



SESSION 3 of 4

Philip and the Ethiopian

MEETING AIM

To explore how God uses us to tell others the good news about Jesus.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 8:26-40

BACKGROUND

In this story from Acts we come across one of the earliest instances of evangelism. Philip is able to explain who Jesus is to the Ethiopian man, who responds by requesting an immediate baptism! This story provides an obvious chance to explore what the group already knows about Jesus and how they might explain him to someone who wanted to understand him, but also to raise any questions they have.

5 CIRCLE TIME

As the group comes together, ask: "What's the most unusual journey you've ever been on?" Allow them to spend time thinking and sharing.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: masking tape; a mat or sheet; blindfolds; a timer

Before the session, map out a path on the floor with masking tape, but cover it up with a mat or sheet before the activity.

Ask the group to divide into small groups, and nominate someone to walk the path blindfolded. The rest of the group's job is to give directions to help that person complete the marked-out route. Each group's objective is to get their person from the start to the finish in the quickest time. The quickest group is the winner!

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: a map of Judea (use a Bible map or an atlas); play figures (such as Lego or Playmobil) or playdough

Show the children the maps you have brought and the route between Jerusalem and Gaza. Retell the story using your play

figures on the map to act it out. It will only add to the fun if the figurines are a bit bizarre! Alternatively, you could make figurines out of playdough. Include details such as the Ethiopian reading the passage out loud (it says that Philip overheard him reading). You could even have a bowl of water ready to re-enact the baptism.

If the children would like to, let them retell the story themselves.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Discuss the story further by using these questions, ensuring that everyone who wants to has the chance to answer:

- What did Philip need in order to do his job in the story?
- How do you think this encounter between the two men changed the Ethiopian's life?
- Are there things about Jesus you don't understand? Who could you ask to help you explain them?
- Who are the people in your life that don't know about Jesus? How would you feel if they asked you to explain who Jesus was to them?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: large sheets of paper; pens

In the story we've been reading the Ethiopian man had the opportunity to ask questions about Jesus, and Philip was able to answer them.

Split into smaller groups of about three or four people. Give each group a large piece of paper and ask them to discuss and note down the main points they would make if they were asked to explain who Jesus is. Give the groups ten minutes to talk and write down their points, then ask them to nominate a spokesperson who can feed back to the wider group.

After the spokespeople have fed back, ask the groups to turn the page over and write down any questions they still have about Jesus. Again, ask a spokesperson from each group to feed back their questions and let the whole group discuss their thoughts or similar questions.

5 PRAYER

Ask the children to find somewhere comfortable to sit on their own. Explain that you're going to retell the story and that they should try to imagine themselves in the story. Ask them to close their eyes and picture the scene as you explain it to them:

You are on a long journey. It's already been going on a while and it's going to last for weeks. It's hot and dusty, and you're far away from home.

Since you arrived in Jerusalem you've heard some things about a man called Jesus, and there's a lot of discussion about it. Some people have changed their lives to follow him. They say that he's the Son of God. Other people are angry and say that he and his followers are liars. They claim he was killed and that should be the end of that!

You're not sure what to make of it, so you spend some time reading on the way home, hoping that will help you understand better. In the deepest part of your heart, you hope the stories you've heard about Jesus are true, but at the same time you're nervous because that might mean your whole life is about to be messed up and turned around! Besides, you don't want to be seen as a liar or a fool if you do believe.

You read the passage. It says:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

Could Jesus really be alive? Could he be the Son of God? Could he even be interested in you, on this journey far from home, and want you to know about him?

Imagine yourself today on a journey you often take. What would change if Jesus joined you on that journey? What would you want to ask him? *Pause for a moment to let the group think about this.* What might he explain to you? *Pause again.*

Finish this time of meditation and imagining with a prayer:

"Jesus, thank you that you join us on our journeys. Please meet with us in what we know and in what we don't know about you. Help us to see you more and to understand you better. Help us to explain who you are to people who do not know you. Amen."

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