



Date: _____

Series: We Are God's Church (Spring)
Year 2, Lesson 53

An Ethiopian Believes

Bible Event: Acts 8:26-40

Take Home Point: *WE ARE GOD'S CHURCH – *We teach about Jesus.*

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson. The leader will say the first part of the phrase (CAPS). The children respond with the second part of the phrase (*italics*).

Jesus Link: All of God's word teaches us Jesus is the Savior.

What kids will learn about God in this worship experience:

- Children will learn the story of the Ethiopian who came to trust Jesus because Philip shared the Good News. They will learn that they, too, can share the Good News of Jesus. There are many ways to share Jesus' love. Kids will take home the point: ***WE ARE GOD'S CHURCH – *We teach about Jesus.***
- Children will respond to God's love as they pray to him, thanking him for loving them and giving them Jesus. They will offer him their songs of worship, their offerings, and their actions of love as they actively learn God's word.



Welcome Zone: (15-20 minutes)

Purpose: While kids arrive, give them a simple learning readiness activity that requires minimal supervision. This might include a video, games, blocks, or puzzles.

Video Suggestion: List a video, if available.

Activity Suggestion: Blocks, toys, puzzles, paper, and crayons.



Opening Worship: (10-15 minutes)

Children can bring forward the cross, candles, Bible, offering plate, and treasure box. The treasure box contains the props used to tell or dramatize the Bible event. Open with a simple prayer, having the children repeat after you. Collect offering and talk about how God will use it.

Praise Songs:

Choose two or three songs and list them here.

Bible Event: Imagination Theater

Imagination Theater is audience participation drama where the Bible event is told in creative fashion using children as actors. The Imagination Box contains the Bible and other special props used for the drama. Begin by removing the Bible and explain that it is God's word. Briefly summarize the story, and then remove an imaginary hat and place it on your head. This is your imagination hat. Invite the children to put on theirs as well. They will also use their imaginations to picture the events the Bible tells us about. Some will even use their imaginations to help act out these events. Distribute props to actors as they are called forward at the beginning of the presentation. Have them sit to the side until they are called on stage.

Before beginning the drama, call three kids to help:

- *Ethiopian – put the fancy headpiece on the volunteer and have him sit in the chariot, holding both the moneybag and the scroll.*
- *Philip – put the robe on the volunteer and stand him near the narrator.*
- *Angel of the Lord – put the white robe on the volunteer and have him stand near the narrator.*

Phrases that are underlined are to be repeated by the child actor or the audience. After you and the children put on imagination hats, open the Bible and begin.

Boys and girls, remember Jesus told the disciples before he went to heaven to preach the Good News to the whole world?

Well, today, we are going to learn about a man named Philip and how he shared the Good News of Jesus' love. Philip shared the Good News with a man from a different country called Ethiopia. The man

learned that Jesus died for his sins, and that if he believed in Jesus, he would be saved. Now, we would like to tell you the whole story.

One day an angel of the Lord appeared to Philip and said, (have the angel say the following phrase). **Go to the desert road, the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza.** (Send the angel off stage.)

So, Philip did as he was told and ran along the road to Gaza. (Have Philip run in place.) After a while, Philip came to a chariot. (Have Philip run halfway to the chariot.) In the chariot was an Ethiopian official, an important man in charge of all the money of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. (Ethiopian shakes moneybag.)

The Ethiopian had traveled to Jerusalem to worship God. But, even though he had worshipped God, he didn't understand all of God's word and didn't know about Jesus. Now, he was holding a scroll and trying to understand God's word. (Ethiopian holds up scroll, unrolls it a bit and pretends to read it.)

The Spirit of God told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." So Philip ran closer to the chariot (Philip runs closer to the chariot) and asked the Ethiopian, (Philip repeats each phrase into microphone) **"Do you understand what you are reading?"**

The Ethiopian answered, (Ethiopian repeats) **"How can I? I need someone to explain it."** Then, the Ethiopian asked Philip to get up on the chariot and sit with him. (Philip gets into chariot and sits with him.) The Ethiopian asked Philip, (Ethiopian repeats) **Tell me please, what does this mean?** As they traveled, Philip explained to the Ethiopian the Good News of Jesus. He explained that every person is a sinner, every person chooses to do wrong things, and every person deserves to die and be away from God. But God loves all people. So, he sent his Son, Jesus, to die for all the people of the world and take the punishment for their sin. Now, everyone who believes in Jesus will be forgiven and will live someday with Jesus in heaven.

