

Guide for the Recording Project Coordinator

About Glyssen

Glyssen was developed to help provide a language community the essential tools and documentation needed to record one or more books of the Bible. It was developed to give both the recordist and the language team a reasonable starting point in preparation for the recording event.

For the language team, Glyssen will assist in preparation of the translated Scripture text for use as an audio script.

For the recording project coordinator (RPC), Glyssen provides tools for script formatting and voice actor cast management.

For the recordist, Glyssen is designed to manage the clip system required for multi-voice recording including labeling, sortable checklists, voice actor release status. It also provides tools for revision of texts and recorded clips.

- A summary sheet for the audio recording project information
- A chart listing time requirements for the overall project and the individual roles
- A note to the recordist and the language team concerning the use of non readers
- A chart for participant contact information
- A talent release form
- Check off charts for recorded clips - for each part
- A check off chart for instructional clips
- A chart for a post-recording “listening session”
- A list of post-production elements to be discussed
- Placement recommendations for assembly of recorded clips

This guide has been developed to provide background information and explanations which are too lengthy to be a part of the user interface.

Help us improve Glyssen: SIL (VM Productions, Language Software Development) and Faith Comes By Hearing want to thank you for choosing to use Glyssen, we hope it serves you well. It is our desire that Glyssen and the supporting documents be as helpful as possible. We welcome user feedback. If you have an idea, suggestion, difficulty with the software or this guide please feel free to send us any email at vms_project_coord_jaars@sil.org.

If you have any other recording questions or you would like technical assistance with your project please contact us at the coordinates below.

1.1 Planning who will be Voice Actors

Clear communication and acceptance of the message are the goals of any audio recording. As you are considering potential individuals to use as voice actors it is important to consider the following criteria.

- The character of the voice actor, Christian maturity, age, and standing in the community may have an effect on the audience. For example, it may be important to include some village elders as voice actors to acknowledge the prestige traditionally assigned to them. This can add credibility to the recording as listeners respond positively to messages spoken by their leaders. This can be an effective use of the cameo role function (see below).
- Voice quality and speech clarity will affect clear communication. A raspy voice or unclear pronunciation can obscure the message.
- Voice actors should be able to speak naturally and with appropriate expression. Is the actor teachable and willing to accept dramatic coaching?
- Narrator and major characters, such as Jesus, are the most important. Begin the selection process by considering who will fill them. Choose wisely and carefully.

1.2 Assigning Voice Actors to Characters

The more actors involved in a recording, the more difficult the logistics for the RPC and the higher the cost for the project sponsor. Glyssen is designed to help you produce a quality recording using a minimum number of actors, while still giving the impression that each character voice is unique. This is done by creating groupings of Biblical characters which may be “acted” by the same voice without the listener noticing.

A ‘cameo’ is a special role where an actor is included due to the level of community engagement their participation may produce. Normally a cameo actor is assigned a single minor character. Glyssen allows you to easily identify a cameo actor and make their assignment.

1.3 Voicing & Narration Considerations

There are various options when considering how many voices will be used to create an audio recording. It is best to think through the advantages and disadvantages of each when setting up a project in Glyssen.

- **Single voice** – One person tells the story in whatever style is appropriate for the target culture/audience. This person is called a narrator or storyteller. The narrator identifies individual characters within the story using words like, “Jesus said” or “Peter answered, saying.” In a situation where it might be unsafe for people to have their voice used in a Scripture video, it might be easier to find one person willing to take the risk. Using only narrators is the least expensive form of recording. See the section below for narration options.
- **Multi-voice** – A narrator tells the story and other voice actors play the parts of the individual characters. Multiple voice recordings tend to be more engaging for listeners. Having various voice actors portray different story characters dramatically gives the recording a realistic tone. Using a variety of people increases the likelihood of community ownership and acceptance. It often results in more effective distribution and use. It does place greater demands on the project coordinator, who must recruit and organize community members to be actors. Additional

time must be reserved in the schedule for welcoming, instructing and then thanking each actor when they participate. It is normal for project expenses to be significantly higher as you must factor in the cost of voice actors' salaries/gifts, travel, housing, and meals.

- **Single narration** – All text is spoken by one actor. A single voice narrator must be available for the entire estimated recording time.
- **Author Narration** – Each biblical author is portrayed by a unique voice actor. Listeners will be able to identify who the author of a book is by voice. This shares the narration workload amongst more than one actor which may be desirable in a project recording multiple books. This style requires that a sufficient number of actors are available with strong clear voices.
- **Narrator gender** – Is there a preference for one gender to fill the narrator role? If there is not, and you have a shortage of one gender, then you have the flexibility to assign an actor from the gender with surplus provided they have an appropriate voice.

1.4 Using Non Readers in Recording

Are you having trouble finding enough good readers? Do you have someone with a great voice who can't read? It is natural to assume that all voice actors must be able to read the script. But reading is not necessarily the best technique for a voice actor. When reading, a person must visually identify each word before speaking. This requires greater concentration which contributes to speech errors and fatigue, especially for less experienced readers. Reading also results in monotone speech which is less engaging to the listener. One way to overcome this deficiency is to memorize and practice the text until it's familiar. Not all of your cast members will have sufficient time to practice all of their lines.

Prompting offers an alternative. With prompting, one or two experienced readers recite lines for each voice actor to repeat. The recordist joins these lines together to produce each clip. This is called the Prompter Method (PM). Prompting is more natural for oral-based cultures where verbal communication is preferred. Using PM seems cumbersome at first, but after just a few clips, a rhythm develops between the prompter and voice actor. Reading seems like a faster method but you must consider that pronunciation errors and repetitions required to produce dramatic speech will take extra time. In reality, unless you have an abundance of good readers, reading offers no real time advantage. In summary, prompting offers the following advantages:

- Less stress and fatigue for the actor than reading
- More natural process for oral-preference individuals
- Selection of actors is based on voice, not reading skill
- Greater pool of potential actors
- Inclusion of key community leaders for promotion of the project
- More dramatic speech by actors

If you are interested in a demonstration of the Prompter Method, contact SIL International Media Services.