



International Bible Society

## *My First Bible to Caucasus Students*

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### **Life and Light to Abkhazian Children**

*“God has promised to send Savior,” said Salima with joy ...*

The Road of Life runs along the seashore, connecting the capital of Abkhazia with Russia. This road is a life-giving artery, enabling many people to survive, so it is no wonder that the local people gave it such apt name. Columns of cars, all kinds of wagons, as well as pedestrians move forward slowly to reach the Russian town of Adler. In Adler, people are able to purchase necessities to live. The road itself is lined bountifully with subtropical trees: palms, eucalyptuses and oleanders.

There is something symbolic in the name of road we are driving on. Driving on the **Road of Life** we bring the **Word of Life** to needy children. The elementary school we visit also has symbolism, as it is named Light. Earlier we had distributed *My First Bible* to the students and now we are eager to know how the books have been received.



As we passed through the town of Gagra, we noticed a banner: “**Give Peace to Caucasus**”. Actually it sounds like prayer to us. We can offer an answer to the prayer as we distribute the Word of God which can give true peace through Jesus Christ. “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7, NIV) Only God’s peace can fulfill the deepest needs of people’s souls.

In one of the classrooms we visited we asked the children: “Do any of you have a children’s Bible at home?” Not one student raised a hand. What could have happened to the *My First Bible* distributed by International Bible Society? Quickly we had an answer as all of the students opened their book bags and then raised their hands high, holding their copies of *My First Bible*.

Surprised, we asked, “Why do you carry the book with you?” They answered with one accord that the book is nice, interesting, and they like it. “Why do you like the book?”, we asked. “The stories written in the book are real stories, not fairy tales,” said one student. The children were so enthusiastic to share their experiences of reading, and finding their favorite story. We were amazed that these young students, who had not read the Bible because of being raised in nominally Muslim or Abkhaz pagan homes, now knew and enjoyed so many Bible stories.

Here are some of testimonies of the students:

Robert explained why he likes the story of Adam and Eve: “God is just and keeps what He has promised. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were unfaithful so he had to banish them

from the garden of Eden, but He also gave them hope for the future as well.” We could see he had read the book attentively. “Even now we can trust God. He carries out all that He has promised,” added Robert.

The great ship called Noah’s ark fascinated a boy named Saidu. “In spite having neither navigation equipment nor tiller, God himself steered the ark. There were very few people and so many animals in the ark. And what is more, the ark came to rest on our Caucasus Mountains.” Saidu enthusiastically shared his acceptance of the truth of the Bible with his knowledge of geography.



“I like The Tower of Babel Story,” said girl named Guranda. “When people did evil, God intervened and wanted to stop them. Unfortunately they didn’t reform.”

“Even though the Adam and Eve Story seemed to be sad and hopeless, finally it turned out well. God banished them, but dressed them with animal skin clothing to warm them up. Not only did He dress them, but He also promised to send Savior!” expressed Salima with joy.

The Word of God can bring light, life and salvation to both the young and old people of Abkhazia, who face numerous daily difficulties and challenges. As expressed by one of the teachers at the elementary school, “*My First Bible* brings into the children’s hearts a love of truth and fairness as well as love for their parents and God. Reading also develops attitudes of mercy, compassion, forgiveness and a desire for good.”

By providing *My First Bible* to these elementary students at the Light School in Abkhazia, International Bible Society brought the light of Jesus.

**“When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, ‘I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’” (John 8:12, NIV)**



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*Changing the hearts of today’s generation  
to change tomorrow’s world*