

IMPRESSIONS

FOR YOUTH

Vol. 2.1

The
Story
of a Kid
Missionary +
Fun Games

A publication of Synergie Francophone

formerly known as BLF USA

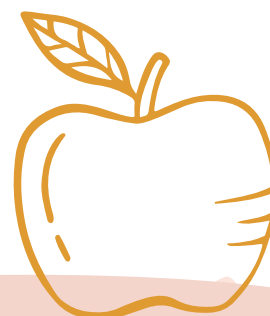
In French, "Impression" means
"printing" as in printing books.



Synergie
FRANCOPHONE

Synergie Francophone provides Bibles, Christian books, and
Sunday school materials in French for children and their
teachers around the world who cannot afford them.

Synergie Francophone, P.O. Box 629, Wheaton, IL 60187 | 630-221-1980



Imagine your favorite fruit. Maybe it's a crisp apple or a sweet strawberry or a juicy peach. Plants that give lots of fruit are called "fruitful." Full of fruit. The Bible talks often about fruitfulness. God's first command to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is to "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth." In the New Testament, Jesus mentions fruitfulness in his stories about the kingdom of God. One of the most famous is how the kingdom is like a tiny mustard seed that grows into a tree big enough for birds to make a home in. On the night before Jesus' death, He tells his disciples, "I chose you to go and produce lasting fruit." We celebrate all that God has done in and through Synergie Francophone—because He has been the one who has produced the fruit.

We rejoice with the angels in heaven for everyone who believes in Jesus today because of having the right materials in the hands of the right people. We rejoice in the biblical resources for seminary and Bible school students. We rejoice in Sunday school materials making the Good News available to children in a way they can understand and believe. We rejoice in books and Bibles that help leaders preach, train, and support new disciples to make even more disciples. We rejoice

in seeing the fruit of the Gospel in new lives given to Christ and becoming more like Him. We rejoice in the strong francophone (French-speaking) leaders whom we have the joy of supporting in their work of the Gospel.

Credit: Ray Sanford

As we look forward, God has given

SF new partners, new books, and new opportunities to see the Good News grow more than ever before. As we do everything in prayer, we know God will keep his promise that his Word, when put in the hands and the hearts of people, will never return to Him without producing fruit. Today there are more opportunities than ever across francophone Africa, Canada, Haiti, and other French-speaking countries around the world.

In this issue, you can read about a kid who was a missionary. You can learn the story of Abe and Mary Kroeker, the missionaries whom God chose to start SF. You can read about a boy who did not want to be a fish. As you read these stories, tell God "Thank you!" for what He has done. We hope these stories about how God is bringing fruit through SF will encourage you and inspire you to tell others about Jesus.

Ray Sanford, President of the Board

THE STORY OF A 15-YEAR-OLD MISSIONARY

By: Jordan Lockwood



My grandparents, parents, and brothers, 2006.
Credit: Lynn Lockwood

When I was growing up, Synergie Francophone (or BLF, as it was called then) was always a part of my day-to-day life. My family would talk about the ministry at dinner or in our prayers before the meal. On our fridge, there were magnets with pictures of people who worked with BLF, and whenever I would grab a glass of orange juice, I'd see the Kapitaniuks, the Brandles, the Kroekers, and the Phillips. When you see people's faces every day, it's easy to think of them as friends!

It's even easier when you actually get the chance to visit them on a BLF Impressions team. Impressions teams were groups of Christ-followers who traveled to France for short trips to help print and send books. I don't know many kids who would say no to a trip to France, seeing the Eiffel Tower, walking along

historic streets, and tasting amazing food. Even just the chance to take a trip on a plane was exciting for me, but the most exciting part was the chance to see, and work in, the print shop.

At the time, BLF was the main source of printed Christian books in the French language, both in Europe and Africa. For a kid who spent every possible moment either reading, talking about books, or at the library to pick up more books, standing in an active print shop was a dream come true. We saw each step of the process, from printing and cutting the pages, to binding and shrink-wrapping bundles of books.

