

LESSON 49

The Death of Stephen

ACTS 6:8—7:1, 51–60



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD CAN WORK THE SIN OF MAN FOR THE GOOD OF HIS SAVING PLAN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

SUPPLIES: puppet

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 127)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?**SUPPLIES:** Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity**SUPPLIES:** coloring page for NT Lesson 49—one for each child; markers or crayons**Just a Little Bit Dirty****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a bright white, cloth napkin
- ✓ ketchup packages (the kind you get in a fast-food restaurant)
- ✓ oxygen-based stain remover and detergent (e.g., OxiClean®)
- ✓ bucket or basin
- ✓ water
- ✓ rubber glove
- ✓ stirrer

(Note: Test this experiment at home first. Stain the cloth with an inch of ketchup and be sure that it can be made completely clean with the supplies you will have available in the classroom.)

Rock Hard**SUPPLIES:** a stone about the size of a tennis ball; play dough; a piece of cardboard

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn how Stephen was killed for his faith

Bring a puppet to class today for this introductory activity.

TEACHER: Hi, Puppet.

PUPPET: What are we going to learn about today?

TEACHER: We are going to learn about Stephen and how brave he was.

PUPPET: I'm pretty brave, you know.

TEACHER: Then perhaps you could help me teach the lesson.

PUPPET: T-t-teach th-th-the l-l-lesson?

TEACHER: Sure Puppet, you could help me teach the children.

PUPPET: Do you m-m-mean t-t-talk in f-f-front of th-th-the c-c-class?

TEACHER: I thought you said you were brave?

PUPPET: I guess I'm not that brave. Maybe I can help the children answer the questions instead of asking them.

TEACHER: All right Puppet, you can help the children answer.

PUPPET: *(sighing in relief)* Wow, that sounds better.

Ask the following questions as a lead-in to the lesson:

- **What does it mean to be brave?**
(Accept any answer.)
- **What does it look like to be brave?**
(Accept any answer.)
- **Who are some brave people you know?**
(Accept any answer.)

Sometimes being brave comes at a cost and means that others might not treat you nicely. Sometimes there's even danger in doing what you need to do in order to be brave.

- **Can you think of anyone in the Bible who was brave?**
(Guide these answers, but take any answer if possible.)
- **What gave these people the courage to do these hard but brave things?**
(Confidence in God and trust in his power and sovereignty.)

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 127, “The Death of Stephen,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

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

- **What was Stephen doing that made the religious leaders jealous?**
(Stephen was doing great wonders and signs among the people.)

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

Stephen called Jesus the “Righteous One” (Acts 7:52). 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 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 perfectly. The Bible tells us that there is no one who is righteous, not even one (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. Jesus took our sin and gives us his obedience so we can enter into heaven. He is the only righteous one!

- **What did the religious leaders do?**
(They convinced others to say bad things about Stephen, accusing him of speaking against God.)
- **What happened then?**
(Stephen was arrested and put on trial for speaking against God.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What did Stephen accuse the high priest and the other religious leaders 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.)
- **As he was dying, 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.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

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.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 49—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What are the men doing in the picture?**
(The men are holding rocks, getting ready to stone Stephen.)

- **What did Stephen say that made them angry enough to throw stones?**
(The men and elders of the synagogue were jealous of Stephen's powerful ministry. Stephen also shared a vision where he said he saw the "Son of man standing at the right hand of God.")

- **Who did Stephen trust while the men were throwing stones at him?**
(Stephen never stopped trusting God.)

Just a Little Bit Dirty

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a bright white, cloth napkin
- ✓ ketchup packages (the kind you get in a fast-food restaurant)
- ✓ oxygen-based stain remover and detergent (e.g., OxiClean)
- ✓ bucket or basin
- ✓ water
- ✓ rubber glove
- ✓ stirrer

Before class, stir some of the oxygen-based stain remover in a small amount of water in a bucket or basin.

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

Open a ketchup package and smear a small, one-inch stain in the very center of the cloth napkin. Now ask the class 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 still 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 Isaiah 1:18, which talks about how God takes our sins, which are bright red and makes them as white as snow. Put on the rubber gloves and dip the napkin into the prepared cleaning solution to 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 away our sin is because of Jesus' death. The reason God can make us white as snow is by giving us Jesus' righteous life.

Rock Hard

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a stone about the size of a tennis ball
- ✓ play dough
- ✓ a piece of cardboard

The object of this lesson is to help the children understand how terrible stoning was and to recognize the faith that Stephen demonstrated.

Pass the stone around the class, cautioning the children to hold and pass it gently. Place the play dough on a piece of cardboard on a table and ask for a volunteer to smash the stone into the dough.

The stone will smash the playdough and leave an imprint. Talk with the children about the power of the stone when it hits the dough. Then have them sit around in a circle with the playdough 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 dough. Finish the story, and then guide the discussion with questions like these:

- **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 death Stephen could bring honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

LESSON 49 - THE DEATH OF STEPHEN

