

=THE CONVERSION=
Lesson 6
The Ethiopian Eunuch

Objects to have:

Your square of cloth (for the man by the Pool of Bethesda)

Your pitcher (for the woman by the well)

The two hearts that are black on one side and white on the other (for the publican and Pharisee)

The HIDE-AND-SEEK sign (for Zacchaeus)

Your hammer (for the thief on the cross)

Draw a picture representing this story. Color and mount the picture on heavy paper. (Color the frame black to resemble the edges of the cover of an open Bible; color the hills to look like sand, etc.) Cut apart the picture into pieces resembling a jigsaw puzzle, thus: Cut away the frame into one solid piece. Cut the sky, hills, and right section of the road into one piece. Cut around the outline of Philip. Cut the chariot separate, with the horse. Cut the Ethiopian separate. Leave the water and rocks and the rest of the road in one piece.

At least seven thumb tacks, or Scotch tape

A bulletin board, or wall space

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

For the last few Sundays we have had Bible stories that are found in the New Testament part of the Bible. (Show the children where the New Testament is found in your Bible.) Let's remember some of the stories. (Hold up your objects of review, one at a time, and allow the children to remember the main character or characters of each story and one or two facts about the story.)

Our story for today is found in the New Testament, also. It is found here (show the children Acts chapter 8.) This is another good story. Sit up straight, look at me, and listen.

(Put the frame of the picture on the bulletin board or wall. This frame is to remind us of the Bible.) The Bible tells us that everyone has sinned. Everyday someone new learns that he should be sorry for his sin. Everyday someone should learn to tell Jesus about his sin, and he should ask Jesus to be his Saviour. In today's story from the Bible we meet another person who was sorry for his sin and wanted Jesus to forgive him.

Telling the story:

First we will talk about another man. We will talk about Philip. Philip was a preacher. He was having such a good time preaching the Gospel! He loved to tell people how they might be saved. He would travel from city to city. In each new city he would gather people together. They would sit down, get very quiet, and listen to him preach. Many people said, "Philip is telling us the truth. We understand now how sinful we are. We know that we could never go to Heaven as we are." The people would bow their heads and tell God about their sins, and ask Jesus to be their Saviour. Then Philip would leave those people and leave the city where they lived and travel on to another city so that he could preach to people in that city.

One day an angel came to Philip. The angel said, "Philip, get up." Well, Philip decided that since he was seeing and hearing an angel, that whatever the angel was telling must be a message from God. Philip did what the angel said to do; Philip got up. Philip stood there listening to whatever else the angel had to say to him. The angel said, "Philip, get ready to travel again. I want you to go someplace where you had not planned to go." Remember, Philip knew that this message was from God, and Philip had decided a long time before that to always obey God. "Philip," the angel said, "you won't go to a city this time. You will go to the road (put the section of road, sky, and hills into the puzzle on the board or wall) that leads from Jerusalem into Gaza. The road the leads from Jerusalem into Gaza goes right through the desert."

The road goes right through the desert? A desert is mostly dirt and sand. There may be a few trees, but one could travel a long way in the desert without seeing one tree. After traveling many, many miles a person might see a little pond of water. There may be a few little bushes and some weeds and some cactus. But, mostly a desert place has just dirt and sand. How could there be many people in the desert? Maybe Philip thought that it was strange that God's message was that Philip should go to the road that leads from Jerusalem into Gaza—a roadway that went through the desert. But, wherever God wanted Philip to go, that is where Philip would go.

Philip started out walking on the road that would lead from Jerusalem into Gaza. He walked and walked and walked. Then he saw way away from him just one lonely chariot. (Put the chariot in place in your puzzle.) God spoke to Philip. God said, "Philip, see that chariot? Get close enough to that chariot so that you can talk to the man who is riding in it."

Philip obeyed God again. Philip had to hurry to catch up with the chariot. The chariot was pulled by a horse, and the horse was walking and pulling the chariot away from Philip. Philip had to run to catch up with the chariot. He was running fast enough that he finally got close enough to see that there was a man in the chariot. He kept running and running, until he finally came up to the side of the chariot. (Talk as if you are out of breath.) Philip ran alongside the chariot. He could see that the man in the chariot was an Ethiopian, for his skin was dark. Philip could also see that the man in the chariot was sitting there reading a book. The man was reading the book out loud. (Read Isaiah 53:7.)

Philip knew what the man was reading. Philip had read these words before, maybe many times. The Ethiopian was reading from the Old Testament of the Bible; he was reading the book of Isaiah. (Hold up your Bible that is open to the book of Isaiah.) Philip, running beside the chariot, called out to the man, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The Ethiopian man stopped reading and turned his head to look at Philip. Where had he come from? The Ethiopian answered Philip, "No, I don't understand what I am reading. I need someone who does understand this to teach me what this is all about. Can you possibly tell me what it means?"

Philip was probably wishing by now that the Ethiopian man would stop the chariot so that he could stop running! The Ethiopian said, "Sir, do you know what that verse means? Do you know what (read Isaiah 53:7 again) means?"

Philip nodded his head. The Ethiopian man stopped the chariot. "Would you please get into my chariot, sit with me, and explain this verse as we travel along?"

Philip climbed into the chariot and sat down beside the man. The chariot started up again. Philip talked with the Ethiopian man. Philip said, "That verse of Scripture is not talking about Isaiah. It is talking about Jesus. Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth from Heaven. God told Isaiah many, many years ago that Jesus would come, that He would die on the cross without fighting the people who nailed Him to the cross." Philip explained something more to the Ethiopian man, "By dying on the cross, Jesus made the only way there is to go to Heaven." Philip said to the Ethiopian, "Jesus is in Heaven now. Tell Jesus about your sins. He will hear you. Ask Jesus to wash your heart clean."

All the time that Philip and the Ethiopian were talking, the chariot was being pulled along the road by the horse. Suddenly, the Ethiopian said, "Look, there is some water by the road." (Put the water into the picture.) "There is a little pond of water. I want to be baptized."

Philip said, "If you really believe in Jesus as your Saviour, you may be baptized."

The Ethiopian man said, "I do believe that Jesus is the Son of God."

Philip said, “Then stop the chariot.” The chariot was stopped. Philip and the Ethiopian man went down into the water. (Put the Ethiopian into place beside Philip in the water.) Philip put the Ethiopian down into the water so that the water covered him. Then he brought the Ethiopian up out of the water. This was like burying the Ethiopian in water. That shows that a person who is saved wants to do away with old sins. He wants to bury them. Then Philip brought the Ethiopian out of the water. That shows that the saved person wants to live a new life—a life to please God. The Ethiopian got baptized by Philip to show that he had been saved.

The Ethiopian was so happy that he had trusted Jesus as his Saviour! As he got into his chariot, I think that he could have been singing a song. Philip had explained the Gospel to him. Philip had showed him how to be saved. The Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing; he started up his chariot and went on his way.

The Ethiopian never saw Philip again. Philip had other places to go to tell people about Jesus.

Our Bible verse for today helps us remember our Bible story: “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus.” Acts 8:35. (Show the children where this verse is found in the Bible.)