

## The Deaf of Brazil

### The Libras Brazilian Sign Language Community



Deaf people are scattered throughout Brazil, within every ethnicity and social stratus of the sociologically complex nation. Deaf schools pepper the country as well, but few of these work from a Christian base. When this project has been presented, secular and Christian schools have shown eager enthusiasm for having the Scripture materials to be used in their schools.

The Deaf population of Brazil uses LIBRAS (Lingua Brasileira de Sinais, or Brazilian Sign Language) as their first language. These people are a microcosm of the nation, coming from both indigenous Brazilians and from among the many major worldwide ethnicities that have immigrated into Brazil in the past 200 years.

Although their racial backgrounds differ, the Deaf in Brazil share more in common with one another than they do with the wider hearing population. Because there are more opportunities for education and employment for the Deaf in urban areas, many families with deaf children move from the countryside into cities.

Companies are legally required to maintain a certain percentage of physically challenged employees, but many businesses circumvent or ignore the laws. This practice limits the real opportunities available to the Deaf, and as a result, forces many into low-salaried positions creating a Deaf community majority with serious economic problems.

There are no accurate statistics about the number of Christians among the Deaf in Brazil. The populous as a whole embraces religion, which includes a majority who consider themselves Catholics, although many accept mystical, occult or traditional religious rituals alongside Christian professions.

**Primary Religion:**

Christianity

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**

Unknown

**Churches:**

Yes

**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**

24 Bible stories/Gospel of Mark

**Population (date):**

Potentially 1 million (2013)



## The Brazilian Sign Language of Brazil

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### Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?

This is the first sign language translation project in the world directed at reaching deaf children. This project will give churches and Christian schools material to evangelize and disciple deaf young people, and even help them improve their ability in LIBRAS. To introduce each new story, the team presents the new signs to be learned with accompanying drawings. This material could help other Latin American sign language projects since they could adapt the LIBRAS translation for their respective countries.

At the same time, this project will serve deaf adults with the translation of Mark. Many have requested a verse-by-verse translation. Mark gives a clear panorama of the story of Jesus.

Response to the Gospel

This project will provide materials for deaf children to help alleviate misunderstanding about who God is and how much He loves them. This will give the next generation of Deaf Brazilians a solid basis for confidence and self-esteem. Perhaps it will help bridge the gap of misunderstanding that has engulfed previous Deaf generations. Even more important, the Bible stories will introduce the children to the Savior and help them avoid debilitating lifestyle pitfalls, offering them abundant life in Christ instead.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

In addition, this project will provide a DVD translation of the Gospel of Mark in LIBRAS, primarily for deaf adults. The translator for that Gospel is in training as a Sign Language consultant in the broader context of Latin America.