

Horrible Saul; Happy New Christians

Acts 8



New Testament 7
Part 2: ABCs of Acts 7-12

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 7 [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

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray” (Acts 8:22a).

OLDER CHILDREN: “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you” (Acts 8:22).

Also help the children memorize the ABCs of Acts.

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.

- [“Jesus Loves the Little Children”](#)
- [“Philip and the Eunuch”](#)
- [“Preach, Philip, Preach”](#)
- [“P-H-I-L-I-P”](#)

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.]
- [ABCs of Acts 1-12](#) Bible fact cards (provided under “N.T. 7 Bible Facts”)
- “Acts Chapter Summary” from [“Kids Prep 2”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- “Summary of the Bible” from [“Kids Prep”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Pictures/drawings from any books listed under 3rd-4th Grader Pre-Class Activities/ Learning Centers
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- John the Baptist/Peter A Beka Flash-A-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book)



- Pictures or felt figures of people from all over the world
- World map
- [Map of Palestine](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Scroll of Isaiah 53
- “Chariot” made out of cardboard box, large enough to put a child-size chair inside so that kids can role play the story of the Ethiopian
- Man in a Chariot visual (<http://store.bibleclassworkshop.com/shopexd.asp?id=328>)

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

God wants me to tell others about Jesus, no matter how young I am.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Last week we talked about a brave man named Stephen. What very sad thing happened to Stephen? Stephen was killed because he shared God’s Word with people, and they didn’t want to listen. Why didn’t the people just read their Bibles to see if what Stephen was telling them was what God’s Word said about Jesus? They could study the Old Testament and everything it said about Jesus, but at that time, the New Testament itself had not yet been written down. The apostles and others taught people and performed miracles to prove that what they were saying was from God, and then those people taught more people. Even though today we don’t have the apostles or Jesus to speak to us directly, we do have the Bible to read, and the words in the Bible have been proven to be from God. And it is still very important that we share what the Bible says about Jesus, just like Stephen told others about Jesus. Let’s listen to a story about a man who ran to catch a chariot to tell someone about Jesus!

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week’s lesson.

In New Testament times the only Scriptures written down were the Old Testament. The New Testament was being written a little at a time by apostles and other inspired men; it was not in book form yet. So how did people learn about Jesus? They had to learn from the apostles and others whom God inspired to share the Truth without mistake. Just like in New Testament times, there are many people in the world today that have never heard about Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Some live in faraway lands, and some live in our own neighborhoods and go to school with us. Even though we have all the Scriptures written down for us today, it is still very important that we teach others about Jesus. Let’s listen carefully to the lesson today about how a certain man shared the story of Jesus with a complete stranger.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review ABCs of Acts covered thus far.
2. “H” is for Horrible Saul. Chapter eight of Acts begins by telling us about the man named Saul of Tarsus who, in chapter seven, held the coats of those who stoned Stephen. We will learn more about Saul in chapter nine, but we want to remember that he was a man who was willing to do anything to stop the apostles from teaching about Jesus. He was willing

to kill or imprison Christians. No matter what Saul or others did, however, the apostles and other Christians did not stop telling others about Jesus.

3. “H” is also for Happy New Christians. After Stephen’s death, many Christians left Jerusalem and taught the good news about Jesus wherever they went. One such Christian was Philip, one of the seven men (like Stephen) chosen in Acts six to help the widows. Chapter eight tells us about Philip teaching two different men who decided to become happy new Christians. We will talk about one of these men this morning and the other one on Wednesday night.



NOTE: Philip was either a Greek, or a Jew with a Greek background.

Remind the kids this is **not** the same Philip as the one chosen to be an apostle.

4. God spoke to Philip while he was in Samaria and told him to go to the “desert road” that went from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip immediately did what God told him to do.



HISTORICAL NOTE: “Two roads led south from near Jerusalem, one through Hebron into Idumea (Edom) and the other joining the coast road before Gaza heading for Egypt... Old Gaza was a deserted town whose ruins lay near the now culturally Greek cities of Askelon and new Gaza. Philip might have no one to preach to on a little-traveled road that would lead by a deserted city” (*Bible Background Commentary*, p. 345).

5. Traveling down the road in a chariot was a man from the African nation of Ethiopia. He was a very important man in the Ethiopian government. He had lots of power and authority over how the Queen of Ethiopia’s money was spent. He was wealthy enough to own an Old Testament scroll. He knew how to read Hebrew, and he had been to Jerusalem to worship during a Jewish feast. We are not told if he was a Jew or a “God-fearing” Gentile, but considering what we do know, it seems likely that he was a Jew (or a Jewish proselyte, i.e., someone who had converted to Judaism). Maybe he heard about Jesus while he was in Jerusalem.



