

ACTS CHAPTER 8

The Spread of the Gospel by Persecution



7

April 24, 2005
2.ACT07

Lesson Goal

Students will understand how God used the persecution of the church to spread the Gospel.

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how God is faithful to His word (see Acts 1:8).
- Explain what event God used to scatter the church.
- Tell the teacher Phillip's role in the spreading of the Gospel
- Explain what Simon the Sorcerer was trying to do.
- Demonstrate a simple Gospel presentation

Memory Verse

Acts 8:1b "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria."

Application

- Make the most of every opportunity to proclaim the Gospel.
- Evaluate your heart: Are you a "true believer" or a "make believer?"
- Practice presenting a simple but clear presentation of the Gospel to one another.

ACTS CHAPTER 8

The Spread of the Gospel by Persecution



7

4th–6th Grade
April 24, 2005
2.ACT07JR

MEMORY VERSE



“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.”
Acts 8:1b



SHOOK

The Price is Right (Game). Bring in some items or pictures of items that the students in the class might wish that they could have or afford (items such as a computer, mountain bike, CD player, Roller Blades, name brand clothing, etc.). The students can compete with each other or as a class. Have three different prices for each item. See if the students can pick the correct price. For the last item, have a card with salvation or a right relationship with God. Ask the students what they think that the relationship with God is worth. Tell the students that in today’s Bible adventure they will learn about a man who thought he could buy the gift of the Holy Spirit for his own personal use, but was corrected by the Apostles.

Mr. Magic (Guest Demonstration/Discussion). Invite an amateur magician (there’s one in every crowd) to do a couple of magic tricks for your class. Ask the class if they know how the tricks were done. Does this magician have special powers? Have the guest show the class how he did the tricks. What is the difference between this type of magic and evil magic? Evil magic is power from the evil spirits. It is not like the magic that was performed here today. Evil magic can give a person power over other people. In today’s lesson, the new Church encounters a magician who had some superhuman power but wanted power like the Apostles.

Mystery Word (Discussion). What does the word “Simony” mean? *Definition: the buying or selling of sacred or spiritual things, such as ecclesiastical (church) pardons and church offices.* Offer a prize to anyone who guesses correctly. As you listen to today’s story, see if you can figure out the origin of this interesting word.

Go, Go, Go!! (Object Lesson). **Note: This activity should probably carry all the way through the BOOK time.** For this activity you will need a glass/pitcher/vase/jar of cool water, some food coloring, and possibly a pedestal of some type so that the students can see the jar of water. As you begin to talk place two drops of food coloring into the water. Tell the students that in today’s Bible adventure they are going to see that Jesus’ command to share the Gospel with Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth begins to actually happen. In the jar we started with only two drops of coloring in the water and already it is spreading throughout the water. Lets keep an eye on it throughout the lesson and see what happens.

Presentation Ideas

Simon the Sorcerer (*Illustration/Coloring Page*). Acts 8:9-10, **2.ACT07JR.GF1**.

Peter Scolding Simon (*Illustration/Coloring Page*). Acts 8:20-24, **2.ACT07JR.GF2**.

Philip Baptizing the Eunuch (*Illustration/Coloring Page*). Acts 8:36-49, **2.ACT07JR.GF3**.

Holy Land—New Testament (*Map/Overhead*). Review today's Bible adventure by tracing the steps of Phillip from Jerusalem to Samaria, then to the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

Bible Adventure for 4th – 6th grades

(Say this very quietly and softly) I want you to close your eyes. In your mind, picture yourself as I describe. Think of yourself out in the middle of a huge field of dirt that has just been plowed. There is a warm wind blowing so strong that it is hard for you to stand. Your hands are filled with small, black, seeds. The Lord says to you, "Now slowly turn and allow the seeds to be released from your hands as you turn." You watch as your little seeds are carried very far and scattered throughout the huge field of dirt. You think in your mind, "Now in the spring, I will come out and see my little seeds growing everywhere, all over the four corners of this land."