The visit didn't end with just a tour, though! The staff put my brothers and me to work at one of the tables in the print shop pressing stickers on the covers of the new Manga Bibles before they were packaged. I may have been guilty of sneaking a peek

at a few pages while we worked, and I was excited to take a copy home when we went back to the US.

Beyond working at the print shop, we also had the chance to fellowship with the missionaries who hosted us, as well as with the family who joined us on the Impressions trip. Some days we explored and saw the sights, on others we focused on learning about BLF's ministry. We learned about how few Christians there were in France and about how essential the materials BLF produced were to missionaries and churches throughout the French-speaking world.

At the end of each day, whether spent in the print shop or distributing tracts, we would come back to share a meal together and pray for the ministry we were learning more about each day. When I went home after the trip, I had a new perspective on what ministry in the French-speaking world looks like and a new appreciation for how important BLF (now SF)'s role in that ministry is. I also, of course, brought home a Manga Bible. I can see it on my bookshelf now.



A picture of me today.
Credit: Lynn Lockwood



My brother and I working in the BLF print shop, 2013.
Credit: Lynn Lockwood

FROM ZERO TO TWELVE THOUSAND

THE STORY OF CHRISTIAN BOOKS IN FRENCH

Adapted by Angela Brandle from Elise Teegne's article "An Impossible Dream Fulfilled: Highlights from the SF Story"

ABE'S VISION

Our story begins with Abe and Mary Kroeker, a young missionary couple from Dallas, Oregon, who arrived in the Congo, Africa, in 1933. They stayed for twenty years, telling the Congolese people the Good News of God's love and forgiveness. When

Mary became ill, they returned to America to seek medical help. Abe longed to have books to leave behind for people to read about God's truth and learn how to be his disciples.



A thousand Bibles arrived in Matende with the Kroeker sons, 1948. Exposition of tracts and Sunday school material printed by ELB. Credit: Clement and Charlotte Kroeker

NO BOOKS TO SEND

In 1953, Abe and Mary went to France, hoping to find Christian books in French to buy and send to the Congo and other African countries where people speak French. Sadly, nothing was available even for the French people in France. What could they do? If they wanted good Christian leaflets and books, they would have to make them themselves.

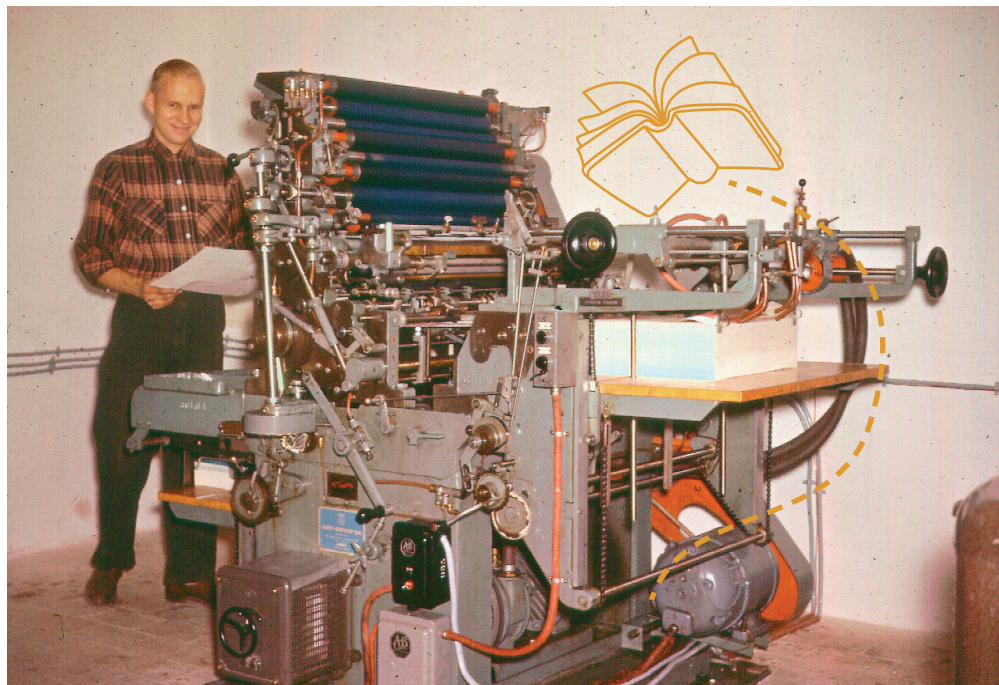
"WE MUST MAKE THE BOOKS OURSELVES!"

