

Samaria and the Ends of the Earth

Bible Lesson: Acts 8:26-40

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will understand ways that God spreads his truth into unreached cultures.

Outcomes

1. Students will discover the inequities in our world, both material and spiritual.
2. Students will learn how God moves unbelievers who seek him into places where they can hear the gospel.
3. Students will understand that God may move them into a place where they can share the good news of Jesus with people from other cultures.

Memory Verse

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Directions

1. Review verses for the “Bible Drill Challenge.” Consider how you will relate each to today’s theme.
2. Review the “Key Word Wheel” poster. Integrate these words as you notice them in any and all sections of today’s lesson. Suggested: “Purpose,” “People,” “Proclamation,” and “Passport to the World.”
3. Read the Bible story references. Pray that God will guide you as you teach and apply this lesson to your unique group of students.
4. Review the world facts in the pre-lesson activity. Consider how you will adapt this for your setting and students.



PREPARATION: 20 min.

TEACHING: 36 min.

Materials

- Bibles
- “Key Word Wheel” poster (Introduction p. 6)
- “Key Word Cards” (Introduction pp. 7-8)
- ten students (if your group is small, ten chairs)

TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: THE WORLD AS A FAMILY OF TEN

Directions

1. Warmly welcome students to your class to learn more about God's purposes. Invite them to participate in an activity that takes a look at our world today.
2. Choose ten students and have them stand in a line at the front of the teaching area. Ask your group to imagine that these ten students represent all the people in the whole world. (If you have a small class, use ten chairs to visualize these statistics.)
3. Guide the ten students to act as illustrations for the facts below. Enjoy the process. Allow for moments of reflection when difficult truths about poverty are demonstrated.
4. Say, *"Here is how the world population would be distributed across the five largest continents."* As you announce the continent, go down the line of students and tap the correct number of people on the shoulder.
 - *"Africa."* – Tap one person.
 - *"Europe."* – Tap one person.
 - *"North America."* – Tap one person.
 - *"Central and South America."* – Tap one person.
 - *"Asia."* – Tap six people. Say, *"This is where the most unreached people live."*
5. Say, *"Let's discover something about the lives of people in our world."*¹
 - *"Three out of ten has a phone. Seven do not."*
 - *"Two out of ten earn less than a dollar a day."*
 - *"Six out of ten do not have enough food and go to bed hungry."*
 - *"Three out of ten do not have safe, clean water to drink."*
 - *"Five out of ten cannot know and worship the true God because there is no one in their culture to tell them about Jesus."*
6. Thank your ten volunteers and have them sit with the rest of the group. Ask students to silently consider this question: *"Which of these facts disturbs or touches your heart the most?"* Allow students pray silently for a few minutes, taking their concerns for peoples around the world to God.

BIBLE DRILL CHALLENGE

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Materials

- ten students or ten chairs

¹ *If the World Were a Village: A Book About the World's Peoples* David J. Smith (Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can Press, LTD., 2003).

