



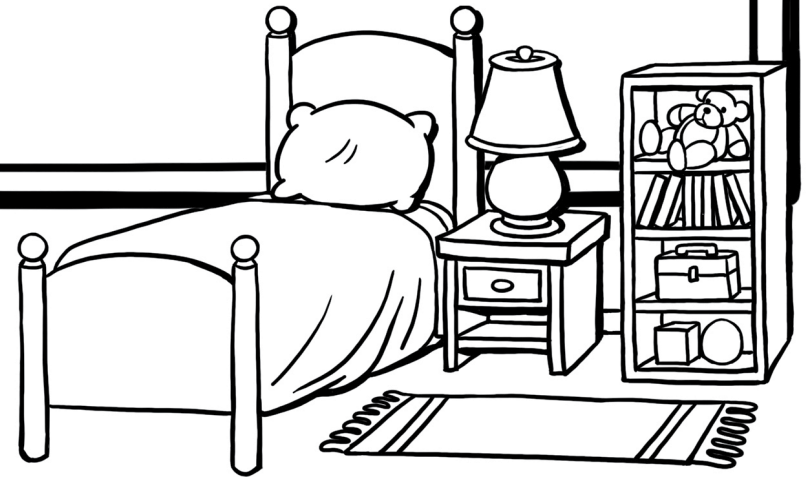
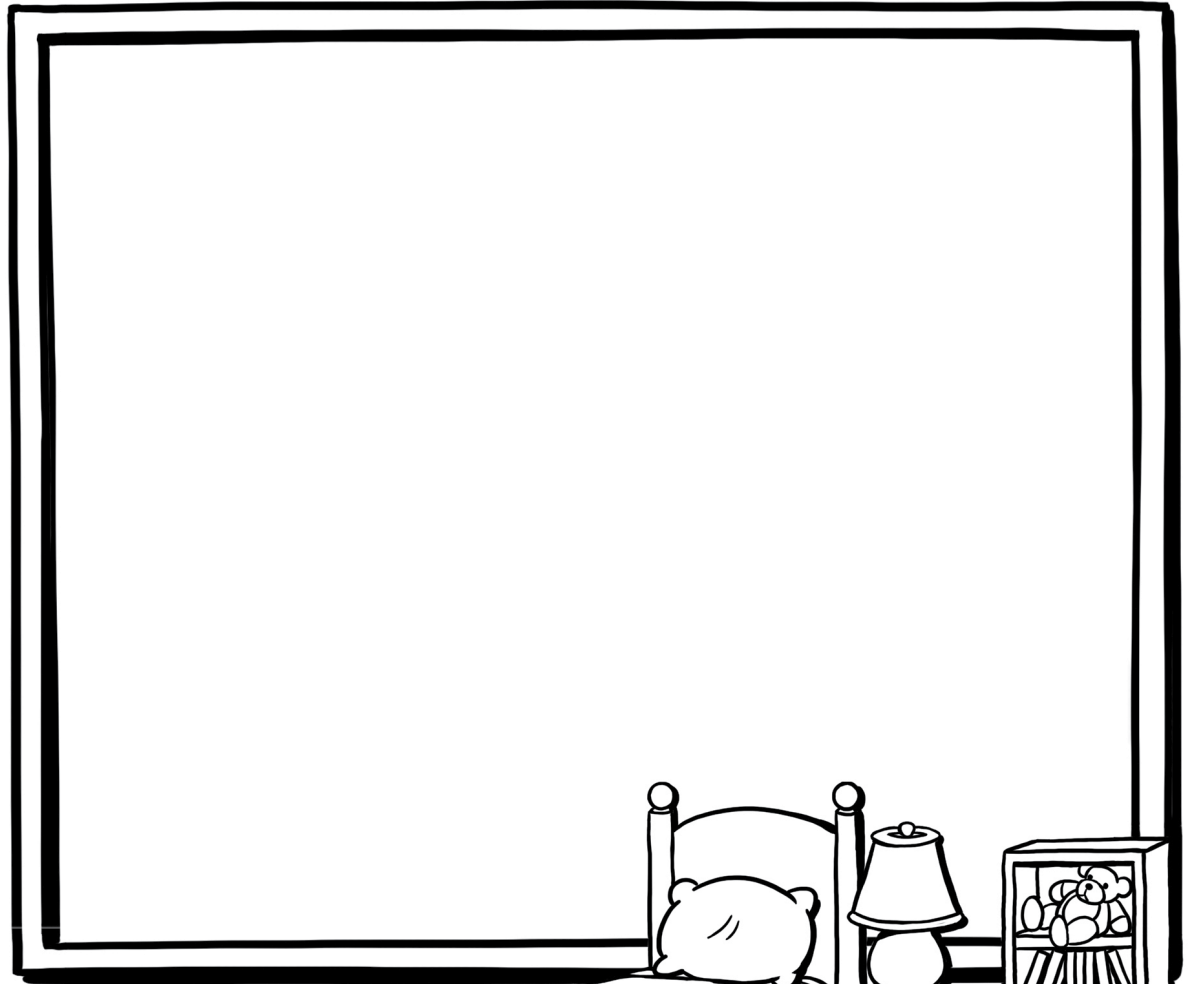
# 1 Leave Your Comfort Zone

## WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

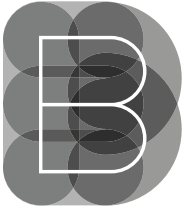
Many of us are settled in our routines and traditions, but life is full of change. It can be difficult to leave our comfort zones and do something different. Some children, when asked to change activities, meet new people, or alter a routine, may even create a scene. Stepping out of our comfort zone to follow God is no different. Like Abram and his family, we need courage to follow God.

- Make trying new things part of your routine. As a family, decide on several different things to try, such as eating a new food, visiting a new place, greeting a neighbor you don't know, or sitting in a different place in worship. Commit to trying one new thing each week.
- Read *The Couch Potato* by Jory John and Pete Oswald (Harper Collins, 2020) or watch the YouTube video "The Couch Potato—Storytime Read Aloud" ([bit.ly/FMCouchPotato](https://bit.ly/FMCouchPotato), 6:13). Talk about how stepping outside of our comfort zones can bring appreciation for our surroundings.
- Set up a goal ladder. Draw a ladder and, on the top, write an idea of a new thing to try and why you want to try it. On the bottom step, write the first thing you need to do to get to the goal, then on each step, write the next thing to do to make it to the goal. As you reach each step, color or decorate that part of the ladder to celebrate getting closer to your goal.

God, give me courage to trust that you will be with me and guide me as I cross new borders. Amen.



Is your bedroom your comfort zone? Draw what you might find if you left that place to discover something outside of your normal surroundings. Who might you find?



## BIBLE STORY

Based on Genesis 12:1-9

Abram was a man who always listened for God. For many years, Abram listened for God while living in the land of Haran. Abram was at home in Haran where he lived with his wife, Sarai, and their many servants who helped him take care of his land, and their many possessions, and their many animals.

