

THE ETHIOPIAN

LESSON TEXT

Acts 8:26-40; Isaiah 52-53

LESSON OBJECTIVE

- The students will be able to state two prophecies about Jesus from the book of Isaiah.
- The students will identify ways in which God uses others to teach them.
- The students will each become a "Philip" to someone this week.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil
- For the teacher:*
- 2 poster boards (20" x 30")
 - marker
 - 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
 - globe or map of the world
 - a box or bucket
 - a filling for the box or bucket, such as: shredded paper, Styrofoam peanuts (for packing), or sand
 - an old sheet or newspaper
 - tape
 - markers
 - colored index cards (4 colors, 12 of each color)
 - extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student
- Page B, 1 copy for the teacher
- Page C, 1 copy for each student
- Page D, 1 copy for the teacher
- Page E, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: Prophecy and Fulfillment
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer
 Victories
 Good News from the Kingdom

Getting into God's Word

Story: "The Afternoon That Changed a Life"
 Scripture Study
 Activity: Digging into the Past

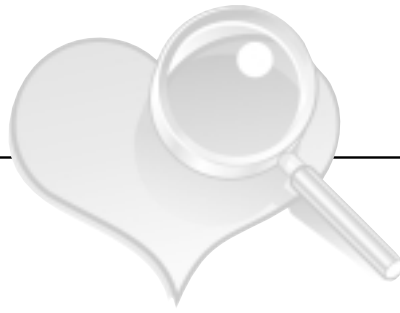
Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Hebrews 13:7
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time
 Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13:7



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Read and meditate on Acts 8:26-40 and Isaiah 52-53. The focus of this lesson is how God uses individuals to bring about changed lives. Think back to the people whom God has brought into your life. Look at the ways these people have changed your life. List five reasons you are grateful for relationships in your life.

TEACHER TIPS

Originally the term “eunuch” in the ancient period referred to someone who served as a keeper of female dwellings. A eunuch was one who was either impotent from birth, emasculated (castrated) or one who lived in voluntary abstinence. Eventually, by the first century it began to be applied to any person with great power or officer to the court. The Ethiopian of Acts 8 should be thought of as a highly visible and significant personality from North Africa, representing both a new race and new tier in church outreach. For preteens the best definition for “eunuch” is a person who was specifically trained and prepared to be an officer in the queen’s court and to help her in certain ways. (See NOTE in the Scripture Study section for input as to how to answer a student who asks for more information about what a eunuch is.)

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

PROPHECY AND FULFILLMENT

As the students complete this worksheet, they will begin to understand that the prophecies found in Isaiah were fulfilled in Jesus’ life.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- 1 poster board (20" x 30")
- marker
- extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student
- Page B, 1 copy for the teacher

PREPARATION

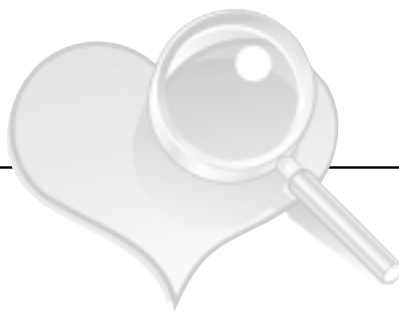
Enlarge the example of “Cross I” from Reproducible Page B onto the poster board.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute copies of Reproducible Page A (Prophecy and Fulfillment) and a pen or pencil to the students as they arrive.
2. Help each student to understand the instructions to look up the biblical reference and match it to one of the phrases.
3. Once the students have completed the worksheet, have them write the references for the New Testament verses that match the phrases in the spaces on “Cross I” poster board.

ANSWER KEY:

1:I; 2:E; 3:F; 4:A; 5:C; 6:J; 7:G; 8:H; 9:B; 10:D



STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER

Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together? Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, etc. Thank God for putting so many special people into each person's life.

