

## Storying in Senegal

by Mark & Leigh Tanquist  
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Do you remember hearing the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* for the first time? Or *Goldilocks* and *The Three Bears*? Perhaps you had these stories read to you or told to you when you were a small child. You may have listened to the account of David and Goliath and rooted for the small boy with the few stones and a slingshot taking on the giant warrior with the long spear and menacing sword. Or you may remember the narrative of Daniel in the den of lions and shuddered to think how you would feel in a similar circumstance. Chances are grown-ups shared these stories with you long before you learned to read for yourself.



Many missionaries work in towns and villages where the majority of people have never learned to read. The wisdom of the people is handed down in oral stories, proverbs, and lists that people learn from memory. The average person does not learn things from newspapers, books, or the internet. The treasures of the culture are preserved by the works of musicians and storytellers. Missionaries translate the Bible and other literature into the language of the local people, but even then many cannot read these things for themselves. How are they to hear about Jesus Christ and God's wonderful plan of salvation? The work of missionaries as storytellers in these cultures is vitally important.

There are four and a half million Wolof people in Senegal, almost half of the population of the country, making them the largest people group in a country that is predominantly Muslim. Among these Wolof people there are fewer than 100 individuals around the country who are believers in Jesus Christ. SIM missionaries are committed to see that number increase as the Holy Spirit guides their work in Senegal.

### Chronological Bible Storying

The main activity our missionaries are involved in that helps spread the news about Jesus Christ is called Chronological Bible Storying. Storying uses a series of 52 stories from the Bible that take listeners from the account of Creation, through the Old Testament prophets, to the work of Jesus and his death and resurrection. Storying groups meet once a week for a whole year as they learn these stories from the Bible. Storying builds bridges with people, such as Muslims, who already know and believe some of the stories in the Bible. Relationships are built as eternal truths are shared that focus not on disagreement, but on the simple Word of God, from beginning to end.

Storying groups are usually started when people hear about the stories through friends and invite us to their villages to begin one with them. Since 2003, our team in Senegal has led storying groups in more than a dozen towns and villages. Sometimes these groups include men and women. At other times there are separate groups for men and women. In other places a children's group has been started as well.

By working with the people through the storying groups we are able to learn about the needs of the people and how we can appropriately respond to them. This has led to such projects as a primary health care clinic in one village, relief after a devastating fire in another village, a new well with running water in another, and numerous short-term medical mission programmes.

The Holy Spirit has been working in exciting ways over the past few years through the teaching of these Bible stories, and our team has seen a small group of believers form in the Kaffrine area of Senegal. The men and women in this community meet on Sundays for teaching and fellowship, and they have become a real community of brothers and sisters to each other and to our missionary team.

Our SIM colleagues have been involved in different discipleship activities with these believers and are thrilled to see how they are growing spiritually and living as witnesses for Christ in their own villages. Many of them face daily persecution in their own homes. Pray for the Lord to continue to build them up and strengthen their faith and testimony that His church might grow strong in the Kaffrine area!

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### Urgent Prayer Need

Bingham Academy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, urgently needs a [French teacher](#) to join their staff team in August. Pray that God will provide the right person to meet this need.