

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22 )

## **Philip and the Ethiopian – Acts 8:26-40**

### **Prepare to Wonder**

#### **Faith Word: SPIRIT**

Today's Bible story is about the Holy Spirit at work in the life of Philip. The story of the interaction between Philip and the Ethiopian is an example of the amazing things that happen when followers of Jesus allow the Spirit to guide their actions and words.

The Ethiopian was an important official who was responsible for the treasury of the Ethiopian queen. In spite of his status, Jews at that time would have considered him an outsider for two reasons: because of where he lived and because he was a eunuch. In spite of this, the Ethiopian man was seeking God. He had been to Jerusalem to worship and was on his way home when the Spirit sent Philip his way.

Philip, one of Jesus' disciples, had been preaching in Samaria when the Spirit told him to take the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza. On that road Philip encountered the chariot carrying the Ethiopian man. The Spirit guided Philip to keep up with the chariot. As Philip ran by the chariot, he heard the Ethiopian reading aloud as was customary at the time. Philip recognized that the man was reading from the scroll of Isaiah. Philip asked the man if he understood what he was reading and the man invited him to explain it. At this invitation Philip told the Ethiopian the good news about Jesus. To one who was considered an outcast, hearing about Jesus who welcomed society's outcasts must have been amazing. The Ethiopian man ended up asking Philip to baptize him before the Spirit led Philip elsewhere.

#### **Spiritual Practice for Adults**

Find a quiet place to sit. Place your feet on the ground and place your hands palms down on your knees. Take a deep breath in and let it go. This time as you breathe in, think, "Spirit, guide me." Exhale and think, "All my days." Repeat several times.

# Come Together

## Come Together

**Supplies:** *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, scroll*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22). Place the scroll inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *Spirit* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

**SAY:** This month we are going to hear stories about the Holy Spirit and the ways it guides the followers of Jesus. This week we will hear about a man named Philip.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, “Philip and the Ethiopian” (pp. 276–77) from the storybook.

**PRAY:** Dear God, thank you for the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Philip and the Ethiopian – Preschool

**Supplies:** *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Photocopy “Philip and the Ethiopian” (Reproducible 2A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

**SAY:** Philip was lead by the Spirit to a road heading to a place called Gaza. While he was on the road, he met a man from Ethiopia.

**WONDER:** Why do you think the Spirit led Philip to go to where the Ethiopian was?

## What Doesn’t Belong? – Younger Elementary

**Supplies:** *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons*

**Prepare:** *Photocopy “What Doesn’t Belong?” (Reproducible 2B) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of “What Doesn’t Belong?” to each child.

**SAY:** Philip was lead by the Spirit to a road and he met a man from Ethiopia. The man was reading Scripture, but he wasn’t sure what it meant. Philip helped the man understand that it was about Jesus.

- Invite the kids to look for and circle what doesn't belong in the picture.
- Encourage the kids to color the picture.

## What Does It Say? – Older Elementary

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "What Does It Say?" (Reproducible 2C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "What Does It Say?" to each older elementary child.

**SAY:** The Holy Spirit led one of Jesus' followers named Philip to an Ethiopian man who was reading Scripture. The Ethiopian man didn't understand what he was reading, so Philip helped him. The sentence below is a jumbled version of Acts 8:35. Can you unscramble each word so that the Scripture verse makes sense?

- Invite the kids to unscramble the Bible verse.
- Encourage them to use a Bible if they get stuck.

## Thank-You Cards – All Ages

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, card stock, crayons or markers*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Thank-You Cards" (Reproducible 2D) onto card stock for each kid in your class.*

**SAY:** The Ethiopian man was thankful to Philip for teaching him about Jesus. Who are you thankful for? Make a thank-you card for that person.

- Encourage each child to use crayons or markers to color and decorate their cards.
- Invite them to fold the card in half and write a message on the inside of the card.
- Encourage the kids to give or mail the card to the person they are each thankful for.

## Wonder Time

### Interactive Bible Story

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Philip and the Ethiopian" (Reproducible 2F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

**WONDER:** What is your favorite part of this story? Why?

## Share a Story

*Supplies:* Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you and to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 2 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

## Wonder with Me

*Supplies:* Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

*Prepare Ahead:* Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 1 (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14).

*Cut out the Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 6) if you haven't already.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22).

**SAY:** Today's faith word is *Spirit*. The word *Spirit* means the feeling that God is with you.

- Show the children this week's figure—one of the symbols of baptism.

**WONDER** together:

- What is the most important part of the story?
  - What does it feel like when God is with you?
  - What symbol would you make for this week's story?
- Place the figure on the Wonder Story Mat.
  - Open the Wonder Box to reveal the scroll.

**WONDER:** Why do you think a scroll is in the Wonder Box this week?

## Experience Wonder

### Interconnected Web

*Supplies:* ball of yarn

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.

**SAY:** Today we heard the story of Philip and the Ethiopian. These two people didn't know each other before the story, but by the end of it, they were connected.

**ASK:** What does it mean to be connected to another person?

**SAY:** I think it means that we are a part of each other's story. I think it means what I do affects other people. I think it means that I am called to show God's love to other people. It's like all of us are a web.

- Show the kids the ball of yarn.

**SAY:** I am going to hold onto the end of the yarn ball and toss the yarn across the circle. The person who catches it will hold onto the yarn and then toss the yarn ball to another person. By the end of the game, we will have a web.