VICTORIES

Take the time to have the students share about the challenge they were given at the end of last week's class. *Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent quiet times? Would anyone like to share something they learned this week?*

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

INSTRUCTIONS

Now let's take a few minutes to share "Good News from the Kingdom." Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the location as you share. Remind your students that the kingdom of God is worldwide, and the victories of our brothers and sisters on other continents can inspire and spur us on.





STORY

"THE AFTERNOON THAT CHANGED A LIFE"

In this story, one junior high school boy's simple action changed another's life forever. Mark had no idea that befriending Bill would change the course of Bill's day and ultimately his life. Consider how your actions towards your students can change their lives forever.

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

- Page C, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute copies of Reproducible Page C (the story) to the students.
2. Read the story to the students.
3. Explain and discuss the story concept. Explain to the students that Mark was just like them and Bill could be any one of the students they go to school with each day.
4. *What excuses could Mark have come up with that day in order not to help Bill?* (could have been too busy or shy / could have been in a hurry to get home / could have given the excuse, "I didn't know him.")
5. *What are some of the things Bill could have been down about?* (his parents arguing or getting a divorce / may not have fit in / may have been lonely)
6. *What do you have to offer to someone who is lonely?* (friendship / understanding of God's love)



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Have the students take out their Bibles and turn to Acts 8:26-40. Select a volunteer to read the passage. Explain that a eunuch is one who was specially trained and prepared to be an officer in the queen's court and to help her in certain ways.

NOTE: If a student were to ask more about what a "eunuch" is, do not go into the sexual nature of the word. Above all, do not respond in a way that is flustered or embarrassed—preteens are already uncomfortable enough with topics that have to do with sex.

- *Do you think the chariot was moving or standing still when Philip was told to "go to that chariot and stay near it"?* (Help the students get into visualizing the story.)
- *How do you think Philip felt about "staying near" a moving chariot?* (He could have felt uncertain, awkward or afraid.) *He showed by his actions that he trusted God. You can see God has a plan for others through the lives of his disciples.*
- *What are some ways you can tell that the Ethiopian was teachable?* (reading the scriptures / asked questions / invited Philip to ride with him to explain it)
- *Why do you think the Ethiopian was struggling with this particular passage?* (He was probably confused because he had been taught that the passage meant one thing, but he understood something different. The Jewish popular view of this passage was that it was about the prophet himself (Isaiah), but the Christian's understanding was that this passage was about Jesus, the Christ. It is an established fact that the early Christians used this passage from Isaiah to teach about Jesus.)
- *Why do you think the Ethiopian said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"* (Philip taught him by beginning with the prophecy and then teaching him about Jesus and how to become a disciple of Jesus. It doesn't say how long they rode together, but they must have been together in the chariot for a while.)



GETTING INTO GOD'S WORD

- *Why do you think the story gives the details of Philip and the Ethiopian both going down into the water and Philip baptizing him and both coming up out of the water?* (To help understand that baptism is a burial in water. Help the students understand that today many people are “baptized” by sprinkling a little water on their forehead, but that was not the Biblical example here. “Baptize” means to immerse, plunge or dip into water.)
- *What are some ways you think the Ethiopian changed his life that day?* (He lived for Jesus. He shared with others about Jesus just as Philip had shared with him. According to ancient Christian legends, Ethiopia was evangelized because of the conversion of the Ethiopian, and there was a large number of disciples in that country.)

ACTIVITY

DIGGING INTO THE PAST

The students will use the same passages that the Ethiopian was studying in order to understand the prophecies about Jesus that were made by Isaiah.

