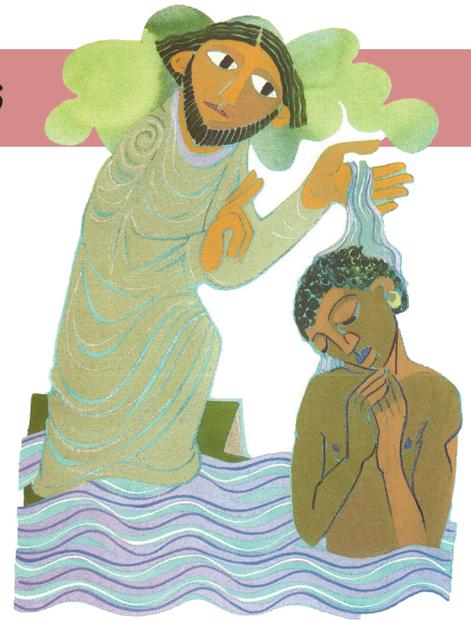


Philip and the Ethiopian

**1**

Before you begin, please read the introduction on the right to yourself.

2

With the help of your child, prepare the meeting space. Pull out your Bible, light some candles, and add any other decoration you'd like to make the space beautiful.

Then begin with a prayer.

The first Christians were Jews. They were awaiting the Messiah, and it was the Hebrew Scriptures that the disciples used in their preaching. But Jesus' message soon reached outside the Jewish community. Disciples like Philip traveled to many lands. This story tells of a time when that message went all the way to Ethiopia, where a vibrant Christian community developed. The story can be found in Acts 8:4-40.

3

Getting started. Discuss together: Who was the first person to tell you about God? Or who was your favorite teacher? Why?

Read the story below out loud. If your child is old enough, he or she can read it to you. Otherwise, read it to your child. Along the way, clarify anything your child might not understand.



A long, long time ago, a man named Philip began to share the Good News. Philip was a Jew who spoke Greek. As the early Church got bigger and bigger, the apostles realized they could not do everything themselves. They told the believers to choose seven people to help them. Philip was one of those chosen.

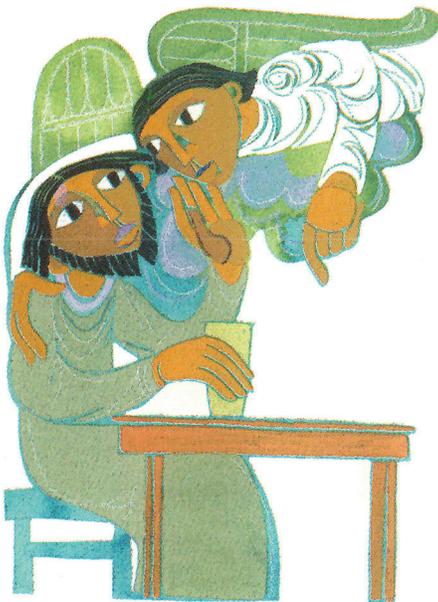
Philip liked to tell people about Jesus. He told them what Jesus said. He told them what Jesus did. He told them how Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. Philip did such a good job talking about Jesus that many Jews came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

One day, an angel spoke to Philip. The angel told Philip to get ready to leave by noon. The angel told him to set out on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip knew that this road went right through the desert. He knew that it would be very hot walking down the road at noon. Philip went anyway. He trusted God's messenger.

As he walked down the road, Philip noticed a fancy chariot. (A chariot was a special wagon in which rich people rode.) Philip could tell by the decorations that this chariot came from a faraway land. The Holy Spirit told Philip to go and walk along beside the fancy chariot.

The chariot belonged to a man from Ethiopia. Ethiopia is in Africa. The man who owned the chariot was a very important man. He worked for a queen. He took care of all of her money.

The Ethiopian was on his way home. He had been in Jerusalem to worship. He had also gone there to learn



more about God. He liked to read the Jewish holy books. He was reading one of them when Philip began to walk beside his chariot.