Abe and Mary asked some young people from their Bible study group to translate a leaflet called "The Loveliness of Christ" into French. Two Christian brothers in Belgium printed the leaflet in their printshop. The printing of millions of leaflets, books,

and Sunday school materials for French-speakers all over the world had begun!

Abe and Mary's son Clement, known to his friends as Bud, dreamed of starting a publishing and printing plant that would provide New Testaments, leaflets, and books to all the French-speaking countries in the world, especially in Africa. (French is spoken in thirty countries on the African continent!) After

moving to Belgium with their families, Abe and Bud formed a committee with three of their friends that became an official organization in 1959 called Éditeurs de Littérature Biblique (Publishers of Biblical Literature) or ELB for short. One Christian gave \$5,500, a hefty sum of money in those days. It was exactly the amount needed to buy a printing press.



Clement Kroeker with the first offset printing press, 1959.

Credit: Clement and Charlotte Kroeker

MOVING INTO A CASTLE

The Kroekers set out to find a building big enough to house the printing press. They found an old castle to rent in a suburb north of Brussels. They worked hard to clean it up and clear the overgrown garden. The castle was big enough to divide into two apartments, one for Abe and Mary and the other for Bud and Charlotte and their future children. There were rooms for guests too. They had to enlarge a window to put the massive printing machinery in the basement. When everything was ready, the first delivery of paper arrived. They loaded the paper into the printer, the rollers started turning, and out came the printed pages at the other end. Abe and Bud's dream was starting to come true.



1959-1973 Home of the first printer.

Credit: Clement and Charlotte Kroeker

ROLLING LIKE A SNOWBALL

Like a snowball rolling downhill, the printing of books was picking up speed. To meet the growing demand for books, they purchased a two-color printing press. But there was a problem. It was too big to fit into the castle. They would have to find land and build a printing plant.

GOD DOES MIRACLES

After weeks of searching, the Kroekers found a property in the picturesque Belgian countryside. They knew they would need a miracle to move there because land was extremely expensive. They prayed as they drove to meet the owner of the land. The owner agreed to sell his property at a special price because his circumstances had changed, and he needed to sell his land. When he learned that the Kroekers planned to print Bibles, he lowered the price even more! God had answered their prayer immediately!

After they spent many years translating, printing, and sending books around the world, God called Abe and Mary Kroeker to heaven.



Countryside around Braine-l'Alleud, 1971. Abe and Mary Kroeker in their Braine-le-Château home, 1988. Credit: Clement and Charlotte Kroeker



Congolese children with SF's Sunday school curriculum, 2019. Credit: Synergie Francophone

BOOKS FOR 80 COUNTRIES WEAR OUT THE PRINTING PRESS

Before long, ELB was sending books to nearly 80 countries. The hard-working printing press was getting old. The Slavic Gospel Association (SGA), based over the border in France, had bigger and newer printing machinery. The SGA had started out printing books for Eastern Europe but was printing more and more in French. ELB decided to join it and moved to Marpent, France. Together, SGA and ELB became Bibles and Literature in French (BLF) and operated out of a former bus depot that had room for the machinery and a warehouse for the books.