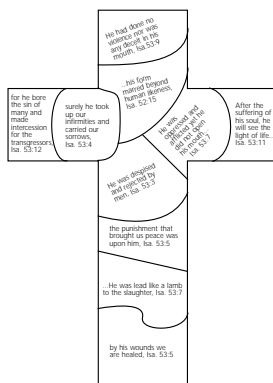
MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 poster boards (20" x 30")
- a box or bucket
- a filling for the box or bucket, such as: shredded paper, Styrofoam peanuts (for packing), or sand
- an old sheet or newspaper
- tape

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for the teacher



PREPARATION

1. Fill the box or bucket with shredded paper, styrofoam, sand or other filling.
2. Enlarge the example “Cross II,” from Reproducible Page D, onto the poster board.
3. Cut “Cross II” into pre-drawn puzzle pieces. If you have more than ten students, cut each phrase into two pieces. If you have more than twenty students, you may want to create two sets of materials.
4. Randomly bury cut puzzle pieces from “Cross II” in the container.
5. Place the container with buried pieces on the protective sheet or newspaper on the “dig” area.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Gather the students around the “dig” area.
2. Display the poster of “Cross I” (completed during the Preclass Activity).
3. Ask the students to determine who the phrases are describing (Jesus). How do we know this? (scripture references from the New Testament)
4. Review with the students the following synopsis of “Isaiah the Prophet”:
The book of Isaiah was written well before 700 bc and is named after the prophet who recorded it. Isaiah was the only complete scroll found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1949, and it measured seventeen feet long.
5. Explain to the students that they will be digging for “ancient prophecies from Isaiah.”
6. Each student will take a turn digging for one puzzle piece.
7. After all the pieces have been excavated, the students will read aloud their “find.”
8. The student will then match the “find” with the corresponding New Testament section on “Cross I.”
9. Attach tape to the underneath side of puzzle piece and have the student place it on top of the corresponding area on “Cross I.” (Each piece can be lifted so that the students can view both the “Old” and the “New.”)
10. Discuss God’s power. (He was able to use Isaiah to make specific predictions about Jesus 750 years before they occurred.)



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13:7

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- colored index cards (4 colors, 12 of each)
- marker

Reproducible Pages:

- Page E, 1 copy for each student

PREPARATION

1. Write the following words/phrases (one per card) on twelve index cards of the same color:
Remember / your leaders / who spoke / the word / of God / to you. / Consider / the outcome / of their / way of life / and imitate / their faith.
2. Repeat this for each color of index cards.
3. Before the students arrive, hide the index cards in as many different places in the classroom as possible.

NOTE: If you have a small class, you may want to have fewer than four groups and, therefore, use fewer than four colors of index cards.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute copies of Reproducible Page E (Memory Verse) to each student and read it together aloud several times so students are familiar with the verse.
2. Divide students into four groups. Assign each group a certain color of index cards to find.

3. At the word "go," tell each group to go and find their cards and put the memory verse in order. The first group of students to put the cards in order wins.

NOTE: If you are meeting in a school classroom, be sure to make students aware of "off limits" areas so they do not disturb any of the teacher's/students' materials.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you explain to them the challenge for the week.

Challenge the students to become a "Philip" to someone this week. (Philip shared his faith with the Ethiopian.) On the back of your memory verse sheet, write down a list of friends you could invite to church this week. Pray about it and then invite at least one person from your list.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Become a "Philip" to someone this week by inviting them to come to church with you.

THE ETHIOPIAN

LESSON TEXT

Acts 8:26-40

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will explain why Philip was able to teach the Ethiopian.
- The students will identify ways in which God uses people to help change others.
- The students will each become a "Philip" to someone this week.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- map showing the distance between Ethiopia and Jerusalem
- 1 poster board
- 4 sheets of construction paper (9" x 12")
- marker
- tape, safety pins or string

Reproducible Pages:

- Page F, 1 copy for each student
- Page G, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: Summary of Characters
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer and Review
 Great News Sharing

Getting into God's Word

Scripture Study
 Activity: Character Fellowship

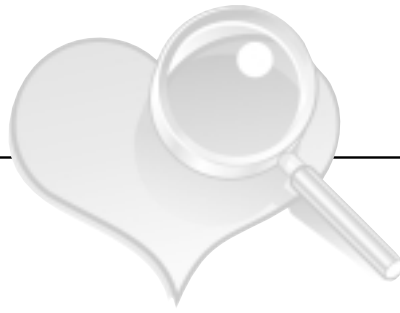
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Hebrews 13:7



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Read and meditate on Act 8:26-40. The focus of this lesson is how God uses individuals to bring about changed lives. Think back to the people whom God has brought into your life. Look at the ways these people have changed your life. List five reasons you are grateful for others in your life.

