

South Africa



Scripture for Future Leaders

Project: 103369
Non Tax Deductible



Overview

Bible Society Australia is supporting the Bible Society of South Africa in tackling South Africa's literacy crisis by providing children with Bible-based literacy resources. This project seeks to enhance reading and numeracy skills, instil biblical values, and empower caregivers and teachers, ultimately fostering a new generation of literate, faith-driven leaders.

The Need

In South Africa, the literacy crisis presents a profound challenge, particularly for children in disadvantaged communities. Recent findings from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) reveal that over 30% of children do not recognise all the letters of the alphabet by the end of Grade 2, and a staggering 82% of Grade 4 learners struggle with reading comprehension. This alarming trend perpetuates a cycle of poverty and social issues, as children who lack basic literacy skills are ill-equipped to succeed academically and face increased risks of unemployment, crime, and family instability.

The absence of resources, such as libraries and quality reading materials, further exacerbates this situation, leaving many children without the necessary support to thrive. Teachers and caregivers express a dire need for educational materials tailored to their students, as many schools lack adequate resources to foster literacy. Parents are eager for engaging reading materials to help bridge the educational gap for their children. Addressing these needs is crucial not only for improving literacy rates but also for nurturing the next generation of leaders who can positively impact their communities and break the cycle of disadvantage.

30%+

of graduating Grade 2 students don't know all the alphabet

82%

of Grade 4 children cannot read with comprehension

76.8%

of public schools have no library, and 72% have no internet access

Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. – Matthew 19:14, NIV

Goals

This project aims to combat the literacy crisis in South Africa, create Scripture literacy and instil Christian values that will equip future leaders. In 2025, the project aims to reach 17,500 children (and another 30,000 in 2026), providing them with essential literacy resources. In 2025, schools and community centres will be selected, and age-appropriate materials for children aged 5 to 12 will be produced and supplied to partners, churches and schools.

The project will distribute Scripture resources such as the “Do and Learn” Bible-based literacy series and other Scriptures, enhancing both reading and comprehension skills while introducing children to the Bible early on. Engagement with teachers and community partners will be vital, and by the end of the year, the goal is to see a demonstrable improvement in literacy and spiritual growth among participants.

Impact

The impact of this project on participants will be profound and multifaceted, spanning years of targeted support from Grade R to Grade 7. For children aged 5 to 7, the “Do and Learn” Bible-based literacy series will lay a strong foundation in reading and numeracy, introducing them to Jesus and Christian values early on, while also involving parents who may struggle with literacy themselves. As children progress to Grades 3 to 5, they will deepen their reading skills and comprehension through engaging materials like the Gospel of Mark or John, fostering a meaningful connection with the Bible and instilling confidence in daily prayer. By Grades 6 and 7, participants will not only enhance their ability to navigate the Bible but also understand its relevance to their lives and challenges.

Overall, this project seeks to cultivate not just literacy but also a strong moral compass, empowering these young learners to become informed and engaged members of their communities, equipped with the tools to effect positive change.

Testimony

“I have never held a Bible in my hand before at home. We used to have one which belonged to my grandmother. Now there is no Bible at home, until I came back from school with my [Bible]. Every day during supper my mum asks me to read for the family, we then sing and pray. But I told them it’s not just singing and praying, the Bible teaches us to believe in him so we can have eternal life. I learned that I was far from God but through Christ I have been brought back.” — Grade 7 Learner, Richards Bay

Prayer Points

- Please pray that this project will succeed in helping children in South Africa to read and write, know Christ and prepare them for successful years in the formal education system
- Pray that many more children will have access to the Bible and its life-giving message
- Pray for funding that will enable the Bible Society of South Africa to address this huge and growing need.