

The Ethiopian Official Believed

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 8:26-40

MAIN POINT: Philip told the Ethiopian man about Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 2:13

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

The believers in the early church faced intense persecution. After Stephen was killed, Jesus' followers at the church in Jerusalem scattered; however, they did not stop talking about Jesus. They continued to share the good news. One man, Philip, took the gospel to Samaria. The crowds there listened and believed, and they had great joy.

In today's Bible story, Philip was instructed by an angel of the Lord to go to a certain road in the desert. Philip obeyed. The Spirit led Philip to a chariot, where an Ethiopian official was reading the Scriptures from the prophet Isaiah. The Ethiopian man did not understand what he was reading, so Philip explained it to him.

The man was reading from the prophet Isaiah: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter ... In His humiliation justice was denied Him. ... For His life is taken from the earth” (Acts 8:32-33). The official wondered if Isaiah was speaking about himself or another person. Philip told the official that Isaiah’s words weren’t about Isaiah; they were about the Messiah—Jesus! The official believed in Jesus and was baptized.

Guide preschoolers to consider the role of the Holy Spirit in this interaction between Philip and the Ethiopian official. Who was responsible for Philip’s going to the desert? Who helped Philip explain the Scriptures? Who changed the heart of the official so he would believe?

After his interaction with the Ethiopian official, Philip continued sharing the gospel in all the towns on his way to the town of Caesarea.

In our mission of making disciples, believers must be willing instruments to be used in the hands of the Lord. Philip didn’t go into the desert today with a strategy for converting another man; the Holy Spirit led Philip, and he obeyed. As believers, we can be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and willing to follow His lead. He will go with us.

The BIBLE STORY

The Ethiopian Official Believed

Acts 8:26-40

Philip was one of the men Jesus sent out to tell people about Him. One day, an angel told Philip to go to a desert road. So Philip went.

On the road, Philip saw a man from Ethiopia. The man was an important official who worked for the queen of Ethiopia. He was riding in a chariot and reading the words of the prophet Isaiah.

The Holy Spirit led Philip to go to the man. Philip ran up to him and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

The man said, “I need someone to teach it to me.” Then he invited Philip into his chariot.

Philip sat with the man, who was reading these words from Isaiah: “He was led like a sheep to be killed, and just like a lamb is quiet when its wool is cut, He does not say anything. What happened to Him was not fair. His life was taken away.”

The man asked, “Was Isaiah talking about himself or someone else?”

Isaiah was talking about the Messiah, so Philip began to teach the man the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled down the road, they came to some water. The man asked the chariot to stop He wanted to be baptized because he believed in Jesus. Philip baptized the man in the water and the man went home happy.

Introduce THE STORY

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- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Welcome time

Greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Trace the Path" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers use their finger, a crayon, or pencil to trace the path from Philip to the man in the chariot. Then trace the path from the man in the chariot to the water. **SAY**

- Philip was a man Jesus sent out to tell people about

Him. In today's Bible story, the Holy Spirit led Philip on a path where he met a man who needed to hear the good news. Let's discover how the Holy Spirit led Philip in today's Bible story.

Pass the Bible

Invite preschoolers to sit in a circle on the floor. Give one child a Bible. Explain that when the music is playing preschoolers should pass the Bible around the circle. When the music stops, whoever is holding the Bible gets to ask the big picture question and the rest of the group will answer.



- Bible

SAY • *What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians.* The Holy Spirit did some amazing things in the Bible story we will hear today. The Holy Spirit led Philip to a man who was reading the Bible. Listen for how the Holy Spirit led Philip to share the good news with the man and how the Holy Spirit helped the man believe the good news.

Draw on sand bags

Fill a gallon-sized ziplock bag half full of sand. Put the sand-filled ziplock bag inside another ziplock bag. Secure the opening of the bag with duct tape. Invite preschoolers to make handprints and footprints, draw, or write in the sand.

- clean play sand
- gallon-sized ziplock bags
- duct tape

SAY • We can find sand in many places like in a sand box, on the beach, or in the desert. In today's Bible story, the Holy Spirit led Philip to a desert road. The road was probably very sandy. Listen to our Bible story to find out what the Holy Spirit did on that desert road.

Transition to tell the story

Direct preschoolers where to sit as they move to Bible study one at a time. For example: "Rachel, please sit by Keith." "Sam, please sit by Alyssa."

Tell THE STORY

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Introduce the Bible story

• Bible

Open a Bible and read Isaiah 53:7-8.

