Fruit of the Spirit
Galatians 5:22 | The fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace

Peace | Staying calm and cool knowing that God is in control.

Episode 1
Philip and the Ethiopian
Acts 8:26–40

MEMORY VERSE  For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.—Isaiah 9:6

KEY POINT  Without Jesus it is impossible to have peace.
Let’s Play

**EARLY ARRIVAL (before service)**
- Have some upbeat music playing.
- Welcome children warmly.
- Have some simple toys available to make the environment welcoming.
- Teachers should take this time to engage in conversation with children as they sit to play with them. Ask them about their week, school, and home. Begin to establish relationships.

**BEGIN CLASS (service time)**
- Introduce yourself and your assistants.
- Before the discussion questions, PRAY that the Lord will bless your time together.
- Have a set of supplies for yourself to demonstrate as you explain.

**SUPPLIES per child**
- “Letter-tile” print-outs
- “Board game” print-outs

**SUPPLIES to share**
- Scissors

**PREP it :: : instructions**
Have you ever played Scrabble® before? It’s a fun spelling game where you get points for the letters and words that you use. We’re going to create our own version of the game. In the real Scrabble® game, you start with a blank board and everyone picks letters from a bag. Our game is different. We’ll start with four words already on the board and everyone will get four extra letters to add to the board to make new words out of what’s already there.

1. Cut out the “letter-tiles” before class.

2. Pair up the children into teams of 2 to 4 players.

3. Hand each team a board game and ask someone to read what it says. Have everyone repeat it together, “No Jesus, no peace.”

4. Ask: Can someone tell me what this means? (Wait for answers.) That’s right; it means that without Jesus there is NO PEACE. We need to fix that, don’t we? Our game will help us figure out the answer.

5. Hand out the letter tiles. (Each team gets two Ks and two Ws.) If there are four players, each player gets one of the letters.
**PLAY it :: instructions**

1. The object of this game is to make two new words from the words already on the board by using the letters on your tiles. Each person on your team gets a turn; but keep going around until someone figures out the answer. (You can determine who goes first in each team alphabetically, e.g., Anne, Bobby, Kate, Will.)

2. The answer to the game will tell us how to find peace. If you think your team has figured out the answer, raise your hand and share it with the rest of the class.

3. After you read the “Connect it,” hand out more boards and tiles so that every child gets one set to take home. (A set is one board game, two Ws and two Ks.)

**CONNECT it :: SAY**

That game was hard but very important. What did the answer tells us? (Wait for answers.) That’s right; it means that when you KNOW JESUS you will KNOW PEACE.

Today we begin to learn about a new fruit of the Spirit—PEACE. As we learned in the game . . .

**KEYPOINT**

**Without Jesus it is impossible to have peace.**

When you learn the answer in this game, everyone wins. You don’t just win points (like in other games) you win eternal peace! Let’s watch Virtuality now and learn about a man who had no peace because he didn’t know Jesus. We’ll also learn about the man who told him about Jesus. It’s important to tell everyone you know about Jesus so that they’ll know Jesus and have peace too.

This game is a great way to share Jesus with others, so I have one set for everyone to take home.

**WATCH it :: Go to large group to see the Virtuality DVD, Fruit of the Spirit Series DVD (VOLUME 3, EPISODE 1)**
BACKGROUND information :: SAY IT in your own words
Ethiopia is a country on the continent of Africa. The man that we are going to read about today was an important officer for the queen of that country. He was also a eunuch (a male castrated as a child to serve in the royal court). Most eunuchs were typically slaves, but were also considered very trustworthy and loyal, which is probably the reason he was allowed to travel. Although the Bible mentions him only briefly (we don’t even know his name), he was very influential and important for the future of Ethiopia.

It is believed that the God of the Jews (our God) was introduced to Ethiopia many years earlier during the reign of King Solomon. The Queen of Sheba (the queen of Ethiopia at that time) visited Solomon in Jerusalem and was very impressed by his wisdom. She told him “Everything I heard in my country about your achievements and wisdom is true! I didn’t believe it until I arrived here and saw it with my own eyes. Truly I had not heard the half of it! Your wisdom and prosperity are far greater than what I was told. How happy these people must be! What a privilege for your officials to stand here day after day, listening to your wisdom! The LORD your God is great indeed!” (1 Kings 10:6–9 NLT). She undoubtedly bought Judaism back to Ethiopia with her and the nation began to believe in the one true God.

There’s no doubt that the Ethiopian in our story already believed in God, but he didn’t know about Jesus. There was something in his spirit that was searching for more. He had many questions and no peace, so he traveled to Jerusalem (where the Queen of Sheba first heard of God) in search of answers. The Ethiopian was searching for peace and he was about to meet Jesus—the giver of peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Back in Israel, Philip (one of the Apostles) was having great success spreading the Good News of Jesus in Samaria. Acts 8:6–8 says that when the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. . . [And] so there was great joy in that city.
Philip may have wondered why the Lord would tell him to leave this huge city where thousands of people were listening and believing in Jesus to travel a lonely desert road to tell one man about Jesus. But that’s exactly what happened, and Philip obeyed.

