

Stephen

Acts 6:7-15; 7:1-60



New Testament 4
Part 1: Disciples of the Early Church

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 4 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 6:7-15; 7:1-60; 8:1-2; Matthew 6:10-12; Hebrews 11:35-40; 2 Corinthians 11:22-33

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["I'm a Hard Fighting Soldier on the Battlefield"](#)
- ["This Little Christian Light of Mine"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [N.T. Disciples & Peter Bible fact cards](#) (provided under "N.T. 4 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- "Summary of the Bible" from ["Kids Prep"](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Some people may make fun of me for believing in Jesus, but I won't be afraid or embarrassed to tell others about Him.



LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Last week we learned about the seven men chosen to serve the Church in a special way. A man named Stephen was one of the men chosen. He was a great man, and we are going to study about him and how he wanted to teach others about Jesus no matter what happened to him. He was very brave. We also must tell others about Jesus and do the right thing even when it is the hard thing to do.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week's lesson.

Have you ever been made fun of for going to Bible class or worship services? Have you ever been teased because you believe in Jesus? That's hard to bear sometimes. Today, we are going to learn about a man who wanted to teach about Jesus no matter what happened to him. He was so brave that even when his life was threatened, he kept teaching about Jesus. We may never face persecution like that, but we may be teased and made fun of. We should not let that stop us; we should always tell others about Jesus, even when it's hard.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the Christians in Jerusalem to be a special servant (deacon). He was chosen to help the widows who did not have enough food (Acts 6:1-6) in the weeks that followed the beginning of the Church on Pentecost. Stephen was a well-educated young man, a young Christian who was said to be "full of faith and filled with [controlled by] the Holy Spirit." He was a very spiritually minded man who wanted to do all he could for the Lord and the Lord's Church.
2. Stephen spent much of his time teaching about Jesus and performing miracles. One day when Stephen was teaching in the synagogue, a group of Jews, from several different places outside of Jerusalem, angrily argued with him. They did not want to hear about Jesus and did not want others to hear either. They were afraid that they would lose their influence and power if many people became followers of Jesus (i.e., Christians). Nothing the Jews said or did could stop Stephen from preaching or others from listening. So they convinced some men to lie about Stephen and accuse him of **blasphemy** against Moses and God.



Blasphemy: "to spurn or treat with contempt...to slander or speak lightly of the sacred; slanderous, abusive, and damaging speech" (*Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, L.O. Richards, p. 131). Since the Jewish leaders refused to accept the divinity of Jesus, anyone who taught that He was the Son of God or performed miracles in His name was considered guilty of treating Almighty God with contempt. To blaspheme Moses was to have the same contempt and disrespect for him and for the Law which God established to set the Jews apart from all other nations.

3. The Jewish leaders grabbed Stephen and took him by force to the Jewish court called the Sanhedrin. The men who lied about Stephen testified before the court. Then Stephen was given the opportunity to speak. He was not afraid of these men who had also mistreated Jesus. Acts 6:17 tells us that his face looked "like the face of an angel."

**NOTES:**

The Sanhedrin was made up 72 men, and could make judgments about religious matters instead of turning the problem over to the Romans.

Most commentators do not think that the phrase “face of an angel” indicated a supernatural glow, but rather, obvious confidence on his face.

4. Acts 7 is Stephen’s speech or sermon; it is the longest sermon in the book. He spoke to the court about some of the most important events and people in Jewish history. He told the Jews that throughout their history, their ancestors refused to follow those chosen by God to lead them. They rejected God’s promises over and over. They even refused to listen to Moses and others who told them about the coming Messiah.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the articles “[Jacob’s Journey to Egypt](#),” “[How Many of Jacob’s Descendants Moved to Egypt?](#)” and “[Was Moses Ineloquent or ‘Mighty in Words?’](#)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for discussions about alleged biblical discrepancies from this section of Scripture.

5. At the end of his speech, Stephen told the Jewish leaders that they were stubborn people, like their ancestors, because they refused to follow God’s Son. He called them murderers because they had killed Jesus, the last Prophet and the Savior Who was sent by God, just as their ancestors killed the prophets whom God had sent before (See Jesus’ similar comments in Matthew 23:34-36). When the men heard Stephen call them murderers and accuse them of not obeying God, they became very angry. He looked toward heaven and told them that he could see Jesus standing at the right hand of God. This made the Jews even angrier. They rushed toward him, dragged him outside the city, and stoned him to death. Standing to the side, holding the coats of those throwing rocks, was a man named Saul of Tarsus.



NOTES: It was against Jewish law to carry out an execution inside the gates of their holy city.

