

**Upper Level
Day 2**

By Katherine Rath

Philip and the Ethiopian

Acts 6:1-7; 8:26-40

Objectives:

1. The students will explain how people in the Bible who were not called evangelists benefitted the early Church.
2. The students will discuss how both called workers and laypeople can serve God and others in modern times.
3. The students will identify how God used Philip and helped Philip to spread His Word. The students will brainstorm how they can witness to others in their lives.
4. The students will list Bible passages that encourage evangelism.

Materials:

For teaching the lesson:

- Bibles
- Bookmarks printed on cardstock or printer paper (two bookmarks per student)
- Colored pencils

For further reading:

- *The People's Bible—Acts*, by Richard D. Balge, pp. 66-70, 95-98

Introduction:

1. Brainstorm a list of jobs that students might have when they are older. It may help to list jobs that their relatives have or jobs they are interested in. (Note: If teacher and pastor are not on the list after this discussion, add them.)
2. Discuss with students how the jobs of pastor and teacher serve God and fulfill God's command to spread the word to all nations. (Matt. 28:19-20a "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.")
3. Next, ask students if the jobs of pastor and teacher are the only jobs in which adults can share the love of Jesus with others.
(No! All people can share the message of the Bible with people they come into contact with, including kids.)
4. Have students pick a job off the board and explain to a partner how someone who has that job could serve God and others. *(Answers will vary; however, students should highlight how anyone can share the Good News with co-workers, their family, and other people in their lives. They can also model Christ's love through their daily words and actions. As needed, guide students to realize that even if a person's full time job is not in the church, as a Christian, they are still called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the Word. If applicable, have students name lay members of the congregation who they know that serve God or others.)*
5. The Bible highlights several people in the book of Acts who were not the Apostles who helped serve the church in their own unique situations. Divide the students into small groups to read three short portions of Scripture that highlight how lay people served the newly growing church. When the students have finished reading, have each group report how their chosen person served God and/or others in the church. *(Assist groups as needed.)*

- a. Lydia—Acts 16:11-15 – *(She showed hospitality toward Paul and his companions who were traveling to spread God’s Word.)*
 - b. Dorcas—Acts 9:36-42 – *(She used her talent of making clothing to help the poor and always did good to others.)*
 - c. Aquila and Priscilla – Acts 18:24-26 – *(They welcomed the evangelist Apollos into their home and gave him more instruction about God.)*
6. In today’s lesson, we will learn more about laypeople who were chosen by God to use their spiritual gifts to further the work of the church.

Bible Story:

Historical Background

Jesus had ascended into heaven, leaving the Twelve Apostles to spread the Gospel to all nations. This was an extensive but essential task.

Reading the Story (Part One)

1. Distribute Bibles and have the students open their Bibles to Acts 6:1-7.
2. Choose a method for reading the text aloud—the teacher reads to students, the students take turns reading the text, or ask for a student volunteer to read.

Discussion Questions (Part One)

1. As the church continued to grow, which widows were sometimes overlooked in food distributions?
(The Grecian Jewish widows)
2. Explain that this overlooking of distributing food was likely due to an accident or the Apostles having so much work to do and losing track of all the people who needed food.
3. Why was it wise for the apostles to ask for help in taking care of the needs of their congregations?
(Caring for the needs of others in the church was and is very important as well, and although the Apostles themselves did not have time to preach and take care of everyone’s food needs, there were other Christians who had both the time and ability to care for others. It was good for the Apostles to let other Christians display their faith in action while serving others.)
4. Explain that the seven who were chosen have often been known as the Seven Deacons of the early Church. A deacon is typically a layperson (not trained as a pastor or teacher) who is chosen by a church to help with serving others in the church and assisting the pastor as needed.
5. How did the Seven Deacons of the early church help?
(They took care of the poor and needy, opening up more time for the Twelve Apostles to do ministry work and prayer.)
6. How did God bless the early Christian church through this plan to divide up the work?
(The word of God spread, and the number of believers increased.)

Reading the Story (Part Two)

1. Instruct the students to turn to Acts 8:26-40. Briefly explain that one of the Seven Deacons, Stephen, was stoned, and this level of persecution had caused many Christians to flee their homes. One of those who had to flee was Philip, another one of the Seven Deacons.
2. Again, choose a method for reading the text (teacher reads to students, the students take turns reading the text, or ask for a student volunteer to read).