Boys and girls, this is exactly what happened to the Jerusalem Church, after **Stephen was stoned**. The Christians had to leave the city because persecution had now come, and those same men wanted to hurt all the believers in the Church. So the Christians hurriedly left Jerusalem and went to live in cities all over the Roman Empire. **The believers in Jerusalem were God's seed**, and the persecution was used of God to plant them in new soil so they could bear fruit. Just as Jesus had told them to go, they went throughout Judea and Samaria and others went to more distant fields. God was at work, spreading His seed everywhere. Many people asked Jesus to become their Savior and forgive their sins. The Church of Jesus Christ was growing. *"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God," John 1:12 (NIV).*

Philip, like Stephen, was chosen as a deacon. He grew in his ministry and became an effective evangelist. God led Philip to go to the hated city of Samaria. You see, **the Jews hated the Samaritans because they had intermarried with Gentiles and were a mixture of Jew and Gentile**. They even had their own temple and priesthood. This caused the Jews to have nothing ever to do with them. Is there someone in your life that you do not like? You just know that Jesus would never want that person because they are so awful. But, boys and girls, that is the very one God wants you to reach and share Christ with. The Bible says, *"Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there," Acts 8:5*. The crowds not only heard God's Word, but he demonstrated God's power by performing miracles and healings. The Bible says, *"..There was great joy in that city," Acts 8:8 (NIV)*. Many people were being saved and asking

Jesus to be their Savior, and this brought joy into their hearts. ***Have you asked Jesus to forgive your wrongs and asked Him to become your Savior?*** Do you sense in your heart that you do not have joy? Do you know that God wants to forgive you for all you have done wrong? He does. He is waiting for you to come to Him today and ask Him to forgive you. Maybe that friend that is so awful wants to hear about Jesus and that He loves them.

Now, there was **a man in the crowd named Simon, and this man practiced witchcraft. He did things that caused people to be amazed.** Notice I did not say that what he did brought them joy in their hearts. No, it made Simon look powerful in their eyes. Simon wanted all for himself and was doing things under the power of Satan. People would say, "Oh, how great Simon is," not "How great God is." Therefore, they would give Simon money for his great things and this made him rich. As he heard Philip preaching, he wanted that same power. He even went and was baptized, just like the other people who had asked Jesus in their hearts. But Simon's reasons were wrong, because he wanted it for gain and power. God calls that selfishness, which the Bible says is SIN!

When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them. **God was establishing His Church throughout the world, just like seeds in the wind, and He wanted the Samaritans and the Jews to be united.** By the Apostles coming and laying hands on them and God giving them the Holy Spirit, it revealed that they were God's people, also. Yes, even the hated Samaritans were part of the Church. God only did that in the early Church to establish it. Now when we ask Jesus to be our Savior, we receive the Holy Spirit immediately as a seal of our salvation.

When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of hands, he asked the Apostles if he could buy what they had. *Peter answered, "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift God with money." Peter went on to say, "You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps He will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin." Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me, so that nothing you have said may happen to me." Acts 8:20-34 (NIV).* Boys and girls, from Simon's words there is no evidence that he repented and sought forgiveness. A sinner who wants the prayers of others but who will not pray himself is not going to enter God's Kingdom. Wow, God knows our thoughts, words and deeds, and He knows the intents of our hearts. **Are your motives always what God wants?** Is there something you need to ask for forgiveness? Do not let another moment go by to make things right between you and the Lord. *(Teachers: Stop now if you sense the moving of the Holy Spirit to pray with them over their actions and thoughts.)*

