



SESSION 3 of 4

Philip and the Ethiopian

MEETING AIM

To explore the way that Philip revealed Jesus to the Ethiopian and how we can do likewise.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 8:26-40

BACKGROUND

Under persecution, the disciples spread out into the local area, taking the message of Jesus out from Jerusalem. Philip spends time in Samaria, spreading the gospel there, until an angel of God instructs him to travel along the road towards Gaza. Bumping into an Ethiopian who was studying the ancient Bible texts was no happy coincidence, but rather part of God's great plan to take his message of hope to all the ends of the earth.

5 CIRCLE TIME

As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle. Invite them to tell you about an interesting journey they have been on. What made it interesting? How did they travel? Where were they going? Who did they travel with? Explain that during this session we will be finding out more about someone who had a life-changing experience when he was on a journey.

5 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: a feely bag and a selection of different-shaped items to hide inside it

Place one item at a time into the feely bag and invite the children to take turns to explore what they think is in the bag, without telling other people what is in there, until everyone has had a chance to guess. Try to include items with different textures and shapes to make it more interesting.

For older children you could turn this into a competition and ask them to write down what they feel each time before revealing all the answers at the end, but for younger children just run it as a discussion activity. When everyone has had chance to guess, reveal what is really in the bag each time.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: two leaders to play the parts of Philip and the Ethiopian, with simple, appropriate costumes; chairs set up to represent a chariot; a scroll

Seat the children on the floor together and explain that you are going to act out the story for them today. Alternatively, you could choose two children to mime the story as you narrate.

Philip: *Walking on the spot as he talks.* Hello, everybody, I'm Philip, a follower of Jesus. I've just come from Samaria, where I've been telling people all about Jesus, but a strange thing happened. An angel of God visited me and told me I should head out of Samaria and walk down this road here. I don't know why. Oh, look! What's that? *He points to the chariot where the Ethiopian is sitting, reading the scroll.* What's that, God? You want me to walk over to him? Er...OK.

Ethiopian: *Reading aloud.* "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter."

Philip: Do you understand what you're reading about?

Ethiopian: How can I understand if no one has ever explained it to me?

Philip: I'd love to help you! *He climbs onto the chariot.* This was written many, many years ago to tell us all about Jesus, and how he would come to earth and die for all our sins. Look, I'll show you more.

There is hushed whispering between the two characters.

Ethiopian: Look, there's a lake! I want to be baptised, right here and now! *He steps down from the chariot.* Jesus did this thing for me, and I want to be a follower of Jesus too!

To the children. I was baptised that day, and then Philip disappeared and I never saw him again! He went on to tell other people about Jesus. And me? I went back to Ethiopia completely changed, and I took Jesus with me to share with people back home. It was all part of God's plan to share the good news of Jesus all around the world!

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- How do you feel about this story?
- How did Philip reveal Jesus to the Ethiopian?
- If someone asked you about Jesus, how would you answer?
- What would you ask Philip about Jesus?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: scratch-art paper or shapes; scraping tools (available as kits online)

Distribute the scratch-art paper and scraping tools, and give the children free choice to scratch words, images or doodles into the paper. Ideally, have more than one sheet available for each child for them to experiment with. Talk about how scraping into the top black layer reveals the colourful picture underneath. They can draw things of their own choosing or things that relate to the story.

Now give each child a second piece of paper and ask them to scratch 'Jesus' into the paper, perhaps in bubble writing or another interesting style. Talk about how Philip revealed who Jesus was to the Ethiopian as they explored the Bible text together and what it means for us to reveal Jesus.

5 PRAYER

Sit the children down together and explain to them that, as you pray today, there are simple actions for the children to join in with:

Dear Jesus, just as Philip followed you, show us where you want us to go.
Use two fingers of one hand to walk along the other arm.

Just as Philip listened to what you had to say to him, help us hear what you are saying to us.
Use one hand to cup around your ear.

Just as Philip revealed who you are to the Ethiopian, help us reveal who you are to our friends.
Cover eyes with your hands before taking them off to reveal your eyes.

Amen.

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