Description:
A simple activity to help children learn to read “shape script”

Aims:
- To help children understand the concept of learning to read a different script
- To let children experience learning to read a phonetic script

Audience:
K-5 grade children

Country/Area:
Non-specific

Minimum Time Requirements:
10-15 minutes

Scripture to Study:
Isaiah 34:16a (NKJV says: “Search from the book of the LORD, and read:”)

Materials:
- One copy each of pages 4-7 printed out
- 3 copies each of pages 8-11 printed out
- 1 copy each of pages 12-15 or one set for each older child or group.
- 1 copy of page 16 printed out and enlarged if possible
- Bible with place marked at Isaiah 34:16a

If you have any questions or problems related to this lesson, please contact the Wycliffe Children’s Communications Team at: childrens_resources_orlando@wycliffe.org
Pre-class Preparations

- Print out one copy of pages 4-7, 12-15, & 16 (or one set pp. 12-15 for each older child or group of children to work on independently) and 3 copies of pages 8-11.
- Familiarize yourself with the “shape script” so that you can help the children put the shapes in the correct order to form words and sentences.

Class Time

Introduction:

Start by asking the children: How many of you can read or are learning to read? What do you like to read best? Do you know anyone older than you who can’t read? How do you think they feel if they can’t read? (Pause after each question in order to allow the children to give answers.)

Continue by saying: Did you know that even the Bible talks about reading? Read or invite a volunteer to read Isaiah 34:16a. Does God want us to read? What does He want us to read? Why do you think He said that? (Pause after each question in order to allow the children to give answers.)

Then explain: There are over 2,000 languages in the world that have never been written down. The people speak them, but can’t read or write them because they don’t have an alphabet yet. If the children who speak those unwritten languages attend school, they are taught in a language they don’t understand very well. Today, we are going to learn to read a script that is new to us. But, because you already know how to read in one language, it won’t take you very long to learn to read this “Shape Script”!

Ask for volunteers to come to the front and hold pages 4-7. Hand each child a page in random order. Practice the 4 pages several times so the children begin to associate the color and shape with its sound. For this exercise, we are using a strictly phonetic English script:

- \( \text{t} \) pronounces like the “t” sound in the word “tie”
- \( \text{i} \) pronounces like the vowel sound in the word “tie”
- \( \text{m} \) pronounces like the “m” sound in the word “moo”
- \( \text{u} \) pronounces like the vowel sound in the word “moo”

(The children will eventually figure out that they’re working with word sounds rather than spellings.)

After the children have practiced pages 4-7 a number of times, invite other volunteers to hold up pages 8-11 while the first volunteers return to their seats. Say: Now that we have learned 2 vowel sounds and 2 consonant sounds in “Shape Script”, we can begin to form some simple words with them.

Materials:

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- 1 copy of page 16 printed out and enlarged if possible

Page 4  Page 5
\( \text{t} \)  \( \text{i} \)

Page 6  Page 7
\( \text{m} \)  \( \text{u} \)
Arrange the children so that the sounds on the pages form simple words like: (tie) (time) (my) (to / two / too)

Ask: Can you think of any other words we can form with our “shape script”? (You may need to add more “letters” to accommodate possibilities like: “I”, “toot”, “tight”, “moo”, “might”.) Allow children to form the words they think up.

Continue by saying: Now we are going to combine those words into some phrases in “Shape Script”. Add more volunteers holding shapes if needed. Have the children with the shapes form the phrases: “I tie” “my tie” and “I tie my tie”

On pages 12-15 are some sentences for the children to figure out. These pages could be enlarged to 11” x 17” if you want to have volunteer children hold them in front. Another option would be to print out enough of the pages 12-15 on letter size for each child to have a copy to work out the sentences on their own or in small groups. This might work better with older children.

Answer Key:

- Page 12: My tie
- Page 13: I tie my tie.
- Page 14: I might tie my tie.
- Page 15: I might tie my tie too tight.

Conclusion

Ask: Did you enjoy learning our “Shape Script”? Language can be fun, like solving a puzzle. Once you have the pieces, you can begin to put them together. God has given us the ability to learn languages from the minute we are born. SIL International* trains people to learn languages that they don’t speak. Through the process of learning an unwritten language, translation teams figure out different parts of a language, create an alphabet and learn sentence structure. They also learn how a language expresses words like love, sin and forgiveness.

Show the children page 16, and say: Even though “Shape Script” is a made-up script, the Cree people of Canada actually write in a more complicated “Shape Script.” This is a page from their New Testament.

Continue: If you enjoyed working with our “Shape Script”, maybe God is calling you to help translate the Bible for some of over 2,000 people groups who still don’t have God’s Word. Let’s pray and thank God for the Bible. Let’s also ask Him to call Bible translation teams to the places where people still wait to hear and read God’s Word in their own language.

*SIL International is a partner organization with Wy-cliffe Bible Translators, dedicated to training, language research, translation, and literacy.
Answers

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