



SESSION 3 of 4

Philip and the Ethiopian

MEETING AIM

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

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 8:26-40

BACKGROUND

Philip is one of the group of seven listed in Acts 6:5. Though there are various 'supernatural' events in this story, it has eminently practical implications for young people. We should be listening to the Holy Spirit and following his guidance in what we should do and to whom we should talk. We should be willing to do something unusual and talk to people we may not necessarily talk to!

5 GATHERING TIME

Welcome the young people to your group and share out any refreshments you have – try fruit, toast, pastries or pizza (depending on when you meet). Chat with the young people about what their week has been like. Share their triumphs and disasters and everything in between. If appropriate, share a story or two from your own week. Ask the group whether they talked to anyone unusual in the past week or so. What made them unusual?

15 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: an expert in something unusual

Before the session, find someone in your congregation who is a specialist in something that is unusual or difficult to explain. This could be something such as astronomy, geopolitics, recycling or ancient history. If there isn't anyone in your church, there might be someone at a local school or university.

Invite them to come to your group and tell the group about their specialism. Give space for the group to ask questions. At the end of your time, thank your volunteer for coming and pray for them before they leave.

15 BIBLE EXPLORATION

You will need: props to help you recreate your story (see below); towels; paper and pens

Before the session, gather together some props to help you explore the story. You'll need some chairs, sheets, garden canes, a large paddling pool filled with water – whatever you can collect together.

Get half the group to blow up the paddling pool and fill it with water. The other half of the group should make a carriage or chariot for the Ethiopian to travel in, using chairs and making a canopy from a sheet and some canes.

Read out the Bible passage asking one young person to be Philip and one to be the Ethiopian – check that they don't mind getting wet! When you get to the part about baptism, they can get in the paddling pool and get wet.

Once everyone is dry, split the group into pairs and give each pair a pen and a piece of paper. Ask them to draw three columns – in the first column, they should write what the Ethiopian discovered, in the second what Philip discovered and in the third what we can learn from the story.

Bring everyone back together and compare the different columns. Discuss the different ideas the group have come up with.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

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

- Is there anything that you wish someone would explain to you about following Jesus? What?
- The Ethiopian didn't just listen to Philip, he applied what he learnt to his life. Are there areas in your life where you need to do the same?
- The Ethiopian was an unlikely person for Philip to talk to. Who might be the equivalent in your neighbourhood. Why?
- Have you ever been told by the Holy Spirit to talk to someone? What happened?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: church leaders or children's group leaders

What you do as a response to this passage depends on the make-up of your group. If your group are new Christians or on the fringes of church, then invite some of your church leaders into the group and let the young people ask any questions about faith that they have. If the group struggle to think of any questions, invite your visitors to tell the story of how they met Jesus. Hopefully questions should flow from there.

If your group is well on their way with Jesus, then invite them to take on the role of Philip by helping out with the children's groups in your church. Invite some children's leaders to the group and get them to work with the young people in planning a session for the next time the children's groups meet. Make sure the young people take a full role in helping children understand more about their walk with Jesus.

Make sure the young people are able to attend the next children's groups and support them as they help children learn more about God. Let parents and carers know what the young people are going to be doing, so they can support them too.

5 PRAYER

You will need: cups; water

Give the young people a cup of water each and an empty cup. Ask them to pour the water from one cup to the other, reminding the group about how the Ethiopian was baptised. Invite them to think about the questions you're going to ask them:

- Are you like the Ethiopian? Are there things about following Jesus you don't understand? Tell Jesus about them now.
- Are you like Philip? Do you love to tell others about Jesus? Pray for someone you know who doesn't follow Jesus. Ask God to help them discover more about him.
- Maybe you're not like either of the characters. Maybe you're not bothered about faith. If Jesus were here now, what would you ask or say to him?

Ask the group to drink their cup of water and let them know that they can come and talk to you about whatever they thought or prayed during this prayer time.

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