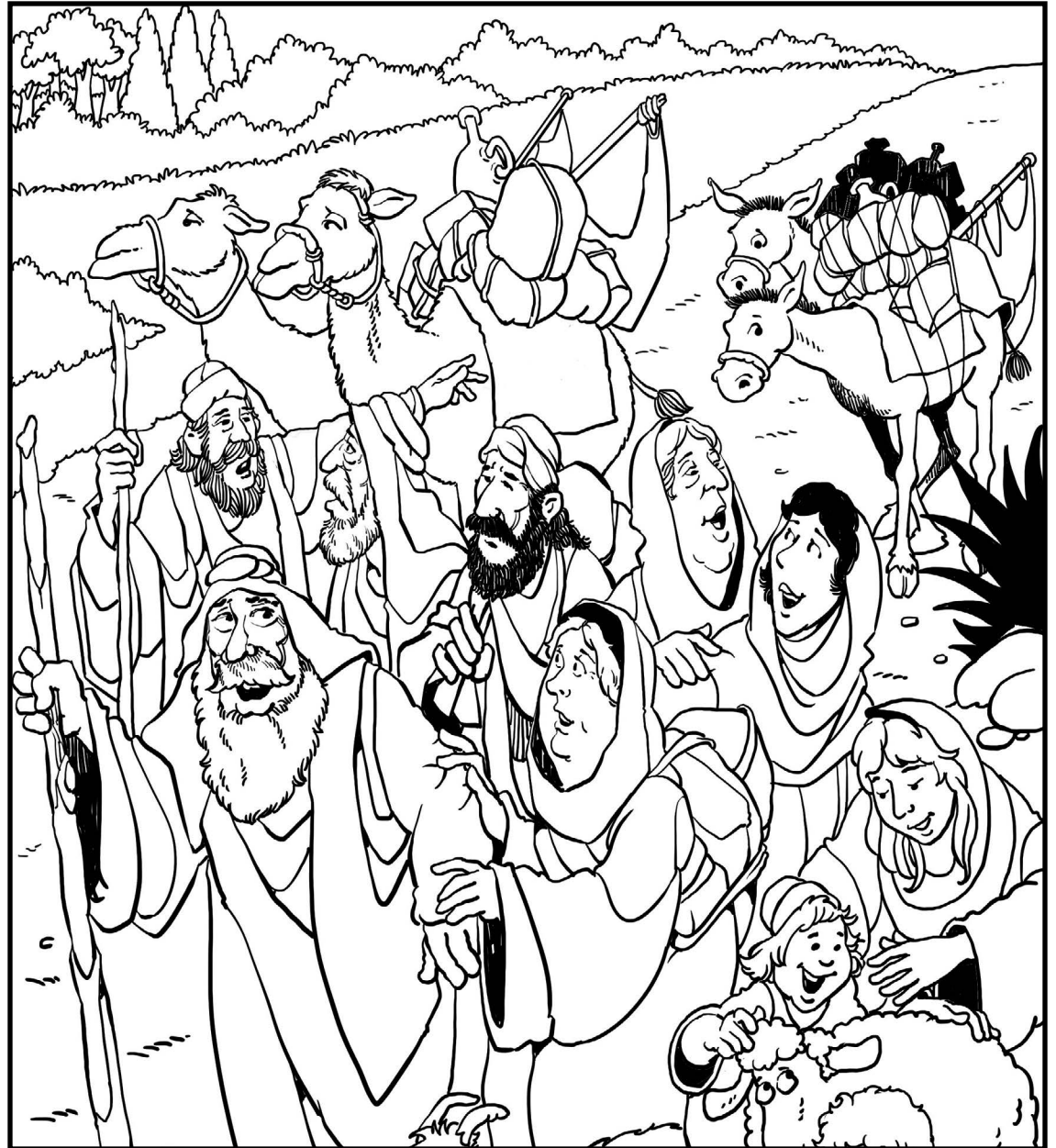
One day, Abram heard God speaking to him. God told Abram that he and Sarai should take all of their family and all of their servants and all of their possessions and all of their animals and follow God to a new place. God said that they would be blessed and become the ancestors of many, many people.

Abram and Sarai did not want to move, but they did want to follow God. They told everyone that they were going to move. Their relatives and their servants packed up all their possessions and took all their animals and began a long, long journey to a new place.

The first place Abram and his family came to was a land called Shechem. God told Abram that one day this land would belong to his family. Abram was so pleased to hear God's voice that he placed stones and worshiped God by a large oak tree there.

However, God told Abram and Sarai that they had to keep going. God told them to take all of their family and all of their servants and all of their possessions and all of their animals and follow God.

Then Abram, his wife Sarai, and all of their servants with all their possessions, and all their animals climbed into the hills at a place called Bethel. Bethel was in the land that God promised to Abram and his family, that they would live there for many generations. Abram placed stones in this place and worshiped God. Abram and Sarai trusted God. God's promises were true to them.





