

CHOOSING AN ESL CURRICULUM

There is a world of ESL Curriculum out there waiting for you. Please do not think that you have to come up with your own material. That will burn out your teachers.

The ESL Teacher Training will show you many examples of different curriculums, both secular and Bible-based. This is a good time to look through the different options and decide which curriculum you would like to start with.

Your first decision will be whether to use a secular curriculum or a Bible-based curriculum. Here are a few things that you need to consider: If you pick a Bible-based curriculum, you need to be sure that you advertise in a way that is not a “bait and switch.” If using Bible-based material you need to advertise your class as a Bible Study that teaches English. On the other hand, if you pick a secular curriculum you can advertise that you are having free English classes. Usually “free English classes” will attract a lot more students and many of these will not be Christians. “Bible Studies that teach English” will attract fewer students and mostly Christians.

Do not think that you will not have the Gospel in classes using a secular curriculum. All classes should open with prayer and have a short devotional time. Once your classes are well established, you can then offer Sunday School Classes and Bible Studies. Your students are more likely to attend these now because they have built a relationship with you already. You can also have special events where you present an easy English Gospel presentation.

There are many ESL curriculums available from a variety of publishers; however, a lot of new ESL Schools have found two in particular to be “teacher” friendly. From a Director’s perspective, I like them because they are multi-level (meaning that they have different books for different fluency levels), you can purchase a placement process (which comes up with a numerical score that tells you which book a student should be in), the publisher representatives are usually willing to send you free samples, and there are a lot of enrichment materials that you can order to go with them. These two are Expressways and Side-by-Side, both published by Pearson Longman and written by the same authors (Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss). To get a Pearson Longman catalog, call 1-877-202-4572 or you can order online at OASIS.PEARSONED.com. It is important that you preview all the chapters of any curriculum. You want to make sure that all the chapters are value-friendly or at least value-neutral. In other words you do not want curriculum with chapters about horoscope or lottery, etc... Even if you have the students skip these chapters, you have basically endorsed them by asking them to purchase the book. You also want to make sure that the curriculum is relevant to your students’ lives. For instance, you do not want to pick a curriculum that focuses a lot on college life if most of your students are immigrants or refugees.

If you prefer to use Bible-based material, I would suggest starting with Window to the World from Campus Crusade if your students are low-level English students. You

can order it by calling 1-800-432-1997. (If it is still under revision, please contact the MNA ESL Director and she can send you a copy.) English Lessons from The Bible and English in Action are other good choices. English Lessons from The Bible focuses on the book of Mark. It is published by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Church. It is now a free download. Just go to www.namb.net/literacy-missions. English in Action is published by The Navigators and can be ordered at 1-719-594-2700 X8800. For more suggestions, please see the article on our website (www.pcamna.org/esl) on how to get the Gospel into secular curriculums.