

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

Philip catches up with the man from Ethiopia

By Janaan Manternach

Philip was very happy. He had come to Samaria to tell the people about Jesus. They were excited to hear what he told them.

One day God sent Philip on a special journey. "Head south to the desert road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza," God's messenger said to Philip.

Philip set out right away. He had no idea what God wanted him to do. He took a shortcut through the desert to the main road. When he came to the Jerusalem-Gaza road, he started walking toward Gaza.

A little while later a carriage came by. The carriage went right past Philip. He caught sight of a foreigner in the carriage. He looked like a very important person. Actually he was in charge of the treasury of all of Ethiopia, a country in Africa.

Philip heard God's Spirit speaking to him in his heart. "Go and catch up with that carriage," the Spirit told Philip.

Philip began to run. Luckily the carriage was not going very fast. Soon Philip was running beside the carriage. He could hear the man in the carriage saying something.

As he ran alongside the carriage, Philip gradually understood what the Ethiopian official was saying. He was reading the Bible. The man was meditating aloud on the words of the prophet Isaiah. Philip was amazed.

Philip shouted to the man in the carriage. "Do you really understand what you are reading?"

The man was surprised. But he answered Philip honestly. "How can I understand the prophet's words unless someone explains them to me?"

"Maybe I can help you," Philip shouted back as he kept running alongside the carriage.

The Ethiopian official ordered the carriage stopped. "Please climb in. Help me if you can."

The Bible text the man was reading was about God's servant. The prophet Isaiah wrote that God's servant would be like a lamb led to slaughter.

"Tell me if you can," the Ethiopian asked Philip, "what is the prophet talking about?"

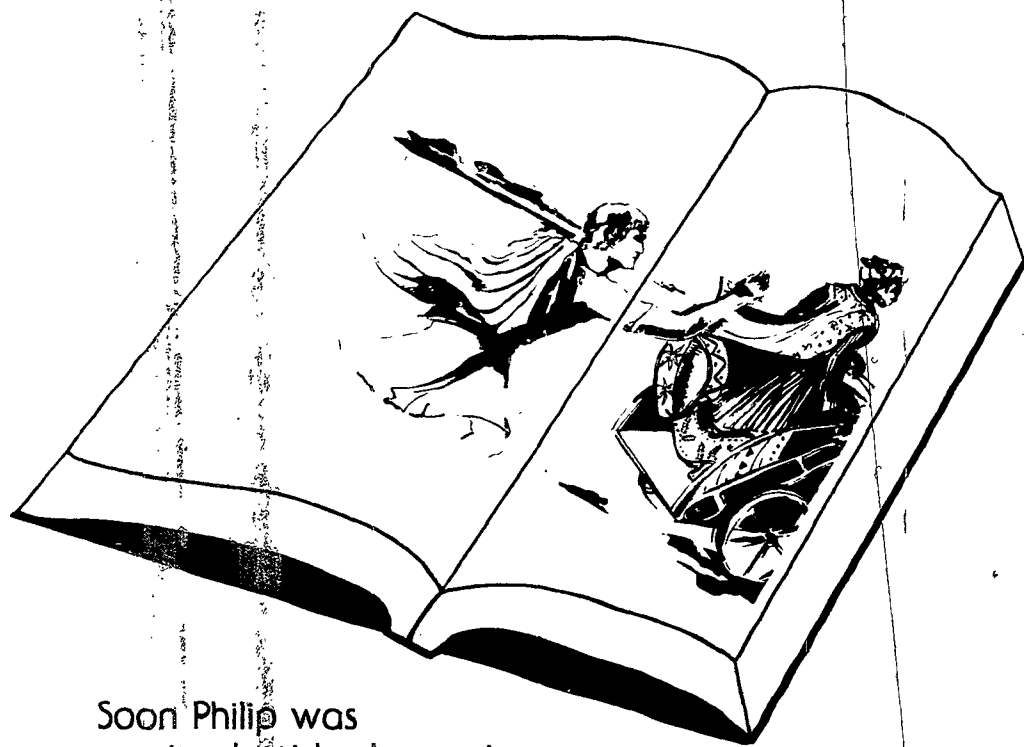
So Philip discussed this passage with the Ethiopian. And Philip told him the good news about Jesus of Nazareth. "Jesus was executed like a lamb led to slaughter. But we believe Jesus did nothing but good all his life — helping people, teaching them, freeing them. We believe God raised him up from death to life. He is alive and with us."

"Stop the carriage!" the Ethiopian ordered. "There is some water. I want to be baptized. I believe Jesus is my Lord and savior."

So Philip baptized him, and the man from Ethiopia went on his way. He was very happy.

Story hour biblical quotes — this week from Acts 8:26-39 — are paraphrased.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of numerous catechetical books and articles for children.)



Soon Philip was running beside the carriage. Finally the carriage stopped. The two men began to talk. It was to be a day they both would remember.



Together

Sister Elenita Barry, MM, worked with Navajo children in western New Mexico for more than 10 years. Supported by a grant from the Catholic Extension Society, she taught Navajo children the saving Word of the gospels.

Sister Elenita is one of a small team of home missionaries who, together with the Extension Society, pursue the vital and urgent task of evangelization here in the United States. But the team is too small to do it alone. It needs new members. It needs you.

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HOW ABOUT YOU?

Imagine that you are Philip and you want to help the man in the carriage. What would you tell him about Jesus?

Imagine what Philip must have looked like running alongside the Ethiopian's carriage. Now draw your own picture of that scene and give your picture a name

Children's Reading Corner:

There are many stories and books for children about Jesus. The more we hear about Jesus, the more we are aware of his importance and role in our lives.

Some books that might be helpful include titles from a collection called Arch Books (Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118. Paperback, \$1.75 each). Or:

"Stories of Jesus," by John Behnke (Paulist Press, 545 Island Rd., Ramsey, N.J. 07446. 1977. Paperback, \$5.95).

"Jesus, Friend of Children," (Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118. 1976. Hardback, \$4.50).



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