## 2 Embrace Relationships

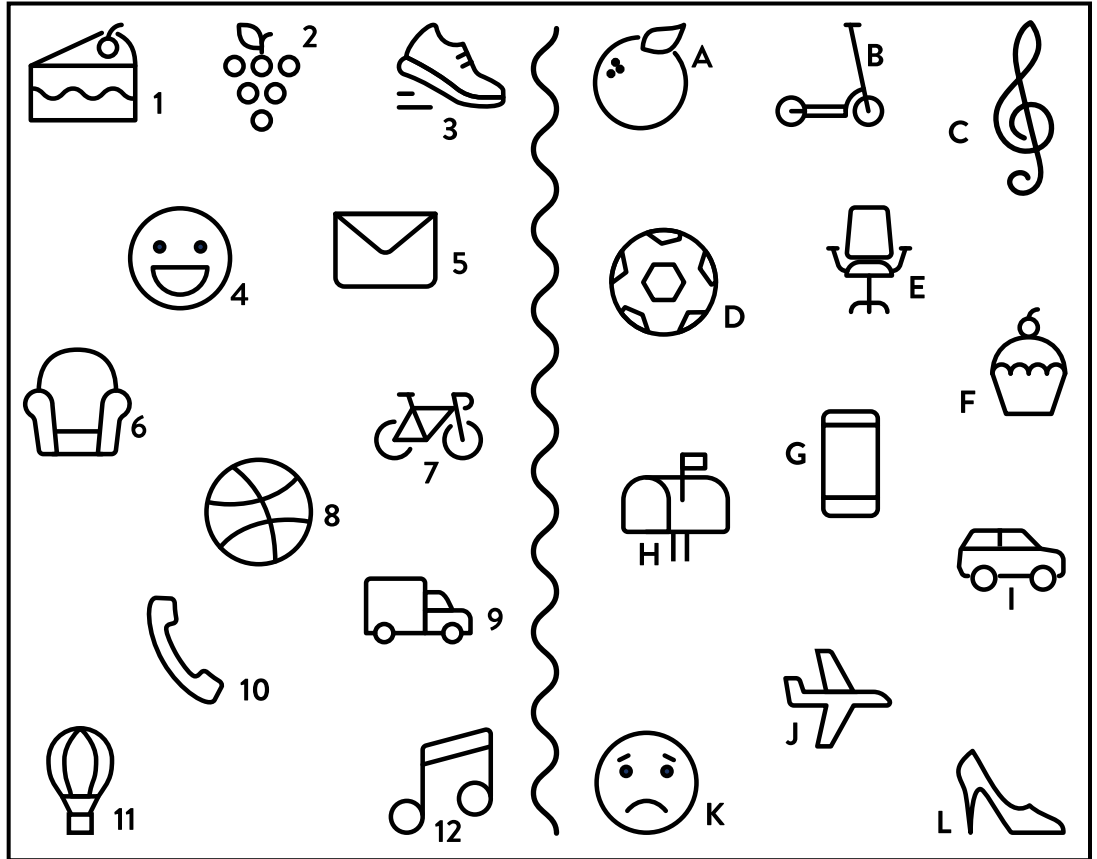
### WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

God created all humans. We are different colors, genders, heights, and body types. We have diverse talents and gifts. When we learn more about others, we learn more about ourselves and ultimately more about God. One way that we can cross borders is to recognize differences and commit ourselves to building relationships despite differences.

- Try having a scavenger hunt for things that are the same but different. List as many pairs as you can find, such as brown and white eggs that look different on the outside but are the same inside, many-colored candies that are all chocolate inside, tall trees and short bushes, or soft couches and hard chairs. As the list grows, discuss how it becomes easier to find things that are the same. Talk about how people are that way too.
- Read *Brian the Brave* by Paul Stewart or watch the YouTube video “‘Brian the Brave’ Written by Paul Stewart & Illustrated by Jane Porter” ([bit.ly/FMBrianTheBrave](https://bit.ly/FMBrianTheBrave), 4:39). We, like sheep, are all different: some black, some white, some different shades of brown, and in all shapes and sizes. Talk about how we can be brave and get to know people who are different from us.
- Become a pen pal. Go to [bit.ly/FMPenPalIdeas](https://bit.ly/FMPenPalIdeas) for some ideas on safe ways to find a pen pal who may be from a different country, an elderly person, or even an astronaut! There are also good suggestions on what to include in a letter and questions to ask.

God, thank you for creating people who are all unique. Give me courage to create friendships with people who are not just like me. Amen.

Find the pairs that are the same, yet different.

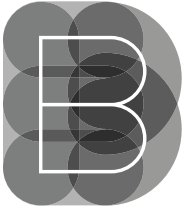


Draw yourself in the group.



1-F, 2-A, 3-L, 4-K, 5-H, 6-E, 7-B, 8-D, 9-I, 10-G, 11-J, 12-C





## BIBLE STORY

Based on Ruth 1:1-17

Long, long ago there was a woman named Naomi who was married to a man named Elimelech. They lived together in Bethlehem. Naomi and her husband loved each other very much and they had two sons together. One year there was a famine. No crops could grow and there was not enough food for everyone to eat. Naomi and her husband decided to move their family to a different country, far from Bethlehem, where they could find food. Their sons grew up to be adults. They got married and they all lived a happy life.

One of the sons married a woman named Ruth. Ruth was from their new country and was different from Naomi. She had a different skin color than Naomi and her family. Ruth and Naomi had different religions and practiced their faith in different ways. They had different traditions and liked different things. Even though they were so different, they loved one another.

Then something very sad happened. Naomi's husband died, and a bit later Naomi's sons died. Because Naomi had lost so much of her family, she decided to return to her homeland in Bethlehem. Ruth wanted to go with Naomi to Bethlehem, but Naomi tried to get Ruth to stay in her homeland because Naomi knew how different it would be for Ruth. While Ruth knew it would be hard to be in a new and different place, she loved Naomi so much that she wanted to go with her. She told Naomi, "I will go where you go. I will live where you live. I will worship your God. I will live with you until we both die, and we can be buried together. May God bless our friendship." And, indeed, God did bless their friendship. Naomi helped Ruth and Ruth helped Naomi. They were always friends, they had food, and they were happy together in their new home of Bethlehem.





