I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.

John 8:12
(NIV 1984)
Why did God lead Philip to the Ethiopian?

God led Philip to tell the good news of Jesus to an African from Ethiopia so that he would be saved.

Application: God gives us opportunities to share the Good News with people of all races and nationalities.

Response: We do everything possible to support the spread of the gospel throughout the world.

Lesson Summary: God’s angel appeared to Philip and directed him to go to a desert road. There he met an Ethiopian official and shared the gospel with him. The Ethiopian asked to be baptized, and Philip baptized him. The Ethiopian went home rejoicing, and Philip continued preaching in another place.

* Matthew 28:19
* Mark 16:15
* 1 Timothy 2:3,4
* The Third Commandment
* Hymn 573:1,2,4

Looking Back at Lesson 11

The Persecution of the Early Church
Acts 6:8–8:8

Aim: How did God use the persecution of early Christians for the good of his church?

Truth: God used the persecution of early Christians to spread his Word so that many people were brought to faith.

Application: God still causes his Word to be spread in spite of persecution.

Response: We trust that God will cause his Word to be spread, even when Christians face persecution.

Lesson Summary: Stephen, a church deacon, was brought before the Sanhedrin for blasphemy. Through a summary of the Old Testament, he showed the Jewish leaders that they had rejected God’s prophets. The men stoned him to death. This event started a severe persecution of Christians led by Saul. Many Christians fled to other cities and spread the gospel.

Memory Treasures: Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 28:19,20; 1 Peter 5:8; The Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed; Hymn 200:1-4

Heavenly Father, as you led Philip to preach to the Ethiopian, so you have called me to tell the Good News to these children. Thank you for this blessed privilege! Inspire us all, as you did Philip, to tell the Good News to people of all races and nationalities. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
**Alternate Lesson Plan**

**Sing:** Sing “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains” (hymn 571:1-3). This hymn focuses our thoughts on foreign mission fields like Africa, where there is still much work to be done.

**Pray:** Dearest heavenly Father, show us opportunities to tell people of all races and nations about you. Guide us to support our missionaries in Africa and other foreign lands with our prayers and our offerings. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Tell the students to imagine they have a message for a friend in a different country. Ask, “How could you get your message across?”

Give them 30 seconds to make a list of different ways they could get the message to their friend. When time is up, make a master list on the board. Then lead the class to cross out any means that would not have been available two thousand years ago. Point out that you now have a list of ways the disciples could have used to spread the gospel.

We are blessed to have so many ways to communicate with people around the world who need to hear the Good News. In Philip’s day, there were not so many options. We are going to hear how God led Philip to spread the Good News to a man from Ethiopia—a part of present-day Africa. We will answer the question, Why did God lead Philip to the Ethiopian?
Acts 8:26-30

1. When the Bible describes the eunuch as Ethiopian, it doesn’t mean that he was from modern-day Ethiopia but that he was from Nubia, in the upper Nile region. Why did Philip run up to the Ethiopian’s chariot? [The Holy Spirit told Philip to go up to the chariot and stay near it.]

2. Explain that the Ethiopian was a black man from the Egypt/Sudan area of present-day Africa.

3. What evidence is there that even though the Ethiopian was a Gentile, he believed in the true God as the Jews did? [He had just come from worshiping in Jerusalem, and he was reading from the book of Isaiah.]

3. Philip and the Ethiopian were complete strangers. How did Philip start a conversation with this man? [Philip asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading.]

**KEY POINT** Where did God lead Philip? God led Philip to an [Ethiopian] to talk to him about the [Word] of God.

**God Connects Us** God leads different people to share the gospel in various situations. Connect the following believers with the appropriate situation where they can talk to someone about the Word of God. You’ll have to think of one situation for yourself!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Works a shift with nurses who haven’t heard the Good News.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Is assigned to a dorm room with a roommate who is an unbeliever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>[Various responses.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>Receives a call to share the gospel with the members of a congregation and those who don’t know the Savior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Have the students identify the verse that tells how Philip knew to whom he was supposed to speak. [Verse 29.]

2. Have the students complete God’s Word 1, item 2.

3. Point out that Philip had not mentioned Jesus—yet. Ask the students how he was already showing God’s love to the Ethiopian. [He offered to help him by explaining Scripture to him.]