GOD IS FULFILLING ABE'S VISION

A dream was fulfilled in 2021 when BLF became a completely independent publishing house. To avoid confusion, BLF USA changed its name to Synergie Francophone (SF). "Synergie," means "working together." "Francophone" means "French-speaking." SF continues to fulfill Abe's original vision of providing Bibles, books, and printed materials such as its popular Sunday school curriculum in French, which was specially adapted for African cultures. SF has distributed thousands of sets of Sunday school manuals in many African countries and in Haiti, as well as thousands of books.

SF is growing as God continues to use us to buy and ship books to the world's more than 320 million French-speakers. New, young staff have joined us. We work together with Christian leaders in African countries who share the Gospel in their communities or elsewhere as missionaries. We provide books and Bibles for them and for people who believe in Jesus through their words. We encourage teachers of disciples and trainers of pastors to lead his churches by providing materials for their students. We raise funds for a printing plant in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We

buy French Bibles for people who don't have one. We have opportunities to send teams to France, Quebec, and French-speaking African countries to help with printing and making books, and to serve alongside our partners in their work for God. Younger people are joining our team to pray and to share their money so that we can buy more Bibles and books to send.



Members of the France Impressions Team, 2024.

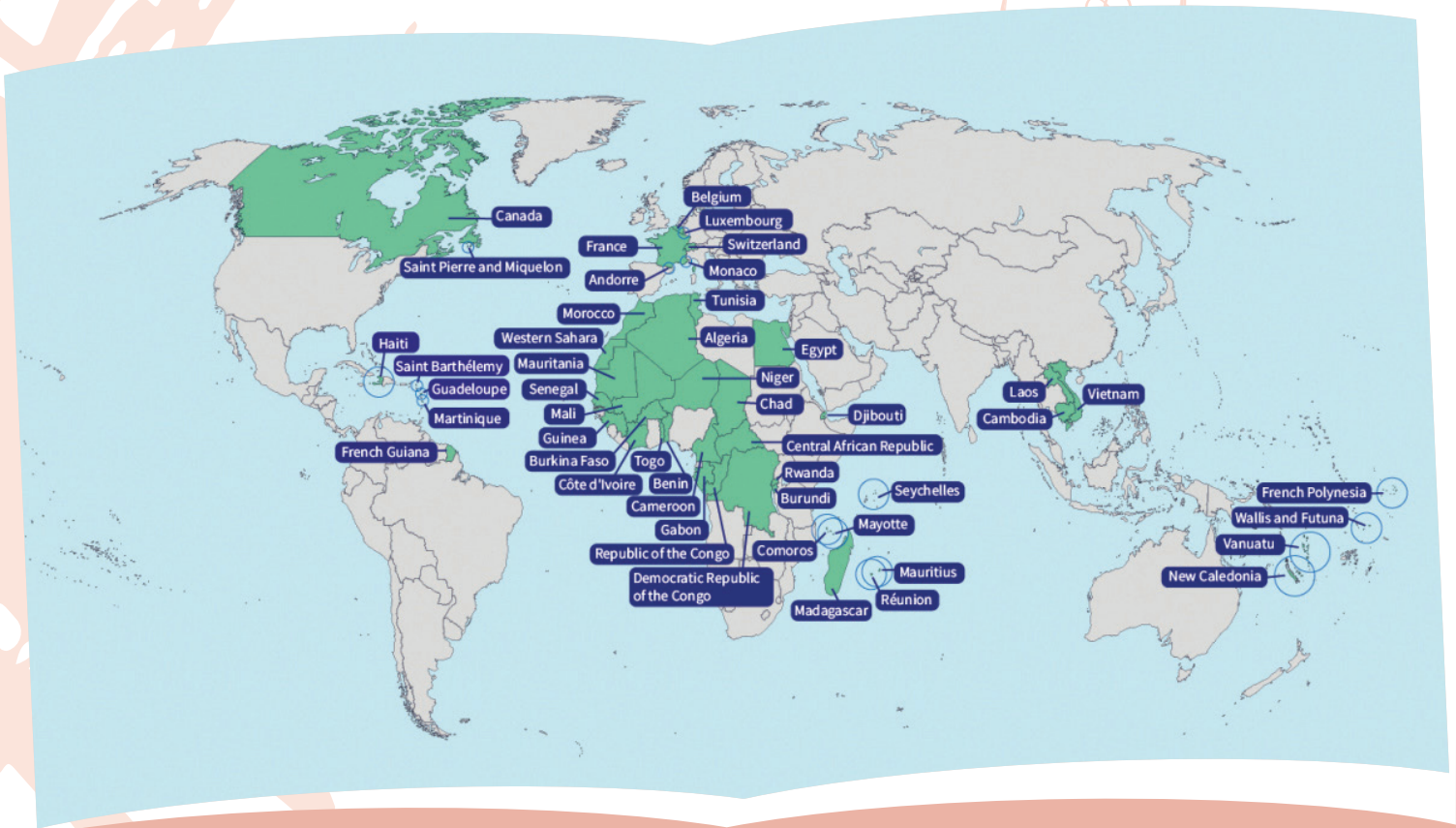
Credit: Joy Axelson

FROM ZERO TO TWELVE THOUSAND

Members of a France Impressions Team just visited the warehouse of the CLC bookseller, which has a chain of Christian bookshops in some French-speaking countries. It has 12,000 different Christian books in French in its warehouse in Montélimar, France. In 70 years, God has fulfilled Abe's vision. From no good Christian books in French, there are now 12,000 titles available. Many of these books have been translated from English, but more are being written in French by Christians in Europe, Africa, Canada, Haiti, and

other French-speaking places.

But millions of French-speakers still don't have a single sentence of God's Word or a book to explain it, so SF's work is far from finished. We want every one of them to read about Jesus and accept God's love and forgiveness! God says, "I send [my word] out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it" (Isaiah 55:11 New Living Translation). Will you help God and us to get his word out?