In those days, people liked to read out loud. It was another way of praying to God. These are some of the words the Ethiopian was reading when Philip joined him:

*“He has been humiliated and has no one to defend him.
Who will ever talk about his descendants,
Since his life on earth has been cut short!”*

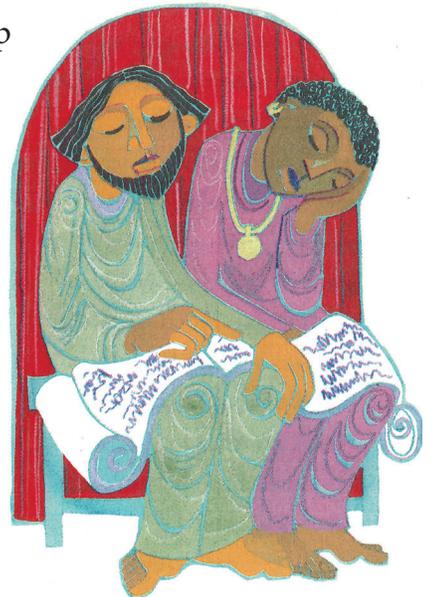
Philip said to the Ethiopian, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The Ethiopian answered, “How can I, unless someone helps me?” Then he invited Philip to ride in his chariot with him.

They rode together for a long time. Philip began to talk about the words that the man had been reading. He explained all about the Good News of Jesus. Finally, he told him how people had made fun of Jesus before they killed him. He told the man how young Jesus was when he died.

As they traveled down the road, they came to a lake. The man told Philip that he wanted to be a follower of Jesus. He told Philip he wanted to be baptized. So they stopped the chariot, and they both got out. Philip and the man both went into the water. Philip baptized the Ethiopian. After they came out of the water, Philip left the man.

Philip went to many different towns and baptized a great number of people. The Ethiopian took his new faith all the way back to Africa. The Church was growing beyond Palestine. Now even people from other lands believed in the Good News.

*God called both Philip and the Ethiopian. They both listened, and they both answered. The great and Holy Spirit was not just **with** Philip and not just **with** the Ethiopian, but also **in** them. Philip and the Ethiopian let the Spirit move them and great things happened.*



1

Now discuss the story with your child. Use the following or other questions:

1. What was your favorite part of the story? Why?
2. Do you feel more like Philip or more like the Ethiopian? Why?
3. Who talks to you about God? To whom do you talk about God? What are you saying?

2

Get your child started on the activity on the next page, making sure they understand the instructions. (The answers to the word search are on page 8.) Then continue to read below.

3

Just for you: We need to risk talking about God so we and others can grow in faith and love.

We learn about God in many ways, but certainly the most common way is by listening. We listen to parents, teachers, clergy, and other committed Christians. After we learn about Jesus, then we have another responsibility: we have to speak to others and share our faith! Talking about God is what disciples do.

The Waters of Baptism

Find these words from the story of Philip and the Ethiopian in the puzzle below.

PHILIP

BELIEVE

AFRICA

BAPTIZE

CHARIOT

ANGEL

WATER

ROAD

R O A D P N I C

K O L A H S R B

J A C O I B E E

A N G E L P T L

E A F R I C A I

T E R P P H W E

C H A R I O T V

I B A P T I Z E

In the each of the four squares below draw a different way that we use water.

Building a Church of Belonging and Welcome

1

Help your child get started on their activity on the next page, and then continue to the step 2.

2

Just for you: There may be particular people you recognize who help to make Mass a welcoming and prayerful experience (for example, the greeters, musicians, lectors, priest, altar servers, eucharistic ministers, etc).

All these people build up our Church family. In the space below, list some things that happen at your church to make you feel welcome.

3

When your children have finished these reflections, come up with a common list of five things or people that make you feel welcome. The more we feel like we belong, the more real the Church becomes to us! Let younger children color the church building.