Have the students read 1 Peter 3:15 together. Point out that at any time God may put someone in our path that needs the Good News. Ask what this means for us. [We need to be ready to tell the Good News, gently and respectfully.]

Then use skit 2 on Copy Master 1 to show students how to use friendship evangelism when God leads them to someone who needs the Good News.
4. Ask what the Ethiopian was confused about. [If Isaiah was talking about himself or someone else.]

5. Have students answer one item in God's Word 2, item 5 and then pair up with someone who did the other item and trade answers.

6. Ask the students to draw a simple sketch to answer God's Word 2, item 6. [Sketch of a shell with water, a river with two men, a font, or any other baptismal symbol.]

Go With the Flow
Have the students choose one situation from God's Word Today 2 and make a flowchart showing how that believer’s actions affected the spread of the gospel. Give the following example, connecting the phrases with arrows:

Katy babysat. A couple attended the English as a Second Language class at church. They heard the gospel. They joined the church and had their children baptized. Their son grew up and became a pastor himself.

**Act 8:31-38**

4. Imagine that you have never heard about Jesus. Look at verses 32 and 33. Write one question you would have about those verses. [Answers will vary.]

5. Ask the students to draw a simple sketch to answer God's Word 2, item 6. [Sketch of a shell with water, a river with two men, a font, or any other baptismal symbol.]

6. How do we know that the Ethiopian believed what Philip told him about Jesus? [He asked to be baptized.]

**Key Point** How did this conversation change the Ethiopian’s life?

Philip told the Ethiopian the good news about [Jesus] and then [baptized] him.

**God's Word Today** Making a Difference

It may be difficult to see how you can share the Good News with people of different races and nationalities. But opportunities may be closer than you think. Describe how what the following Christians do could lead to someone hearing the Good News or being baptized.

- Katy babysits during the English as a Second Language class at her church. [Because Katy babysits, people may hear the Good News at church and have their children baptized.]
- Missy saves loose change to support mission work. [Because Missy (and others) donate money, missionaries can spread the gospel throughout the world.]
- David mows the pastor’s lawn on Saturday so that Pastor can reach out to immigrants. [Because of David, his pastor is able to preach the Good News to people from a different country.]
- Jack and Leah adopt a baby girl from China. [Jack and Leah could take that little girl to church and have her baptized, which may not have happened in her home country.]
Acts 8:39,40

7. Describe the amazing way that Philip continued to preach the gospel. [The Spirit took him away after he and the Ethiopian came out of the water. He reappeared in Azotus (20 miles north of Gaza).]

8. Tell why we are filled with the same joy as the Ethiopian. [Like the Ethiopian, we have heard the Good News and received the blessing of baptism. We now have the peace and forgiveness that Jesus brings.]

KEYPOINT How did the Ethiopian feel after his time with Philip?

The Ethiopian was filled with joy as he went home to Africa.

Picture This Like the Ethiopian, we are filled with joy. This joy leads us to look for opportunities to spread the gospel message far and wide. Look at the pictures below. Write an idea for how to use the item in the picture to spread the Good News to all the world.

Choose one of the three memory treasure passages. Draw a symbol that could be used along with the passage on a mission banner or bulletin board.
Encourage families to save their pocket change for a specific mission or group. (Send home some suggestions and addresses. Check with your pastor or check a synod yearbook.)

Ask the students why God led Philip to the Ethiopian. [So that he could share God’s Word with him.] Have the students describe how they can continue the work Philip started. [Pray for the spread of the gospel, encourage missionaries by sending cards and letters, become a missionary or nurse in the mission field.] Close by having each student write a one-sentence prayer for mission work in Africa. Going in alphabetical order, read them aloud to create a class prayer.

Provide a list of home and world missions and a globe or map. Allow the students to explore the locations where we have world missions and home missions.

**Aim:** Why did God lead Philip to the Ethiopian?

**Truth:** God led [Philip] to tell the good news of Jesus to an African from Ethiopia so that he would be [saved].

**Application:** God gives [us] opportunities to share the [Good News] with people of all races and nationalities.

**Response:** We do everything possible to support the spread of the [gospel] throughout the [world].

Talk with your parents about your community—do people from a variety of races and cultural groups live in your area? What is your church doing to reach out to the people you thought of? What can you and your parents do?

