You may remember from our last report that we were planning on starting a biweekly church Bible study using the Bible Project as a sort of baseline. Well, I am excited to report that we have just finished up our 6th class, with much more on the way! The response has been overwhelming. As you can see in the snapshots above, we don’t have room in our little office. Every time there are more and more people that end up sitting on the ground! Our little church here in Frydek-Mistek is around 30 years old and there has never been a class like this. With its 50 members about 30 of them are attending the lessons which is for us, nothing short of a miracle.

The most thrilling part of all of this has been the blessing of poring over that splendid, remarkable, perfect and beautiful book which is God’s word. As I see the affection that people have for the Bible and the eager response to these lessons, I also perceive the threat it poses to the enemy. It is for this reason that I plead with you to pray for us. Besides me, there are three other teachers for these lessons. Let me introduce them to you.

**Martin** – Poet, church elder and father of three. Martin runs a local ministry to city youth in an underground nuclear fallout shelter, I know, it’s so cool! Please pray for his youth ministry and his responsibilities as elder and teacher.

**Andrew** – The young spark of our group. Faithful, kind and generous. He is always there when you need him. He is a recent Bible graduate and aspiring missionary. Andrew has been involved in various ministries and is currently working with Martin and leading a youth Bible study. Please pray for spiritual guidance and his teaching ministry.

**Dan** – Administrator, programmer, youth minister, incessant book worm, translator and all-around Bible nerd. As a programmer for an American company his dedication, attention to detail and translating abilities make him a valuable and unique teacher here in Czech. Please pray for his studies in Scripture, for his teaching and strength for his myriad of responsibilities.
English class has been great! I have had some unforgettable conversations and students seem to be responding more and more to the spiritual side of the lessons. The Lord is also helping me learn new ways to present His truth in the lessons. I know you have been praying for these very things and I thank you!

When having a conversation with someone about a seemingly everyday topic ask God to help you see the profound spiritual truths hidden in that topic. This is what I do in all my English teaching and I think it can help you when you witness to your friends and family.

**For example, consider the Iranian Spider Tailed Horned Viper.**

I don’t like snakes and I hate spiders. So, for me, a snake with a spider for a tail is the most horrifying creature I can imagine. And with horns! Most people have never heard of this snake and for good reason. Its existence was only recently confirmed in 2006. In my lessons I show a video of how this snake sneaks up to the top of the rocks and coils up with skin which is perfectly camouflaged to match the specific type of rocks where it lives in Iran. This makes it practically invisible to its prey, which are birds. It then starts moving its tail to expertly mimic a big spider crawling around. Before too long a bird comes and takes the bait. The viper can then effortlessly capture its meal. My students are all surprised that something like this exists and they never knew about it. This is when I make the argument of irreducible complexity.

I ask, what does this snake need to survive? They reply that it needs the camouflage and the matching rocks, it needs the spider tail and the instinctive knowledge to mimic a spider and it needs birds that eat spiders. I then ask them that if we removed any one of these things would the snake be able to survive? Not at all, they say, it would be a complete failure. If you remove the camouflage then the birds would see them. If you remove the rocks, then the camouflage would be useless and if you removed the tail then there would be no trap. So how could a creature like this have possibly evolved, I ask? If the camouflage evolved first then how could it catch birds without a tail for a trap? Or if the tail evolved first then how did it hide from the birds without camouflage? Or if it ate something other than birds then why would it need to evolve at all? Every time they admit that they cannot imagine any way this animal could have evolved and that it is fascinating and puzzling.

Another interesting thing about this snake is the message it sends with its tail which is – I’m just a spider, come here, don’t worry, no snakes around here. But if you consider the rattlesnake, its tail sends out the exact opposite message – stay away! I am dangerous! I am here! Watch out! Amazing, how can two snakes have two radically different tails which send radically different messages and serve totally different purposes?

Finally, I tell them that as a Christian, it is creatures like these that make me see the amazing design in God’s creation. I have received so many positive reactions to this that I am losing count.
The Sound of Music

Another great example is my lesson on music. One of the first questions I ask is, what is the difference between music and noise? I have had dozens of hours with my students discussing this one question. First, we discuss what noise is. We brainstorm on all the things that come close to music, like the rhythmic sound of gentle waves or the calming sound of the rain and wind, but we conclude that this is not music. Then, we discuss music and how it is an accumulation of sounds, but in an orderly fashion. The dictionary definition of music is – the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity.

Once we establish the difference between music and noise, we move on to the next question which is - can music ever exist without some kind of structure or intelligent input? They always say, no, that’s just impossible. Well, I ask, what if we put all the instruments in the world into a giant box and shook it all around for a million years. Could that ever produce music like in the famous Prague Philharmonic? Never, they say, not in a billion years! Then I raise the pressure and ask, why then do so many people believe that some primordial soup bubbling some millions or billions of years ago had the ability to randomly produce life which is infinitely more complex than any orchestra? This is when I can really see the gears turning in my students’ heads. I’m quite certain that I am the only one that has ever challenged their faith in evolution and they don’t really know how to react to this. Usually they just sit and think for a minute, then they say something like, wow, I never thought of it like that. One thing I have noticed about Czechs is that they are very honest in their opinions. When they are presented with something that shakes their opinion or worldview, they don’t try to sneak their way out of it or something, but they usually find it relatively easy to admit they could be wrong or that there could be a better way.
Time and Pizza

I have so many testimonies to share with you but since this report is already getting quite long, I will try to make this the last page. Every now and then I am invited to meet a student outside of class. Usually we go to a restaurant for a burger or pizza. Recently I met a student at a pizzeria and the first thing he asked me was, are you happy here, away from your family and country and people? I told him that my happiness is not derived from these kinds of things but rather from God. I told him that when I try my best to live for God then I experience the most happiness. He sharply disagreed and said, no way, you can’t be happy unless you live for yourself, for free time. I said, but living for yourself is so worthless. We have so little time here and when it’s over what does it all matter in light of eternity? He asked me to explain so I said, look at this tiny pizza crumb, how insignificant is it compared to the sun? He said, it’s nothing compared to the sun. Then I blew it off the table and said, you see, it’s gone, so easily and so fast. That’s like our life, that crumb. He said, but I have a lot of time! I laughed and pulled out my calculator on my phone. I said, ok, you think you have a lot of free time? Let’s see how much you really have.

We then had fun calculating all the non-free days in a typical 27 year-old’s life. In the end we came to 2,006 free days! That’s just 5.4 years which is only 280 weekends! I told my student, you see you have had only 280 weekends to enjoy so far. He then said, well, I have a lot more to go! And then, at that very moment, miraculously, I got a message on my phone from Irena. She wrote that her friend from Finland just learned that she has a huge brain tumor. I turned my phone to my student so he could read it for himself. I said, you see? You can never say you have a lot more time. Our friend in Finland is just 40 years old with three children and she suffers from the most malignant brain tumor there is. Please continue to pray for my student Dan and for our friend in Finland.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Josh, Irena and Shani