6. As Stephen was dying, he asked God to forgive the angry mob, just as Jesus had done from the cross. After Stephen’s death, there was a terrible sadness among the Christians in Jerusalem. This was a turning point in the history of the Church. The Jews made their rejection of Jesus and the Gospel very clear, and persecution of Christians began in earnest. Most of the Christians, except for the apostles, left Jerusalem. Everywhere they went, they taught others about Jesus. So the Church continued to grow, and the Gospel was spread to many places all over the world—because of and in spite of persecution.
7. Until this time, the apostles were the ones being persecuted. Now all Christians had to decide how much their faith meant to them and whether or not they would remain faithful. At some point, each of us may have to stand up for what is right and not be ashamed that we believe in Jesus. We probably won’t be faced with death, like Stephen was, but we will often be in situations where people make fun of us or try to get us to do something we know God would not want us to do. No matter what other people say about us or do to us, we must never be afraid to tell others that we believe in Jesus, or be embarrassed to do what He wants us to do.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#)

Ages 2-5:

- “[Stephen Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Make a numbered hopscotch grid on the floor with masking tape. Let the children take turns tossing a beanbag onto a number and answering a question about this or a previous lesson (have questions pre-assigned that go with those numbers). If he gets the answer correctly, he then plays hopscotch with the beanbag on that number. If he completes the grid correctly, he gets a point, and the next child takes a turn.
- Write key words from this lesson and previous lessons on large cards. Go over each word with the children. Then write each word on the board, with certain letters missing. Let children fill in the blanks and tell what they remember about the word.
- Spend time talking about deacons and how they are servants for the Lord.
- Show pictures of the deacons in your congregation.
- Play the matching game from last week with the pictures of the elders and deacons.

1st-2nd Graders:

- Hopscotch game, as described above, with more difficult questions on the higher numbers of the grid. The children must throw the beanbag on a different number with each turn. If the child answers the question correctly and completes the hopscotch course correctly, he gets the number of points on the square with the bean bag.
- Play Bible Alphabet Soup: Give each student or group of students a set of alphabet letters (bought or cut out) and have them spell the answers. This can be a race. Use questions like the following:
 - Who wrote the book of Acts?
 - Who held the coats of those who stoned Stephen?
 - “I am not ashamed of the _____.”
 - How did Stephen die? He was _____.
 - Who were responsible for killing Jesus and Stephen?
 - In Acts 6, Stephen was chosen to help care for _____.
 - Stephen was chosen to be one of the first _____.
 - What N.T. book tells us about the beginning of the Church?
- “[Stephen Acronym Activity](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[Stephen Matching Activity](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[Stephen Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Play Bible Alphabet Soup: Give each student or group of students a set of alphabet letters (bought or cut out) and have them spell the answers. This can be a race. Use questions like the following:
 - Who wrote the book of Acts?
 - Who held the coats of those who stoned Stephen?
 - “I am not ashamed of the _____.”
 - How did Stephen die? He was _____.

- Who were responsible for killing Jesus and Stephen?
- In Acts 6, Stephen was chosen to help care for _____.
- Stephen was chosen to be one of the first _____.
- What N.T. book tells us about the beginning of the Church?
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- Have the children read scriptures about persecution: Daniel 3:18; Acts 16:25; 1 Samuel 19:10-11; Matthew 5:44; 1 Peter 4:16; Daniel 6:14; Acts 12:2. Talk about how each Bible character handled persecution.
- Have the children read *Discovery* magazine articles: “Lions and Tigers and Christians,” [August, 2000](#); “Saul the Enemy of Christ,” [May, 2007](#)

SONGS:

“I’M A HARD FIGHTING SOLDIER ON THE BATTLEFIELD” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

I’m a hard fighting soldier on the battlefield. (3X)
 I keep on bringin’ souls to Jesus,
 By the service that I yield.

I’ve got a helmet on my head, in my hand a sword and shield. (3X)
 I keep on bringin’ souls to Jesus,
 By the service that I yield.

You gotta walk right, talk right, sing right, pray right, on the battlefield. (3X)
 I keep on bringin’ souls to Jesus,
 By the service that I yield.

If I die let me die in the service of my Lord, (3X)
 I keep on bringin’ souls to Jesus,
 By the service that I yield.

“THIS LITTLE CHRISTIAN LIGHT OF MINE” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

This little Christian light of mine,
 I’m gonna let it shine.
 This little Christian light of mine,
 I’m gonna let it shine.
 This little Christian light of mine,
 I’m gonna let it shine,
 Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

All around the neighborhood,
 I’m gonna let it shine.
 All around the neighborhood,
 I’m gonna let it shine.

All around the neighborhood,
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm gonna let it shine.
Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm gonna let it shine.
Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

Won't let Satan [blow on finger] it out.
I'm gonna let it shine.
Won't let Satan [blow on finger] it out.
I'm gonna let it shine.
Won't let Satan [blow on finger] it out.
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, all the time let it shine.

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE "SUGGESTION" BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



Stephen

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WEDNESDAY EVENING

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

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INTRODUCTION:

- [N.T. 4 Bible Fact Flashcards](#) (provided under “N.T. 4 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Briefly review Sunday morning’s lesson (see [N.T. 4 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. With OLDER CHILDREN, spend more time talking about how we can handle **persecution**. For example, write situations on strips of paper and put them in a can or jar. Let each child draw out a strip of paper and then discuss what might be the best way to handle the problem.



Persecution: the abuse of others (in words or actions) because of their religious beliefs

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson.

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