**Student’s initials:** ______  **Parent’s initials:** ______

**CLOSE**

Ask the students to describe how God led Philip to the Ethiopian. [He told Philip where to go and whom to talk to.] Ask why God did this. [So that Philip could tell the Ethiopian the Good News.] Refer the students to the lists they made in Get Set! Point out that these are really lists of ways that we can spread the Good News. Ask the students to circle one idea on their list and tell how they could use that means to spread the Good News. Conclude by singing “Spread, Oh, Spread the Mighty Word” (hymn 576:1–4).
Lesson Activities

1. Review

Backward Fill-in-the-Blank

*Purpose:* Students will review the lesson by writing fill-in-the-blank clues for provided answers.

*Procedure:* Have each student complete Copy Master 2. The answers are as follows:

[Fill-in-the-blank sentences will vary. On the earth picture, the students could write all creation, all creatures, all nations, all people, etc.]

What Did Philip Say?

*Purpose:* Students will recreate what Philip may have said.

*Procedure:* Have the students work in small groups to write out a script of what Philip actually may have said to the Ethiopian. Use Isaiah 60:1-3 and 53:4-6 to get them started. They should remember to include an explanation of Baptism too.

2. Application

Friendship Evangelism

*Purpose:* Students will do a skit and answer a few questions to help them better understand friendship witnessing.

*Procedure:* Hand out Copy Master 1 and ask the students to cut it into three sections. They can pair up and do each skit, using the evaluation questions after each skit. Or you can assign pairs to perform each skit for the class and do the evaluation as a class after each skit.

3. Music

Jesus, Jesus, God’s Son, Jesus

*Purpose:* Students will learn a song in which we pray that God would help us use our gifts in service to him and give us courage to share his Word.

*Procedure:* Teach the song “Jesus, Jesus, God’s Son, Jesus” (Copy Master 3).

Memory Treasures Exercises

- What wonderful message from God do all three passages contain? [That God wants all people to be saved.]
- Though we don’t know what day this incident took place, how was the Ethiopian obeying the Third Commandment? [He was gladly hearing and learning God’s Word.]
4. Art

The World’s Savior

Purpose: Students will decorate a Christian symbol reminding us that Jesus is the Savior of all people.

Procedure: Have the students color or decorate Copy Master 4. Explain that a cross and a globe are the elements in the symbol “The World’s Savior.” Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross redeemed the whole world, and God wants the news of this redemption to be spread to all the world.

5. Writing

Letter of Encouragement

Purpose: Students will use letter writing to explore and extend the lesson.

Procedure: Tell the students, “Imagine that you are Philip. Write a letter to your Ethiopian friend to see how he is doing. Write a little about your experience on the road to Gaza. Encourage him in the faith. Include a Bible passage and/or a short prayer.”

Pyramid Poem

Purpose: Students will review the facts of the lesson by writing a poem.

Procedure: Have the students write the story of today’s lesson in a pyramid formation, writing one word in the first line, two in the second, etc. Example:

Philip
Preached gospel
Baptized the Ethiopian
Disappeared from his sight
Witnessed about his Savior often

6. Bible Study

Beautiful Feet

Purpose: Students will be encouraged to spread the gospel and pray for others who do so.

Procedure: Read Romans 10:13-15 and discuss the following:

• Who will be saved? [Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord.]

• There is a logical sequence of questions in these verses. Finish these sentences:

You can’t call on Jesus unless you [believe in him].
You can’t believe in Jesus unless you have [heard about him].
You can’t hear about Jesus unless someone [preaches to you].

• What does this passage then urge us to do? [To go and preach so that others may hear and believe.]

• The quotation in verse 15 is from Isaiah. Why are these feet beautiful? [Because they bring the good news of Jesus to others.]

• What are some ways, then, that we have beautiful feet in God’s eyes? [We tell people about Jesus. We pray for missionaries. We support mission work with our offerings.]

Ask the students to trace their feet, cut them out, and decorate them. On the feet have the students write short prayers for the work of our missionaries in foreign lands. Display them on a bulletin board under the heading “Lord, use our feet to bring the good news!”