- Hold onto the end of the yarn ball and toss the yarn across the circle.
- The person who catches the yarn will hold onto the yarn and toss the yarn ball to another person. The yarn will unwind as it goes, forming visual connections between the kids.
- Keep tossing the yarn ball across the circle making a web. It's okay if kids get to catch and toss the yarn ball more than once.

**WONDER:** How is this web like people?

## Examine the Bible Verse

**SAY:** Our Unit 1 Bible verse is Galatians 5:22. Find it in your Bibles.

**ASK:** Is Galatians in the Old or New Testament? (*New*) Where is the Letter to the Galatians located in the New Testament? (*ninth book*) In what chapter of Galatians is our verse located? (*5*) What is the verse number? (*22*)

**SAY:** Our Bible verse tells us what a life of faith following the Spirit looks like.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15). Read it together.

## Peaceful Place

**Supplies:** *Leader Guide—p. 113, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: Welcome Child of God, by Anne Ylvisaker; paper; crayons or markers*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Photocopy the Unit 1 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 113) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to draw a picture of their favorite part of today's story.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

**Tip:** *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

# Go in Peace

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## Spiritual Practice – Exploring the Spirit Through Guidance

**SAY:** A spiritual practice is something we do to help us be present with God. A spiritual practice can be anything because you can be with God any time, anywhere, and any way! This month we are going to do a guided prayer to connect with God.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
  - Find a quiet place to sit. Place your feet on the ground and place your hands palms down on your knees. Take a deep breath in and let it go. This time as you breathe in, think, “Spirit, guide me.” Exhale and think, “My whole life.” Repeat several times.

**SAY:** The Spirit will be with each of us for our whole lives. The Spirit will keep us connected to God and each other.

**PRAY:** Repeat after me: “God, thank you for the Holy Spirit. Help me to feel how close you always are to me. Amen.”

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: “May you feel God’s love all around you every day.”

## Family Spiritual Practice

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids’ Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy “Celebration Chart” (p. 111) and “Family Letter” (p. 112) for each child.*

**SAY:** Let’s take a look at your Take-Home Pages (*Reproducibles 2F–2G*). Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week’s spiritual devotion with you. There’s an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

## Supplemental Activities

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### Preschoolers – Pretend to Be the Sunday School Teacher

*Supplies: none*

**SAY:** Philip taught the Ethiopian man about God and Jesus.

**ASK:** Who teaches you about God and Jesus?

**SAY:** I'd love to see you each teach each other about God and Jesus. Can you pretend to be a Sunday school teacher?

- Invite each child pretend to teach today's Bible story, or another story about God and Jesus.

## Early Elementary – Follow the Spirit

*Supplies: none*

**SAY:** Today Philip followed the nudge of the Holy Spirit and made a new friend! Let's play a game to remember to follow the Spirit.

- Play a variation of the game, "Follow the Leader."
- Invite the kids to follow you and mirror your actions.
- After a few minutes, invite a child to become the leader. The rest of the group will follow that child and mirror their actions.
- After a few minutes, invite another child to become the leader. Keep playing until each child has gotten to be the leader.

## Older Elementary – Ethiopian Cross

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, world map or globe, cardboard, pencils or pens, scissors, aluminum foil, craft sticks, double-stick tape, transparent tape*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Ethiopian Cross" (Reproducible 2E) for each child.*

**SAY:** Our Bible story today is about one of Jesus' followers, named Philip, and a man from Ethiopia.

- Have the children find Ethiopia on the map.

**SAY:** Today you are going to make an Ethiopian cross.

- Give each child a copy of "Ethiopian Cross."

**SAY:** This cross looks a little different than the crosses we are used to seeing. Each arm of the cross is the same length and there are three points on the end of each arm to represent the Trinity.

**ASK:** Do you remember what the Trinity is? (*the idea of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*)

**SAY:** Ethiopian crosses are often silver-plated and decorated with elaborate designs.

- Encourage each child to cut out the cross pattern and use it to draw a cross on a piece of cardboard.
- Have each child cut out a cardboard cross.

- Give each child a piece of aluminum foil slightly larger than the cardboard cross.
- Encourage each child to place a piece of double-stick tape on one side of the cardboard cross and then turn the cross over and press it firmly to the non-shiny side of the foil.
- Have each child use a pair of scissors to snip from the edge of the foil almost to the cardboard at each corner and point of the cross.
- Encourage each child to carefully wrap the foil around the cross, smoothing the edges, overlapping the foil on the back, and folding the foil back so loose edges are not visible from the front.
- Have each child use transparent tape to tape the foil down on the back of the cross.
- Invite each child to use a craft stick or a non-opened ballpoint pen to press designs carefully into the foil on the front of the cross.

## Intergenerational Activity – Isaiah 53:1-2

*Supplies: Bibles, paper, pencils*

**SAY:** Philip helped an Ethiopian man understand the words he was reading. The Ethiopian man was reading from the scroll of Isaiah. Isaiah is in the Old Testament. At the time Philip met the Ethiopian man the New Testament hadn't been written yet.

- Have the participants to look up Isaiah 53:1-2 in their Bibles.
- Invite a participant to read the verses aloud.

**ASK:** If somebody asked you what these verses mean, what would you tell them?

- Give each participant a piece of paper and a pencil. Encourage each participant to rewrite Isaiah 53:1-2 in their own words.
- Invite participants to share their writings with the group.

**SAY:** The Spirit guided Philip letting him know where to go and what to do next.

**ASK:** How do you figure out what God wants you to do?

**PRAY:** God, thank you for loving us and claiming us as your own. Help us to pay attention to the things you are asking us to do so that we might share your love with others. Amen