

# Scripture Engagement

## Alongside Bible Translation

Integrating the Bible into all areas of life & allowing  
God's Word to transform our community

This booklet aims to encourage and inspire you, as God's Word is translated into your language, to use it in your communities to see transformation. God created your language and culture; it is full of beauty and can be used for God's purposes. There are so many ways within your culture that you can use to relate to God, worship Him and share Him with others.

As God's Word is translated into your language, it is important to consider the wider community and churches that will receive and use it: think about their needs, resources, abilities, tough topics they face, and how best to communicate with them. God's Word is a double-edged sword, able to transform, heal, instruct, and much more. How will your community, families and local churches engage with the Bible, and how can you support them as they listen, read, learn, and spend time with God and His transformational truth?

## What is Scripture Engagement?

Scripture Engagement is a term used in the Bible Translation world to talk about everything that goes alongside translation work and is even included in elements of the translation process; some would say it is more important than the translation work. You cannot have one without the other. Without Scripture Engagement, Bibles sit on a shelf as a beautiful book, audio device or holy talisman, never touching the lives of God's people. What is Bible Translation without transformation through God's Word?

Scripture Engagement essentially translates the Bible into the life and culture of your community. It expresses and portrays biblical truths in local and relevant ways, using your way of doing things. It takes the Scriptures into all areas of life in creative ways, to address every situation, allowing all people to engage with the unique God of the Bible to see individual and communal transformation. It provides a link / bridge between God's Word and your community: it brings the truth of the Bible to us and leads us deeper into the Scriptures.

### **Matthew 4:4**

*"People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."*

### **Romans 10:14-15**

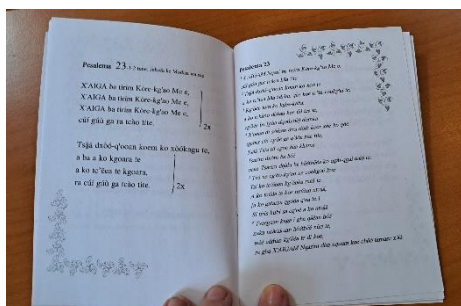
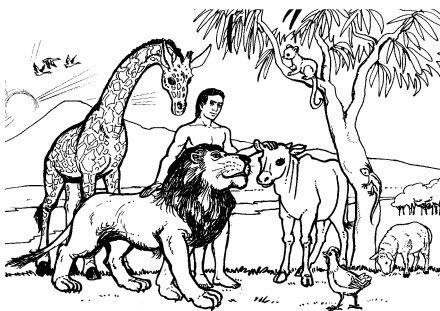
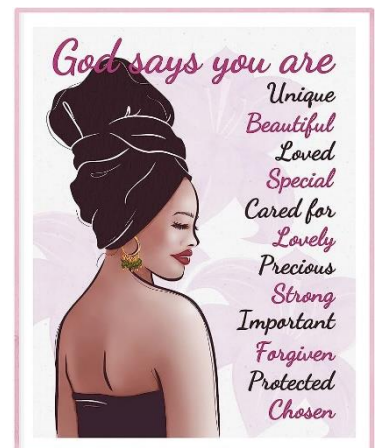
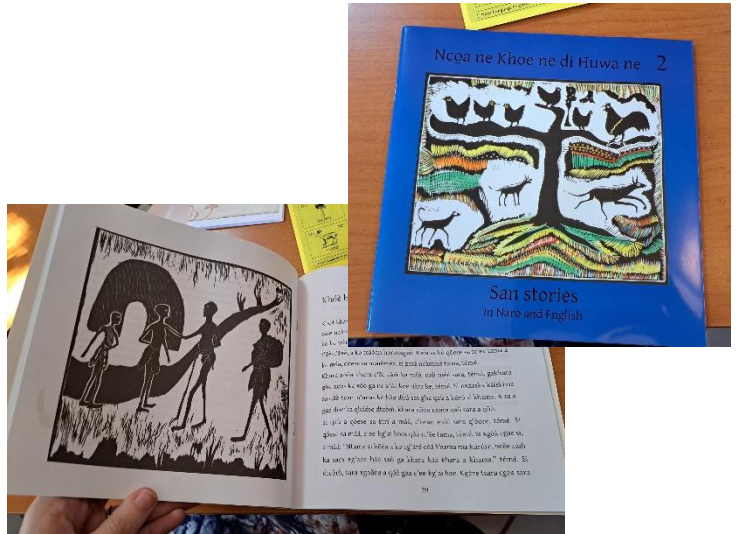
*"But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"*

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."*

## Examples of Scripture Engagement

- Children's books
- Art
- Posters
- Fabric patterns
- Pottery
- Songbooks / songs
- Poetry
- Dances
- Drama
- Teaching materials
- Prayer groups
- Home groups
- Bible studies
- Listening groups
- More...



## Questions to Consider

### 1) Remaining Faithful to Scripture:

- What format will be seen by your communities as the holy, authoritative Word of God?
- What tools will help your community to have a good understanding of the Bible?
- Who in the community will be teaching from the Bible or using it to create prayers, worship and more? What would help them to be faithful to the truth of Scripture as they open the Bible for other people?

### 2) Your Social and Cultural Context:

- What oral characteristics does your language have? What parts of your spoken language will help you to translate and create oral Scripture Engagement tools?

*If your community prefer to communicate, remember, express, and process orally, transformation is more likely using oral forms. The characteristics of your spoken language are important to be aware of as you translate the Bible and create Scripture Engagement tools. For example, what indicates that you are telling a true historical story or a moral story with a lesson to learn? What is involved in your singing and dancing? How do you introduce and represent important people?*

- What groups, organisations and talents do you have in your communities that could be used to engage with the Bible translations in creative ways?