Discussion Questions (Part Two)

1. Ask students to find evidence that shows how God clearly intended for Philip to enter into this exact situation to help this exact man.
(See verses 26, 29)
2. Which continent is the country of Ethiopia in?
(Africa)
3. Briefly explain to students that the man whom Philip witnessed to was not necessarily from the modern country of Ethiopia, but he was a Gentile from an African nation.
4. Why was it significant that God sent Philip specifically to a Gentile to witness about salvation through Jesus?
(God wants ALL people to hear the truth of his Word, not just His chosen people.)
5. From what book of the Old Testament was the Ethiopian man reading?
(Isaiah)
6. Although the man clearly had interest in God's Word, what problem was he facing?
(He could not understand what the portion of Scripture was talking about.)
7. How did Philip help with the man's problem?
(He explained the meaning to the man.)
8. Reread verses 32-33. From our post-New Testament time period, what can we understand that these passages from Isaiah are talking about?
(Jesus, the Savior's death)
9. When they passed water near the road, what did the Ethiopian man ask Philip to do for him?
(Baptize him)
10. Was Philip such an excellent evangelist that the man believed so quickly and wanted to be baptized?
(No. God gave Philip the right words to say, and the Holy Spirit, working through the Word of God, planted faith in the Ethiopian man's heart. While we cannot credit Philip with creating the man's faith, we can easily see that he was God's instrument in bringing the full knowledge of God's Word to the Ethiopian man.)
11. God took Philip away from the place where the Ethiopian man was traveling. What was Philip's next job?
(He traveled around preaching the Gospel in many towns.)

Application

1. Review: Had Philip been trained as an Apostle of Jesus? Did he have any experience in ministry?
(No, he was chosen as a deacon to serve the poor, and God later chose to use him as an evangelist.)
2. Even though Philip was not formally trained in preaching God's Word, did he hesitate or complain about having to explain God's Word to this man that he met?
(No)
3. How is Philip a good example for people today?
(We can be prepared to share our faith and knowledge of the Bible with people that God puts into our lives. We don't have to be trained pastors and teachers to share the Good News of Jesus.)
4. How will we know when God puts us into a situation to share his Word?
(We probably won't have an angel communicate with us directly, like Philip; however, we can depend on the fact that God will put us into the right situations at the right time. We should always stay ready to share our faith.)
5. Brainstorm with the students how God might use them to share God's Word in their daily lives.
(Answers will vary but may include witnessing to friends on their sports teams, neighbors, or even their own relatives who do not believe.)
6. Based on that brainstorming, have each student come up with one way they could share their faith with at least one person in their lives who does not believe.
(Answers will vary.)

kids c.a.r.e. Connection:

Yesterday, you learned about the history and modern life of the Roma people in Bulgaria whom our mission offerings to kids c.a.r.e. will benefit. A large part of Roma culture surrounds playing music. Although Roma music has changed over time as the people traveled and picked up new influences, Roma music is still well-known and cherished in Europe. Let's listen to some examples of Roma music in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJEUxVGQIuk>.

Teacher Note: As this video is quite long, decide how much music you have time to listen to now or skip around the video to hear multiple songs and styles.

Memory Verses:

(Theme Passage) John 10:16 "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

1 Peter 3:15b "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for people who share God's Word with us and who model your love through their acts of service, whether they are trained called workers or lay people in our congregations. Please continue to give them the strength to serve you in all things. We also ask you to empower all of us to serve you in whatever way you know is best. Help us to always be ready to be a witness to the people you put into our lives. In your name we pray. Amen.

Activities:

Evangelism Bookmarks:

Distribute printed bookmark templates on cardstock or printer paper as well as colored pencils. (Note: You may want to cut these out ahead of time if you do not have enough scissors for your students.) Tell the students that they will be creating bookmarks with Bible passages and/or pictures that encourage them to spread God's Word. As a class, brainstorm Bible passages about sharing God's Word to give the students options. Each student should create two bookmarks, one to keep for their own encouragement and one to give to someone else that they would like to encourage in evangelism.

Prepared to Answer Roleplay:

Have students form pairs or small groups to run through how they would answer questions about their faith that may come up in their daily lives. (Note: Resource B includes example scenarios you may use for this activity.) Emphasize to students that although they may feel uncomfortable, the main way to become more comfortable talking about faith is to practice. Another option for this activity would be to brainstorm times students had a difficult experience trying to express their faith or answer questions about their faith and specifically discuss how they could respond in those situations.