SAY • Do you know whom these words are written about?

In our Bible story, a man was reading these words from the Bible. He did not know he was reading about Jesus. The Holy Spirit sent someone to tell him.

Watch or tell the Bible story

• Bible

• bookmark

• Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Acts 8 in your Bible. Invite a child to open to Acts. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Someone was reading the Bible in today's Bible story.

The Bible is the best book a person can read because it is the only book with God's words in it. God's words are true. Today's Bible story is in the Book of Acts.

Tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps.

Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

• Main Point Poster

• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • How amazing! The Holy Spirit led Philip to a man who was already reading about Jesus! He just didn't know it. **Philip told the Ethiopian man about**

Jesus. The Holy Spirit helped the man believe the truth about Jesus. He became a follower of Jesus.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Who did Philip see on the desert road? (*a man who worked for the queen of Ethiopia*)
2. Who led Philip to go up to the man? (*the Holy Spirit*)
3. Who was the man reading about? (*the Messiah, Jesus*)
4. What did Philip teach the man? (*the good news about Jesus*)
5. What did the man do to show he believed the good news about Jesus? (*He was baptized.*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question is, ***What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians.*** The man from Ethiopia knew what the Bible said, but he did not know that the prophets were speaking about Jesus. The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the man understand the good news about Jesus: Jesus died on the cross for our sin, and He is alive, just like the prophets said.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Philippians 2:13. Read the key passage aloud several times.

• Key Passage Poster

SAY • Our key passage reminds us that God has a good plan in everything He does. God planned for Philip to tell the Ethiopian man about Jesus. God has plans to use us to share the good news with others too.

Transition to experience the story

Experience THE STORY

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Make scrolls

Give each preschooler a sheet of paper. Invite her to “write” on the paper. You may also write the name *JESUS* for preschoolers to trace. Guide preschoolers to roll up their paper and secure it with a piece of string.

SAY • The man from Ethiopia read Isaiah’s words about Jesus on a scroll. The man from Ethiopia knew what the Bible said, but he did not know that the prophets were speaking about Jesus. **Philip told the Ethiopian man about Jesus.** The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the man understand the good news about Jesus: Jesus died on the cross for our sin, and He is alive, just like the prophets said.



- paper
- markers
- string
- scissors

Sort coffee beans

Show preschoolers where Ethiopia is on a map or globe. Set a bowl of whole coffee beans on a table with a muffin pan. Invite preschoolers to count and sort the beans into the muffin cups. Consider providing nonbreakable coffee mugs for preschoolers to sort the coffee beans into using spoons.

SAY • The coffee plant these coffee beans came from was first found in Ethiopia. The man in our Bible story was an important official who worked for the queen of Ethiopia. **Philip told the Ethiopian man about Jesus.**

- Allergy Alert download
- map or globe
- bowl
- whole coffee beans
- muffin pan
- nonbreakable coffee mugs (optional)
- plastic spoons (optional)

The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the man understand the good news about Jesus. Let's pray the Holy Spirit will help more people in Ethiopia and right here in our country believe the good news about Jesus.

Play out the Bible story

Cut off one side of a large cardboard box. Cut two circles from the cardboard piece you removed. Use a marker to draw a wheel hub and spokes on the circles. Attach the "wheels" to the sides of the box. Invite preschoolers to take turns acting out the Bible story. Select one child to be the Ethiopian official sitting in the chariot looking at a Bible. Allow another child to be Philip walking along the road and climbing into the chariot to explain the Bible.

- large cardboard box
- scissors
- marker
- masking tape
- Bible
- Bible times clothes (optional)

SAY • The man from Ethiopia knew what the Bible said, but he did not know that the prophets were speaking about Jesus. The Holy Spirit led Philip to the man's chariot. Philip told the Ethiopian man about Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for our sin, and He is alive, just like the prophets said.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve flatbread for snack. Tell preschoolers that people in Ethiopia eat a spongy flatbread called *injera* (in JEH ruh). Remind preschoolers that **Philip told the Ethiopian man about Jesus**. The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the man understand the good news about Jesus. *What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians*

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw themselves sharing the good news about Jesus with someone they know. Remind preschoolers that the Holy Spirit led Philip to help the man understand the good news about Jesus. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You for the Holy Spirit. Thank You that the Holy Spirit will help us do the work You have for us. Help us to share the good news about Your Son: Jesus died on the cross for our sin, and He is alive, just like the prophets said. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*