

Lesson 9

The Church: One in Faith

Bible Lesson: Acts 8:26-40

Memory Verse: What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. *1 John 1:3*

Enrichment Memory Verse: For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. *1 Corinthians 12:13*

Catechism Memory Work: I believe in the Holy Spirit;...
What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith;...

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach:

- ✚ The student will understand that God wants people all over the world to hear His gospel and to become members of His Church.
- ✚ The student will accept Christians of all lands and all races as one in faith and in the Holy Christian Church.
- ✚ The student will understand that the Holy Spirit wants to lead all Christians to serve God in taking the gospel to the world, by prayer, giving, and/or becoming His witnesses in the world.

Prepare Materials:

Along with the regular materials needed for class, you will need the following items for this lesson:

- ◆ scroll for the skit
- ◆ map showing the Holy Land, Gaza and Ethiopia
- ◆ a world map
- ◆ pictures of chariots

Prayer Preparation

1. Pray for the work of missions around the world. Pray that God's Word may be preached clearly. Pray that the Holy Spirit will open the hearts of many to the gospel.
2. Pray for your church and Sunday School, that they may be active participants in the work of taking the gospel to the world.
3. Pray for yourself and your class, that together you may gain a clearer vision of God's work in the whole world.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Bible Study

There is a great and awesome aspect of the Apostles' Creed that we might take for granted. When we confess the Creed, we are joining together with the Christian Church. This includes not just those that we see with us in our church building. It includes believers in places all around the world and also believers from all time. When we gather in our churches we see just a small slice of that which makes up the church here and now and that is only a slice of what is the true Christian Church.

The Christian Church is an answer to Christ's prayer for unity in John 17. As Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane he prayed, **"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."** The Apostles wrote what they saw and what Jesus

said by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Through their witness we hear of Jesus Christ and are given the gift of faith (Romans 10:14-17).

We live in a world in which people declare how independent they are but their actions show something quite different. People find themselves gathering together with people of like minds, whether it be in their hobbies or their political views. But the Christian Church should not be simply cliques who have a common interest. The local congregation is not a club that insulates itself from the world but is God's Kingdom on earth. We are gathered around the one true faith. We are gathered by God's work so that we might receive from Christ His good gifts to us.

The enemies of the Christian Church will sometimes talk about faith. However, when they do this it will often be a discussion about "sincere" faith being enough to save us or simply "faith in faith" language. In contrast to this, we must make clear that faith in something that doesn't exist does us no good. The prophets of the Old Testament do a wonderful job mocking faith in false gods (e.g. 1 Kings 18:27; Isaiah 44:6-20). So, we will point directly to the one in whom we place our faith. We put our faith in Christ who is always the focus of the Christian Church. We focus on Christ and Him crucified as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:2, **"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."**

We are thankful that God in His mercy has formed for Himself His bride, the Church. We are able to know Him as He has revealed Himself to us and, perhaps in an even more mind boggling way, God knows us (Galatians 4:9) and calls us His children (1 John 3:1). We know where the Church is because there the Gospel is preached; forgiveness of sins is proclaimed, and troubled consciences are given peace. This the Holy Spirit has done for you.

B. Creed Study

Philip was a man that the Lord used to communicate His love and grace. According to Acts 6:5, Philip was recognized by the early church as a mature believer, full of wisdom and the Holy Spirit. In order for us to be effective witnesses for Christ we need to pray that the Lord would develop our character so that our witness in word is backed up by a life example.

Philip was willing to obey the voice of the Lord. God led him to go to a place others wouldn't have gone. Philip was faithful to the Lord's call. The lesson we learn here is that God is not so concerned about the abilities we have, but He is looking at our hearts.

Philip took the initiative to talk to the man from Ethiopia. As Christians we need to look for opportunities to share our faith. We must not simply sit back and wait for people to come to us, but we must look for opportunities that the Lord has prepared for us to share His love.

Philip was very clear about what the focal point of witnessing is all about, namely to tell others about Christ. In verse 35 the Bible says that Philip "preached Jesus" to the man. Christ is the message we bring.

