

Australia



Indigenous Community Bible Engagement



Overview

Bible Society Australia (BSA) develops Bible resources in Indigenous languages to meet people where they are at and help them engage with the Scriptures in a meaningful way.

These Scripture resources also build biblical literacy, and are specifically designed for various audiences, including children’s Bible activity books, resources for those in hospitals and prisons, and Christmas and Easter resources for remote church communities.

The Need

45-65% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Australia are functionally non-literate. Poor literacy adds to disadvantages, resulting in difficulties finding employment and managing health. It also limits a person’s ability to participate in the management of their community.

BSA is acutely aware of the great need for discipleship among Australia’s Indigenous population. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identify as Christian, yet the inability to read the Scriptures makes it hard for Indigenous Christians to engage with the Bible. BSA is committed to creating Bible engagement resources, helping Indigenous Christians connect with Scripture in a way that is practical and relevant.

45–65%

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Australia are functionally non-literate (refer to the findings of the Literacy for Life Foundation, 2017).

54%

of people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander also identified as Christian.

Goals

The Pitjantjatjara Daily Prayer Book is being translated to encourage further engagement with Scripture. The Pitjantjatjara Translation Team has made good progress on the Pitjantjatjara Daily Prayer Book. Once the Prayer Book has had final checks completed, there are plans to print and distribute it during 2023.

Plans to develop Children's Bible Storybooks in multiple key

languages across Australia to help meet demand for literacy resources in Indigenous languages are underway, and there are further plans to develop these stories into video stories for online distribution.

Some Children's Bible Storybooks have already been translated, into the languages of Pitjantjatjara and Adnyamathanha. These will be printed and distributed in 2023.

A children's Christmas storybook called *Jesus is Born* has been translated into Noongar and was launched in December 2022. Translation of the storybook *Jesus and the Storm* into Noongar is currently underway.

Impact

In 2022, Bible Society followed up the *Jesus. All About Life* Easter Posters for Indigenous communities with Christmas Posters for communities to celebrate with. These posters featured beautiful artwork by several different Indigenous artists and were available in 38 different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

The Scripture posters, with small portions of Scripture, have a great impact on communities. They can be hung on church walls and in people's homes, are an effective way to help those with low literacy 'engage' with Scripture in a meaningful and manageable way. They will also be able to share this verse with their family and wider community in a very visual and obvious way.

Prayer Needs

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in creating resources that help communities open their hearts to God.
- Pray that these resources will breathe new life into Indigenous communities across Australia.
- Pray that those away from their families in hospital or prison will find comfort through the Scriptures contained in these resources.
- Pray that children across Australia will learn about God through the books, apps and recordings that Bible Society Australia produces.

