?

I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need. Philippians 4:13

These sentences are mixed up. Look back at the story on the other page and rewrite these sentences so that you can read them.

1. in his disciples Jesus boat told to the get, into.
2. to himself went He hills into by pray the.
3. the trouble disciples in the Meanwhile were waves fighting.

Unscramble these words.

sisipceld posdewhir
roter lelayr
enco icamedelx
idarf

Now put the correct words in the blanks in this story:

When the___________ saw him, they screamed in___________. But Jesus spoke to them at__________. “It’s all right,” he said. “I am here! Don’t be _____________. The_________ worshiped him. “You_________ are the Son of God!” they____________.

Look at these words from the story. Each word describes something that you can do. Act out what it says. Then put the words in the right order in which they appear in the story.

reached out fighting
screamed in terror climbed into
walked toward called
looked around grabbed

Jesus is powerful. We can trust Him to help us.