

# Simon the Sorcerer

Acts 8:4-25



New Testament 4  
Part 1: Disciples of the Early Church

## SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 4 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 8:4-25; 1 John 1:6-10; 2:1-2; Psalm 103

### MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: “[God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9b).

OLDER CHILDREN: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

### SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- [“What Must I Do to Be Saved?”](#)

### LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [N.T. Disciples & Peter Bible fact cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 4 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)
- “Summary of the Bible” from [“Kids Prep”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- [Map of New Testament World](#) (provided in activity sheets)

### PERSONAL APPLICATION:

When Christians do something wrong, we know that God will forgive them when they admit what they did, say they are sorry, and try not to make the same mistake again.



## LESSON STARTS HERE

### INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

We have been learning about things that happened when the Church first began. The apostles and other Christians were teaching about Jesus and many people were baptized. Today, we are going to learn about a man named Simon and how he did not fully understand what being a Christian was all about.


### INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week's lesson.


Have you ever been taught something and thought you really understood it, only to find out later that you didn't quite have it right (maybe how to do some math, etc.)? Today we're going to learn about a man who became a Christian, but still did not really understand what it was all about and made a big mistake.

### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. After Stephen's death, the early Christians were scattered to many different places. Some of them, including Philip, went to **Samaria** to teach about Jesus. [Remind older children that Jesus had taught the Samaritan woman at the well and her neighbors.] Philip was one of the men who had been chosen to help the needy widows in Acts 6. He also became an important **evangelist** (Acts 21:8) for the early Church.



**HISTORICAL NOTE: Samaria:** the name of the middle province of Palestine in New Testament times. It was also the name of the capital city of the Kingdom of Israel, built by King Ahab. After the Assyrian conquest in 722 B.C., most of the Jews living in the area were transported to other areas in the Assyrian empire. People from other areas were brought into Palestine; they intermarried with the remaining Jews. The **Samaritans** were considered “half-breeds” and “dogs” by the Jews; both groups hated one another. The Samaritans worshipped on Mt. Gerazim, instead of in Jerusalem, and accepted only the five books of Moses as authoritative. [See the article “[Samaria](#),” p. 27 in the April, 2014 issue of *Discovery* magazine, for more on Samaria.]



**NOTE:** Because of the centuries of hatred toward one another, for Philip, a Jew, to go into Samaria was remarkable. Perhaps some remembered hearing about Jesus from His earlier visit (John 4) or had heard the news of His ministry and crucifixion. Nonetheless, it would have been a “hard pill to swallow” for the Samaritans to think that their eternal destinies depended on a Jew. It may have appeared to them, as it did to some Jewish Christians later, that they needed to convert to Judaism before becoming Christians. That would have been tantamount to turning their backs on their own people and their heritage. And for some Jewish Christians, allowing Samaritans to have any part in “their Messiah” would have been a betrayal of **their** heritage and **their** people. Thus, it was important for the leadership in Jerusalem to send Peter and John to lend support to Philip's cross-cultural ministry and to try to quell any opposition from Jewish Christians.



**Evangelist:** one who preaches or evangelizes to others

2. God gave Philip the ability to perform miracles so that the Samaritans would believe that the words he spoke were from God (Mark 16:20). Because Philip did so much good for the people, there was “much rejoicing in the city.” Many people in Samaria became Christians. Peter and John came from Jerusalem to pray with these new Christians. They laid hands on them to give them the ability to do miracles and speak in other languages. As they spread the Gospel, they would use miraculous gifts, as did the apostles and others, to prove that their teachings were from God.



**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the article “[Modern-Day Miracles, Tongue-Speaking, and Holy Spirit Baptism: A Refutation](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for an in depth study on those topics.

3. One man who was baptized was named Simon. He was a famous magician (sorcerer). He claimed to be “someone great” (Acts 8:9), and all the people called him “the Great Power of God” (vs.10). He did not refuse their adoration as the apostles did (3:11ff., 14:11ff.). He was amazed at the things Philip was able to do. When he saw what other Christians could do after Peter and John “laid hands on them,” he was even more amazed. He wanted to be able to do the same kinds of miracles that Philip could do, and he wanted to be able to give the miraculous gifts to others, as the apostles did. He thought that maybe he could **buy** these abilities. After all, he had been able to buy magic potions and make money by deceiving people with tricks.



**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the article “[Exorcism, Demons, Witchcraft, and Astrology](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for an in depth study on those topics.

4. Peter told Simon the sorcerer that his money was worthless. No one could do miracles unless **God** wanted them to, and no one could **buy** the ability to do miracles. Peter told him, “Your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray.” Suddenly Simon understood what a terrible mistake he had made and how badly he had misunderstood the purpose of the miracles—and his commitment to Christ. Simon repented and asked Peter to pray for him. [Review the meaning of repent, i.e., completely changing your thinking so that you change the direction of your life; make a complete about-face.]
5. Simon believed and was baptized, but he obviously didn’t have a clear understanding of what being a Christian was all about. Even Christians do things that are wrong sometimes. But God has promised that if Christians repent and ask for forgiveness, He will forgive them and help them to do better. Christians are not perfect people. They are just people trying to follow Jesus; we are grateful that God forgives and wants to help us do better. [With OLDER CHILDREN, read 1 John 1:6-10.]



