

BUILDING AN ENGLISH LEARNING MINISTRY

A photograph of three people—a man and two women—looking at a book together. The man is in the foreground, looking down at the book. A woman stands behind him, and another woman is to his right, also looking at the book. In the foreground, there are several small flags, including the Union Jack and the Spanish flag. The background is a blurred indoor space with lights.

WE SERVE *Churches*
AS CHURCHES SERVE *Others*

BUILDING AN ENGLISH LEARNING MINISTRY

God is bringing the nations to Tennessee. Many of our Tennessee Baptist churches are uniquely positioned to meet the needs of our international neighbors through English language ministries. Your church can develop relationships with students and have gospel conversations that could lead to heart transformation and changed lives. If the Lord is leading your church to start English classes, we hope this resource will provide some simple tips for building your ministry.

FIRST STEPS

1 Pray

Starting an ESL ministry is so much more than just teaching English. The Lord often uses these types of ministries to plant new ethnic churches.

Some prayer points to consider as you begin:

- Your church's vision
- Volunteers with a heart for the nations
- Students who are open to the Gospel
- Bible studies or new church plants to start from these classes

2 Research

Identify the different ethnic groups living in your community.

- Visit local ethnic restaurants and markets
- Talk to local school administrators
- Talk with other churches or organizations that are teaching English



Determine your Purpose

As God's people we want to do all things with excellence, and this must be true of our English classes. It is also important to remember there are many places people can learn English, but the church is where they can experience the love of Christ and hear the Gospel. As you build your ministry remember:

- Keep evangelism at the center of your ministry
- Do not assume evangelism will happen
- Determine beforehand how to incorporate intentional gospel sharing
- Provide basic evangelism training for your volunteers

BUILDING YOUR PROGRAM

ENLIST A DIRECTOR

Every ESL ministry needs a director to coordinate all the details involved in maintaining the program. It is important that the director has a passion for sharing the gospel with the lost and serving internationals in your community.

Responsibilities of the director will include:

- Recruiting volunteers
- Providing training for volunteers
- Recruiting students
- Supervising and supporting teachers
- Choosing curriculum
- Placing students
- Handling logistical needs of the ministry
- Filling in for absent teachers



RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

Once your program director is chosen, begin recruiting volunteers. As in any ministry, it is important to have a reliable volunteer base. The number of volunteers will vary based on the size of your ministry. Below is a general guideline for the number you might need.

- Teacher and assistant for three levels: beginner, intermediate, advanced
- Hospitality workers for snacks, refreshments, and welcoming students
- Childcare workers
- Language Partners
- Drivers for any transportation needs

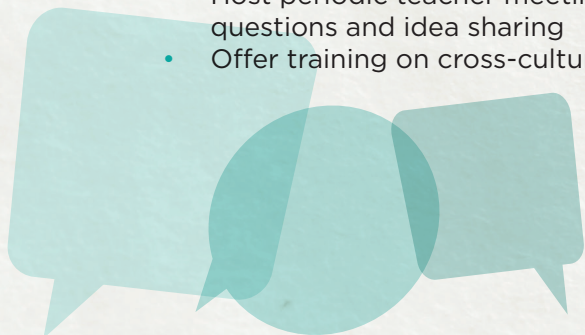
As you recruit volunteers in your church you might consider the following:

- Prepare job descriptions with specific duties, requirements, and expectations
- Prepare a volunteer application
- Promote in your church during the service, on the website or social media, and regular newsletter or email.
- Ask nearby smaller churches or partner churches that may have members willing to serve but no ministry at their church.

TRAIN VOLUNTEERS

Not every ESL volunteer needs to be an experienced teacher. TBMB Compassion ministries has trained workshop leaders that can provide your volunteers with basic training in teaching English. In addition to the basic ESL workshop, there are other ways you can equip your teachers so they feel confident in their ministry:

- Observe other ESL programs
- Invite a specialist from a local school system or university to share helpful tips
- Host periodic teacher meetings that allow for questions and idea sharing
- Offer training on cross-cultural communication



DETERMINE BASIC PROGRAM DETAILS

The details of every ministry vary based on the church and needs in the community. Below are things you might consider as you determine the details of your church's program.

When?

- Many ESL programs coincide with the local school calendar
- Working adults may be best served with evening classes
- Mothers may prefer morning classes
- Many churches schedule classes to coincide with regular weekly programs to allow children to participate in church programs while parents attend English class

Where?

- Most churches host classes on their property
- Some volunteers go to local restaurants or business and offer classes on site to employees before business hours

Class size and levels?

- A minimum of 3 levels is recommended: beginner, intermediate, and advanced
- An average of 10 students per class is best for volunteers and students

Curriculum?

- There are several curriculum options available. The Basic ESL workshops give some tips in choosing curriculum. We also have a network of churches that can give input on what curriculum they are using.

Class length?

- One and a half to two-hour classes is recommended with a short break for refreshments and fellowship
- Some ministries begin or end with all students together for fellowship, refreshments and Bible story or worship

Cost?

- Your church will need to decide if and how much to charge for classes or materials. There are **valid reasons** for charging or not charging for the ministry and this must be a matter of prayer for every church.



Recruit Students

It is important to begin advertising several weeks before your classes begin and in several ways:

- Post flyers in multiple languages in schools, apartments, ethnic markets or restaurants, laundromats, libraries
- Advertise on your church website
- Post on social media
- Advertise on any local language radio stations
- Promote in local ethnic churches

Enlist Prayer Support

As you start your English ministry, invite your church to partner with you in prayer in some of the following ways:

- Prayer partners for volunteers
- Regularly communicate needs to congregation
- Share answered prayers
- Invite prayer partners to special events

If you have other questions about building your English language ministry, please contact:

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ENGLISH as a SECOND LANGUAGE