Map of French-speaking countries

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you want to join in this work, consider sending \$10 to buy a first Bible in French for a young person. Or ask your parents if your family would consider joining a team going to France or Quebec. Or commit to pray

for the French-speaking countries of the world. If you write and tell us you are doing that, we will send you a tote bag and a map of the French-speaking countries.

I WANT TO BE A MAN, NOT A FISH

Adapted by Mary Ann Miller from Dr. Roger Ibengi Dobe's article "I Will Not Become a Fish"

When I was a child, my teachers taught us that if we were baptized by going completely under the water we'd turn into fish when we died! What?? How could a person turn into a fish? I certainly didn't want that to happen to me! And I certainly wasn't interested in churches that did that kind of baptism.

After I grew up, I taught math at a high school. One day, I overheard one of the students reading out loud a Christian booklet entitled "The Movie of your Life." I was angry because he wasn't listening to what I was teaching. I took the booklet out of his hands and put it in my bag.

When I got home from school every day, I used to take a nap. But that day I took the booklet out of my bag and began to read it. Each word and thought weighed heavily on my mind. I began to realize that I was guilty before God, because I felt as if the author was describing my life.

The booklet described a man who was living his life without God. He went to church, but only for entertainment and to be noticed by others. When he went to church, he didn't want the preacher to preach too long because he thought it was a waste of time. He didn't realize it, but he was living in sin and hypocrisy (pretending to be a Christian). He had heard about Jesus many times but had closed his heart to Him. He mocked the evangelists who came to his town to preach the Good News, and he chased them away if they came near his house.

When this man died, he found himself before God to be judged. Suddenly, his life appeared in a movie. Everything he had done was shown before his eyes and before the angels and those who had died before him. He saw

himself drunk, lying, stealing, swearing and realized he wasn't worthy of living in heaven. Then he went to hell for eternity.

