#### Lesson 8:

#### Philip Teaches the Ethiopian

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Acts 8:26-39

MEMORY WORK:

Mark 16:15 – Go into all the world and preach the gosepel to every creature

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Jesus wants everyone in the world to become a Christian so they can go to heaven. Even though I’m not yet a preacher or teacher, I can talk to other people about Jesus and invite them to Bible classes and worship services.

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| **LESSON STARTS HERE** |

INTRODUCTION:

In New Testament times the only Scriptures written down were the Old Testament. The New Testament was being written a little at a time by apostles and other inspired men; it was not in book form yet. So how did people learn about Jesus? They had to learn from the apostles and others whom God inspired to share the Truth without mistake. Just like in New Testament times, there are many people in the world today that have never heard about Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Some live in faraway lands, and some live in our own neighborhoods and go to school with us. Even though we have all the Scriptures written down for us today, it is still very important that we teach others about Jesus..

This week we are going to learn about how Philip taught others about Jesus. We can see that the early Christians we read about in the Bible saw how important it was to teach about Jesus so everyone would have the chance to be baptized and one day go to heaven. Today, we also should teach our friends, neighbors, and family about Jesus!

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. After Stephen’s death, many Christians left Jerusalem and taught the good news about Jesus wherever they went. One such Christian was Philip, one of the seven men (like Stephen) chosen in Acts six to help the widows. Chapter eight tells us about Philip teaching two different men who decided to become happy new Christians. We will talk about one of these men this morning and the other one on Wednesday night.
2. God spoke to Philip, while he was in Samaria, and told him to go to the “desert road” that went from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts 8:26b). He might have wondered who he could possibly find there, but Philip did as God commanded and went immediately.
3. Traveling in a chariot down that deserted road was a man from the African nation of **Ethiopia**. He was a very important man in the government of **Candace,** the Queen, because he took care of the country’s money.

**HISTORICAL NOTE: Candace**: the title of the Ethiopian queen, not her name. Some scholars think that an Ethiopian queen ruled on behalf of her son, either because he was too young to deal with affairs of state or because he “was considered the child of the sun” and, therefore, “too holy to become involved in secular affairs” (*Nelson’s NKJV Study Bible*, p. 1833).

**Ethiopia:** a sparsely populated kingdom which is sometimes called “Cush” in Scripture, after the descendants of Cush, the son of Ham. The exact location of this ancient kingdom is not known with certainty; it was likely in east Africa, south of Egypt. It is not the same as today’s Ethiopia, which developed from the Abyssinian Empire, but may have been at least part of modern-day Sudan. Biblical and historical records tell us that Ethiopians were tall and dark-skinned.

**Eunuch:** literally means a man who has been castrated, but that is not always how it is used in Scripture (e.g., Matthew 19:12). If this Ethiopian was a true eunuch, he would not have been allowed to worship in the Temple (Deuteronomy 23:1). True eunuchs were chosen to supervise harems, for example. The term eventually was used to refer to different levels of government officials. This man may have been a convert to Judaism (proselyte) or a Gentile who worshipped with Jews, seeking a lifestyle and moral standard much higher than the Gentile world—one who feared God like Cornelius.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** “Two roads led south from near Jerusalem, one through Hebron into Idumea (Edom) and the other joining the coast road before Gaza heading for Egypt, both with plenty of Roman milestones as road markers” (*Bible Background Commentary*, p. 345).

**NOTE:** The Ethiopian eunuch may have been traveling with a caravan since he was such an important official. Riding in a fine chariot, with a driver, would have instantly identified him as a man of wealth and made him an easy mark for robbers, which were common. Another indication of his wealth was that he owned a scroll.

1. The Ethiopian was traveling along this dusty road going home after spending time in Jerusalem worshipping God. He had probably been there for one of the yearly Jewish feasts. As he was returning home, he was reading aloud from a scroll which included what we call chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah. God told Philip to go up to the man’s chariot and talk to him. Philip **ran** to the chariot and asked the man, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The man said he needed help and was glad to have Philip join him in the chariot so they could read and discuss God’s Word together. From the words of Isaiah and other scriptures, Philip taught the Ethiopian about the Savior. (He may have heard about Jesus and the Church while he was in Jerusalem. If so, Philip helped him put together what he had heard, along with what the Old Testament taught about the Christ.)

