

English Classes in a Church Context

Why?

Usually classes will be run to meet a felt need for help with English. This can be in order to help Christians for whom the English language is a struggle, but is also a means of building up relationships with those who would not normally find their way into a church. Their main value is in generating friendships that can open the door to evangelistic opportunities (e.g. separate Christianity Explored Bible studies) rather than as means of evangelism in themselves.

Who?

- International students at the local University
- Wives and children of international students
- Parents of ethnic minority school children
- Extra practice for those at local language schools
- International businessmen and their families on short-term placements in Britain
- Au pairs
- Refugees
- Internationals who have married a Brit.

Where?

Anywhere!

- A room in the actual church
- Round the kitchen table in a home
- A rented room from the council, e.g. in a local library
- Question: if you hire a room, how are the costs going to be covered? Grants may be possible through the local council.

When?

- Initially something manageable, e.g. an hour a week
- Can progress to up to 2 hours a day
- Some churches run classes in an evening, alongside other social events such as badminton
- Others run day-time classes, during school hours
- For children, an after-school club

What?

- Helpful to have at least one EFL qualified teacher to run the class; or to advise at least
- Issues to think through:

Advertising: How will you let potential students know the class will be taking place?

Will you charge students? (Fees comparable with local adult education? £1 a session to cover photocopying costs? Free lessons?)

Books: Will you encourage students to have their own text book and systematically go through that? Will you provide textbooks for the class, but not allow students to write in them? Are you going to write your own material and use your own resources?

What is your objective? To reinforce grammar rules and structures? To focus on speaking skills through conversation classes? To equip folks for surviving in Britain (how to make a doctor's

appointment, how to ask for and give directions, how to return faulty goods, how to report a car accident etc.) To help with academic English?

How will you assess students' ability? Will you run mixed ability classes?

Are your classes going to be single sex? (E.g. if you are working primarily with strict Muslim women) If you are running a class for whom that is an issue, can you guarantee that they feel safe with you?

Facilities for children? If you are running a class for international wives with pre-school children, will you provide a crèche?

Resources

- **Keltic International** is an excellent resource. They have a huge range of EFL materials, and deliver promptly, unlike many high street booksellers. They have a free catalogue. Keltic International, 39 Alexandra Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2PQ.
Tel: 01932 820485
Email: keltic@keltic.co.uk
Web: www.keltic.co.uk
- Major booksellers all stock bestselling EFL materials such as the New Headway range (OUP), English File (OUP), Cutting Edge (Pearson Education/ Longman), Language in Use (CUP), Reward (Macmillan ELT) etc.
- It is possible to use Scripture as a starting point for lessons. Narrative stories lend themselves to this, especially Christmas and Easter, but obviously the teacher has to be careful not to treat an English lesson as an evangelistic Bible study!
- Whatever type of room you use, it is very helpful to have a whiteboard and a tape-recorder (with a counter) or CD player.

Useful websites for resources:

- www.iatefl.org (International Association of Teachers of EFL – has a good section of links)
- www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/index.shtml (BBC World Service website for learners of English)
- www.teachingenglish.org.uk (joint BBC World Service/British Council website for teachers of English)
- www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/ (search for information about Britain as well as anywhere else in the world)
- www.britishcouncil.org (British resources and information on current issues in Britain. Also details about language schools in Britain for students)
- www.ukpolitics.org.uk (British resources and information on current issues in Britain on CD-Rom, by subscription from this website)
- www.wordsmyth.net (dictionary and thesaurus)
- www.lyrics.net (site giving lyrics to just about any song you can think of)
- www.visitbritain.com (tourist information about the UK)
- www.refdesk.com (newspapers from all over the world as well as links for a wealth of reference material)
- www.celea.net (CELEA - Christian English Language Educators Association- website for Christian

TESOL professionals)

- www.flo-joe.co.uk (for teachers and students taking Cambridge exams)
- www.coursefinders.com (for students of English)
- www.englishclub.net (for students of English)
- www.howstuffworks.com (full information about everything. Useful resource material)
- www.easyenglishworld.com (commentaries on books of the Bible in easy English, produced by Wycliffe associates)
- www.onestopenGLISH.com (resources for English teachers)
- www.bbc.co.uk (resources for English teachers)