Philip was not only a faithful evangelist, but he was an obedient personal worker. Like the Lord Jesus, he was willing to go wherever God led him, even if it meant leaving the crowds behind. The Bible says, *"Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go South to the road, the desert road, that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza," Acts 8:26 (NIV).* Philip obeyed and went. **While on his way, he met an Ethiopian man, a eunuch, who was an official in charge of the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians.** This man had gone to Jerusalem to

worship God. He was so concerned about his spiritual life that he traveled over 200 miles to Jerusalem to worship God; but still his heart was not satisfied. On his way home, he was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. Now he was not only very important, but also very rich, because he could afford to buy a scroll, which was God's Holy Word. The Bible says, *"The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it,'" Acts 8:29 (NIV)*. Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. He boldly asked him, *"Do you understand what you are reading?"* The Ethiopian said, *"How can I, unless someone explains it to me?" Acts 8:30-31 (NIV)*. Right then the Ethiopian invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Wow! What an opportunity God had given Philip to explain all that had happened to the Lord Jesus. If we obey the Lord's leading, we can be sure that God will go before us and open the way for our witness. *"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," Acts 8:32 (NIV)*. Philip explained about our Lord Jesus laying down His life and allowing the men to nail Him to the cross, because the sinless man of God had to die in our place for our wrongs. Otherwise, we would go to hell and have no hope. Jesus Christ bridged that gap. By asking Him to forgive our wrongs, we can be saved and go to heaven. As Philip explained the verses to him, the Ethiopian began to understand the Gospel because the Spirit of God was opening his mind to God's truth. It is the heart that understands the Word that eventually bears fruit. *"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ," Romans 10:17 (NIV)*.

This man believed on Jesus Christ and was born again! **He wanted Philip to baptize him right then, while he was in Jerusalem. He wanted everyone with him to know that he was now a true believer in Jesus Christ, and his life was now committed to following Him.** Philip baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away to Azotus and other towns to preach while the Ethiopian eunuch went on rejoicing. Boys and girls, do you obey God just like that man did? He knew what God had asked him and did it immediately. Right now, bow your heads and ask God to lead and show you what He would have you do with your life.

Aim Questions:

- 1. What did God allow to aid the spread of His church?** *He allowed persecution so that the Christians had to leave Jerusalem.*
 - 2. Who was Philip, and how did he get to Samaria?** *One of the seven chosen to aid the Apostles.(6:5) He fled or walked to Samaria.*
 - 3. What did Simon the sorcerer do, and why was it wrong?** *He asked if he could buy the Holy Spirit from the Apostles. This was wrong because it showed that he did not understand that salvation is a free gift of God.*
 - 4. Who did Philip teach in a chariot? How did the man respond?** *An Ethiopian eunuch. He became a Christian.*
 - 5. Why is it that God's power could not be bought from the Apostles?**
 - 6. What have you done to help God's gift of salvation be given to others?**
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 **LOOK**

A.C.T.S. 8 (Worksheet). Who went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there? (*Philip*) The Church was being scattered. Where did the Angel of the Lord send Philip? (*The road to Gaza*). After Stephen had been stoned, what happened to the Church in Jerusalem? (*It was Scattered*) Who was trying to destroy the Church? (*Satan*) After Philip baptized the eunuch, where did Philip go? (*He was seen at Azotus*). **2.ACT07JR.GF4.**

Who Is It? (Worksheet). In Acts chapter 8, the Church is being persecuted and begins to scatter. Read the statement or sentence on the right, and have the students match it to the correct person on the left. Names of persons can be used more than once, **2.ACT07JR.GF5.** *Answers:* 3, 6, 5, 4, 6, 7, 2, 5, 1.