### 3 Challenge Exclusion

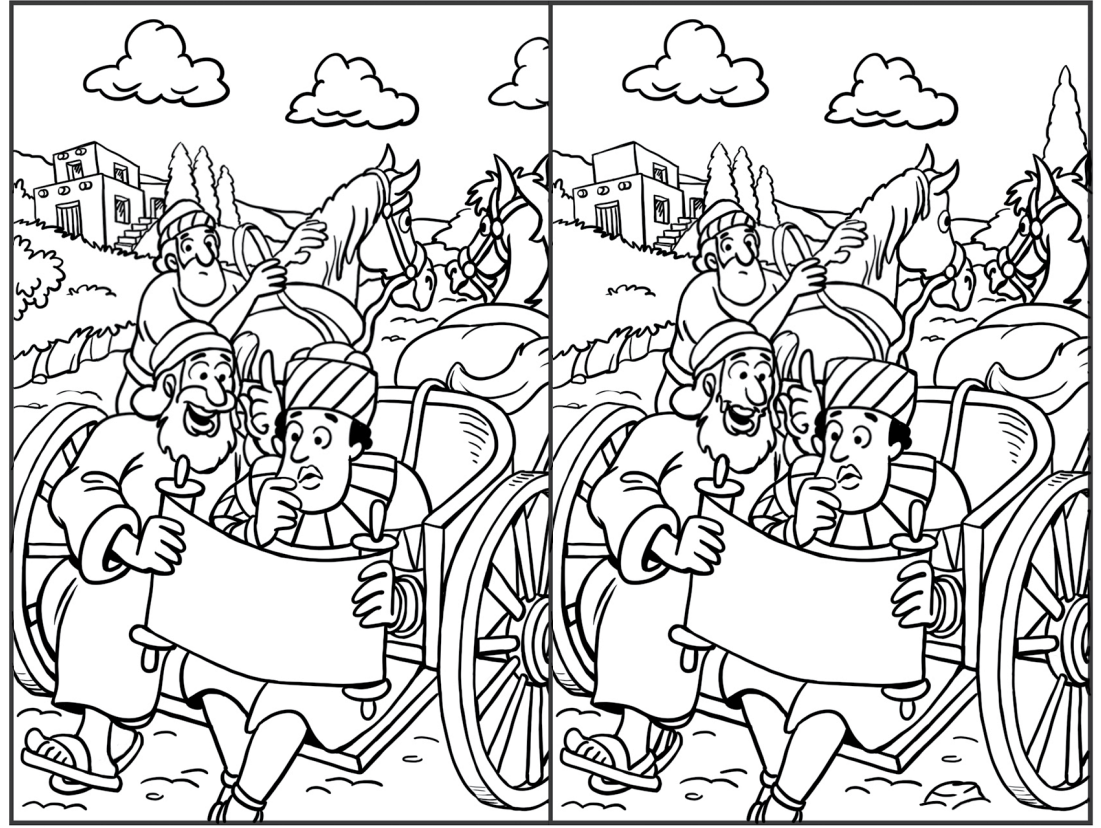
#### WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

Welcoming others feels good, but often that applies when the people we welcome are mainly like us in some way. Working to include people who are different from us will help us grow our community as well as be open to the new things they might bring.

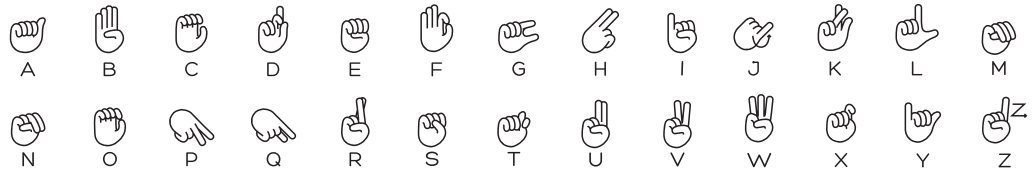
- Read together *Bruno's Hat* by Canivales (Flyaway Books, 2019) or watch the YouTube video "Bruno's Hat" ([bit.ly/FMBrunosHat](https://bit.ly/FMBrunosHat), 4:45). Bruno wears a funny hat, but it is his best friend Peter who is embarrassed and learns what it means to challenge the way others think when they exclude someone. Talk together about what you might do in similar situations.
- Sometimes we exclude people unintentionally. People who can't hear are often forgotten. Watch the YouTube video "Greetings, Farewells and Introductions in ASL" ([bit.ly/FMASLGreetings](https://bit.ly/FMASLGreetings), 8:46) to learn a few ways to greet people who use sign language.
- Play a cooperative game so all are included. Invite each person to find an object then join together in a circle. Set a timer for thirty seconds. Have the first person begin telling a story using the object they chose. When the timer goes off, the object is set in the center of the circle and the second person continues telling the story based on their object and including the object in the center. Continue in this fashion until all have contributed to the story. If only a few are playing, have each person gather two or three objects.