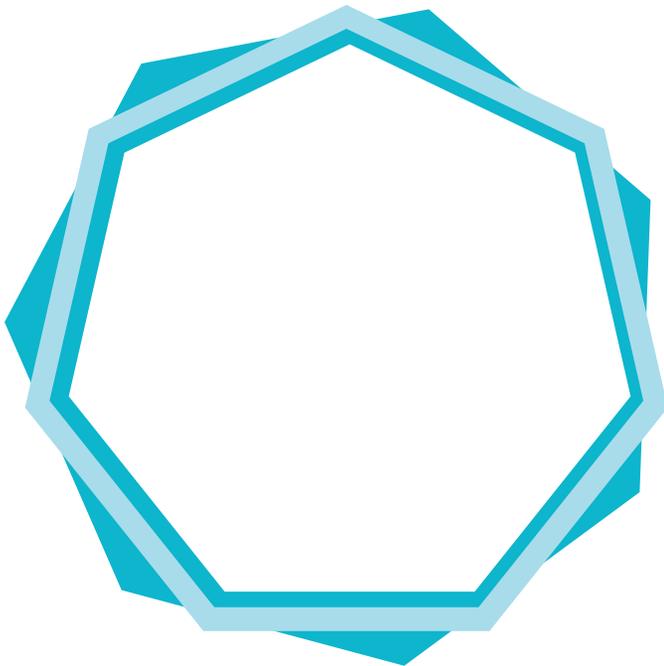
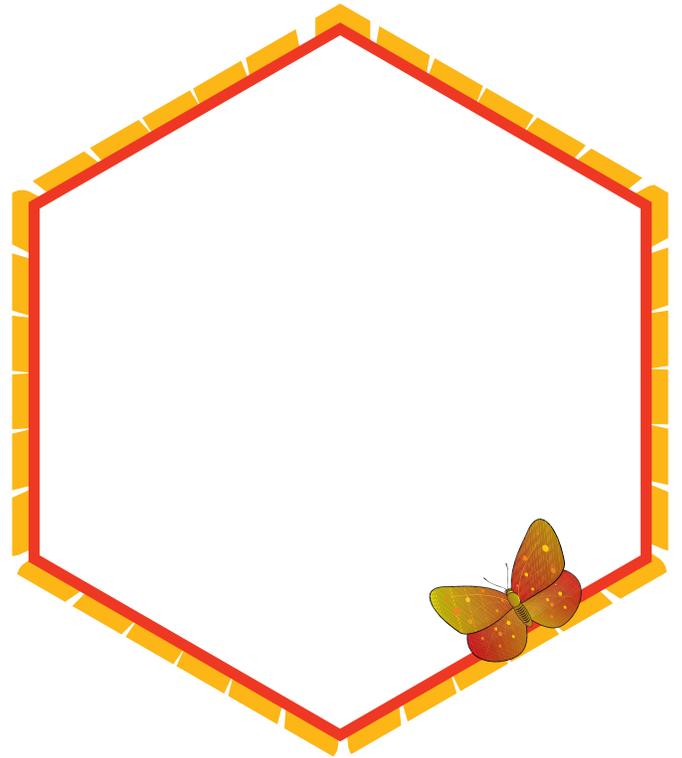
1.
(color the roof)
2.
(color the windows)
3.
(color the door)
4.
(color the cross)
5.
(color the whole church!)



Feeling Like You Belong

Many people in your church work very hard to make your parish feel like a family.

In each of the frames below, draw a picture of the different people who help out at your church
(ex: greeters, musicians, priests, altar servers, eucharistic ministers, etc).



What We Know About God



1

Prepare a small notebook by writing on it “What we know about God.” Then use it as a scrapbook, a place to save pictures, articles, stories, jokes—whatever.

Add to your memories of God anytime you recognize them.

Closing Ritual

2

Read together the very same passage from the prophet Isaiah that the Ethiopian was reading, Isaiah 43:1-7, in your Bible. What promise do you hear in this reading? End with the Our Father.

Answer to activity on page 5

R	O	A	D	P	N	I	C
K	O	L	A	H	S	R	B
J	A	C	O	I	B	E	E
A	N	G	E	L	P	T	L
E	A	F	R	I	C	A	I
T	E	R	P	P	H	W	E
C	H	A	R	I	O	T	V
I	B	A	P	T	I	Z	E