We know that everyone is important to God, but it still may not have made much sense to Philip at the time. He probably never knew the impact this one man would have; yet history reveals a different story. Let’s meet Philip and the Ethiopian on this desert road and listen to their conversation. Afterward I’ll tell you the rest of the story, what Philip himself never knew.

**PREP it : : : props and characters**

1. Select a few children to act out portions of the story as you read it. If you don’t have enough children, they can play multiple roles in the different sections of the story. These are the characters.
   - Philip
   - Angel of the Lord
   - Man from Ethiopia
   - People of Azotus

2. If you are able, bring a few of these props from home to enhance the story.
   - Wings or something to make angel’s costume
   - Roll of paper (cut a long strip for the desert road)
   - A Bible
   - Blue fabric or paper (for the water)

**READ Bible Story : : : ACTS 8:26–40**

*(Ethiopian, walk really slowly, reading your Bible along the desert road.)*

An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. The angel said, “Get ready and go south. Go to the road that leads down to Gaza from Jerusalem—the desert road.”

So Philip got ready and went. *(Philip, pretend to pack bags and get ready to make a long journey.)*

On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch. He was an important officer in the service of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was
responsible for taking care of all her money. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot and reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet.

The Spirit said to Philip, (Angel, say:) “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

So Philip ran toward the chariot. (Philip, walk quickly to the desert road and then walk slowly next to the Ethiopian.)

He heard the man reading from Isaiah, the prophet. (Ethiopian, read or pretend to read to yourself.)

Philip asked, (Philip, say:) “Do you understand what you are reading?”

He answered, “How can I understand? I need someone to explain it to me!” Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him. (Ethiopian, say, “I don’t get it, would you explain it to me?”)

The verse of Scripture that he was reading was this: (Both men, look at the Bible together, while the teacher reads the following verses from Isaiah.) “He was like a sheep being led to be killed. He was quiet, as a sheep is quiet while its wool is being cut. He said nothing. He was shamed and was treated unfairly. He died without children to continue his family. His life on earth has ended” (Isaiah 53: 7-8).

The officer said to Philip, “Please tell me, who is the prophet talking about? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?” (Ethiopian, say, “What’s he talking ’bout Philip?”)

Philip began to speak. He started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News about Jesus. (Philip and Ethiopian, walk and talk quietly together.)

While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The officer said, “Look! Here is water! What is stopping me from being baptized?” (Ethiopian, point to the blue paper or fabric next to the desert road.)

Then the officer commanded the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the officer went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. (Philip, pretend to baptize the Ethiopian in the water.)

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away; (Angel, take Philip away quickly.) the officer never saw him again.
(Ethiopian, say, “Where’d he go?” Look around, “Doesn’t matter, I understand my Bible now and now I have peace.) The officer continued on his way home, full of joy. (Ethiopian, jump for joy down the road.)

But Philip appeared in a city called Azotus and preached the Good News in all the towns on the way from Azotus to Caesarea. (Philip, somewhere else, say “I have Good News to tell you!”)

**CONNECT it : : : SAY**

The Ethiopian already had the Scriptures, but they weren’t the whole Bible we have today. The New Testament had not been written yet, so he didn’t know about Jesus. Someone had to tell him.

Until Philip explained it, the Ethiopian didn’t know that he was already reading about Jesus. He knew there was something very important about what he was reading, but he didn’t have peace because he couldn’t understand it.

**KEYPOINT**

**Without Jesus it is impossible to have peace.**

The book of Isaiah (that he was reading) also tells us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

**MEMORYVERSE**

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.—Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

In the book of Isaiah, we learn that Jesus had to suffer so that we can have peace.

**But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed!** (Isaiah 53:5 NLT)

The Bible tells us that if we look for God with all of our heart, we will find him (Deuteronomy 4:29). The Ethiopian went to Jerusalem to look for God but it was on his way back home that he found Jesus and finally had peace.

Historians tell us that this man went back to Ethiopia and began the Christian church. Even today more people are Christians there than any other religion.

Philip dropped everything and obeyed God to meet this one man in the desert road. God doesn’t have to explain everything to us; we just need to obey Him.
Philip’s obedience bought the peace of Jesus to an entire nation for thousands of generations to come.

**LET’S PRAY :: SAY**

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for giving us so many ways to share Jesus with others. I pray that You will help us stop and listen, the same way Philip did, so we too can share the peace of Jesus with others. We know that without Jesus there is no real peace. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.
Let’s Review

This Month’s Verse | THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS . . . PEACE
PEACE | Staying calm and cool knowing that God is in control.

TODAY’S LESSON

Bible Story | Philip and the Ethiopian
Location | Acts 8:26–40
Memory Verse | For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.—Isaiah 9:6
Key Point | Without Jesus it is impossible to have peace.

TIME FILLERS

• Ask if anyone would like to “play the teacher” and review today’s lesson with the class.
• Play games to help children memorize today’s Bible memory verse.

TAKE HOME SHEETS

• VIRTUE Quest is the take-home sheet designed for children to do with their parents. The sheet contains information about today’s lesson. The goal is to partner with parents to continue and to reiterate the lesson. Be sure to hand all parents a sheet as they pick up their children.