

Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Acts 8:26-40

Background

Alleluia, Alleluia! Christ is Risen! We are now firmly rooted in the Easter season and we continue to celebrate as Jesus' time with his disciples marches on. We've walked with Jesus through the wilderness into Jerusalem and to the grave. Easter is a season of 50 days in which we name and claim our identity in Christ as an Easter People. Easter is a season of baptism and rebirth. Many of the Scripture passages we will hear are about baptism or about Jesus' sacrifice for us. Many churches use this as a season for baptisms and receptions into the church. It is the season when we re-explore our identity as Christians as it is the key to our faith tradition: that Jesus, the Son of God, died for our sins and rose to new life again from the grave. In doing so, Jesus has opened the pathway to everlasting life for all of us. Thanks be to God!

A Notation for This Week's Scripture

During Eastertide, the Old Testament readings are replaced in the lectionary with passages from the book of Acts. This week we encounter a familiar story: that of Philip teaching the Ethiopian Eunuch. In today's passage Philip, one of the original deacons of the church, is told by an angel to go down to a particular road. On the road Philip encounters an Ethiopian court official who is reading Scripture but struggling to understand. Philip answered the angel's prompting and because of that is able to share his knowledge and faith leading to the baptism of the Ethiopian. What would happen if more of us felt able and willing to instruct others in the faith?

Theme: Called to Teach

Before Class: You will need:

- Sheets of 11"X17" paper for each child
- Empty paper towel tubes (1 for each child)
- Popsicle sticks
- Crayons
- Ribbon or rubber bands
- Scissors
- Tape
- Glue
- Note: Look ahead to the activity. If you have a particularly young class, you may want to go ahead and assemble the scrolls for them.

Beginning: Have you ever been reading a book and you come across a word or a section that you don't understand? How did you move forward? A good teacher is very helpful when we are trying to make sense of a difficult reading. Today's story is about a man who is struggling to read the bible and it teaches us what can happen when we help others understand the love that God is trying to share with us.

Celebrant/Teacher: Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

People/Children: The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

Opening Prayer: *Dear God, open our eyes to see the people and places where we might be called to share your love. Amen.*

The Story:

An important part of Jesus' call to his followers was to spread the word about God. Today our story finds Philip, one of Jesus' 12 disciples, following Jesus' call when he encountered a foreign man who needed help understanding Bible. Philip used all of the knowledge he had from years of study and of learning from Jesus to instruct this new follower of the faith.

Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' So Philip got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian official traveling on that road. The Ethiopian was seated in his chariot reading a scroll of the book of Isaiah. Then the Spirit of God said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.'

So Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the Ethiopian man reading the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' The man replied, 'How can I understand without a teacher?' And the Ethiopian man invited Philip to get in the chariot and sit beside him.

The man asked Philip, 'Who is this story in the bible about?' Then Philip began to tell the Ethiopian man about the good news of Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the Ethiopian said, 'Look, here is water! Can I be baptized?' The man commanded his chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the man, went down into the water.

Philip baptized the man. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the man didn't see him again. But the man went on his way giving thanks to God.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what the Ethiopian thought when Philip approached his chariot.
- I wonder what made the Ethiopian try to read the scripture.
- I wonder how Philip felt when the Ethiopian asked to get baptized.

Activity: When Philip encountered the Ethiopian he was reading from the prophet Isaiah. In those days, scripture was commonly written on what is called a scroll. Do any of you know what a scroll is? A scroll is a roll of parchment or hide upon which scripture was written. It is

likely the scripture that the Ethiopian was reading was on a scroll. Today we are going to create our own scrolls to take home.

Give each child a piece of paper, a paper towel tube, and two popsicle sticks. On the left hand edge of the paper the children will tape the paper towel roll. On the right-hand edge of the paper they will glue the popsicle sticks.

After assembling the scroll, invite the children to draw a picture from today's story on the scroll. They could draw Philip and the Ethiopian man in the chariot together. They could draw Philip baptizing the man. Etc.

Once the scroll is decorated the kids will roll the scroll from left to right, so that the paper is around the paper towel tube. Once it is tightly rolled they can tie a ribbon or put a rubber band around the outside to hold the scroll closed.

Getting Closure: After everyone has finished their scrolls invite them to share their scroll with the class.

Closing Prayer: Holy God, give us courage to share what we know about you with others whom we meet. Amen.

Celebrant/Teacher: Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

People/Children: The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

