

Unit 3

- What can you do before you get there?
- Integrating TPR and Photobook

Cast:

- Missionary Li Wei
- Chinese House group

Scene 3.1. Missionary Li Wei with his Chinese House Group

Missionary Li Wei: Hello again! The last couple of times we met I told you how I got interested in people from Islamistan. As I got to know a few people from there I started praying for them. We also introduced a few dishes from their cuisine into our restaurant, which brought in more of them. I then tried to learn some their language, using Baby Bao as my example of a good language learner!

As I began to learn the rudiments of their language, my interest in their country began to grow. I started to collect newspaper and magazine articles about Islamistan. I'd cut them out, put them in a file (*shows file with stuff on Muslim world in it*), and then used them as conversation starters with my new friends. Sometimes it was very interesting to see how they reacted to certain articles! Sometimes they all agreed, sometimes they disagreed with an article. Sometimes they would disagree among themselves about the article, and they'd have a big argument about it.

Although normally I could never understand them when they talked among themselves, I could make out the gist of what they were saying when they argued about an article I'd showed them, since I knew what the article was about! When I couldn't understand a thing of what they were saying, I felt I wasn't learning any language at all. When I could make out the gist of what they were saying, however, it seemed as if my brain began to create meaning for new words. I learned that I would learn much faster if I could understand a good bit of what was said. That gave me a context to give meaning to the bits I couldn't understand.

As I learned more and more about Islamistan, its people and their spiritual needs, my burden for them began to grow. I started praying more intentionally for them. I also began telling the house church of which my family is a part about our new friends. The people in our house church started praying for the salvation of my friends as well...

Camera pans to house group praying for people in Islamistan

Fade and Cut

Scene 3.2. Missionary Li Wei alone in church. Cross in background...

Missionary Li Wei: One day the senior elder came up to me and said, “Li Wei, we see that the Lord has given you a burden for people from Islamistan. We’ve noticed your fervency in praying for them, your desire to share the gospel of God’s grace in Jesus Christ with them, and even to want to learn their language. Li Wei, we want you to pray about going as a missionary to Islamistan!”

I didn’t know what to say; I was speechless. Something deep within me said, “Yes! That is the direction God is leading me”. But the thought of leaving my parents, as well as the security of my friends and home church saddened me.

I bowed my head and said, “I am humbled, Uncle Wu, that you think of me. May the Lord’s will be done...”

When I told my family, mother wept. I could tell that father found the idea of my going to Islamistan difficult too. Yet I knew that deep in their hearts they were pleased that the Lord might be honoring me in this way. “Son,” my father said, “If the Lord is leading you to Islamistan, then you must start preparing for that eventuality now, right away.”

I asked father what he thought I should do. “I’ve seen you working with Mr. Mahmut and Mr. Ahmet,” he said. “In fact, Mr. Ahmet is becoming an important person in your life. He is not only helping you with the language, but he is a doorway into the culture of Islamistan. You, we, our cell church, all of use must start praying that the Lord will give you a language helper like Mr. Ahmet who will become your doorway into the language and culture of Islamistan when you get there. We must pray very hard about this! In the meantime, you must continue your lessons here with Mr. Ahmet.

Cut

Scene 3.3. Teacher Zhang Dong in front of class

Teacher Zhang Dong: Missionary Li Wei’s father gave him some very good advice. One of the most important things you can do before you go overseas is to start praying for a good language helper. You will probably spend more time with that person than with any other during your first couple of years in Islamistan. Your language helper becomes your gateway into the culture. You see, friendships among Muslim people are very close. That means that good friends spend lots of time with each other.

Your language helper will become much more than a means through which you learn the language. As you spend lots of time together, as you learn more and more about each other, your language helper may introduce you to his or her family. Since they are almost always members of large clans, you may meet lots of your language helper’s family.

So, it is very important to begin praying even now a good language helper. You want someone you “click” with and who will, as a result, take you into their world. You also want to pray that they come from a decent, respectable family, so that your standing in the community is not undermined from the start because you are associating with people of poor repute!

Can you think of anything else you can do before you leave for the mission field?

Student #1: Try to do what Missionary Li Wei did, and start learning some of the language.

Teacher Zhang Dong: Good. Can you think of ways to do that?

Student #1: Might it be possible to take a language course at a local college? If that is too difficult or expensive, maybe you can find information about the language on the internet or get some CDs of the language.

Teacher Zhang Dong: Yes, there are many resources on the internet, particularly if you know some English. An excellent program for which you don’t need to know English is called “Rosetta Stone”. It works a bit like the picture book that we talked about the other day. Can you think of other practical things you can do now?

