

JUNE

CURRICULUM



1ST-4TH GRADE

GOD'S SPIRIT UNIFIES (PT. 1)

SERIES: NO FEAR

Join us throughout the month of June as we learn stories that show us examples of being a fearless follower of Christ. We will be going through the books of Luke and Acts.

REMEMBER VERSE

ISAIAH 41:10—So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

SCHEDULE

All Services

0:00—0:10	Welcome/Check-In
0:10—0:15	Transition to Large Group
0:15—0:30	Large Group (B100)
0:30—0:35	Transition to Small Group
0:35—1:05	Small Group (Lesson/Activity/Respond)
1:05—1:15	Dismiss

NOTES

LEADER RESOURCES

SERIES OVERVIEW

WEEK 1: God Is Powerful

Ascension

CURRENT WEEK: God's Spirit Unifies, Part 1

Philip

WEEK 3: God's Spirit Unifies, Part 2

Peter and Cornelius

WEEK 4: God Answers Prayer

Peter Delivered from Prison

WEEK 5: God Speaks

Lydia and Philippi

WEEK 6: Remember & Celebrate

ZONK!

EQUIP

Throughout Acts we read how God's Spirit unified many different people into His family. Acts 8 gives us a specific example of this as we see how God brought an Ethiopian eunuch into the faith community through the evangelism of Philip. This act of salvation was a radical step forward in the early church's mission to the Gentiles. This man wasn't just a Gentile from a distant land; he was also a eunuch—a man who, because of his physical condition, was considered by the Jews to live in a constant state of ritual impurity (Leviticus 21:16-23).

It wasn't uncommon for eunuchs to hold high positions in government during this time, particularly positions relating to the queen or the harem. This eunuch, in particular, was "an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means 'queen of the Ethiopians')" (Acts 8:27). Though he was a wealthy, important man in his country, he loved the God of the Jews and traveled an incredible distance to worship Him in Jerusalem.

After his long journey, the eunuch would have only been permitted to come as far as the Court of the Gentiles in the temple. This man could have taken part in temple services and experienced Jewish worship from the fringes, but he would have been unable to be fully included into this family, because of his status as a Gentile and his physical condition (Deuteronomy 23:1). Though the Law had forbidden eunuchs to be a full part of the Jewish faith community, a prophecy in Isaiah held hope: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me ... to them I will give within my temple ... a name better than sons and daughters" (Isaiah 56:4-5). Through this prophecy, God spoke of a time when Jesus would fulfill the Law and give everyone the opportunity to be a part of His family.

ENCOURAGE

Sometimes, because of busy schedules, exhausted minds, or simply laziness, we have a hard time making time to be with friends and loved ones. We say we want to get together, grab that cup of coffee, go on that walk in the park, but months go by and we never get to it!

This week, call that friend (or two) in your faith community whom you haven't seen in a while. Before you get together, think of some engaging questions to spark conversation, such as, "If you could describe the sweetest moment you've had with God in the past few months, what would it be?" or "Where and how do you sense God leading your life in the upcoming months/years?" Make plans to meet and savor the time you spend together. Ask God to enrich your conversation and your connection with each other so you both feel encouraged and loved. Thank God, the One who blessed you with your faith community, for offering you the gift of relationship with Him.

WELCOME

Some fun ideas to welcome kids as they check-in to your room at the beginning of service.

Invite the kids to color on the provided coloring page or work on the provided activity page.

As kids arrive, feel free to ask them this week's Connect Question. Feel free to write the question on the board and encourage some fun dialogue before you start your lesson.

QUESTION: What is the farthest away you've ever traveled?

RESPOND

A chance for kids to respond to what God is putting on their hearts through creative expression.

God's Spirit unifies all believers in the world. Even though we come from different cultures and families, we're all members of the family of God.

INSTRUCTIONS: Hand each child an I Can Spend the Sabbath Template and the cut outs that go along with it. Instruct each child to think of their own answers and color in the hexagons. Then, have the kids cut out the shapes and glue them however they would like onto the main template page.

SUPPLIES:

- I Can Spend the Sabbath Template
- Hexagon Cut Outs
- Coloring Supplies
- Scissors
- Glue

REFLECT

A chance to reflect on what kids have just learned about The Big God Story.

Even though Philip and the Ethiopian man were from different towns and cultures, God's Spirit unified them. God's Spirit connected them to the same faith community even when they lived in different places in the world! God's Spirit still unifies believers all over the world today.

- In what city was Philip preaching the good news? *Acts 8:5*
- Why was Philip on the desert road? *Acts 8:26*
- What did the man want Philip to explain to him? *Acts 8:28-35*
- From what book of the Bible was the Ethiopian reading? *Isaiah 53:7, 8*
- Whom did the Isaiah verses describe? *Acts 8:35*
- What is a faith community? *Acts 2:44-47*
- How did the man respond when Philip told him about Jesus? *Acts 8:36-39*

BLESS

A powerful way to bless the kids and parents by sending them off with a benediction.