TEACHER TIPS

Originally the term “eunuch” in the ancient period referred to someone who served as a keeper of female dwellings. A eunuch was one who was either impotent from birth, emasculated (castrated) or one who lived in voluntary abstinence. Eventually, by the first century it began to be applied to any person with great power or officer to the court. The Ethiopian of Acts 8 should be thought of as a highly visible and significant personality from North Africa, representing both a new race and new tier in church outreach. For preteens the best definition for “eunuch” is a person who was specifically trained and prepared to be an officer in the queen’s court and to help her in certain ways. (See NOTE in the Scripture Study section as to how to answer a student who asks for more information about what a eunuch is.)

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

SUMMARY OF CHARACTERS

This activity worksheet will help to remind your students about all the Biblical characters that they have studied in this unit, and will provide preparation for the activity that follows this lesson.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

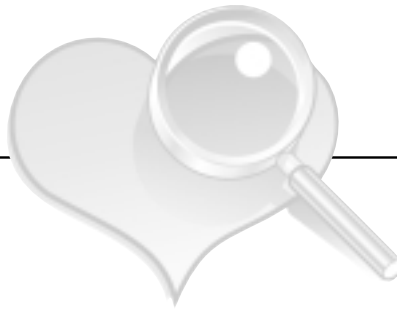
Reproducible Pages:

- Page F, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute pencils and a copy of Reproducible Page F (Summary of Characters) to each student.
2. Instruct the students to draw a line matching the characteristic on the left to the character on the right. Explain that a characteristic could be matched to more than one character.





STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER AND REVIEW

- Open with one of the students praying for one to two minutes for each student to be sharing their faith with their friends.
- Have one student recite the memory verse: Hebrews 13:7.
- Have a student briefly review the previous lesson (Core Lesson).

GREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief, so that as many as possible can share.





SCRIPTURE STUDY

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- map showing the distance between Ethiopia and Jerusalem

Reproducible Pages:

- Page G, 1 copy for each student

Distribute copies of Reproducible Page G (The Ethiopian Jews) to the students. Read it aloud to the class. Point out how God had made plans for all races to be a part of his kingdom. God's plan had been in effect a long time before the Ethiopian's conversion. The Queen of Sheba had visited King Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-13) almost a thousand years before the time of the Ethiopian's encounter with Philip and God had prepared that entire country for the good news about Jesus, the Christ.

Have the students take out their Bibles and turn to Acts 8:26-40. Select a volunteer to read the passage.

NOTE: If a student were to ask more about what a "eunuch" is, do not go into the sexual nature of the word. You could explain that a eunuch is one who was specially trained and prepared to be an officer in the Queen's court and to help her in certain ways. Above all, do not respond in a way that is flustered or embarrassed—preteens are already uncomfortable enough with topics that have to do with sex.

- *Who can describe what kind of man the Ethiopian was?* He was an important official, and probably busy. He was trusted by Queen Candice of Ethiopia. He was interested in God—he was studying the Scriptures on his own. Because the Ethiopian was a very trusted official of the Queen, he was allowed to travel great distances for personal reasons. Take out the map and point out to the students the distance between the country of Ethiopia and the city of Jerusalem.