Then the booklet described the life of another man who had lived in sin. But when he heard that Jesus had died to take the punishment for his sin, he prayed and accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. He had received forgiveness for his sins and his life had become new. He was now going to church to hear stories about Jesus. He told his friends about Jesus and talked to Jesus and served Jesus. When he died and stood before God to be judged, Jesus welcomed him into heaven for eternity.

These two pictures presented me with a choice: hell or heaven. The verse that brought tears to my eyes was Ecclesiastes 12:18, "For God will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or evil." At that moment I recognized I was guilty and deserved to go to hell. I began to weep bitterly, and I understood that Jesus had died for the forgiveness of my sins.

At the end of this booklet, the author invited me to ask God to forgive me of my sins and to entrust my life to Jesus. After praying this, I felt an unexplainable peace come over me. I understood that I had become a Christian, one who follows Jesus.

From then on, my life and my feelings began to change. I now wanted to hear God's Word. I needed to find a church where I would learn to understand the Bible, so I joined a Bible study group where I could grow in my new faith with my new Christian friends. I praise and thank God that I am a Christ-follower and that when I die, I know that Jesus will welcome me to live with Him for eternity.



Prof. Roger Ibengi with graduating students at New Life University, Kinshasa. Credit: Roger Ibengi Dobe



THE BIBLE DELIVERY CHALLENGE!