Philip gave the man the invitation. He said to him, "If you believe . . ." God calls us to extend the invitation to come to Christ. That message is to be extended to all nations, all tribes and all people groups. Today there are many, many people who are just like the man from Ethiopia. They are searching for meaning to life which can be found only in Jesus Christ.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome

Discuss with the class experiences the students may have had in seeking opportunities to serve God.

Open with Prayer

Encourage students to thank God for His call to them to serve in His Church. Ask for brief sentence prayers that God will bless the words of witness they have shared.

Recite Memory Work

Listen to students recite their memory work:

From the Bible: John 15:5

And

From the Catechism: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith;...

Review

Conduct a quick oral review of last week's lesson.

More questions to be added later.

Introduce Wall Words

displayed—
representing—
ethnic—
commission—
foreigner—
countrymen—
oneness—

Introduce the Lesson

SAY Have you ever been asked to do a very important errand for someone? Maybe your teacher or school principal asked you to take a very important message to someone. I'm sure you took your errand very seriously. But what if the President asked you to take a message to another officer? You'd probably stop whatever you were doing to take that message. And you'd most likely think you'd been given a very special job to do. In today's lesson a man named Philip was given a job to do that was so important that God sent an angel to Philip to give him his orders. It turned out that the person Philip would see was a very important person, but Philip didn't know that at the time. And Philip's errand was to a foreign country. We'll find out what it was.

Teach the Lesson

SAY Open your books to Lesson 9. The title tells us the lesson is about the Church being one in faith. What do we say we mean by one in faith? How is the Church one in faith? (*We mean that all Christians have the same faith in Jesus.*) **ASK**

Where can we find believers who have the same faith in Jesus as we have? (*We can find these believers all over the world.*) **SAY** Look at the picture on this page. What countries or continents do we find represented here? The AFLC has missionaries in Mexico and in a country of South America call Brazil. Can you find these flags? (Allow students to point out these places.) **ASK** Why should we pray for believers around the world? (*They confess the same faith in Jesus that we do.*) We should pray that God will bless them and keep them in their faith. We should pray that God would help them win other people to trust in Jesus. **SAY** Now we'll read the story of how an angel told Philip to go on an errand for God. Let's read it to find out why the errand was so important. **READ OR TELL** the story from the second half of the lesson. **ASK** Why was this errand so important that God told Philip to go? (*The Ethiopian officer was reading God's Word but needed help to understand it and to tell him how to believe in Jesus. The gospel was to be brought to a new country where the gospel hadn't been preached yet. Now there would be Christians in the country of Ethiopia.*) **ASK** What was the Ethiopian reading? (*Something Isaiah the Prophet had written about the promised Savior.*) Isaiah didn't mention Jesus' name in this verse but we know he was writing about Jesus. The Ethiopian didn't know who Isaiah was writing about but he wanted to know. The Holy Spirit had been working in his heart and making him ready to hear the gospel. **ASK** How did the Ethiopian learn about Jesus? (*Philip told him that Jesus had died to save sinners.*) **ASK** How did the Ethiopian come to believe in Jesus as his Savior? (*The Holy Spirit worked in his heart to show him his sins and help him repent of them and confess them.*)

More to be added later.

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Memory Work

BIBLE VERSE— I John 1:3

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

CATECHISM—READ

I believe in the Holy Spirit...

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him;

But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith;...

Activity Pages

Activity 1 - Crossword Fun
ANSWERS

Across

1. GAZA
6. CHARIOT
7. HOLY
9. FELLOWSHIP
11. ONE

Down

2. AFRICA

3. UNITY
4. BAPTIZED
5. FOLLOWERS
8. ISAIAH
10. GOD

Activity 2 - Good News! (skit)**CLOSING THE LESSON****Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us the gospel so we may trust in You and become part of Your Church. We ask that You will use us in building Your kingdom. We pray that we may have the fellowship with You that will make us love You enough to be Your witnesses and lead others to know You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Assignment

1. Remind the students to complete the assignments not yet finished and to learn memory verses and the catechism.
2. Remind the students to bring Bibles and completed work to be checked.
3. Review memory work from past lessons.