- *Why do you think the Ethiopian spent his travel time studying the Scriptures? Don't you think he had other important things to do? How eager are you to study out the scriptures on your own? Or, do you wait to be reminded?*
- *What are some responses the Ethiopian could have given to Philip since he was such an important official? (I am in a hurry to get back. / I don't have time for you. / I don't want a stranger coming into my chariot. / I am too important to have someone like you teach me.) What does his response to Philip tell you about his character? (humble / teachable)*
- *How do you feel when your parents, teachers or peers ask about your walk with God? How often do you seek help when you don't understand what you are reading? How do you feel when someone tries to teach you something that will help you to change?*
- *How do you think the story of the Ethiopian might have ended if he had a proud, defensive and unteachable heart? (The country of Ethiopia would not have been evangelized. / He wouldn't have been rejoicing as he came back to Ethiopia. / He wouldn't have been saved.)*
- *How do you need to change to become more teachable? How might your life change if you did become more teachable?*
Philip helped the Ethiopian learn about the scriptures he was reading. How else does God use individuals to help us change? (meeting needs—physical and spiritual / challenging us / building friendships, etc.)



ACTIVITY

CHARACTER FELLOWSHIP

This interactive activity will help your students to remember the people they have studied in this unit, and the outstanding characteristics of those people.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 poster board
- 4 sheets of construction paper (9" x 12")
- marker
- tape, safety pins or string

PREPARATION

1. Before class write the names of each of the following characters on a piece of construction paper (Lydia, Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus, the Ethiopian). These will be used to identify the roles in the activity to follow.
NOTE: You can use tape, safety pins or string to attach the signs to the students.
2. Write out the two questions found under #3 in the Instructions section.
3. Tape the questions to the wall.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide the students into four groups. (If there are less than 12 students, just choose four students to role play, and keep the group together.)
2. Give each group the name of a Bible character who has been discussed in the past four weeks (Lydia, Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus, the Ethiopian).
3. Have them discuss the following:
 - a) *What was the character's position in life when introduced to God?*
 - b) *Who did God send to teach them about his love and forgiveness?*
 - c) *Did the character show an eagerness to learn or was he or she hesitant?*
 - d) *What kind of changes did the character have to make?*
 - e) *How did the character's life change when he or she understood about or met Jesus?*
4. After they have discussed these questions, ask them to choose a student to act out their character.
5. Have the four characters put on their identifying signs and "meet" in fellowship. They should then share their conversions with each other using the information discussed with the five questions.



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13:7

INSTRUCTIONS

Review the scripture memory verse and practice the verse together with the class. Be sure to encourage the students on their success.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you remind them of the challenge for the week.

Each student was to become a "Philip" to one person on their list they wrote out. They were to do this by inviting him or her to church. They are being like Philip as he shared his faith with the Ethiopian.

The students will share their victories during next week's class.

CONCLUSION

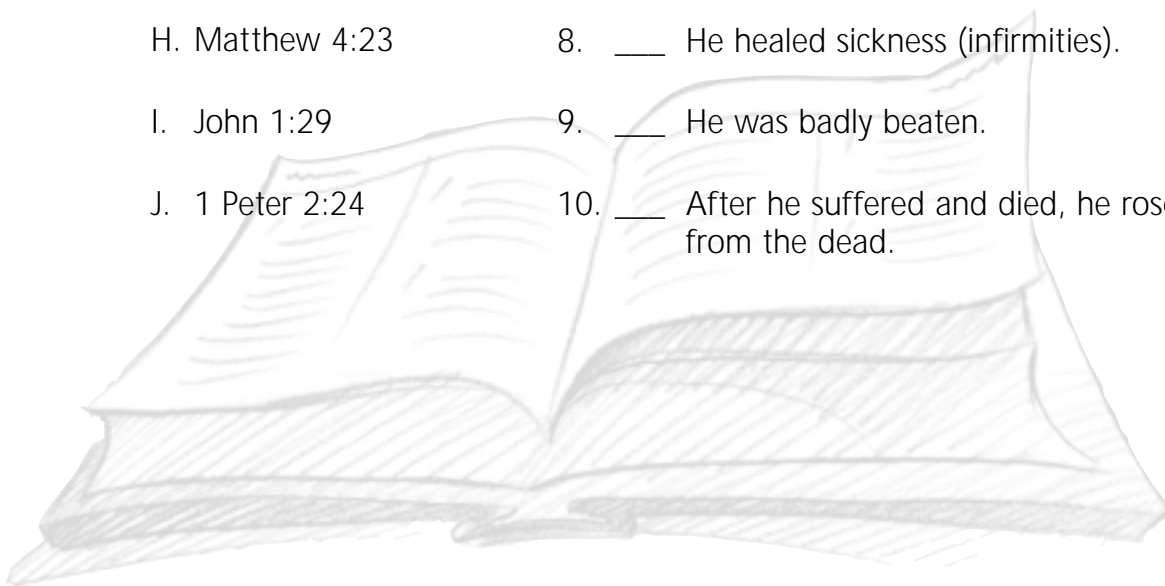
End the class with a prayer.

