



The Spirit in Action

(based on Acts 8:26-40)

Philip loved to tell everyone about Jesus and God's love. One day, an angel came to Philip and told him to go to a certain road that went south from Jerusalem.

Now it just so happened that a very important man was traveling along that road in his chariot. The man was from a country called Ethiopia. He was the chief treasurer for the queen of Ethiopia. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship God and was on his way home.

The Holy Spirit told Philip to run and catch up with the chariot, so Philip ran very fast. When he was close to the chariot, Philip could hear the man reading from a scroll, which was an ancient book. He recognized the words. It was a passage from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

"Excuse me," Philip shouted. "Do you understand what you are reading?"

"Not really," the man answered. "Will you ride in my chariot and help me understand what it means?"

Philip jumped into the chariot and sat down. He and the man had a very interesting conversation about the words on the scroll. Then Philip told the man the good news of Jesus.

As they were going along the road, they came to some water.

"Look!" the man exclaimed. "Here is some water. I can be baptized as a follower of Jesus right now." He ordered the chariot to stop. Then Philip and the man got out of the chariot and went into the water for the baptism.

When they came out of the water, the Holy Spirit whisked Philip away. The man never saw the disciple again, but he was very happy to be a follower of Jesus. He went back to Ethiopia and told many people about Jesus and God's love.

Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit led Philip to other towns, so more and more people heard about Jesus. The good news began to spread everywhere.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Invite everyone to name the surprises in the story. Provide markers, crayons, and paper to create each surprising scene on a separate sheet of paper. Some of the scenes to draw an angel speaking to Philip, a man in a chariot reading a scroll, Philip joining the man for a conversation, water in the desert and a baptism, and Philip whisked away.

When the illustrations are complete, take turns arranging them in story order and tape them together to create a timeline. Invite everyone to act out the ways God breaks down barriers in the story.



Responding to God's Grace

- Place two parallel lines on the floor with rope or string, 4 feet apart (or draw two chalk lines on a sidewalk). Invite everyone to stand in front of one line, facing the other line. Tell family members that the task is to get everyone over the line to the other side without stepping or falling into the gap. Make a plan. Be creative with items and talents to accomplish the goal. Get ready. Get set. Go! Celebrate attempts and accomplishments!
- The Ethiopian did not understand what he was reading until Philip was able to help him. Wonder together what might be situations in which someone needs help understanding or learning about something. This could be at home, at school, at church, or in your community. Then wonder how you might be able to help another person understand something like Philip did. He took the time needed. Remember that the Ethiopian asked for help first! Philip didn't just barge in assuming the Ethiopian didn't know anything.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Say these words or sing them to the tune "You Are My Sunshine" as this week's prayer:

*You are my power, my greatest power.
You make me stronger in every way.
I never know, God, how much I need you.
Please come fill my life each day.*