Student #2: Put your picture book together.

Teacher Zhang Dong: Yes, you can start that right away. Include pictures of your house here, your job, our town of Xian, your church, special friends, and personal things like that. Then when you get to Islamistan you can make it a project to learn how to describe each picture. Also, that way your Language Helper will get to know you a bit better, which is the goal of friendships, isn’t it?

Student #3: I have an idea that may not help you with the language right away, but it might help you learn the culture. You might start reading books about the country, even translated novels by famous writers of Islamistan.

Teacher Zhang Dong: Indeed! That is a truly excellent suggestion. Reading famous novels by writers from another country is a very helpful way of starting to understand that country and its cultures. Here are some famous writers whose books have been translated into Chinese (*Check which of these books have been translated into Chinese!*). Gengiz Aytmatov. He is a Turkic writer from Kirkizstan. Yashar Kemal is one of Turkey’s most famous writers. Get his book, “Mehmet my Hawk”—it’s a great read. Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel price for literature. His book “Snow” gives great insight into Turkey. The Arab writer Najib Mahfouz also won the Nobel prize. Read anything he has written.

Developing a taste for the literature for Islamistan is very important. It “humanizes” people we tend to fear because they are different. Remember, we are to love the people

God is sending us to. At a very basic level that means you need to develop an understanding and appreciation for their culture and ways of doing things.

Can you think of some other things you can start doing now?

Student #4: We could try to learn maybe 20 or so basic phrases or sentences of survival language, so that when we arrive we can ask for directions, say “please” and “thank you” ask “what do you call this in your language”, “where is the public washroom”, and things like that.

Teacher Zhang Dong: Yes, very good. You can also take a map of China with you. You can soon use it with your language helper after you arrive to pinpoint where you lived or grew up. Also, make sure you take some family pictures. You can use those to learn the names of different family members: cousins, uncles, aunts, brother, sister, etc. Many Middle Eastern languages are very detailed with respect to using separate words for various relatives, because that determines who has to obey and serve whom.

Lastly, if there is a language school in the community the Lord is leading you to, then plan to get to there sufficiently early to give you enough time to settle, get acquainted with the community and get started on some personal language projects before language school starts.

Fade and Cut

Scene 3.4. Missionary Li Wei working with Mr. Ahmet on picture book

Title on screen: “Pronouns and Possessive Pronouns”

Missionary Li Wei: One of the earliest things I needed to learn were pronouns, words like “I”, “you”, “she”, “we”, “they”, “them”, etc. Do you see these cards? This face means “I”, the three faces means “we”, this stick figure means “he”, the stick figure with a skirt means “she”, these stick figures mean “they”. I want you to teach me using the look and listen technique until I know the pronouns. For “you” I will to point at you.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: Now lets put the picture of the pronoun beside an object. That enables me to learn sentences in which the possessor is a pronoun. For instance, if I put the picture of a face on the book, say “my book”. With the stick figure on the pen you say “his pen”, etc.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: Now give me some short sentences using Total Physical Response. In other words, tell me to “Take his book”, “put the blue pen beside her”, etc.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: Now ask me some questions about the photographs using possessive pronouns, like “Where is his football?”, “Where are their toys?” and I’ll try to point to the right place.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Cut

Scene 3.5. *Title on Screen: “Indirect objects, possession, association”*

Missionary Li Wei: That was great. Now let’s see... Nouns and pronouns are not just the subjects and objects in sentences. They can be indirect objects, as in “Give the blue pen *to him*, and give *me* the book”. They can be beneficiaries, as in “Pour a cup of *for me*” or indicate location, as in “Place the book *in front of Fred*, and place the red pen *behind yourself*”. They can also be possessors, as in “Get *my book* and put it *beside that girl’s binder*”, instruments, as in “Dry the plate *with the towel*” or associates, as in “Sing a song *with your friend*”).

Lets use the picture book again. Let’s start by having you make statements involving locations. Many people and objects in the pictures are in front of, behind, beside, near, and far from, other objects in the pictures. Please include statements which indicate the location of the object or person, as in “This woman is in front of this car”, as well as statements regarding where things are happening, as in “This man is working in front of this tree”. If you make a statement like that in English I’ll try to point at the right picture.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Cut

Scene 3.6. *Title on Screen: “Adverbs”*

Missionary Li Wei: This time I want you to give me Total Physical Response commands, but add an adverb, a word that describes the activity. For instance, you can tell me to “Stand up slowly”, “Sit down quickly”; “Turn the page carefully”, etc. Use words like “sadly”, “happily”, “repeatedly”, “carefully”, “carelessly”, “accidentally”, “purposefully”, because I can easily act them out!