**NOTE:** Some commentators do not believe that Simon’s conversion was genuine. Many believe in the doctrine known as “Once Saved Always Saved,” which means that after a person becomes a Christian, he cannot so sin as to fall away and be lost again. If that doctrine were true (and it is not—cf. “[God’s Love and Christian Perseverance](#)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site), Simon could not have yet become a Christian before he was rebuked by Peter in Acts 8:22-24. Peter’s rebuke was a clear statement about the wicked spiritual state of Simon, and the fact that he was in an unforgiven state. If Simon was already a Christian by that point, then “Once Saved Always Saved” is false.

Before Peter’s rebuke, the text says that, like the others that were becoming Christians in Samaria, “Simon himself also **believed** and...was **baptized**” (Acts 8:13)—the prescription given by Jesus for being saved (Mark 16:16). So it is clear that Simon did in fact become a Christian prior to Peter’s rebuke and yet had fallen out of grace in the intervening period between his conversion and the unspecified period of time that “he continued with Philip” (Acts 8:13) before he was rebuked by Peter. Sadly, uninspired Church history records that he may have gone on to be a terrible influence on the Church, buying and selling important positions in the Church, a practice which is known as “simony.”

This account is important because it demonstrates again the temporary nature and selective giving of miraculous abilities. Philip could not pass on miraculous gifts; only the apostles could do so. Simon desired this ability, but did not receive it. Indeed, Peter declared to him: “You have neither part nor portion in this matter” (Acts 8:21). Therefore, when the apostles died, the ability to pass on miraculous gifts ceased.

**PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS** (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

**Ages 2-5:**

- “[Simon the Sorcerer Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Make sight word cards using key words from this and previous lessons (Simon, Philip, Peter, John, miracle, repent, etc.). Hide the same words around the classroom before class. After you have gone over each word with the children, let them go on a “scavenger hunt” to find the words in your classroom. For each card a child finds, he must tell something about that word/person.
- Have students share a time when they did something wrong and tell how they felt after they did it. Also ask if they apologized for the wrongdoing.
- “[Plan of Salvation](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

**1st-2nd Graders:**

- Make word cards of names of key people in this and previous lessons; make sets of cards for two or three teams. Divide the class into two or three teams. Give them one or two minutes to alphabetize the cards. Then the winning team should tell something about each person named on the cards.
- Play Hang-Man with names/words from this and previous lessons.
- Have the kids sit in a circle. Play Toss Across with a foam ball: Tell the kids you will start

with the name of one New Testament book, then toss the ball to another student who must say the name of the next book before tossing the ball to another student. The game continues until all the books of the New Testament have been said in order.

- Learning center about sorcery and witchcraft
- “[Simon the Sorcerer Crossword Puzzle](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[Simon the Sorcerer Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

### 3rd-4th Graders:

- Write each of the “[steps of salvation](#)” on a separate slip of paper, along with an appropriate scripture. Make a set of these slips of paper for every student in your class. Using an egg timer or stop watch, give them a certain amount of time to find each scripture and place the appropriate slip of paper in their Bibles.
- Play Hang-Man with names/words from this and previous lessons.
- Have the kids sit in a circle. Play Toss Across with a foam ball: Tell the kids you will start with the name of one New Testament book, then toss the ball to another student who must say the name of the next book before tossing the ball to another student. The game continues until all the books of the New Testament have been said in order. Then challenge the kids to do the same with the Old Testament books.
- Learning center about sorcery and witchcraft
- “[Simon the Sorcerer Crossword Puzzle](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[Simon the Sorcerer Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
  - *Discovery* magazine ([June, 2005](#))—“What Does It Mean to Repent?”—p. 42, “You Can Be Forgiven—If You Repent!”—p. 44, “Repent and Pray”—p. 45
  - *Discovery* magazine ([July, 2013](#))—“Simon, the Street Magician” and “What is the Difference Between Miracles and Magic?”
  - *Oops! I Made a Mistake* by Susan Hood, Reader’s Digest Children’s Books

### SONGS:

#### “WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook

(Tune: “Wonderful Story of Love”)

(This song works best if half of class asks questions and the other half responds.)

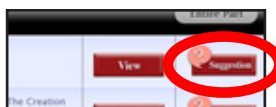
“What must I do to be saved?”  
The question comes today.  
“What must I do to be saved?”  
O answer me, I pray.”

The gospel of Christ, you must hear;  
Believing, you then must repent.  
Confess the name of our Savior,  
Who down from Heaven was sent.

#### CHORUS:

Be bap-tized, be bap-tized,  
Be baptized, from your past sins you’ll be saved.

**\*\*\* IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE  
“SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE  
CURRICULUM WEB SITE.**



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Part 1: Disciples of the Early Church

## WEDNESDAY EVENING

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- [“What Must I Do to Be Saved?”](#)

### LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

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### PERSONAL APPLICATION:

When Christians do something wrong, we know that God will forgive them when they admit what they did, say they are sorry, and try not to make the same mistake again.



## INTRODUCTION:

- [N.T. 4 Bible Fact Flashcards](#) (provided under “N.T. 4 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

## POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Briefly review Sunday morning’s lesson (see [N.T. 4 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. Remind the children that we should pray for one another and try to help one another to make good choices (James 5:16).
3. With OLDER CHILDREN talk more about 1 John 1:7-10. It is important for Christians to try **not** to do wrong, even though we are promised God’s forgiveness.

## PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

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