*There are so many possibilities to engage with the Bible in different ways and forms, in different situations with different groups of people, and with different needs. What have you seen in your community and what creative ways can you think of to engage with the Bible? What local genres, mediums and talents can be used? What local organisations or groups could you partner with?*

- Are there any historical barriers or tensions within your language, or are there any local ways of doing things that are seen as “unholy”? Can these be liberated or redeemed for God’s purposes in your communities?

***“God doesn’t require us to abandon our language and culture to relate to him.”***

*Harriet Hill and Margaret Hill, from the book Translating the Bible into Action.*

### **A) Knowing Your Community**

- What different areas or groups of the community are there?
- How can the Bible translations be best used in each group?
- What creative ways can you think of to take the Bible translations to each group, considering possible tensions or restrictions?
- What needs or struggles do your communities have that the Bible can help with?

### **B) Knowing Your Church Community**

- What different areas or groups are there in your churches?
- How can the Bible translations be best used in each group?
- What creative ways can you think of for each group to engage with, teach or evangelize with the Bible translations?
- What needs or struggles do the local church and Christians have that the Bible can help with?

## **3) Connecting the Bible with Your Context:**

- What is your focus? Do you want to just complete the required passages, or do you want to see transformation through the Bible in your communities?
- When will you start planning and doing Scripture Engagement? Do you have a team or person who can focus on Scripture Engagement alongside the translation team?
- What plans and budgets can you make to facilitate distribution and transmission of the Bible translations and Scripture Engagement tools?

*There are many things that you will need to consider, like printing and publishing of songbooks or devotionals, recording equipment, audio devices, Christian films that can be dubbed, or artwork.*

- In what ways can you share the Gospel:
  - Evangelistically to enable people to commit to the Christian faith?
  - Among Christians to increase their Spiritual hunger and grow their faith?
- How will you use the talents, art forms, music, poetry, dance, storytelling, and more from within your communities to reach all areas, all people, and to address the needs of the community and the local church?

## Useful Resources and Contacts

- **Contact Wycliffe South Africa**

E-mail: [helen\\_vanderwalt@wycliffe.org.za](mailto:helen_vanderwalt@wycliffe.org.za) Website: [www.wycliffe.org.za](http://www.wycliffe.org.za)

*Or get in touch directly with the Field Coordinator who is partnering with you.*

There are many gifted people across southern Africa who can provide training, help to facilitate a workshop, train local people to facilitate workshops, or guide teams as they desire to do different forms of Scripture Engagement. By contacting Wycliffe SA with your hopes and plans, such as wanting to create local worship songs, develop a Bible Study guide, or create artwork, drama or dance for evangelism or discipleship, they will be able to link you with people and resources to help.

- **Book: “Translating the Bible into Action: How the Bible can be Relevant in all Languages and Cultures”** by Hill and Hill (2022).

This is a workbook written for people wanting to do Scripture Engagement.

The book covers areas of theological foundations, multilingual churches, relevant Bible use, sharing faith, using your gifts, passing it on, and practical support for different ideas. You can use it as a whole or just the relevant chapters, and it can be done in chunks over time or used within a seminar. Each chapter contains optional stories, exercises, discussions, and assignments, making it very adaptable for any context. It is also sustainability: materials are designed for you to teach what you have learned to others.

This 2022 revision includes more digital content and other recent Scripture Engagement developments, in line with the current global situation.

The book is also available in French and Portuguese – contact Wycliffe South Africa to access these.

- **Book: “Africa Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars”** edited by T. Adeyemo (2010).

A Biblical commentary produced in Africa by African theologians to meet the needs of Africans; reading the Bible in light of African cultures and realities. This book is available in multiple languages.

- Website: **“Scripture Engagement: Encountering God’s Word in Life-Changing Ways”** by the Forum of Bible Agencies International (2021)

[www.scripture-engagement.org/](http://www.scripture-engagement.org/)

The Forum of Bible Agencies International is an alliance of 40 international Bible Agencies and other mission organisations with a shared vision:

*“working together to maximize the worldwide access and impact of God’s Word.”*

This website provides nearly 500 resources for all kinds of Scripture Engagement all over the world. It aims to provide practical help for facilitating encounters with God through engaging with His Word.

- Christian Films: **“Jesus Film Collection”** by the Jesus Film Project (2021)

[www.jesusfilm.org/watch](http://www.jesusfilm.org/watch)

This collection of 21 films and series covers all parts of the Bible for many cultures and thousands of languages. Contact the Project ([www.jesusfilm.org/about/contact](http://www.jesusfilm.org/about/contact)) or talk to Wycliffe South Africa about the possibility of using your translations in one of these visual tools. Three examples are below:

- 1) **Jesus Film** – A 2-hour film used all over the world. It is made up of 61 clips covering creation, Jesus, the Great Commission, and an invitation to know Jesus personally. It is available in more than 1,800 languages, including all official languages and some minority languages of southern Africa. It can be dubbed with any language.



[www.jesusfilm.org/watch/jesus](http://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/jesus)

- 2) **Lumo Films** – A film for each Gospel, with the original Greek and Aramaic languages softly in the background. Matthew is made up of 25 clips, Mark has 15 clips, Luke has 26 clips, and John has 22 clips. These are available in 28 languages, including English, French and Portuguese. They can be dubbed with any language.



[www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo](http://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo)

- 3) **Walking With Jesus** – A series made specifically for the African context. There are five 25-minute episodes which approach the Christian faith using common African life scenarios and modelling Christian discipleship. It has been dubbed into 60 languages, including English, French (African) and Portuguese (Mozambique).



[www.jesusfilm.org/watch/walking-with-jesus-africa](http://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/walking-with-jesus-africa)

Notes