Preschool–Grade 6

Philip and the Ethiopian

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Believe on Jesus and be baptized. The scripture points to Jesus, and when the man from Ethiopia heard about Jesus, he believed and was baptized right away.
Bible passage: Acts 8:26–40. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." *Acts 8:35 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Explain It (5–10 minutes)

Split into teams of three or four. Write a few hard words on the board: **chariot**, **treasure**, **prophet**, **scripture**, **baptized**. Each team writes what each word means in their own words. Then teams read their answers, and you fill in anything missing. Ask: *Is it easier to understand a hard word when someone explains it?* Say: "Today we'll meet a man who was reading the Bible but couldn't understand it, until God sent someone to explain it."

2. Bible story: He Preached Unto Him Jesus (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Acts 8. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Who was Philip? Philip was one of seven men chosen to help the church in Jerusalem, men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:3, 6:5). He went to the city of Samaria and preached Christ, and many believed and were baptized (8:5, 8:12).

A desert road. Look up Acts 8:26. The angel of the Lord told Philip to go south to the road from Jerusalem down to Gaza, which is **desert** (a dry, empty land). **Look up Acts 8:27–28.** Philip went, and there was a man of **Ethiopia**, a country to the south, of great **authority** (power) under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was in charge of all her **treasure** (her money and riches). He had come to Jerusalem to worship, and on the way home he sat in his **chariot** reading **Esaias** the prophet (the Bible's Greek way to say Isaiah).

"Understandest thou?" Look up Acts 8:29–31. The Spirit told Philip to go near and **join thyself** to the chariot (go right up next to it). Philip ran, heard him reading, and asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The man answered, "How can I, except some man should **guide** me?" (unless someone explains it to me) and asked Philip to sit with him.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

The scripture he read. Look up Acts 8:32–33. He was reading the place in Isaiah that says, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth." **Dumb before his shearer** means silent while its wool is cut. You can find these words in Isaiah 53:7–8. **Look up Acts 8:34–35.** The man asked, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" (Who is he talking about?) Philip began at that same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. Jesus is the Lamb who did not fight back, but let Himself be led away to die for our sins.

"See, here is water." Look up Acts 8:36–37. As they went on, they came to some water, and the man said, "See, here is water; what doth **hinder** me to be baptized?" (what stops me?). Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." He answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." **Son of God** means Jesus is God who came in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).

Into the water. Look up Acts 8:38–39. He commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord **caught away** Philip (took him away suddenly), and the man saw him no more. He went on his way **rejoicing** (full of joy). Philip was found at Azotus, and preached in all the cities until he came to Caesarea (8:40).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Philip left a city where many were believing and went to a desert road, because God said so (8:5–8, 8:26–27). Why do you think he obeyed so quickly?
2. The man said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (8:31). Who helps you understand the Bible?
3. Philip began with the very verses the man was reading and told him about Jesus (8:35). How can someone tell a friend about Jesus, starting from what the friend already knows?
4. As soon as the man saw water, he wanted to be baptized (8:36). Why do you think he didn't want to wait?
5. The man went on his way rejoicing (8:39). Why do you think he was so happy?

Recall questions

1. Which queen did the man serve? *(Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, Acts 8:27)*
2. Which prophet was he reading? *(Esaias, which is Isaiah, 8:28)*
3. What did he command the chariot to do? *(To stand still, 8:38)*

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **scripture** means God's Word written down; **at the same scripture** means right where the man was reading; **preached unto him** means told him about. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The man from Ethiopia heard about Jesus from the scripture, believed with all his heart, and was baptized right away. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, like the man who went down into the water (Acts 8:38). In Samaria, the people Philip preached to were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and then they received the Holy Ghost when Peter and John prayed for them (Acts 8:16–17). **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: tell one friend something you learned about Jesus today. And read one Bible story with a parent, and ask about anything you don't understand.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Acts 8:26: Which way did the angel tell Philip to go? *(Toward the south, to the way that goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza)*
2. Acts 8:27: Why had the man come to Jerusalem? *(To worship)*
3. Acts 8:30: What did Philip do when the Spirit told him to go near? *(He ran to him)*
4. Acts 8:32: What animal is the scripture about? *(A sheep, and a lamb)*
5. Acts 8:35: Who did Philip preach unto him? *(Jesus)*
6. Acts 8:37: What did the man say he believed? *(That Jesus Christ is the Son of God)*
7. Acts 8:38: Who went down into the water? *(Both Philip and the man)*
8. Acts 8:40: Where was Philip found? *(At Azotus)*

Or choose the **Philip and the Ethiopian word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/philip-and-the-ethiopian-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/philip-and-the-ethiopian-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/philip-and-the-ethiopian-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/philip-and-the-ethiopian-worksheet).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that the Bible points us to Jesus. Help us believe on Him with all our hearts and obey Him. Help us tell others about Jesus, like Philip did. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks about being baptized: be glad and encouraging. Tell them to talk with their parents and pastor about it. Never pressure a child.

If a child reads the word "eunuch" in Acts 8:27: say it was a word for a trusted officer who served in a king's or queen's court. This man was in charge of all the queen's treasure. Keep the focus on the story.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post