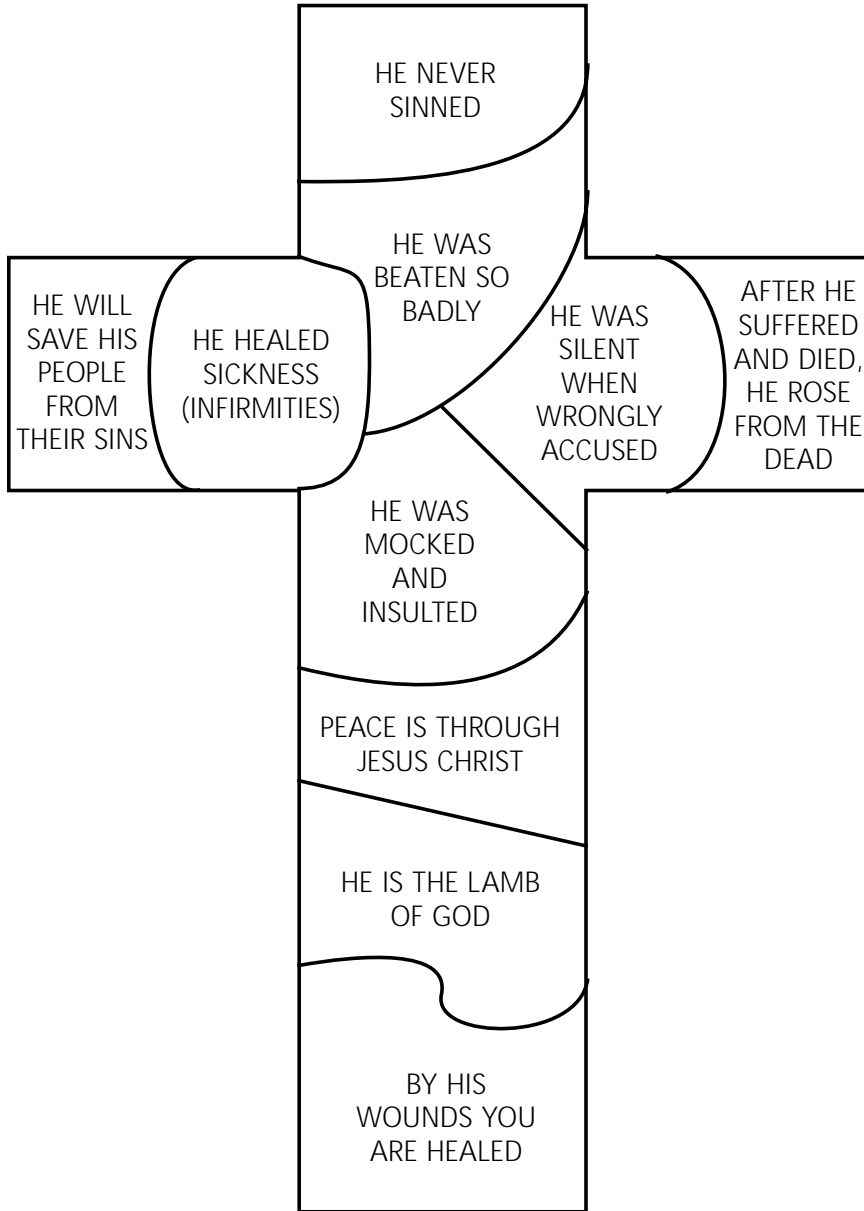
WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Become a "Philip" to someone this week by inviting them to come to church with you.