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the article “[**Preaching ‘Jesus’**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=11&amp;article=928&amp;topic=379)[**Includes Preaching Baptism**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=11&amp;article=928&amp;topic=379)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for further discussion of the eunuch’s conversion.

1. The Ethiopian man understood that he needed forgiveness from his sins and needed to be baptized to have those sins taken away (be saved). They came upon a pool of water, and the man asked to be baptized. Philip told him that if he believed in Jesus with all his heart, he could be baptized. Then the man ordered the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water so that Philip could baptize him.

**NOTE:** Verse 37 of Acts 8 (the eunuch’s confession) is a textual variant, meaning there is evidence that it may not have originally been written by Luke (cf. J.W. McGarvey’s *Commentary on Acts*, pp. 158-159; H. Leo Boles’ *Gospel Advocate Commentary on Acts*, pp. 138-139). That said, there is little doubt that the eunuch would have made the confession in light of Romans 10:9-10 (cf. 1 Timothy 6:13).

1. When they both came up out of the water, God miraculously took Philip away from there to a town named Azotus (about 25 miles north of Gaza and about 35 miles west of Jerusalem). But the Ethiopian, a new Christian, continued his journey home rejoicing. He probably taught others about Jesus when he reached his homeland.
2. We do not know anything else about this man from Africa, but we do know that he was converted (i.e., taught about Jesus and then baptized), because the Spirit saw fit to direct Philip to him, and Philip cared enough to teach him.
3. Philip and the other Christians of that time knew how important it was to tell everyone they knew about Jesus. The Gospel is for **everyone**, no matter where they are from, or what color their skin is, or what language they speak.
4. Most of us won’t go to faraway countries, but we can still teach our friends and relatives about Jesus, just like Philip did. We can also give money to help support the kingdom, with its missionaries and evangelists in other places as they teach and preach about Jesus. In many different ways, we can help tell others how to become Christians, just like Philip did.

**Missionary:** Someone who travels to a place away from his/her home in order to teach others about Jesus, to try to establish congregations of the Lord’s Church, or to strengthen congregations that are weak and struggling.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

##### Betty Lukens’ felt pieces

* ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book)
* Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file.
* A globe or map to talk about the travels of missionaries

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

**“JESUS LOVES** **THE LITTLE CHILDREN”**

Aurthor: Traditional

Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, They are precious in His sight.

Jesus loves the little children of the world.

**“THIS LITTLE** **CHRISTIAN LIGHT OF MINE”**

Author:Unknown\*

This little Christian light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine. (3X) Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel? No! I’m gonna let it shine (3X) Let it shine, all the time, let it shine

Don’t let Satan, (make a blowing sound) it out. I’m gonna let it shine. (3X) Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

All around the neighborhood, I’m gonna let it shine. (3X) Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

 SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Philip and the Ethiopian Baptism craft – a master template and laminated example should be in the lesson file. Be sure to copy onto cardstock. Cut the black line in the water for the men to move up and down. Attach men to a craft stick. Precutting the men is recommended to save time and make neater.
* Chariot craft – Template with instructions is in the lesson file.

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Let the kids make cards to send to missionaries that your congregation sponsors.
* Using a flat map or globe, show the children the places where the congregation’s missionaries are working.
* Show pictures of the missionaries that your congregation supports.
* Have pictures or figures of children from different countries. Let them match the figures to houses where these children might live or put them on a world map to show where they live.

### Review Questions

1. Where did God tell Phillip to go?
	1. To a desert road that went from Jerusalem to Gaza

1. What did Philip find when he got there?
	1. An Ethiopian eunuch traveling by chariot
2. What was the Ethiopian doing?
	1. He was reading out loud from a scroll of Isaiah chapter 53
3. What did Philip ask the Ethiopian?
	1. Do you understand what you are reading?
4. What did the Ethiopian say?
	1. No, he needed help understanding what he was reading.
5. What did Philip tell him?
	1. Philip told him about Christ and that he needed to be baptized for the forgiveness of his sins.
6. When they came to a pool of water, what happened?
	1. The Ethiopian asked Philip to baptize him.
7. What happened to Philip after they came up out of the water?
	1. He was miraculously taken away to a town named Azotus.

### Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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