Music:

Go Into the World (*Let All the People Praise You*, 91)

This short song emphasizes our directive as Christians to spread the Gospel to the entire world. As we evangelize, we know that God will be with us giving us strength and helping us to reflect him in all we do.

Refrain:

Go ye, go ye into the world
And make disciples of all the nations
Go ye, go ye into the world
And I will be with you there!

Verse 1:

I am the vine; you are the branches
Ever the fruit to bear.
I am the light,
You, the reflection ever ev'rywhere

Extending the Lesson:

Music:

As time allows, consider listening to more of the traditional music from the link included inside the lesson. For an example of modern Roma music, you can also listen to music by the Hungarian Gypsy Orchestra <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8kGSD-1D18>

Cooking and Baking:

As your time and materials allow, try out some traditional Roma recipes:

Breakfast Blini: <https://www.thedailymeal.com/waltraut-s-sweet-breakfast-blini-recipe>

Cinnamon Saffron Galuski (Marzipan Dessert Dumplings):

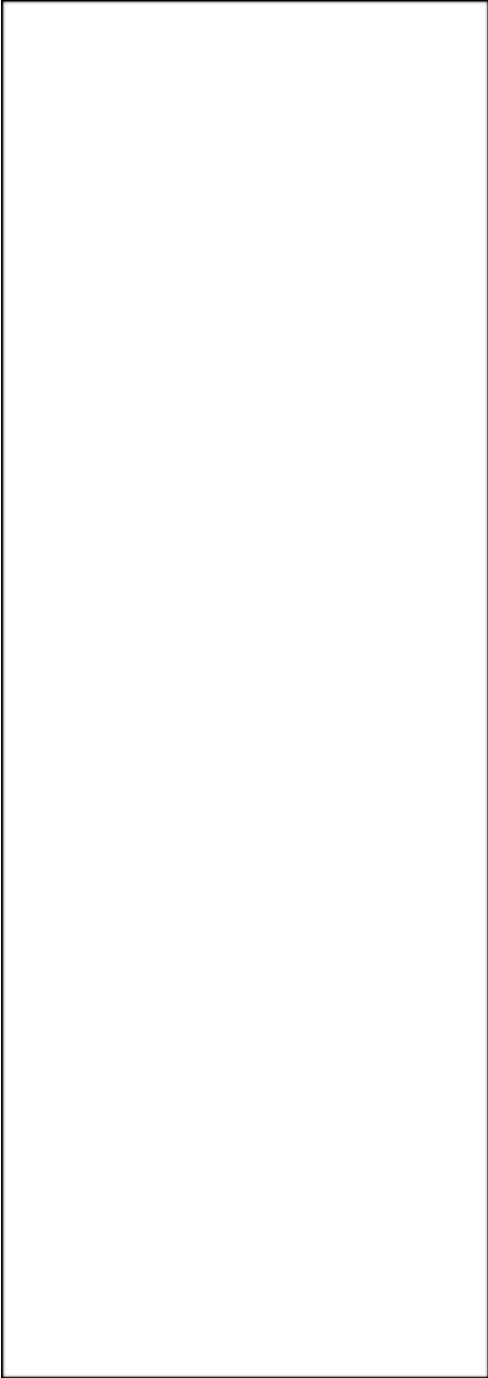
<https://www.thedailymeal.com/recipes/cinnamon-saffron-galu-ki-marzipan-dessert-dumplings-recipe>

Romani Tea: <https://www.thedailymeal.com/romani-tea-recipe> (just the recipe-- ignore the introduction)

Resources:



Bookmark Templates



Prepared to Answer Roleplay

Directions: In pairs or small groups, run through the following situations and practice what you might say if this scenario came up in your daily life.

Scenario #1: A teammate on your soccer team asks you why you attend church on Sunday mornings instead of sleeping in. What would you say?

Scenario #2: Your next door neighbor has supper with your family. Later, when you are playing outside, he asks you why your family prays before meals and has family devotions since he has never been to a house where that happens.

Scenario #3: Your aunt who hasn't been to church in years is visiting your family and asks to see some of your most recent projects. You decide to show her a school art project that includes the Bible passage, John 3:16. What would you talk to her about?

Scenario #4: Some kids on the bus are making fun of a classmate of yours for being a Christian. What would you say to the bullies?

Scenario #5: While waiting in line to attend a movie, an older woman in front of you asks you if you are a Christian. You say, "Yes," and then she asks why. How would you respond?