As they continued to travel along the road, Philip and the Ethiopian came to some water. The Ethiopian said to Philip, **"What stops me from being baptized?"** (Ethiopian and Philip get out of the chariot and kneel on the blue tablecloth.) Then Philip baptized the Ethiopian. (An adult can sprinkle some water on their heads for a "wet" look.)

(Philip and Ethiopian step away from tablecloth.) When they came out of the water, the Spirit of God suddenly took Philip away and the Ethiopian did not see him again. (Philip is escorted off stage.) The Ethiopian got back into his chariot (Ethiopian gets back into chariot) and continued on his way rejoicing in Jesus.

Philip appeared in another place and continued traveling around telling many people about the Good News of Jesus. He knew the Bible message in the book of Colossians (read from the Bible), ***“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders, make the most of every opportunity.”*** He understood today’s special words. ***WE ARE GOD’S CHURCH – *We teach about Jesus.***



Action Zones: (20-30 minutes)

Purpose: Children move at their leisure to the activities according to their interest. Adults are assigned to oversee each of the zones watching for safety, assisting any activity, and helping the children connect to the lesson of the day. All zones are introduced at the beginning of Zone Time. Some suggested zones are included below. It is usually best to have all children go to the Snack Zone first. Sing a blessing song or say a snack prayer together before dismissing to the zones.

During the Zone Time, children may arrive from mid-service dismissal if this is an option at your church. Be prepared to welcome the children and invite them to choose a zone.

Snack Zone: Hand out one of each color of M&M's to the children. Go through the poem, having them pick up and eat each color of M&M as you read it. *Option:* Use M&M's Fun Packs.

M&M Poem

Red for blood that Jesus gave,
Sins removed so we can be saved.
Brown the cross on which he died.
Orange is for joy; he is alive!
Green is for life—so we can grow.
Blue for faith—it's Christ we know.
Yellow tells of wonders above,
Heaven's our home, enjoying God's love.

Prior to class, have a sandwich bag with each of the color M&M's in it and the poem. Use the option of the M&M Fun Pack in the sandwich bag if you prefer. Explain to the children that the bag is to give away to a friend who does not know Jesus. They can tell their friend about Jesus by using their M&M's. If they forget, they can just say something simple like, "These M&M's are to help you remember that God loves you. Have someone read you the poem. It tells all about God's love."

Finish by practicing the take home point. ***WE ARE GOD'S CHURCH – We teach about Jesus.**

Drama Zone: Act out the Bible event. Use the costumes, chariot, scroll, money bag and water items from the Bible event.

Puppet Zone: Let the children use puppets to ask questions about who Jesus is and what he did. Another puppet can answer the questions.

Felt Zone: Use felt board materials to show the story of An Ethiopian Believes from today's Bible event. (For example, use Lesson #165, "Philip Preaches to a Stranger," from *Betty Lukens' Through the Bible in Felt.*)

Craft Zone: Have children pick out matching “card” as adult reads the following poem. Each card has the line corresponding from the poem, and a picture (see appendices):

M&M Poem

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Blue for faith—it’s Christ we know.
Yellow tells of wonders above,
Heaven’s our home, enjoying God’s love.

Next, have the children assemble one set of each colored card. Place one set of cards and a corresponding color M&M (or M&M’s Fun Pack) in a plastic sandwich bag to give to a friend. They can tell their friend about Jesus using the cards to tell the Good News and the M&M’s can remind them how sweet it is to know Jesus.

Play Zone: Play “Pass the Scroll Relay.” Make one line of masking tape on the floor as a starting point. Divide the children into two teams. Give both teams an object, like a chair, to run around and return. Use a scroll rather than a baton. The last child gives the scroll to the teacher who reads the Bible verse inside it. Children play the game several times, trying to improve their time. When finished, remind the children that we want to pass God’s word on to other people, by telling them about Jesus.

Quiet Reading Zone: Basket of books. Include any that feature the story of Philip and the Ethiopian or telling others about Jesus.

Music Zone: Your choice of music.

Coloring Zone: “Philip and the Ethiopian” coloring page.



Closing Worship: (20 minutes)

Purpose: As you empty the zones and clean up, begin the music so the children can start wandering over.

Worship Songs:

Choose one or two songs and list them here.

Bible Application with Puppet Presentation:

Purpose: The puppet demonstrates the need that will be met in today's lesson. The scripts are not written verbatim, but give a story line in which the group leader can interact with the puppet.

Judy tells the large group presenter that she wanted to bring her stuffed animals to church because they don't know about Jesus. Her mom and dad said to leave them in the van. The presenter tells Judy that's great that she wants to tell others about Jesus. Judy replies that she is not too disappointed because her mom and dad suggested she bring her new neighbor that just moved in next door to church next week. The presenter agrees that it is a great idea.

