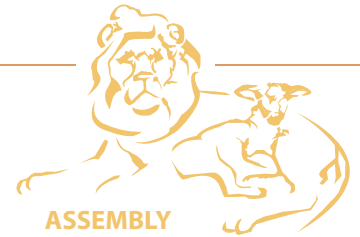


## THE DEATH OF STEPHEN

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: ACTS 6:8-7:1 & 7:51-60



*The following are some ideas for creative ways that you can present this material.*

## LESSON IDEAS

### JUST A LITTLE DIRTY

#### Supplies

- a bright white cloth napkin
- ketchup packages (the kind you get in a fast food restaurant)
- Oxiclean™ or other oxygen cleaning solution

Hold the bright white napkin up in front of the class and ask them to describe the way it looks. They might answer that it is white, bright, clean, etc. You are looking to direct their adjectives toward its spotless looks.

Use a ketchup package and smear a small, one inch stain in the very center of the cloth napkin. Now ask them to describe the napkin. They are likely to say that it is stained, dirty, and gross. Play along and try to minimize the stain by telling them how much of the napkin is yet clean. Ask them if they would still use that napkin if they found it at their place in a restaurant. Help the children see that our hearts are like the dirty napkin. Just one stain of sin and we can no longer be called clean, or righteous. Jesus is the only Righteous One.

Read to them Isaiah 1:18 that God would take our sins that are red as crimson and make them white as snow. Dip the napkin in an Oxiclean™ or other oxygen cleaning solution that will take away the ketchup stain. Wring out the napkin and hold it up for the class to see that the stain is gone. (You may want to practice this at home to make sure you are able to effortlessly clean the napkin.)

Explain that the reason God can take our sin is because of Jesus' death. The reason God can make us white as snow is by giving us Jesus' righteous life.

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### ROCK HARD

#### Supplies

- a stone about the size of a tennis ball
- modeling clay
- a piece of cardboard

The object of this lesson is to help the children understand how terrible stoning was and what faith Stephen demonstrated in his faith toward the Lord.

Pass the stone around the class. (Make sure to bring leadership if some of the children begin to pretend to throw the stone, lest you get too vivid a demonstration of what a stone can do.) Place the block of modeling clay on a piece of cardboard on a table and ask for a volunteer to smash the stone into the clay.

The stone will smash the clay and leave an imprint. Talk with the children about the power of the stone when it hit the clay. Then have them sit around in a circle with the clay and the stone on a table next to you. Tell the story again but when you get to the place where the crowd stoned Stephen, pick up the stone and smash it again into the clay. Go on to finish the story, then ask the children the following questions or make some up of your own.

- Who did Stephen call out to when the crowd stoned him? (Stephen called out to Jesus.)
- Who do you think Stephen was trusting in? (Stephen was trusting in Jesus.)
- How did Jesus help Stephen? (Jesus took away his fear so that even in his death he could bring honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.)



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### WHERE IS the Gospel?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

Stephen called Jesus the Righteous One. The Righteous One means the only one who did what was right. The reason that Jesus can be called the Righteous One is because He never sinned, not even once! Not only that, but Jesus obeyed all of God's laws. No one before Jesus and no one after Jesus can keep God's Law. The Bible tells us that there is no one who is good, not even one, see Psalm 14:3 and Romans 3:10.

Because we have broken God's laws, like the Ten Commandments, we deserve the punishment of hell. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. He lived a righteous life obeying all the laws for us who believe. Jesus takes our sin and gives us His obedience. That way we can enter into heaven. He is the only Righteous One!

