

STORY POINT

Stephen preached about Jesus no matter what.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER

What is the church?

The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

Discovers Identity in Jesus

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE

"so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."
Romans 12:5

SESSIONS IN THIS UNIT

- 29.1 Ananias and Sapphira
- 29.2 Stephen's Sermon
- 29.3 The Good News
- 29.4 Doers of the Word

BIBLE STORY

Stephen's Sermon

Read: Acts 6-7

Stephen was one of Jesus' followers. God blessed Stephen and gave him power to do great wonders and signs. One day, some Jews began to argue with Stephen. The Holy Spirit helped Stephen speak with wisdom, so no matter how hard the Jews tried, they could not win the argument.

The Jews lied about Stephen; they said he had spoken against God. The people dragged Stephen to the Sanhedrin (san HEE drihn), the Jewish court, and told more lies. "We heard Stephen say that Jesus will destroy the temple and change the laws that Moses gave us," they said.

"Is this true?" the high priest asked Stephen.

Stephen began to preach about Jesus. He reminded the court about Abraham. God had made promises to Abraham and his son Isaac. He reminded them about Joseph and Moses. God kept Joseph safe when his brothers tried to hurt him, and God used Joseph to help all His people during a famine. When God's people lived in Egypt, God called Moses to rescue His people from Pharaoh. Moses led God's people away from Egypt, but they turned against Moses and against God. God did not give up on His people, though. He was working out a plan. God worked through Joshua and David and Solomon.

The religious leaders knew these stories from the Old Testament. Stephen told them these stories to explain that Jesus was the Messiah God had promised! But just like their ancestors rejected and killed the prophets in the Old Testament, these Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus and murdered Him!

Stephen's words made the Jewish leaders so angry! Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit. He looked up to heaven and saw Jesus standing there. "Look!" he said. "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

The Jewish leaders screamed at the top of their lungs. They covered their ears and rushed at Stephen. They threw him out of the city and began throwing stones at him. Stephen called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Then he said, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" After this, Stephen died.

Christ Connection: Stephen was killed because he was a Christian. Jesus told His followers that they would be persecuted- hated, hurt, or even killed- for loving Him. Jesus also said that those who suffer for Him would be blessed. We can face suffering in this life because Jesus suffered first. He died and then rose again, and He is waiting for us in heaven.

SESSION STARTER

The Great Debate

Provide your kids with two opposing options, such as whether they like tacos or pizza better. Challenge your kids to provide reasoning and evidence to explain why their choice is the best choice. Can your kids convince you of their opinion?

Examples:

Tacos OR pizza?
Ice cream OR cake?
Chocolate OR vanilla?
Spiderman OR batman?
Football OR soccer?
Cold weather or hot weather?

SAY • There are lots of things that we may have different opinions on, like someone's favorite color or favorite food. However, some things are absolute truth, and our opinion doesn't change that. Today, we will hear about a time when Stephen taught others the truth that Jesus is the Messiah.

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Practice Motions

Take some time to practice hand motions for **Romans 12:5**. Practice the motions several times together as you review the verse.

CLASS GAME

Right Hand Man

Challenge your kids to complete a task- such as drawing a simple figure, writing their name, or tossing and catching a ball- using only their left hands. Then ask them to do the same challenge using their right hands. Compare the results of both!

TIME TO WORSHIP!

Directions: Grab cotton balls, bowls, spoons, and blind folds for the game! Also, go to the **Eleven22 Kids YouTube Playlist** by clicking **HERE** to worship!

WORSHIP

Worship Song 1: We Won't be Quiet
Worship Song 2: This is Amazing Grace

GAME

Cotton Ball Scoop

Sprinkle cotton balls on a table around a centrally located bowl. Give your child a spoon and blindfold them. They have one minute to find cotton balls and put them all in the bowl!!

BIBLE STORY

Found above on page 2.

WORSHIP

Response Song: Waymaker

SMALL GROUP BREAKOUTS

As a class, or as many groups as you have leaders, discuss the following:

Distribute Bibles: Help kids find Acts 6-7. Remind them that Acts is the only book in the History division of the New Testament. Ask kids if they know who wrote Acts (Luke).

Discipleship Journey Connection: Referencing the Discipleship Journey identity was secure in Jesus and the Holy Spirit gave him strength to endure suffering. As a disciple of Jesus, nothing can separate us from the love of God and He gives us all the strength we need!

- How do we know Jesus loves me?

Pray for my #ONEMORE: Ask kids how praying for their ONE more has been this week. Take time to ask kids the name of their ONE more and pray for them by name.

Review Questions: Ask your group the following questions and allow time for kids to respond and discuss.

- **What was Stephen accused of?** (blasphemy, saying something untrue and dishonoring about God; Acts 6:11)
- **What did Stephen preach about?** (Stephen used Israel's history to explain Jesus is the Messiah; Acts 7:51-52)

- **What did the religious leaders do to Stephen as a result of his preaching about Jesus?** (killed him, Acts 7:57-60)
- **Have you ever faced persecution for your faith?** Guide kids to think about ways they may feel persecuted. Be sensitive to their experiences while taking care not to minimize the harsh persecution Christians face in other parts of the world.
- **How can we stand up boldly for Jesus in the face of persecution?** Discuss the strength and power available to believers through the Holy Spirit. Remind kids that He can help us be bold in hard times. Encourage kids to trust God and have faith that He turns all things to good, even when we don't see the good results.
- **What should we do if we are persecuted?** Talk through what Stephen did. Help the kids see that Stephen did not fight his enemies, but instead asked God to forgive them for killing him. Remind kids that Jesus promised troubles and persecution would come. Encourage kids to pray for boldness in hard times, not just for things to get easier.

Gospel Truths: Take time to review your Gospel Truths with your group. Ask each question and give kids time to respond and discuss.

Prayer: Spend time intentionally praying with your group. Below are a few options you can use during prayer.

- Leader: pray over the kids in your group by thanking Jesus for promising to be with us always and asking that he would give us strength and courage when we face suffering.
- Distribute "prayer cards" for kids to write down why they are thankful for God.
- Read Ephesians 6:13-18. Pray with your group about putting on the armor of God.