Look up each scripture and match it with its corresponding phrase.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| A. Matthew 26:62-63 | 1. ___ He is the Lamb of God. |
| B. Mark 15:15, 19 | 2. ___ Peace is through Jesus Christ. |
| C. Mark 15:29-31 | 3. ___ He never sinned. |
| D. Mark 16:6 | 4. ___ He was silent when wrongly accused. |
| E. Acts 10:36 | 5. ___ He was mocked and insulted. |
| F. Luke 23:41 | 6. ___ By his wounds you are healed. |
| G. Matthew 1:21 | 7. ___ He will save his people from their sins. |
| H. Matthew 4:23 | 8. ___ He healed sickness (infirmities). |
| I. John 1:29 | 9. ___ He was badly beaten. |
| J. 1 Peter 2:24 | 10. ___ After he suffered and died, he rose from the dead. |





A SIMPLE GESTURE

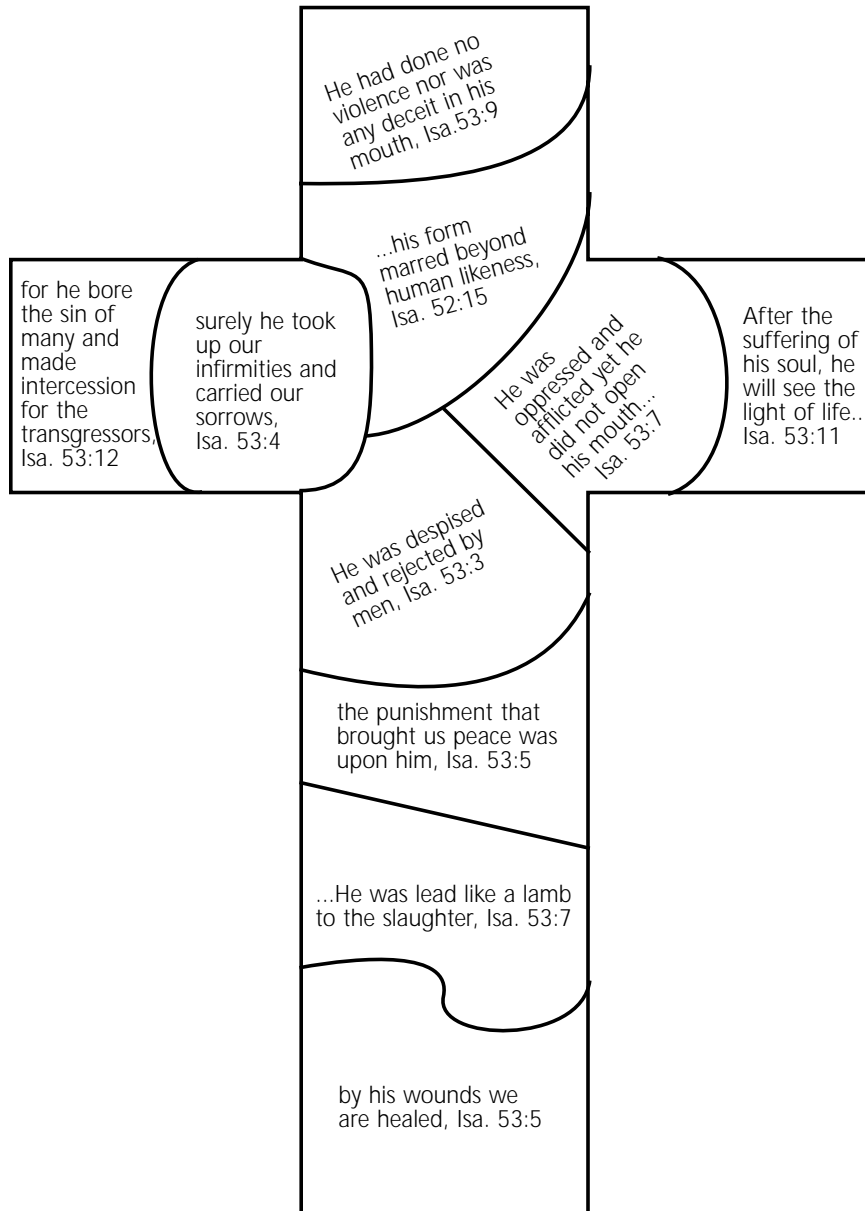
On his way home from junior high, Mark watched as a fellow classmate tripped and scattered the belongings he was carrying. Mark walked up to the fallen boy and began to help him gather up his books and papers, some athletic gear, a pair of worn gym shoes and a calculator. Offering to help the boy carry some of his things home as they were headed in the same direction, Mark soon learned a few things about his new acquaintance. His name was Bill, he loved sports and video games, he was struggling to keep his grades up, and his girlfriend had broken up with him just a few days ago.

