

The Early Church: Philip and the Ethiopian*

Lesson 3

LESSON OVERVIEW

Key Point: Let Jesus' love flow.

Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Story: Acts 8:26-39

Challenge Verse: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden." Matthew 5:14

ITEMS NEEDED

Each class needs the following:

Ice Cream Sundaes—for each student—they will help fix these. Be sure to find out from your leaders where to get the ice cream sundae items.

Crepe paper—2 rolls for each class

Bible Verse Poster (Kindergarten and 1st grade has a shorter version)

BEFORE CLASS

- Put up the Bible Verse Poster for today.
- Set out any items you need for today's lesson
- Pray for each student by name.

AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

- Greet each student by name as they enter.
- Give each student an attendance sticker for the attendance chart, and feel free to add guest names to the chart. This will give them a sense of belonging.
- Get to know any guests and help them fill out a guest form.
- Be sure to smile—Your smile and attitude sets the atmosphere as students enter.

NOTE: Today is Volcano Day as you will see from the lesson.

OPENING ACTIVITY

SAY: Welcome to Volcano Day. Just like lava flows from a volcano, today we're going to talk about how Jesus' love can flow from you to others.

Control Tool

Anytime you say, "Let Jesus' love flow," students should shout back, "Wherever you go." Feel free to have a boys vs. girls or a side vs. side competition to see who can say it the loudest. And remember that students are going to mimic you--If you say it in an excited, energetic way, that's how they'll respond. If you say it halfway or timidly, they'll respond in a like manner.

Activity*

Instruct your class to stand in a circle. Make sure the crepe paper streamers are easily accessible. Explain that when you say go, you are going call out a name and say, "[Name], here's Jesus' love." Hold the end of the crepe paper and throw the streamers to the person whose name you called. Then that student will call someone else's name and toss it to them. Be sure to tell them to hang onto the roll before throwing it. Tell the others to keep their eyes open and be ready to catch the roll. Keep going until every one is holding onto the crepe paper. If you desire, keep going until everyone has thrown it two or three times or until you run out of paper. Encourage the kids to move quickly as they "pass Jesus' love" to the others.

SAY: On the count of three, we're going to see how quickly you can throw all the paper in the trash can and have a seat in the circle. Ready...1-2-3...Go!

Control Tool

Leader: *Let Jesus' love flow* / Students: *Wherever you go!*

Discussion

Ask the students: **What happened as "Jesus' love" flowed?** (It made a web; it was funny; we got all tangled up.)

Ask the students: **How is this like or unlike what happens when we share Jesus' love in real life?** (Both are fun; it brings people together; etc.)

Ask the students: **What might happen in your school if kids and teachers let Jesus' love flow?** (Kids wouldn't get teased; everyone would have a friend; we'd be a lot happier; people would help each other.)

SAY: When we played the game, it really changed the game area. Streamers were everywhere! Imagine how people who love Jesus can change their schools—even their world—if they let Jesus' love flow every day!

Illustration*

SAY: When you share Jesus with others, His love flows from one person to another—sort of like a wave. In fact, we’re going to see how fast we can make a wave flow around our circle. I’ll start it and it will move around the circle to the left. Let’s see how fast we can do it. Ready...Go!
(Throw your hands up, then look to the person to your right. As it moves around, encourage your kids by saying, “Keep going. Faster. Faster.” If a student doesn’t do it, look to the person to their right and say, “Keep going, [Name],” so that it just moves past them but doesn’t draw attention to them.)

Do it again, but this time, as the wave goes around, have the students shout out the name of their schools. (Home-schoolers can just say, “Home.”)

SAY: If you have given your life to Jesus, you can share God’s love with others wherever you go.

Control Tool

Leader: Let Jesus’ love flow / Students: Wherever you go!

BIBLE LESSON

SAY: In the past we’ve learned about how Jesus and his disciples showed God’s love, but it wasn’t always easy. Not everyone believed that Jesus rose from the dead. They thought that Jesus’ followers were lying. One man, named Saul, whom we will learn more about next week, arrested Christians and even had some of them killed for following Jesus. As a result many of Jesus’ followers left Jerusalem to find safer places to live. The book of Acts tells us about a follower of Jesus named Phillip. Listen to what happened to him.

Tell your students to get their Bibles ready for a Bible Drill.
Ready...Acts 8:26...Go!

Read from your Bible Acts 8:26-39.

Ask your students to follow along with you and remind them that their Bibles may not use the exact same words (because there are different translations) but that they have the exact same message. Also tell your students to listen very carefully because afterwards you are going to ask them some questions about what they heard.

Divide your class into two teams and take turns asking each team the following “Listening Questions.”

Listening Questions

Who told Phillip to go south on the road? (An angel)

From where was the man in the chariot? (Ethiopia)

What was the name of the Queen of the Ethiopians? (Candace)

What did the Ethiopian do for the Queen? (He was in charge of all the treasury of the Queen)

From where in the Bible was he trying to read? (The book of Isaiah)

What did the Ethiopian do after Phillip left? (He went on his way rejoicing)

(NOTE: If any of your students ask what a eunuch is, simply explain that it was a man who was unable to have children that served a royal family. Don't make a big deal out of this and don't bring it up unless they ask.)

Ask the students: **When would this have happened—before or after Jesus' life?** (After—the Gospels come first in the New Testament. The book of Acts follows them.)

LESSON ACTIVITY

Tell your students to find a partner. *(Remember to help students so that none ever feel left-out.)* Instruct them to choose who will represent Phillip, the one who knows Jesus—and who will be the Ethiopian, the stranger from a far away country who doesn't know Jesus.