NOTE: Some scholars believe that the meaning of the term “eunuch” had changed by the 1st century; it may not have referred specifically to a castrated man, but to a government official in general. Probably the best explanation of “eunuch” in the classroom setting is to tell younger kids that he was a man specially chosen to work for the queen or king. Older kids will understand that a eunuch was a man who was chosen for an important job and would never marry so that he could concentrate completely on his job.

6. The Ethiopian man was reading aloud from the Old Testament book of Isaiah, in what we know as chapter 53. God told Philip to go up to the man’s chariot and talk to him. Philip ran to the chariot and asked the man, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The man did not understand and asked Philip to join him in the chariot so they could read together. Using Isaiah and other scriptures, Philip taught this man from a distant land that Jesus was the Savior that the prophets wrote about.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Preaching ‘Jesus’ Includes Preaching Baptism](#)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about what Philip taught the eunuch prior to his baptism.

7. The Ethiopian understood that he needed to repent and be baptized to be saved from his sins, just like the people to whom Peter preached in Acts 2. The chariot came to a pool of water near the road, and the man asked to be baptized. Philip told him that he should be baptized if he believed in Jesus with all his heart. The man replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water so that Philip could baptize him (put him completely under the water).



NOTE: Scholars are nearly unanimous in their conclusion that Acts 8:37 was not part of the original text written by Luke. "By the almost universal consent of recent critics, the whole of [verse 37] is excluded from the original text, and should be from all versions" (J.W. McGarvey, *Original Commentary on Acts*, p. 99). See also: J.W. McGarvey, *New Commentary on Acts of Apostles: Vol. 1*, pp. 158-159; Wayne Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles from Jerusalem to Rome*, p. 99; H. Leo Boles, *A Commentary on Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 138-139.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the articles "[The Early Church Did Not Affirm A Gay Eunuch](#)" by Kyle Butt, "[Gentiles, Proselytes, and the Gospel](#)" by Eric Lyons, "[The Meaning of Baptism and the Catholic Ritual](#)" by Moises Pinedo, and "[Who Can Baptize Another Person?](#)" by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for discussion about the eunuch, his conversion, immersion, and the logistics of baptism.

8. When Philip and the Ethiopian came up out of the water, the Spirit led Philip away from that place and to a town called Azotus (about 25 miles north of Gaza and 35 miles west of Jerusalem). But the Ethiopian, now a new Christian, continued his long journey home, rejoicing all the way. We can become Christians today just like the Ethiopian did. Most people don't just pick up a Bible and understand what they need to do. They need someone to teach them, like the Ethiopian did.
9. We do not know anything else about this man from Africa, but we do know that he became a Christian/was converted (taught about Jesus and then baptized into Christ) because Philip cared enough to teach him. Philip and other Christians of that time knew how important it was to tell everyone they knew about Jesus. Philip was a **missionary** (evangelist) who was willing to go to many different places to teach. Though most of us won't go to faraway places, we can still teach others about Jesus (our neighbors, friends, relatives, etc.). We can also give of our money to help support missionaries in other places and pray for them. If there were no preachers or teachers, if no one even talked to others about Jesus, how would they find out about Him? God wants all of us to be missionaries, to teach others wherever we go!



Missionary: Someone who travels to a place away from his/her home in order to teach others about Jesus, to try to establish congregations of the Lord's Church, or to strengthen congregations that are weak and struggling.

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](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Horrible Saul Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 8 provided in activity sheets)
- Let the children draw pictures or make cards to be sent to the missionaries your congregation supports.
- Cut 4” x 10” pieces of beige or white paper. Write John 3:16 on the paper, and under that, write “I can share God’s love!” (or help 5-year-olds to write it on their own). Give each child two wide craft sticks or, better yet, 12” dowels of small diameter. Help them tape their papers to each of the sticks/dowels to make scrolls.

1st-2nd Graders:

- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 8 provided in activity sheets)
- Help the children make cards to send to the missionaries your congregation supports.
- Make a chart (on poster board or a bulletin board) of the “steps of salvation” that each convert in Acts took. Examples: Acts 2: 3,000—heard the Gospel, believed, repented, were baptized. Acts 8: Ethiopian—heard, believed, confessed, was baptized; Acts 8: Samaritans (incl. Simon the magician)—heard, believed, were baptized. Continue adding to the chart with each chapter, each conversion. (Dave Miller’s “[Acts Conversions Chart](#)” provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 8 provided in activity sheets)
- Play Hang Man with key words from this and previous lessons. Have each child give the significance of the key word, as it relates to the lessons. (“[Key Word Cards](#)” provided in activity sheets)
- Make a chart (on poster board or a bulletin board) of the “steps of salvation” that each convert in Acts took. Examples: Acts 2: 3,000—heard the Gospel, believed, repented, were baptized. Acts 8: Ethiopian—heard, believed, confessed, was baptized; Acts 8: Samaritans (incl. Simon the magician)—heard, believed, were baptized. Continue adding to the chart with each chapter, each conversion. (Dave Miller’s “[Acts Conversions Chart](#)” provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - Acts 8 (and 5-7 if they did not do so this quarter or in NT6). [This could be assigned Sunday, to be completed by Wednesday.] Print out copies of the Acts 5-8 quiz from AP’s [Advanced Bible Reader](#) site for the children to take.
 - *Discovery* magazine articles: “Saul the Enemy of Christ,” [May, 2007](#); “The Ethiopian Eunuch,” [December, 2008](#); “Repent and Pray,” [June 2005](#)