Directions

1. Give each student a Bible. Invite students to participate in a Bible drill. Say, *“Since the Bible has such an important purpose, we want to get more acquainted with the Bible itself. Today, and over the next several weeks, we will practice finding verses and stories in the Bible that help us understand God’s purpose.”* (optional: *“We will also be practicing to challenge our parents to a ‘Bible Drill Challenge’ on the last week of our quarter.”*)
2. Instruct students to hold their Bibles in a ready position, Bibles closed and above their heads. Invite students to work in pairs if they are less familiar with their Bibles. Let students warm up for a speed competition by first looking for each item below, one at a time. As you name the item, adding theme-related questions or comments, students will lower their Bibles and quickly try to find what you have named. Say, *“Ready, begin”* after introducing each item.
 - Exodus 9:16 – *“What is God’s purpose?”* (That all people know him.)
 - Find Genesis. *“What is the beginning of God’s story in the Bible?”* (God created people to know and worship him, but they sinned. Sin separates people from God.)
 - Isaiah 45:22 – *“Who does God want to know him?”* (review verse from Lesson 2)
 - Find Genesis 12. *“What was God’s promise to Abraham?”* (God would bless him and through him, bless the nations.)
 - Romans 10:14 – *“What does it take for people to hear about Jesus?”* (review verse from Lesson 8)
 - Psalm 67:1-2 – *“Why does God bless us?”* (review verse from Lesson 3)
 - 2 Peter 3:9 – *“This verse talks about God’s attitude and actions towards those who do not know him yet.”*
3. Read 2 Peter 3:9 aloud. Discuss it together. Ask, *“What does this verse show about God?”* (God is patient and loving.)
4. Explain that God gave many promises saying that people from all nations would come to know him. Ask, *“Do people from every culture know God yet?”* (no)
5. Say, *“God is waiting for his name to be known to all nations. In Matthew 24:14, Jesus said that when the gospel has been preached to the world, to all nations, then the end will come. This part of God’s story will be over and the final part of God’s story, with all nations worshiping God in heaven, will begin. Today’s Bible lesson is about two men – one who was blessed to know the truth about Jesus and one who did not know about Jesus yet. Let’s discover what happened when God moved one man to meet the other in a most surprising way.”*

Materials

- Bibles

BIBLE LESSON: PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

Directions

1. Invite students to share what they know about the temple in Jerusalem. *“What was inside?”* (priests, altars, animal sacrifices, beautiful curtains, gold, the ark of the covenant, holy of holies) *“Why did people come there?”* (to worship, learn about God, bring sacrifices)
2. Explain that God did not limit worship in the temple to the people of Israel. There were certain areas where Gentiles, people who were not descendants from the family of Abraham, could come to learn about God.
3. Open your Bible to Acts 8 and say, *“In Acts 8, we meet a man who has gone to Jerusalem to worship.”* Read Acts 8:27 and ask the students to describe this man. (from country of Ethiopia, an important official of the Queen of Ethiopia, in charge of queen’s wealth, eunuch) Explain that, *“In Bible times, the word ‘eunuch’ meant a government official. They were trusted by the king (or, in this case, queen) with important jobs.”*
4. Say, *“This eunuch was not a believer in Jesus. He could not call on Jesus because he had never heard about him.”* Read Acts 8:28. Ask, *“How do we know that the Ethiopian official is curious about the God of Israel and is seeking to know this God?”* (went to temple to worship, reads the scriptures)
5. Say, *“Remember that God is patient and wants everyone to know and worship him. When people seek God, God will make himself known. This man needs someone to preach to him so he can hear about Jesus.”*
6. Point to the “Key Word Wheel” poster. Say, *“As I read this story, listen for Key Words that show how God is advancing his purpose – to make himself known.”* Read Acts 8:26-29.
7. Then ask, *“How did God move people so that a believer from Israel could meet a nonbeliever from Ethiopia?”* (Ethiopian came to Jerusalem, angel of the Lord told Philip to go down south to the desert road, after the Ethiopian believed in Jesus the Spirit of the Lord moved Philip to a new place)
8. Read verses 30-35. Ask, *“What did Philip proclaim to the eunuch?”* (good news about Jesus, old testament sacrifice is a picture of Jesus)
9. Read verses 36-40. Ask, *“Where do you see an example of ‘Passport to the World’ in this account?”* (two countries of Israel and Ethiopia) Explain that, *“Although Philip did not actually go into the country of Ethiopia on the continent of Africa, a man from that culture came to him. When the Ethiopian official went home, the good news of Jesus traveled to a new continent and into a new culture. How might the gospel have spread in Ethiopia?”* (eunuch told the queen or other officials, they told their family and friends)
10. Say, *“There are still many people today who are waiting to hear about Jesus for the first time. Most live in countries in the 10/40 Window. But like the Ethiopian, they may travel to our country for work, to get a better education, or for vacation. Do you know any people from another culture who live near you?”* Allow students to briefly share examples.