Dear God, help me to be a friend to people I meet, not just my family and friends, but also people who may be different from me. We are all created in your image. Amen.

When we look for differences, we tend to exclude people. Philip looked past the differences he had with the Ethiopian official and helped the man. Find the ten differences.

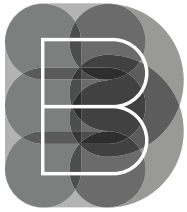


Use the American Sign Language alphabet to read the words below.



Do not exclude. Do not exclude. Do not exclude. Do not exclude. Do not exclude. Do not exclude. Do not exclude. Do not exclude. Do not exclude. Do not exclude.





## BIBLE STORY

Based on Acts 8:26–40

Long ago, after Jesus had died, risen, and gone to be with God in heaven, an angel appeared before Philip. Philip was one of Jesus' disciples who had been telling people about Jesus. This angel told Philip to go to a road that was headed out of Jerusalem to other countries. He didn't usually walk along this road, but he did as the angel told him.

While on this road, Philip met someone not from his land, an Ethiopian official. This official was an important person in the court of the queen. Philip knew he was not from around there and was an important person because of the color of his skin, his accent, the fancy clothes he wore, the chariot he was riding in, and the expensive scroll he was reading from. But God's Spirit told Philip to go and join the person in the chariot.

Philip saw the scroll and knew it was the holy Scriptures. Philip asked the man if he understood what he was reading. The official told Philip that it was a part of the Scriptures from the prophet Isaiah, but that he needed someone to help him.

Philip asked, "Would you like me to explain it to you?"

The Ethiopian official said, "Yes! Please!"

So Philip told the man all about this Scripture passage and all about Jesus. Once he heard about Jesus, the man saw some water alongside the road and exclaimed, "Look! There is some water! Can I be baptized?"

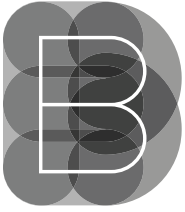
Philip said, "Sure!"

Philip and the man went to the water, and Philip baptized him, welcoming him into God's big family of faithful followers.

Philip never saw the Ethiopian official again, but he probably thought about him a lot. Philip continued to tell people the good news about Jesus. He knew that God wanted all people to believe in God and to know about Jesus. And Philip knew that no matter where someone is from, what they are wearing, or what accent they may have, they are always welcome with God.







## BIBLE STORY

Based on Genesis 45:16–24

Long, long ago there was a young boy named Joseph who had eleven older brothers! Joseph's father loved Joseph more than any of his other brothers. Joseph loved his brothers, but he did not like to tell them his dreams about how much more important he was than the rest of them.

His brothers didn't like that at all. One day, they sent him away with travelers who were passing by. The travelers took Joseph far away to Egypt where he had to become a servant in someone's house.

In Egypt, Joseph made friends and helped people. The king heard about Joseph and wanted Joseph to work for him. The king put Joseph in charge of a lot of things, but particularly Joseph made sure that everyone had enough food to feed their families.

Some time later, Joseph's brothers made the long trip to Egypt looking for food for their families. There was a *famine* where they lived, which means many people did not have enough food to eat. Joseph knew who they were immediately, but they did not recognize Joseph because he had been gone for so long. Finally, Joseph told his brothers who he was. His brothers remembered how unkind they were to Joseph and wondered how he would treat them.

But Joseph was kind. He understood that God had been with him always and led him to a place and time when he could show his brothers love and forgiveness.

Even though Joseph could have been angry with his brothers for the unkind ways they had treated him, he was able to cross over from any hurt or anger he might have had to a new feeling, one of love. The king saw this love Joseph had for his brothers and encouraged him to be sure his brothers had enough food and animals. Joseph also gave them a place to move all their families and live together with Joseph in Egypt.

