

# STUDENT MISSIONS STUDY

## **Stories are Important**

### **1. Play an ice-breaker game: A Group Story.**

Once the students have arrived, divide them into two or three groups. Give each group a pad of paper. Invite them to write a group story. The first student to hold the pad will begin the story by writing a sentence that starts with “once upon a time” and ends with the phrase “and then ...” Then they’ll hand the pad of paper to the next member of their team to write the next sentence. Allow each group to go around the circle a few times. Give them a one-minute alert when the activity is going to conclude. Ask the last person to write an ending sentence. Invite one member from each group to read their story to the larger group.

Share with your students that stories are not only entertaining, but they are important. We are creating a story for our church through our lives, and our actions.

### **2. Read the following quote from Mark Connor in his book *Transforming Your Church*:**

*The church exists for three primary reasons – to minister to God, to minister to each other, and to minister to the world. The interesting thing about these three important ministries is that there is only one that cannot be done in heaven – the third one! One of the reasons our church exists is to minister to the world.*

**Ask** your group, why are most people hesitant to share the story of Jesus?

**Give them time to discuss.** Conclude the discussion by saying, “There are many reasons why people don’t share the good news of Jesus. One of the frequent reasons is that we don’t like to be rejected. Sometimes when we speak the truth of the Gospel, we’ll face rejection. That’s difficult for all of us. But we can be assured that God doesn’t waste those times when we’re rejected. He’s always at work - and the

story doesn’t end with us. We must constantly depend upon the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God. This is exactly what Philip did in Acts 8.”

### **3. Read Acts 8:26-36, pausing to discuss the following questions:**

Why do you think God was so focused on this Ethiopian? (Possible answers: because he was in a pivotal position to have influence, or because he would be able to teach the Ethiopian people about Jesus.) The Holy Spirit seldom speaks in a voice that is audible to us, but there are times when we sense the Holy Spirit prompting us to do something when we see a need. Has there ever been a time when you have done something because you felt like God wanted you to do it?

Can you remember a time when someone explained a scripture to you?

The scripture the Ethiopian was reading was a prophecy about the crucifixion of Jesus, and he was confused by it. Do you think the Bible is confusing to most of your friends?

How would you share with a friend regarding how to become a Christ-follower?

**Invite students to share** what they remember about their story of baptism if they have been baptized in the past.

**Explain** that stories like this one in Acts continue to happen, even in this modern era. God continually uses believers to share the good news of salvation. One way we share the good news is by being a servant to anyone we meet. When we serve, especially during difficult times, we open a door for people to encounter Jesus.

### **4. Share one of the Georgia Barnette Offering videos with the group.**

### **5. Show the need for hope.**

**Say:** There is no doubt that we need more “Philips” these days! People are suffering. Not just because of tragic weather, events, or difficult financial

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times, but students are suffering many other things like depression and anxiety.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), an estimated 3.2 million adolescents ages 12 to 17 in the United States had at least one major depressive episode in 2019, which represents 13.3% of this age group.

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) reports that anxiety disorders affect 25.1% of children between 13 and 18 years old. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of 10 and 24. In 2019, the suicide rate among teenagers ages 15 to 19 was 13.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals.

**Say:** There has never been a more important time for believers to share their faith with others. One way we can help make this happen is to generously give through the Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering. When we give, we empower people to share Jesus all around Louisiana.

*Tell the students Philip was not any different than any of us, except that he was willing to follow the Spirit's lead. Philip had the courage to share the good news of Christ with a stranger.*

#### **6. Read Mark 1:38.**

**Say:** If Jesus were here, He would say the same thing to us. We must be willing to go nearby and share the good news of salvation. The forces of evil are just as strong as they were in Jesus' day. Evil wants us to surrender, but we have been called to move forward and loudly speak the good news of Jesus. It starts by taking that first step. It starts by asking questions, listening, and answering their questions if you can, or researching their question and setting up a time to get back with them with what you've discovered. This was Philip's strategy, and it should be our strategy as well.

#### **7. Share the plan of Salvation with your group.**

**Acknowledge sin:** The first step is to acknowledge that every person has sinned and fallen short of God's standard of perfection.

**Repentance:** The next step is to repent, or turn away from, those sins and seek forgiveness from God.

**Faith:** The third step is to place one's faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Lord. This involves believing that Jesus Christ died on the cross for one's sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

**Confession:** The fourth step is to publicly confess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

#### **8. Define the Georgia Barnette Offering.**

As Louisiana Baptists, many of our churches, including ours, give to international missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. We also support North American missions and church plants through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. And we give to the Georgia Barnette Louisiana Missions Offering, which helps spread the Gospel throughout Louisiana through missions and ministries like disaster relief, church planting, evangelism, and more.

#### **9. Lead the group in a time of silent prayer with these prompts:**

Pray for the needs of one friend.  
Pray for courage to speak the truth of the gospel this year.  
Pray for our church to give generously to the Georgia Barnette Offering so we can make sure people in Louisiana hear about Jesus.

#### **10. Close in prayer.**

Pray aloud for the students as they go into their schools. Pray they will follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit, as Philip did, and share Jesus with their peers.