Coming upon Bill's house, Bill asked Mark to join him in a video game before continuing home. After a few competitive matches, some light conversation and laughs, Mark thanked Bill for the fun afternoon. During their junior high and high school years, Mark and Bill would occasionally bump into each other at school, have a few conversations, and sometimes eat lunch together.

Just a couple of weeks before graduation during their senior year, Bill pulled Mark aside in the hallway. Bill brought up their first encounter. "I have always wanted to let you know what I was about to do on that day," exclaimed Bill. "When you saw me coming home from school, I had just finished cleaning out my locker. I had saved up some of my mom's sleeping pills and I was on my way home to commit suicide. It wasn't until after I spent that afternoon with you that it really hit me. If I took my life, I would have never had that great time with you and possibly others as well. Mark, you must realize you helped me so much more than just by picking up my things that afternoon. You saved my life."



John W. Schlatter, "A Simple Gesture," *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, eds. Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen (Deerfield Beach, Florida: Health Communications, Inc., 1993), 35.



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Remember your leaders, who spoke
the word of God to you. Consider
the outcome of their way of life
and imitate their faith.

HEBREWS 13:7

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Become a "Philip" to someone this week by
inviting them to come to church with you.

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERS

Draw a line matching the word on the left with one of the characters on the right.

NOTE: A word can be matched to more than one character.

purple
chariot
well
taxes
townspeople
household
successful
prejudice
greedy
repentance
husbands
had servants
prayer group
tree
Philip
Ethiopia
baptized
with Jesus
Samaria
Isaiah

Lydia

Zacchaeus

the Ethiopian

Samaritan woman

THE ETHIOPIAN JEWS

Unknown to many Bible readers is the historical connection between ancient Ethiopia and Judaism. Even today, there are a significant number of dark-skinned Ethiopian Jews. An official Internet web site about Ethiopian Jews mentions a connection between a queen from Ethiopia and King Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-13). Historically, the dark-skinned Jews have claimed that their brethren in Israel accept them as Jews. Hence, the evidence is strong that the Ethiopian official of Acts 8 was either a Jew or a convert to Judaism, and among the first blacks to become a disciple. Christianity in Africa was strong in the second century. The Ethiopian's conversion was important in the early church because he was probably one of the first blacks and because he was a high-ranking government official in an African nation. Consider how God used a single incident to open the possibility of salvation to an entire nation.

