

# The Locked Bible



## Description:

An object lesson portraying the need for literacy work, best following a discussion of Bible translation

## Aims:

- Learn what literacy means and why it is important
- Consider literacy work as a possible career
- Pray for Bibleless people and Bible translation

## Audience:

First to sixth grade, easily adaptable through adult

## Country/Area:

General

## Minimum Time Requirements:

3 minutes

## Scripture to Study:

Ephesians 2:10

## Materials:

- A Bible with a hard cover
- A chain that can be snugly wrapped around the Bible's length and width at the same time
- A padlock
- Padlock key on a keychain labeled "LITERACY"

## Pre-class Preparations:

- Chain and lock the Bible so that the chain cannot be slipped off of it.
- Attach the key to a keychain with a tag labeled "LITERACY."

## Class Time:

### **Begin by saying,**

People often call the Bible "Good News." I would like us to read just a few verses to get us started on the right foot today. Who is a good reader here?

### **Select a volunteer to read.**

I would like you to read us some words of encouragement from Ephesians 2:10. Here, use this Bible.

### **Hand the volunteer the chained Bible. After he/she has attempted to read for a little while, say,**

What's the matter? You can't get much out of it? Well, read us what you can. (*He/she may only get a few if any words out of it.*)

### **Continue,**

This is what the Bible is like for many people around the world. Bible translators may have worked many years to write the Bible in a language that never had it before, but people still can't get inside and understand God's message to them. Why not? What's the matter with this Bible?

### **Allow for responses, then say,**

That's right! It's chained shut with a padlock.

### **Tug on the padlock and pretend to try to pull the chain off the corners of the Bible.**

It just won't budge. What do we need to get this Bible open so we can read what's inside? Raise your hand if you know. That's right! We need the *key*!

If your language had never been written before, and someone came and translated the Bible for you, that would be good, right? But if you have never learned to read, what kind of 'key' would you need to unlock the meaning on the pages inside? (Intelligence? Wealth?)

### **Hold up the key with the LITERACY key chain so everyone can read it, then give it to the volunteer.**

## Materials:

- Chained Bible
- Key with "Literacy" tag on the key chain

That's right! You'd need someone to teach you how to read. That's what "literacy" means, being able to read and write. See if you can get into this Bible now! I would still like to hear Ephesians 2:10.

**Allow the volunteer to read Ephesians 2:10.**

Now that we can read it, we find good news, really good news inside! Did you know that God created *you* for a purpose? He had things in mind for you to do even before you were born! Pretty exciting, huh? You know, it isn't enough just to translate the Bible. It is also important that there are people trained to teach people to read it. Could training those people to teach others be one of the "good works God prepared beforehand" for *you* to do? (Ephesians 2:10) After all, if people can't read their Bible, how will they learn the Good News?

**Closing:**

With still more than 2,000 languages that don't have one word of Scripture in them, Wycliffe needs many Bible translators and literacy workers to work together in order to fulfill Wycliffe's vision of starting a translation program in all of them by the year 2025. How old will you be in 2025? Perhaps God will call you to be part of a team to help a people group learn to read their own language. Wouldn't that be exciting?

**Perhaps one or more of your students will respond to this need!**

**Close in prayer. You can lead students to pray some of these types of prayers by simply asking for one child to stand and pray in response to your questions,**

"Who will ...

- *adore or worship God* for His desire to be known by all people everywhere?
- *confess* that even we do not read and obey our Bibles enough?
- *thank God* for giving us a Bible we can read?
- *ask God* to call many workers to translate God's Word for over 2,000 languages that still don't have any portion of the Bible?
- *ask God* to help people learn to read the Bible once it is translated into their languages?
- *ask God* to give people a hunger and thirst to read His Word every day?
- *ask God* to give people faith to believe the Bible and to do what it says?
- *ask God* to bring many people to repentance and faith in Jesus as they read His Word?