Materials

- Bible
- “Key Word Wheel” poster (Introduction p. 6)
- “Key Word Cards” (Introduction pp. 7-8)

IN CLOSING ...

Conclude by praying for some of the people that students mention. Pray that God will put these people in contact with believers who can tell them the good news of Jesus.



PRAYER ACTIVITY: THUMB PRAYER

Directions

1. Invite students to pray. Say, *“Today, we are going to pray for people who are unreached, those who have never heard about Jesus. We have learned that most unreached people are either Tribal, Hindu, Unreligious, Muslim, or Buddhist. As you watch this clip, listen for the kind of things that would need to happen in their culture for these peoples to be reached with the gospel.”*
2. Show Infobyte #2, “THUMB.”
3. Divide the students into groups of five. Distribute one “THUMB Group Information” sheet to each group. Invite students to take turns reading the summaries of beliefs in their small groups.
4. After they read each summary, direct them to use ideas from the paragraph or the video clip to pray for people in each of the five THUMB religious blocks.
5. Bring groups back together and close in prayer, asking God for all the peoples of the earth to hear the truth about God and come to know him for themselves.



PREPARATION: 5 min.

TEACHING: 15 min.

Materials

- Infobyte #2, “THUMB” (IB)
- TV/DVD player
- copy of “THUMB Group Information” sheet for every five students (p. 7)

THUMB Group Information

Tribal people believe that spirits live in many things, even things in nature like trees, rocks, mountains, and water. They are afraid of these invisible, but powerful spirits. They never know when they might do something that will make the spirits angry. They may wear charms to protect them against spirits who might want to hurt them. They also try to make the spirits happy by giving them many gifts. Many tribal people live in Africa, Central and South America, and on the islands of Indonesia. Native Americans are also tribal people.

Hindus believe in and worship millions of gods. Hindu families often have an idol that they worship in their house. There are also many large idols in their Hindu temples. Hindus believe that all people are born over and over again. They believe that if they do good things, they will come back in their next life as a better person. If they are bad, they are born into the next life on this earth as something worse such as a very poor person, an animal, or even an insect. Millions of Hindus live in India and the neighboring country of Nepal.

Unreligious people do not believe in God. Parents and teachers tell their children that God is make-believe. They trust in schooling and their own intelligence to help them to have a good future. They trust in their government leaders to protect them. Some unreligious people trust in science to explain who they are and where they came from instead of the Bible. Others rely on their ancient ancestors and traditions tell them what is true. Unreligious people live in China, North Korea, Japan, and parts of Central Asia.

Muslims believe in one God called Allah. They believe that Jesus is a good prophet, but not the Son of God that died on the cross for their sins. Muslims try to earn their way to heaven by doing more good things than bad. They give to the poor, pray five times a day, and fast (go without food or water) in the daytime during their holy month of Ramadan. Even after doing these good things, Muslims are never sure if they will go to heaven. Their God, Allah, decides who is good enough to enter heaven. Muslims live in North Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan, India, and Central and Southeast Asia.

Buddhists follow the teaching of a man who lived thousands of years ago, called “the Buddha.” This leader taught that evil and suffering in the world are caused by wanting or desiring the wrong things. Buddhists do not believe that God can change their heart, but believe that they can change themselves. They try to have a peaceful life by doing the right things, thinking good thoughts, having a positive attitude, and controlling their feelings. Some Buddhists meditate, sitting very still and trying to get rid of any bad thoughts in their mind. Others do yoga exercises or participate in martial arts like karate to train their mind and body. Buddhists do not do good things to get into heaven. Instead, they do good to reach Nirvana, a peaceful place inside their mind. Buddhists live in Southeast Asia in countries like Japan, China, Cambodia, and Bali.