The presenter reminds Judy that Jesus asked all of us to tell others about him.

Today, in the Bible event, we learned that Philip helped a man from another country called Ethiopia understand God's word. He shared how Jesus died for our sins so we can be forgiven.

He explains that Judy is also telling others about Jesus by bringing her new friend to church next week.

In the Bible event, Philip told a man who did not know Jesus about him. Judy, you are a child and Philip was an adult, so, you see, everyone and anyone can help tell others about Jesus.

Judy is amazed that even though she is small she can still help God by telling others about Jesus.

The large group presenter asks the children in the audience what are some other ways we can spread the news of Jesus. (*Bible storybooks, puzzles and videos.*) There are many ways to tell others about Jesus. It's easy to tell others that Jesus loves us and died on the cross to take away the wrong things we've done. Remember: ***WE ARE GOD'S CHURCH – We teach about Jesus.**

Prayer Time:

Purpose: Allow children to contribute their own prayers. This will teach them to turn to God in both good times and in times of trouble. End with the Lord's Prayer.

"Children Pray" Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Train Option:** Children line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone and speak their brief prayers of thanksgiving.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Children stand in a circle around one child sitting on a chair in the middle. All children in the circle will lay a hand on the child sitting in the chair as they say a prayer together.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and taps children on the head to stand and speak their prayer.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

May God, who is all around you,
pour his love upon you.

(Beginning at the bottom of the circle, slowly make a large circle with your hands. Finish by bringing your hands down and wiggling your fingers to resemble rain.)

And Jesus, his life a sacrifice,
walk right there beside you.

(Slowly make a large sign of the cross. Then move your hands out to the sides.)

And may God's Holy Spirit,
the one who lives inside you,

(Cross hands over your heart.)

keep you strong,
comfort, lead and guide you!

(Move to a "strong man" position. Then cross your arms with your hands on corresponding upper arms to communicate comfort. Bring one hand forward with "lead" and the other with "guide" to complete the blessing.)

Song of Sending:

Choose one song and list it here.



Closing Zones:

***Purpose:** Children go to an activity zone, such as, the coloring zone, quiet reading zone, and children's Christian music video zone, as they wait for their parents.*

Supplies:

Welcome Zone:

- blocks, toys, puzzles, paper and crayons

Opening Worship:

- Bible
- chariot made with a box large enough to put two chairs in it or two chairs behind a cardboard false front, or simply two chairs
- paper scroll
- blue tablecloth or sheet
- small bowl of water
- white robe (angel)
- fancy headpiece
- bag of money
- Bible character robe
- microphone

Action Zones:

Snack:

- three M&M's per child in each of the following colors: red, brown, orange, green, blue and yellow
- Option: M&M's Fun Pack
- small plastic sandwich bag
- half sheet of paper with the "M&M Poem" on it for each child
- paper cups
- water or juice

Drama:

- supplies from opening worship

Craft:

- Copy various templates on various colored paper as indicated. (Seven colors of 8 ½ x 11 inch paper divided in six equal parts.) The paper colors are: red, brown, orange, green, blue, yellow and white. On the red paper, divided in six equal parts, copy the six pictures of a crown of thorns with drops of blood. On the brown paper, divided into six equal parts, copy the six pictures of a cross. On the orange paper, copy the six pictures of a "joyful" person (jumping for joy). On the green paper, copy the plant or tree. On the blue paper, print six pictures of black outlines for clouds. On the yellow paper, print six pictures of Jesus. On the white paper, copy the picture of a rainbow and cross. Each picture represents one line in the "M&M Poem." Cut papers in six after printing to be used as "cards" in the Craft Zone.
- use a stapler or single-hole punch and yarn to put the cards together in sets.
- plastic sandwich bag
- three M&M's per child in each of the following colors: red, brown, orange, green, blue and yellow or option of M&M's Fun Pack

Play:

- paper scroll with the text from John 3:16 printed on it
- masking tape
- chair

Quiet Reading:

- pillows
- book basket—especially books relating to the Ethiopian story

Music:

- songs of choice

Puppet:

- assorted puppets

Felt:

- use felt board Bible characters to act out the story of “An Ethiopian Believes”—one resource is *Betty Lukens’ Through the Bible in Felt*, Lesson #165

Color:

- coloring page
- markers and crayons
- plain paper

Closing Worship:

- Judy, the puppet

Closing Zones:

- colored pencils
- paper
- basket of books

M&M Poem

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