INSTRUCTIONS: Invite the parents into your room at the end of the service to say one last prayer together with the whole family. Instruct them to find their child and sit/stand by their side. Explain what their child learned today and read the verse below. Pray together and then dismiss.

JOHN 17:22-23 – "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one--I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

BLESSING: May you know the unity that comes from God's Spirit. May you look to include others in your faith community. May you carry God's message of hope and salvation to the ends of the earth.

NOTES

This script serves as an outline of what your storytelling might sound like. Items written in italics are cues for the storyteller and are not meant to be read out loud. You are fully encouraged to make it your own and add a personal touch.

The script serves as an example, however if you would like to teach based on the script and are in need of any supplies mentioned, we would be happy to supply those for you! Storytelling images mentioned will always be provided in your basket each week, but if you need any other supplies for your lesson, contact a Grove KIDS Staff member beforehand so we can supply it for you! You are also welcome to bring in your own props if you would like!

RESOURCES PROVIDED

- Judea Map Image
- Africa Map Image
- Chariot Image
- Scroll Image

STORYTELLING

Before you begin, lead the children in a fun activity in which they must work together as a group. Give the kids an objective—for example, as a group, you must agree on the five best ice cream flavors; or, as a group, you must do the chicken dance.

As you worked in your group today, you had to be unified in order for your shared activity to work. What does unified mean? *Pause for answers.* Yes, it means to come together and agree. God's Spirit unifies those who believe in Him. Let's ask God to teach us today as we hear more. *Lead kids in Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.*

After Jesus returned to heaven, He sent His Holy Spirit into the hearts of those who believed in Him. Because of the Holy Spirit helping the disciples, the good news about Jesus began to spread. The believers talked about Jesus in synagogues and marketplaces, on the road, and in people's homes. God's Spirit unified them—or brought them together—as whole families believed and became a part of the faith community!

For a while, the good news about Jesus stayed in Jerusalem, where Jesus' disciples lived. They were having such a great time praising God together! But do you think that was God's plan—to keep the good news all in one place? *Encourage the kids to answer.* Of course not! Let's remember what Jesus had told them to do. *Have a volunteer read Acts 1:8.* The good news, that Jesus saves us and brings us into relationship with God, needed to be told in other places—Judea, Samaria, and even the ends of the earth! *Judea Map Image.*

The new believers started to suffer persecution. That means they were bullied and sometimes even killed for what they believed. Turn in your Bibles to Acts 8:1. *Read verse aloud.* God desires for everyone to be a part of His faith community, so He used something as bad as persecution to help spread the good news that Jesus came to save the world and invite everyone into His faith community. What's a community? *Invite answers.* A community is a group of people who share something in common. God's Spirit unifies His people and brings them into community. *Volunteer reads Acts 8:4.*

As believers scattered all over, the Holy Spirit led a man named Philip, a believer spreading the good news, to help make sure the promise Jesus gave before He went into heaven would actually happen. Let's find out where Philip went. *Read Acts 8:5.* When Jesus was still on earth, He went to Samaria and met a woman at a well. The

Samaritans and the Jews did not get along. So, it was pretty miraculous that God's Spirit unified the Samaritan believers with the Jewish believers!

But God didn't stop there. The Holy Spirit sent Philip to a faraway place to spread the good news to even more people! *Read vv. 26-27.* On this lonely desert road, Philip met a man from the African country of Ethiopia. This man was in charge of all of the money of the queen of Ethiopia. Have you heard of Ethiopia? *Invite kids to raise hands.* In Bible times, it was in a little different place than it is today. Here's where it is today. *Africa Map Image.* Ethiopia was far away from Jerusalem. But God's Spirit brings people together, no matter where they're from. He unifies.

The Ethiopian man had gone to Jerusalem to worship God and was now on his way home. His journey would have taken him over 1,000 miles and probably about 100 days just to get there—they didn't have cars or airplanes back then! *Chariot image.* *Read v. 8.* The people didn't have Bibles like we have today, so the man was probably reading from a scroll. *Scroll image.* This man wanted to know about God.

Continue reading vv. 29-30. Following the Holy Spirit's lead, Philip ran up to the chariot of this important Ethiopian man and asked him if he understood what he was reading. The man needed someone to explain about Jesus, so the man invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Then the Holy Spirit gave Philip the words to explain the verses to the man as well as share the whole message of the good news of Jesus with him. And because God's Spirit had already prepared the Ethiopian to hear what Philip had to say, the man understood the truth, believed, and also became part of the faith community of God! God's Spirit unified the Ethiopian with the rest of the believers that day. *Volunteer reads v. 38.* The Ethiopian man was so excited to follow Jesus that he couldn't wait to be baptized. The Bible says he went away rejoicing!

There were many reasons why it might have been unlikely for this Ethiopian man to believe and have faith in Jesus. First, he came from far away; second, he was a Gentile and not a Jew; and third, he came from a very different culture. But Jesus came so that all people could be saved and become a part of God's family.

Through the cross, God made the way for everyone to be in God's family. He made the way for everyone of every race, gender, social status, physical ability, and culture to know Him as Lord. God's Spirit unifies those who believe in Him.