

Time with Children and Youth

by Colleen Wood

Hiking can be tough. Often you are going to places that you have never been. You can get lost! Sometimes there are markers on the trail, sometimes you have a map, and sometimes you have a person to guide you.

Hiking in Malawi, where our writer for this year's Mission Awareness Sunday are living and working, can be especially challenging. Malawi is called the "warm heart of Africa" and it is beautiful. There are mountains and valleys, spectacular waterfalls, and unique plant and animal life.

When you hike in parts of Malawi, it is important to have a guide. A guide will not only teach you about the culture of Malawi, they will also guide your way and keep you safe. They are helpers who share their great knowledge about hiking in Malawi. They keep you from getting lost.

In our Bible reading today, we will learn about a different kind of guide. There was a traveler, someone far from home trying to find a way, who was reading the Bible, but he was having some trouble understanding it. He didn't grow up with people who could teach him what the Bible meant. The amazing thing was, he really wanted to understand. That is when Philip, one of Jesus' disciples was sent by God to help guide him. Philip came alongside him on the road and then helped him understand the Bible.

Each day, we have paths to travel and choices to make. Sometimes these are hard choices. That's when we need guides who can help us make good choices. Some of your guides can be the grownups in your life – family members, ministers, Sunday school teachers, coaches. We need good guides whether we are hiking in Malawi, reading our Bibles, or making decisions about our life.

Here is the interesting thing. Sometimes, we can also be guides for others. You can help your friends or younger siblings to make wise choices. You might even help them understand the

Bible. When Philip was a guide to the traveler, Philip also learned more about God. The traveler was so excited that he shared his joy with Philip who then knew what it was like to experience God's love. Do you think it is possible that God will bring guides into your life? Do you think that you can help guide others, even adults?