

History of Bible in Literacy

1991

Shirley Gowland (author of **BiL**) founded a Schools' Ministry in Billericay, Essex on a voluntary basis, seeking to encourage churches in the town to '**Serve their Schools**'. **SMB** provided Lion First Bibles, offered assemblies, lessons and lunch time groups to all the primary schools; as well as pastoral support work in senior schools. This ministry grew, establishing links between all the local churches and all the schools, gaining many supporters.

1998

Viz-a-Viz offered to be the 'umbrella' of support needed by taking on the leadership of **SMB**, employing Shirley as Team Leader. **SMB** Management group was established (in 2010, 3 schools workers are employed and a number of volunteer staff with the supervision of Chairman Gary Bott, Youth Director of Billericay Baptist Church). RE lesson plans were written by Shirley to be used in school 'Literacy hour' - hence the title **Bible in Literacy Lessons** fondly known to local Billericay schools as **BILL**. Game Boards, Text Cards and props with matching graphics, were piloted throughout all the primary schools during the next 5 yrs. The introduction of Interactive whiteboards into the Education system, allowed new possibilities that needed developing.

2003-2006

To concentrate on developing the resource further, Shirley left Viz-a-Viz/**SMB** in 2003 after celebrating over 10 years of Schools' Ministry and establishing a Billericay base for **SMB** to work from. She remained the facilitator of 'Serving our Schools', accountable to local churches who financially support the venture. Fund raising, CD production works and permission agreements followed. This resulted in successful inclusion of materials from Lion First Bible, Bible Society's Miracle Maker and Mary Jones, Tale of Three Trees, Bible Explorer images and the filming of questions to children (Alf resource). All this work; from script and programme writing together with graphic design, teacher's notes etc. was sponsored by Bible Society, enabling a prototype production run of 30 Bible in Literacy Packs and first run of CD production by Dave Lodge of Billericay Baptist Church in 2004/5. **BiL** had truly come of age!

2007

On recommendation from Bible Society and local financial advisers, Bible in Literacy Ltd was established as a non-profit making company with David Gowland & Shirley as Directors and license holders of the **BiL** resource. Funding from a local Christian organisation enabled a production run of 200 **BiL** packs.

2008

Shirley administers as Project Manager on a voluntary basis. Christ Church, Stock, Essex began financially supporting the **BiL** project.

2009

Shirley employed by a local primary school to teach **BiL** for two days a week. Bible Society provided Bible in Literacy Ltd with further funding for the production of a '**Step into the Bible**' CD Rom - graphics and CD produced by Dave Lodge, written material by Shirley and Paula Gibson.

2010

In association with **SMB**, Shirley is presenting 'Serving our Schools' training for nominees from local churches. Bible Society has provided Bible in Literacy Ltd with further funding to assist with a new 2 year project entitled 'Pathfinders'. This project will enable Shirley to supply and train several churches with **BiL** packs with the focus of 'How to engage local community with God's word'. To date more than 170 schools in the UK have been supplied with **BiL** which means that potentially more than 70,000 pupils can enjoy and have fun learning about the Bible!

2011/12 Hopes & dreams!

In obedience to the calling and vision of 'engaging children in our schools with God's word' Shirley's heart's desire is to continue to serve as many of the 23,000 primary schools as possible with the resource material and training of **BiL**. Shirley passionately believes that with God's help, and churches willing to serve their local schools, it is possible to supply many more schools over the next decade by introducing churches to the 'gift challenge'.

Sponsor Packs cost £55. Class Box sets cost £145 - enjoy looking at the website!

www.bibleinliteracy.org

Shirley, as facilitator of 'Serving our Schools' training and seeking accountability to officially establish BILL in 2004 on a solid foundation wrote this personal statement:

'Using the credibility and expertise from Bible Society in partnership with Bible in Literacy, I believe this resource has the potential to touch pupils lives in ways unfathomable – not because of any individual's ideas, creativity or technology but simply through allowing exposure of these 8 powerful scriptural texts into the Educational Framework. In themselves, these literacy statements enable head knowledge to deepen into heartfelt reality. I invite all those, with an interest in deciding a way forward to support this resource, to simply reflect for a few moments on the text cards (the core matter of the resource), to see the profound, yet simplistic basis for the next generation to be fed with God's word'.

As Shirley continues to deliver 'Serving our Schools' training with a focus on the works of the Bible in Literacy Project, her requests in 2010 are:

Please pray. Thank you for your support. Remember the retired teacher who organised a Strawberry Tea, initially raising £400. 6 schools were supplied and trained followed by further funding from her local churches facilitating another 4 schools being served. Praise God for supporters such as this! Can you offer help with this Bible in Literacy project?

- Prayer Support
- Financial Support
- Accommodation Support
- Marketing Support
- Practical Support

For more details of **SERVING OUR SCHOOLS** contact:

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Shirley Gowland
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