SAY: Ethiopians, since you're from a distant land, go sit in that far corner over there. *(Point to one of the corners of the room.)*

SAY: Since Jerusalem wasn't safe, Phillip had gone to Samaria to teach people there about Jesus. *(Send all the Phillips to an area of the room that you will designate as Samaria.)* While Phillip was in Samaria, an angel came and said, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." Phillip obeyed. *(Lead the Phillips toward the Ethiopians.)*

SAY: When Phillip got there, he saw the Ethiopian riding in a chariot. Now, the Ethiopian was a very important man and Phillip saw that he was reading something from God's Word. *(Tell the Phillips to go stand next to their Ethiopian partners.)*

SAY: The Ethiopian didn't understand what he was reading in the Bible.

Have the Ethiopians REPEAT after you: "It doesn't make sense to me." "I don't know what this means."

SAY: The Ethiopians didn't understand what was written in God's Word, but Phillip understood.

Have the Phillips REPEAT the following after you:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, / and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, / so he did not open his mouth. / In his humiliation / he was deprived of justice. / Who can speak of his descendants? / For his life / was taken from the earth."

Ask the students: **Who is this talking about?**

SAY: Phillip knew the verse was about Jesus. It was telling how Jesus would be killed even though he hadn't done anything wrong. Remember, Jesus was perfect, but He died to make a way to take away our sins. So Phillip sat in the chariot and told the Ethiopian all about Jesus. If you're a Phillip, sit next to your partner and tell them something you know about Jesus.

SAY: The Ethiopian was so excited about what Philip said that he committed himself to Christ and wanted to get baptized as soon as he could. So when the chariot passed some water, Philip baptized him. The Ethiopian wanted to show that he was a follower of Jesus.

SAY: On the count of three, I want everyone to return to the circle. Ready...1-2-3...Go!

Control Tool

Leader: *Let Jesus' love flow* / Students: *Wherever you go!*

Discussion

Ask the students: **Can being baptized get a person to heaven?** (If you want, ask your students to raise their hands for yes, and then for no. You might be surprised by some of their answers.)

Ask the students: **Can you name anyone we have recently had in a Bible lesson, who believed in Jesus, who wasn't baptized, and who went to heaven?** (The thief on the cross next to Jesus.)

Ask the students: **Was the criminal on the cross who believed in Jesus (whom we learned about several weeks ago) baptized?** (No.)

Ask the students: **Who remembers what Jesus promised him?** (Today you'll be with me in paradise [heaven].)

SAY: Baptism doesn't get a person into heaven. Instead it's the first big step of following Jesus once a person has given his life to Him. Baptism comes after salvation as a symbol that God has already saved you.

CHALLENGE VERSE

Get ready for some Bible Drills
Ready...Matthew 5:14...Go!

Ask the students: **Do you think a volcano with lava on it could be seen from far way.** (It can be seen from very far away.)

SAY: When you live for Jesus, His life and love will shine through you. Even from a distance people will notice that there is something different about you. By how you talk and by how you live, Jesus' love will flow through you to others.

Control Tool

Leader: *Let Jesus' love flow* / Students: *Wherever you go!*

Ask the students: **How did Philip share Jesus' love with the Ethiopian?** (He told him about Jesus; He taught him about God's Word; He helped him to understand the Bible.)

Ask the students: **How is that like the way you can share Jesus' love at school?** (I can tell people about God's Word; I can be a friend; I can tell what I know about Jesus.)

Ask the students: **Do you think it was hard for Philip to help the Ethiopian? Why or why not?** (Yes, because he didn't know him; Yes, because the Ethiopian could've been mean to him; No, because Philip trusted God.)

Ask the students: **When is it hard for you to let Jesus' love flow at school?** (When my friends think it's weird; When I'm around kids I don't know; etc.)

Control Tool

Leader: *Let Jesus' love flow* / Students: *Wherever you go!*

LESSON SNACK

Ice Cream Sundae Volcanoes

Be sure to find out from your leadership where to get everything you need for your class to make ice cream sundaes.

While your students create and eat, ask the following questions:

SAY: Your sundae is sort of like a volcano except with chocolate flowing down the side.

Ask the students: **What should you let flow out of your life?** (Jesus' love)

Ask the students: **How is a volcano kind of like our verse for the day?** (The both have a light on a hill.)

Ask the students: **Who remembers what our verse today meant?**

Ask the students: **Where would today's Bible story be found on the Bible Book Chart?**

Ask the students: **Why is the book of Acts called "Acts"?** (Because it's all about the "acts" of the disciples and others like Paul who later followed Jesus.)

Ask the students: **What is the name of the book that comes after Acts?** (Romans)

BIBLE SKILLS

Get ready for some Bible Drills

Explain that today they are going to be looking for New Testament books of the Bible. You may want to do these drills in front of your Bible Book Chart.

Ready...The book of Acts...Go!

Ready...The book of Romans...Go!

Ready...1 Corinthians 13:4...Go!
Read this verse aloud after it's found.

KEY: This is God's kind of love and when you love people the way He does, they will know there is something different about you. That's what it means to be a light—You couldn't miss a city on a hill or a volcano erupting, and people will take notice of someone who is living for Jesus by sharing His love and life.

Control Tool

Leader: *Let Jesus' love flow* / Students: *Wherever you go!*

PRAYER TIME & WRAP-UP

Pray and ask God to help your kids let others know that they are followers of Jesus.

Take Prayer Requests Below:

List Prayer Requests Here

EXTRA TIME

Use any extra time to help your students memorize the verse for today.

*Adapted from Group Publishing's 2004 VBS curriculum, "Lava, Lava Island, Follow-Up Planner."



“You are the light of the world.
A city on a hill cannot be
hidden.”

Matthew 5:14