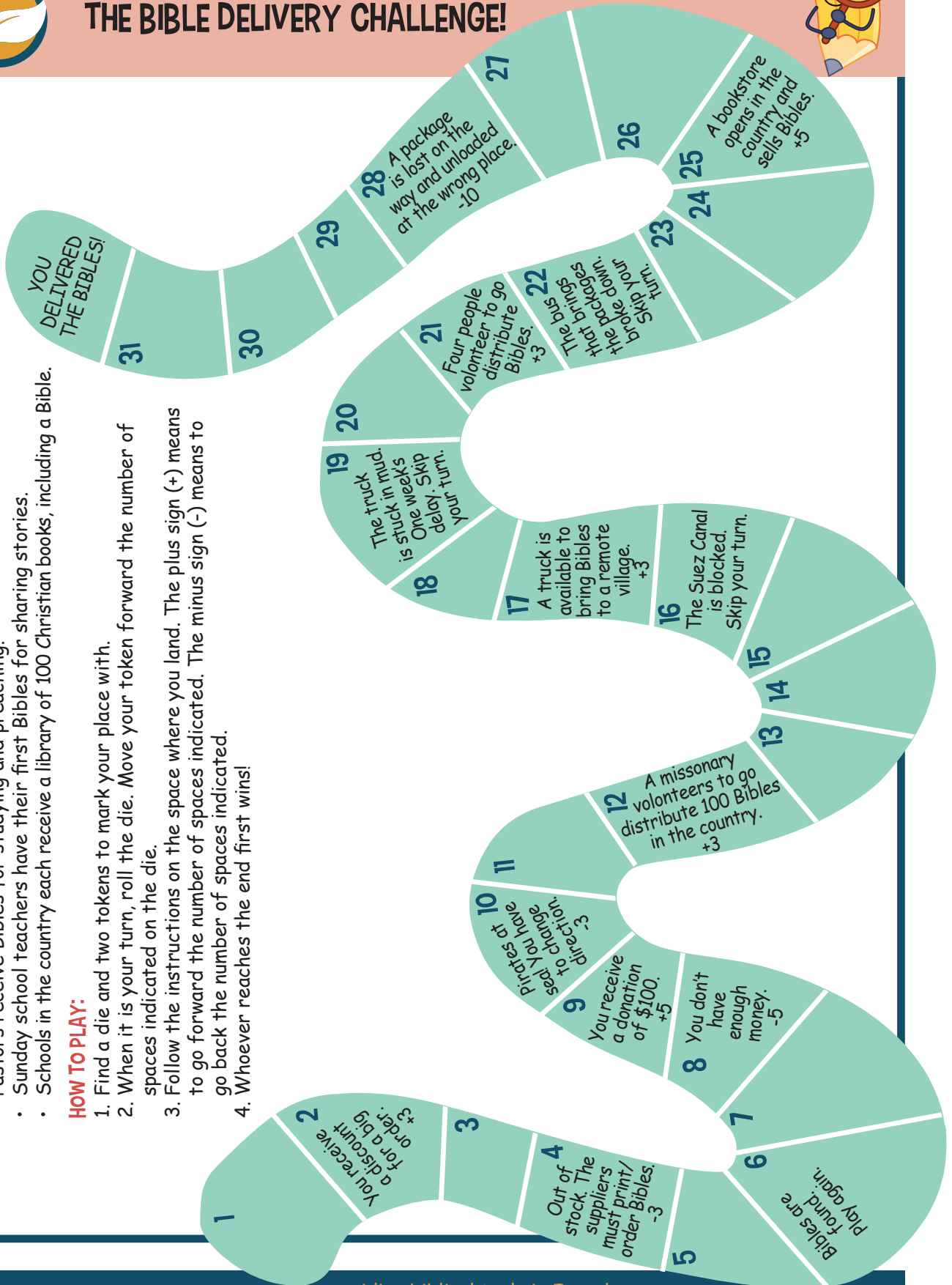


THANKS TO YOU:

- Pastors receive Bibles for studying and preaching.
- Sunday school teachers have their first Bibles for sharing stories.
- Schools in the country each receive a library of 100 Christian books, including a Bible.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Find a die and two tokens to mark your place with.
2. When it is your turn, roll the die. Move your token forward the number of spaces indicated on the die.
3. Follow the instructions on the space where you land. The plus sign (+) means to go forward the number of spaces indicated. The minus sign (-) means to go back the number of spaces indicated.
4. Whoever reaches the end first wins!





PUBLISHING SCRAMBLE

There's lots of work to do before publishing a book. It's up to you to number the steps in order from one to eight.



Creating the Cover

The editor generally decides what to include on the cover to represent the story or subject of the book. It will include the title, subtitle, author's name, a summary, etc. The cover needs to be well thought-out to intrigue readers and make them want to read the book. A graphic designer designs the cover.



Folding

The book's pages are folded and put together. They start to look like a real book!



Writing

The author does research, gathers information, makes an outline, creates characters, and writes the book.



Printing

Printing is an essential step in making a paper book. The printing machine prints on large sheets of paper that are then cut to the book's final size.



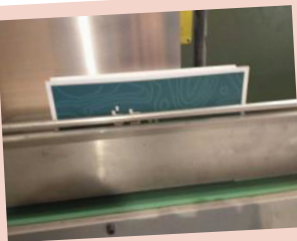
Editing and Revising

Most often, a book is edited and corrected by an editor at a publishing house. The editor supervises, revises, and corrects the book.



Gluing the Cover

The cover is glued to the pages of the book.

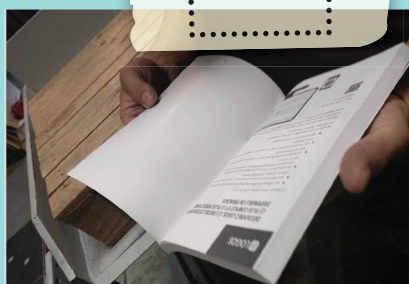


Interior Page Layout

The layout of the book improves its appearance, makes reading easier, and gives the book a professional look.



Finished Book



Answers:
1- Writing
2- Editing and Revising
3- Creating the Cover
4- Interior Page Layout
5- Printing
6- Folding
7- Gluing the Cover
8- Finished Book.