ACTS 8:20 Puzzle (Worksheet). Using the clues, have the students fill in the missing words from the verse, **2.ACT07JR.GF6.**

Tricky Questions (Q and A). Prepare a top hat (one that's actually used for 'magic' tricks would be really great) with question cards and candy in it. A 'magic' wand and white gloves would be good for effect. Pull questions 'out of the hat,' and pull out candy to reward correct answers, **2.ACT07JR.GF7.**

Acts Facts (Bible Drill). Divide the students into groups for their table discussion times with a leader at each table. Have your table form two teams. The teams at each table will compete against each other. Start with closed Bibles for each question. Read the question and the verse. Have them find the verse and stand to answer the questions. Give a candy or something to the team that wins, **2.ACT07JR.GF8.**

Acts 1:8 (Review Game). Acts 1:8 ~ "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*" This would be a great time to review this key verse in the book of Acts to show the students that God was fulfilling his promise to spread the Gospel *to the ends of the earth*. Remind the students that God used the persecution of the church to accomplish this. Have the students recite the verse by memory. Get the students as close as possible in the middle of the room (this is Jerusalem). Then have the students move a little farther apart from one another and have them recite Acts 1:8 again, this time a little louder (this is Samaria). Next have the students move even farther and do the same (this is the ends of the earth). Keep moving further and further apart until the students have memorized the verse and are yelling at the top of their lungs.

Isaiah Scroll (Worksheet). This is the passage in Isaiah from which Phillip explained the "Good News about Jesus" to the Ethiopian official. As a class, and taken directly from the passage, write three or more statements that are true of Jesus. For example: Jesus was silent; Jesus was deprived justice; Jesus' life was taken from earth, etc., **2.ACT07JR.GF9.**

Aim Questions (Worksheet). Have the students answer the Aim Questions about today's Bible Adventure, **2.ACT07JR.GF10.**



TOOK

For Sale (Discussion). Ask the students the following questions:

1. What did Simon the sorcerer do, and why was it wrong? *Tried to buy the Holy Spirit.*
2. Can salvation be bought today?
3. Are there people today who claim they have the power of the Holy Spirit and can do miracles?
4. What do they usually want you to do? *They usually want us to pay them money to do miracles for us.*

Teacher Note: This may be a good time to lead the students through a Gospel presentation. Help them to remember or learn for the first time that salvation is a free gift of God, and that He desires for all to be His children.

Here I Am, Lord, Send Me! (Discussion/Role-play). Ask the students the following questions:

1. Why did Philip go to the chariot?
2. Who did Philip teach in the chariot?
3. How did the man respond?
4. Have there been any situations in your life where you feel God has led a specific individual into your life so that you could be a witness to them?
5. How did you respond?

At the end of discussion, have the teachers or volunteers re-enact the dialogue between Philip and the eunuch found in Acts 8:26-40. Have someone narrate the story, but allow "Philip" and the "eunuch" to read their parts aloud.

How Far Is That? (Map/Discussion). Review Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Today we saw the fulfillment of the third phase of the expansion of the Gospel (Samaria) and a small beginning on the fourth phase (remotest part). Use either the laminated wall map provided, or request overheads from the Resource Room. Trace Philip's steps from Jerusalem to Samaria, to the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, and finally Caesarea. On a world map or globe, find Ethiopia south of Egypt. Using the scale of miles, how far did the Gospel travel (from Jerusalem) by the time the Ethiopian returned home?

"Me, Philip," "You, Ethiopian" (Role-play). After you have told the story and asked aim questions, have students divide into one on one and do the following: Have one student take the role of Philip, the Evangelist, and the other, the Ethiopian man, the seeker. Have them pretend that one wants to **know how** to receive Christ and understand what it means. Have the other **tell how** to receive Christ, and lead them in prayer. Have the students reverse roles. A tool that may be useful to the students as they learn to tell others about Christ is the "Who's in Charge?" tracts. (Please order from the resource room). The teacher may need to teach the students to use the tracts and what they mean so that they can be used effectively.

Simon Says (*Discussion*). Discuss the following comparisons with the students. Can there be modern-day Simons that want the “externals” and not the “internals”? How do our lives stack up? Do we do what Simon says or do we try to follow what God says?

Simon says, "Make money and become powerful any way you can!" Acts 8:11
God says, "Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33

Simon says, "Follow Philip and be baptized because of his great signs and miracles that he did." Acts 8:13
God says, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." I John 1:8

Simon says, "I will pay you, if you give me that power to lay hands on people so that they will receive the Holy Spirit." Acts 8:19
God says, "Peter answered: 'May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!'" Acts 8:20

This workbook is not available at this time.