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Cut

Scene 3.7. *Title on Screen: “The Past and Future Tenses”*

Missionary Li Wei: Can you start sentences with the phrase “When this picture was taken...” and then point to a picture in the book and complete it? For instance, you can say, “When this picture was taken the boy was riding his bicycle.” With 100 pictures I can learn the past tense of that many verbs!

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: Maybe you can vary the sentence frame a bit by saying, “On the day when this picture was taken—” or “During the week when this picture was taken—”. That helps me to discover whether the verbs change forms or not.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: That was great. Now, I need to learn how people make commitments and predictions, as in “We’ll visit you tomorrow” (that is a commitment) or as in “My uncle is coming tomorrow” (that is a prediction.).

Could you describe the pictures in a present time form (“This man is sitting”), then have him/her say what that person will do after that: “This man is sitting. Soon he will stand up”. Let’s keep the sentences simple. Just use simple verbs, like “walking”, “stopping”, “sitting”, “standing”, and “eating”, as in “This girl is washing. Soon she will walk”. If I don’t understand the verb you are using, you can act it out.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Cut

Scene 3.8. *Title on Screen: “General Statements”*

Missionary Li Wei: Some statements do not concern situations or events that are happening at the moment, or have happened in the past, or that are supposed to yet happen. Rather, they deal with what characteristically happens, as in “I shop at Wungles” and “Dogs eat meat”. In the case of “I shop at Wungles” we have a statement of a general fact about a single individual (me). In the case of “Dogs eat meat” we see a general fact about dogs in general. We can also make general statements about things that happened characteristically at some time in the past, as in “I used to shop at Wungles”.

Look, here is a collection of objects, each of which is bought at a different type of shop. Would you make general statements about this object, such as “People buy it at a book shop”, “People buy it at a supermarket”, “People buy it at a tool shop”. I will respond by picking up the object you described.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: Now can you make statements about what you typically do with particular objects? Let's use the picture book. Please make general statements applicable to some element in a picture. For instance, if a woman is cooking, say "Every day she cooks meals for her family". I will respond by pointing to the picture you are referring to. Please use sentence frames such as "Every day—" or "From time to time—".

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: Now please use sentence frames which require a characteristic statement about the past, as in "When this man was young...", "When this girl was a child..." to help me get the past perfect tense.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Cut

Scene 3.9. *Title on Screen: "Time"*

Missionary Li Wei: I need to learn time words as well. By time words I mean words like today, this morning, tonight, tomorrow, names for days of the week, months, seasons, telling time, etc.

See, I have made a paper clock with moveable hands. Can you tell me to do various actions at specific times? For instance, you can tell me to "Go to sleep at 11:00 o'clock" and then gradually move the hands to 11:00, at which point I will mime going to sleep. You can then ask me, "What did you do at 11:00?" and I will have to respond by going to sleep.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: See, I also brought a calendar, so I can learn the different days of the week. Please make up a sentence like "Buy a banana on Tuesday," and then begin pointing one by one at a sequence of days on the calendar until you arrive at Tuesday. When you arrive at Tuesday I respond by picking up a banana. If different foods are used at different times of the day, you can say something like "We eat it in the morning," etc.

Missionary Li Wei and Mr. Ahmet act out the activity

Missionary Li Wei: Thank you very much, Mr. Ahmet! That was a great lesson! I have learned a lot!

Fade and Cut

Scene 3.10. Things learned in this lesson

Scroll by on screen. Voiceover: Teacher Zhang Dong

- Before you do anything else, start praying for a good language helper. You will probably spend more time with that person than with any other during your first couple of years in Islamistan. Your language helper becomes your gateway into the culture.
- You will learn much faster if you can understand something of what is said around you. Comprehensible input is key!
- Reading famous novels by writers from another country is a very helpful way of starting to understand that country and its cultures.
- Learn maybe 20 or so basic phrases or sentences of survival language as soon as possible, so that when you arrive you can ask for directions, say “please” and “thank you” ask “what do you call this in your language”, “where is the public washroom”, and things like that.
- Make sure you take some family pictures. You can use those to learn the names of different family members: cousins, uncles, aunts, brother, sister, etc. as well as communicate to your new friends that family is important to you, just as it is to them!
- You can learn lots of language by combining a picture book with Total Physical Response.