SONGS:

“JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Traditional

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world,
Red and yellow, black and white,
They're all precious in His sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus died for all the children...
Jesus rose for all the children....

“PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook

(Tune: “There’s a Great Day Coming”)

VERSE 1:

There’s a chariot coming, a chariot coming,
There’s a chariot coming Gaza way.
There’s a man that is reading, but he doesn’t understand,
Philip go and help him today.

CHORUS:

Preach the Gospel; preach the Gospel;
Tell him that Jesus is God’s Son.
Preach the Gospel; preach the Gospel;
Jesus is God’s Son.

VERSE 2:

Down into the water, into the water,
Both Philip and the eunuch went that day.
Then the eunuch was a Christian for he had obeyed the Word;
He was ready for the Judgment Day.

“PREACH, PHILIP, PREACH” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Sarah Richey

(Tune: “Skip to My Lou”)

Read, read, Eunuch read. (open hands like reading a book)
Read, read, Eunuch read.
Read, read, Eunuch read.
On the road to Gaza.

Whoa, whoa, horsey, whoa. (pull hands back, like stopping a horse)
Whoa, whoa, horsey, whoa.
Whoa, whoa, horsey, whoa.
On the road to Gaza.

Preach, preach, Philip, preach.
Preach, preach, Philip, preach.
Preach, preach, Philip, preach.
On the road to Gaza.

Baptize, bury me. (make “baptizing” motion with hands)
Baptize, bury me.
Baptize, bury me.
On the road to Gaza.

“P-H-I-L-I-P” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “Mickey Mouse Club March”)

Whose the man who loved the lord and shared it with others?
P-H-I-L-I-P, Philip was his name.

He loved God (He loved God).
He loved God (He loved God).

He told everyone about His love (Yay! Yay! Yay!).
Come along and sing the song and do the very same.
Tell others about God’s Son, Jesus is His name!

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE
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WEDNESDAY EVENING

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

God wants me to tell others about Jesus, no matter how young I am.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [N.T. 7 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 7 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Briefly review Sunday’s lesson (See [N.T. 7 Review Questions](#) for example questions), as well as other ABCs covered to this point.
2. Acts 8 tells us about Happy New Christians. Philip, the same man who taught the Ethiopian how to become a Christian, went to Samaria to teach others about Jesus. This is especially significant, because Jews did not ordinarily go to Samaria. [Remind older children about Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman in John four.] By going to Samaria and teaching the people there, God was showing, through Philip, that the Gospel (the good news about Jesus) was not only for the Jews, but for all people everywhere—even Samaritans.
3. Philip was able to perform miracles there to prove that his message was from God. [Remember that he and the other six men chosen in Acts six were given the ability to do miracles because the apostles laid their hands on them.] The miracles and his message brought great joy to the city of Samaria.
4. But Philip’s message was a problem for a man named Simon who was a sorcerer/magician. He had become famous for his tricks; some even thought he was a man of God because he seemed to have such great powers. But when Simon the magician heard Philip preach about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, he, along with many others, wanted to become Christians. After his baptism, he followed Philip throughout the city. He began to wish that he, too, could perform miracles—and not just the tricks he had done before.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Exorcism, Demons, Witchcraft, and Astrology](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about those practices in the Bible.

5. The apostles in Jerusalem heard about the new Christians in Samaria and sent Peter and John to “lay hands on” these new Christians so that they too could perform miracles as they taught about Jesus. When Simon saw their actions, he begged Peter and John to sell him the ability to pass on miracles to others. Peter strongly rebuked him (verses 20-23), and Simon immediately repented. (Review the meaning of “repent.”) He asked Peter and John to pray that God would forgive him.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Laying On of Hands](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about the ability to do miracles was passed to others in the New Testament.



NOTE: Simon’s desire to buy the ability to give miraculous powers to others, like the apostles, became known as “simony,” i.e., buying and selling important positions in the Church. This corrupt practice was a growing problem in the early Church, especially with the development of a religious hierarchy.

6. People who are new Christians, as well as people who have been Christians for a long time, make mistakes and need forgiveness. Repentance is deciding to turn away from doing wrong to do the right thing. [Remind the kids about the purpose of the invitation song, praying for others, etc. See also 1 John 1:9.]

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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