A.C.T.S. Action Cards (*Workbook*). Using the letters A.C.T.S., continue to encourage students to remember the four significant stats about each section we will be studying. The following is from Acts chapter 8:

- A. Philip chosen by the Apostles.
- C. In the city of Samaria.
- T. Church persecuted in Jerusalem and Judea.
- S. Power not for sale.

Simon the Sorcerer



Peter Scolding Simon



Philip Baptizing the Eunuch



A.C.T.S

8

Apostles – Who went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed Christ there?

City – The Church was being scattered. Where did the Angel of the Lord send Philip?

Trials/troubles – After Stephen had been stoned, what happened to the Church in Jerusalem? Who was trying to destroy the Church?

Spirit – After Philip baptized the eunuch, where did he go?

“Peter answered: ‘May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!’” Acts 8:20



WHO IS IT?

In Acts chapter 8, the Church is being persecuted and begins to scatter.
Read the statement or sentence on the right, and match it to the correct person on the left.
Names of persons can be used more than once.

1. EUNUCH

___ Gave approval to Stephen's death. Acts 8:1

2. PETER & JOHN

___ Went to Samaria to proclaim the Christ there. Acts 8:5

3. SAUL

___ Practiced sorcery in the city of Samaria. Acts 8:9

4. PETER

___ Told Simon, "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!" Acts 8:20

5. SIMON

6. PHILIP

___ Told the eunuch the Good News about Jesus. Acts 8:35

7. SPIRIT OF THE LORD

___ After Philip baptized the eunuch, he was suddenly taken away by whom? Acts 8:39

___ When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the Word of God, they sent _____ to them. Acts 8:14

___ Offered the Apostles money so he could have the ability to lay hands on people and give them the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:19

___ Was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. Acts 8:30



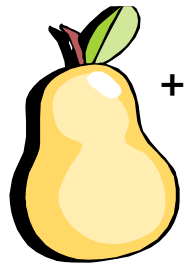
Acts 8:20 PUZZLE

Using the clues, fill in the missing words from the verse.

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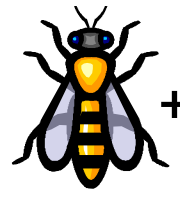


Peter answered:



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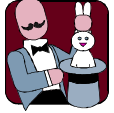


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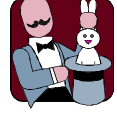
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_____ could buy the _____ of God with _____.



TRICKY QUESTIONS



Pull these questions 'out of the hat' to sharpen students' thinking skills.
Pull out candy to reward correct answers. **(Answers are in bold)**

The Believers began to leave Jerusalem because:

- A. They wanted to spread the Gospel.
- B. There was great persecution.**
- C. Passover and Pentecost were over.

One of the men who had been chosen to care for the widows began preaching in Samaria. His name was:

- A. Stephen.
- B. Saul.
- C. Philip.**

Simon was known as:

- A. Mr. Magic.
- B. Simon the Great.
- C. The Great Power.**

Peter and John came to Samaria because they heard that:

- A. The people of Samaria had accepted the Word of God.**
- B. The people of Samaria couldn't understand the Word of God.
- C. Phillip called them to come and help.

Simon tried to:

- A. Sell his secrets to the Apostles.
- B. Buy the power of the Holy Spirit.**
- C. Entertain the Apostles.

Peter told Simon that:

- A. His heart was not right before God.**
- B. He would have a part in the ministry.
- C. He should be baptized.

Philip left Samaria and headed down the desert road because:

- A. An angel told him to.**
- B. Peter and John could handle things in Samaria.
- C. He wanted to try out his new chariot.

