

THE DEATH OF STEPHEN

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



The STORY

Read about the stoning of Stephen in Acts 6:8-7:1 and 7:51-60.

Stephen spoke many words to the high priest recounting the history of Israel but the children would not be able to follow all that he said. Read the accusations against Stephen in Acts 6 and then transition to the next section by explaining that Stephen ended his answer with a charge against the high priest. Read the rest of the story in Acts 7 starting with verse 51. Explain to the children that Stephen called the high priest and those gathered murderers for killing the Righteous One, Jesus.

Please note: *The discussion questions in the following sections are written to serve as a guide in teaching our youngest children. Three to six year olds are not going to be able to answer these questions like their older brothers and sisters. Please refer to the God's Story Preschool Curriculum Outline for additional ideas.*

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion.

- What was Stephen doing that made other leaders jealous? (Stephen was doing great wonders and signs among the people.)
- What did the men of the synagogue do? (They convinced others to speak against Stephen accusing him of speaking against God.)
- What happened? (These men stirred up the people and the leaders of the synagogue who then captured Stephen and took him before the counsel to accuse him of speaking against God.)

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CRAFT QUESTIONS

Coloring sheets have been provided that exemplify today's lesson: Stephen praying while stones begin to fly. Engage the children by asking:

- Why do you think the men wanted to stone Stephen? (The men and elders of the synagogue were jealous of Stephen's powerful ministry.)
- What did Stephen say that made them angry enough to throw stones? (Stephen shared a vision where he said he saw the "son of man standing at the right hand of God.")
- How do we know from the story that Stephen was a true follower of Christ? (Even when Stephen was going to be hurt because of what he believed, he did not change and he even prayed to the Lord while the stones were thrown.)

SNACK QUESTIONS

While the children are eating the snack, engage the children by asking:

- What did Stephen accuse the High Priest and the others of doing? (Stephen accused them of being the ones who betrayed and murdered Jesus.)
- How did the crowd react to Stephen's charges? (They became angry and then killed Stephen.)
- Who did Stephen claim to see? (Stephen claimed to see Jesus standing at the right hand of God.)
- Why did this make the High Priest angry? (He did not see what Stephen saw and he did not believe that Jesus was God.)



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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 could 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!

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

