

5/31 Sunday School Lesson

This week, we will study “A Deacon Delivers” in class. Directed by an angel, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official reading from the Book of Isaiah while riding in his chariot. Realizing the Ethiopian needs help to understand the Scriptures, Philip steps in. After instructing the Ethiopian, Philip baptizes the man and then is carried away by the Spirit to Azotus. Consider discussing, “Who helps us understand Scripture today?”

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, you bring us together around your Word. Help us to learn and understand your will for us. Bless our time together. In your name we pray. Amen.

ASK: Who are some people who help you? How do you help people?

SAY: God gives us so many people to help us and sometimes we get to be the helper. The Holy Spirit helps us too. Let’s see how the Holy Spirit helps a man named Philip talk about Jesus.

READ: As a family read together from a Bible or the narrative below from Acts 8:26-40.

An angel of the Lord told Philip the deacon to get up and go south on a road through the desert that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip went right away.

A rich man from Ethiopia was riding in a chariot. The rich man worked for Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was in charge of all her treasure. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was on his way home. He was reading the Holy Scriptures from a scroll. Then **along came Philip, and the Spirit said, “Go!”** So Philip ran to catch up to the chariot. **Philip heard the man reading a passage from Isaiah 53 and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”** The man said, “No. I can’t understand unless someone helps me. Please help me. Come and sit with me.”

The Ethiopian read a passage of Scripture and said, “Tell me, who is the lamb?” **Philip said, “Jesus is the lamb.” Then Philip told him more of God’s Good News—that Jesus died and rose. “Now I understand,” said the man from Ethiopia.** As they went along, the man saw water. “Look! Here is water! Philip, **can you baptize me?**” He stopped the chariot and they both went down to the water.

Philip baptized the man from Ethiopia. What a joyful day! When they came out of the water, **the Spirit carried Philip away. The man from Ethiopia could not see Philip anymore but rejoiced and went on his way.** Philip found himself at Azotus, and he kept preaching the Gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

DO SOMETHING

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS

Review the Bible narrative by acting the story out.

FOR OLDER LEARNERS

Read the entire narrative from Scripture. Then have students look up **Isaiah 53:7–8**, the passage that Philip and the Ethiopian man studied together. Talk about how awesome it is that the prophet Isaiah prophesied about what would happen to Jesus hundreds of years before Jesus was even born, and how the Holy Spirit helped Philip explain to the Ethiopian that it was all about Jesus. The whole Bible points to Jesus and shows us God's plan of salvation fulfilled in Jesus.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

It is pretty unusual for the Holy Spirit to be talking to Philip and moving him around in this supernatural way. We don't see this mentioned in any other New Testament story. Ezekiel records being moved this way in the Old Testament.

Sending Philip to help the Ethiopian man understand Scripture and baptize him was very strategic. This Ethiopian man was very wealthy (only wealthy people could buy their own scrolls.) and he had access to the highest echelons of government. This event was the beginning of the spread of the Gospel throughout Africa.

Help students see how the baptizing of one person spread the Gospel to so many people. The same is true for us. We can make a difference by telling just one person about Jesus, and they tell someone, and they tell someone and the pattern repeats until many people hear the message.

Hearing God's Word is a wonderful gift that the Lord has given us. It brings us faith and life.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Christ, through the Holy Spirit, has called us by the Word and Baptism to be His own and still speaks to us through His Word.

Questions to think about and discuss as a family:

1. The Ethiopian needed someone to help him understand the scriptures. Who helps you understand the Bible?
2. What does the man ask Philip to do when he sees the water?
3. At the end of this narrative, it says that both Philip and the Ethiopian went on their way rejoicing. What is our response to being baptized? To hearing the Gospel?

MEMORY WORK:

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear Jesus, thank You for giving us people to help us understand the Bible and teach us about Your Word. Thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit and Baptism. Help us to share the Gospel like Philip and the Ethiopian. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

Activities to together as a family during the week:

Water Play

Set out a tub with water and toy dishes (or in a sink). Have children “wash” the dishes. Ask about other things we wash (e.g., cars, hands, clothes) and how water helps us get things clean. Say, **In church, Pastor uses water and God's Word to wash away our sin in Baptism. When you are baptized, God makes you His child.**

Hide and Seek

Hide Bibles and Bible story books around your room. Say, I hid some Bible books in our room. Let’s go on a treasure hunt to find them. When they are found, ask, **How is the Bible a treasure to us? It tells us that Jesus loves us, forgives us, and has made us His children forever.**

Bible Verse Scroll

Use brown paper bags cut into long strips as scrolls. Write today’s Bible Verse on the paper. If the children are good at copying, consider having them write Romans 10:17 themselves. Glue craft sticks to the narrow edges of the paper and then roll together like a scroll.