The Ethiopian was:

- A. A slave.
- B. A church official.
- C. Treasurer to the Queen of Ethiopia.**

The Ethiopian official was reading:

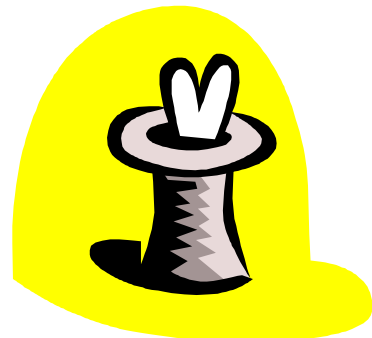
- A. The book of Isaiah.**
- B. The writings of Moses.
- C. The owner's manual for his chariot.

Philip did something for the Ethiopian. He:

- A. Helped him find his way home.
- B. Began with the passage in Isaiah to tell him about Jesus.**
- C. Paid for his room at the inn.

After the Ethiopian was baptized he:

- A. Went on his way rejoicing.**
- B. Followed Philip back to Samaria.
- C. Was confused.



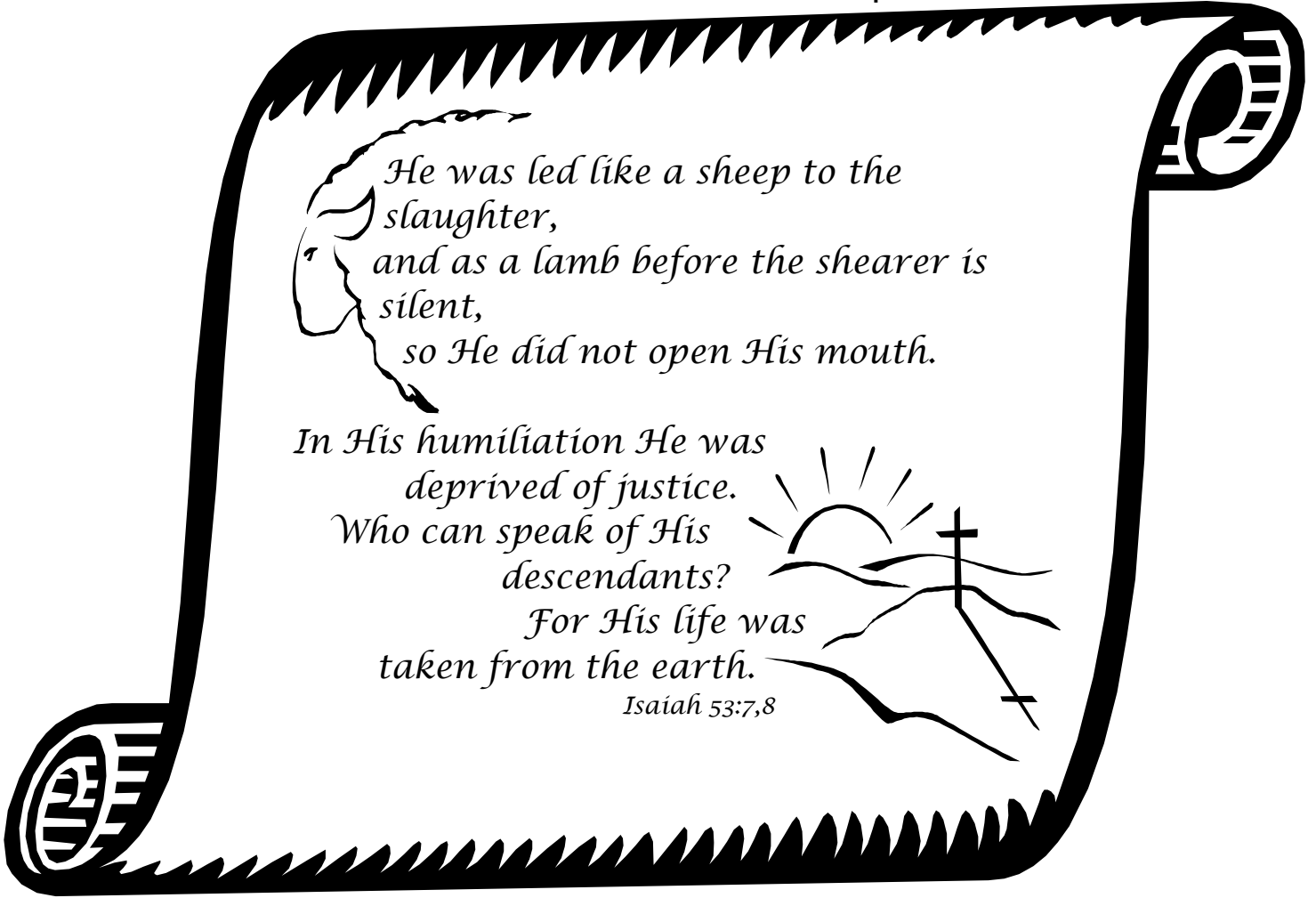
Acts Facts

Divide the students into groups for their table discussion times, with a leader at each table. Have your table form two teams. The teams at each table will compete against each other. Start with closed Bibles for each question. Read the question and the verse. Have them find the verse and stand to answer the following questions. Reward the team that wins.

- ◆ **True or False:** Philip was called by God to wait tables for the church and died like Stephen! **Acts 21:8**
- ◆ **True or False:** When God sends you to go and tell the Word to others, He gives you wisdom and the words to say. **Jeremiah 1:7**
- ◆ **Fill in the blanks:** Now those who had been scattered by the _____ in connection with _____ traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the _____ only to Jews. **Acts 11:19**
Blanks are: persecution-Stephen-message
- ◆ What was the people's response or emotion when Philip preached, cast out demons and healed? **Acts 8:7 & 8**
- ◆ What did Simon do wrong that was a sin against the Holy Spirit? **Acts 8:18 -21**
- ◆ Did Simon pray, repent immediately and ask God to forgive him for what he did? **Acts 8:24**
- ◆ **Yes or No!** When we ask Jesus to forgive our wrongs and receive Christ as our Savior, do we need someone to come and lay hands on us to receive the Holy Spirit? Why did the Church in Samaria need the Apostles to come and lay hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit? **Acts 8:15-17**
- ◆ **True or False:** God sent Philip to meet an Ethiopian man along the road because this man wanted to worship God and understand the Book of Isaiah. **Acts 8:27-29**
- ◆ **Fill in the blanks:** "Do you _____ what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone _____ it to me?" So he _____ Philip to come up and sit with him. **Acts 8:30-31**
Blanks are: understand-explains-invited
- ◆ In **Acts 8:34**, the Ethiopian man asked Philip who the prophet was talking about. Answer his question and explain what **Acts 8:32 & 33** means.
- ◆ What great event happened to the Ethiopian man? **Acts 8:38**

Cj X `X _ #M Z i f c c #####

This is the passage in Isaiah from which Phillip explained the "Good News about Jesus" to the Ethiopian official.



Directly from this passage, write three to five more statements that are true of Jesus.

Jesus was led like a sheep to His death.

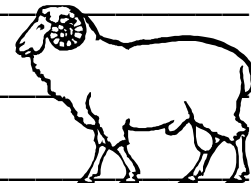
Jesus _____

Jesus _____

Jesus _____

Jesus _____

Jesus _____



Aim Questions

Answer the following questions about today's Bible Adventure.

1. What did God allow to aid the spread of His church?
2. Who was Philip, and how did he get to Samaria?
3. What did Simon the sorcerer do, and why was it wrong?
4. Who did Philip teach in a chariot? How did the man respond?
5. Why is it that God's power could not be bought from the Apostles?
6. What have you done to help God's gift of salvation be given to others?

As believers we should take every opportunity to share with others, the wondrous gift that Christ has shared with us.

"On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria."

Acts Chapter 8