

# The BIBLE Story

## Stephen's Sermon

Acts 6-7

Stephen was a man who loved Jesus. He served the church. God was good to Stephen and gave him power to do great things. **One day, some Jews told lies about Stephen. They did not like Stephen, and they wanted him to get in trouble.**

**The high priest asked Stephen if the Jews were telling the truth. Stephen answered by teaching the Jewish leaders about Jesus. He started in the Old Testament with stories about Abraham and Isaac, Joseph, and Moses.**

In those days, God was working out His plan to bring someone into the world who could save people from their sins. God chose to do great things through His people, the Israelites. He rescued them from slavery in Egypt. And even though the people did not obey God or love God like they should, God did not give up on them.

God worked through Joshua and King David and King Solomon. **Stephen taught the religious leaders new things. He said that Jesus is the Messiah, and the religious**

**leaders were wrong to reject Him and kill Him on the cross.**

**The religious leaders were so angry! They did not like what Stephen was saying. But Stephen looked up and said, "I see the**

**heavens opened and Jesus is standing at God's right side." Suddenly, the people yelled and rushed toward Stephen. They made Stephen leave the city, and then they threw rocks at him. Stephen said, "Jesus, forgive them!" Then he died.**

*Christ Connection: People hurt Stephen because he followed Jesus. Jesus told His disciples that people would hurt them for loving Him. When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too. Jesus died and came back to life, and one day we will live with Him forever.*

### Bible Storytelling Tips

• **Use visuals:** Point out Abraham, Isaac, King David, and King Solomon on the Family Line of Jesus poster (005802967) as they are mentioned in the Bible story. You may also point to each Old Testament Bible person Stephen mentioned on the Giant Timeline or Small Group Timeline (005802970).

• **Draw Bible people:** Use a dry erase board or chalkboard and draw stick figures of the Bible people from Stephen's sermon. Draw Abraham with a beard, Joseph with a striped coat, Moses with a staff, and King David with a crown. Point out that enemies and sin tried to hurt all these men, but they were brave because they belonged to God.

## INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Stephen's Sermon

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Acts 6-7

**STORY POINT:** People hurt Stephen because he followed Jesus.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Romans 12:5

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.

### Welcome time

- "One Foundation" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

### Activity page

- "Old Testament Stories" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to draw a line connecting each Bible person with the Bible story picture they belong in.  
**SAY** • You matched Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and Moses to their Bible story pictures. We hear their stories from the Old Testament part of the Bible. In today's Bible story, a man named Stephen told people about how these stories from the Old Testament point to Jesus.

## LOW PREP

- marker
- scissors (adult use)
- large sheet of construction paper

### Assemble a puzzle

Draw a simple church building shape on a large sheet of construction paper. Cut the drawing into as many pieces as there are preschoolers in your group. Scatter the pieces around the room. Invite each child to quickly find one piece and then to work with the other children to assemble the picture. Repeat the game as time allows.

**SAY** • Do you remember our big picture question and

answer? *What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.* In our Bible story today, we are going to learn about a man named Stephen who loved Jesus and served the church.

### Make cards for church leaders

Set out construction paper, stickers, crayons, markers, and washable ink stamps. Show preschoolers how to fold a piece of paper in half to create a card. Encourage children to make cards for those who serve in their church. Transcribe a message about Jesus to the leader from a child on his card. Guide children to decorate their cards. Collect the cards to deliver to church leaders. If possible, consider hand delivering the cards as a group, following your church's policy for leaving the room.

- construction paper
- stickers
- markers
- crayons
- ink stamps

**SAY** • We made cards with messages about Jesus for our church leaders. They will like hearing what we have to say about Jesus. In our Bible story today, a man named Stephen had a message about Jesus that he told to the religious leaders. Listen to the story.

### Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to "speak up" and say some things they know about Jesus as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

## TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Stephen's Sermon

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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.

### Introduce the Bible story

Place a bookmark at Acts 6 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • Our Bible story comes from the New Testament Book of Acts and tells the true story of a man named Stephen. Stephen loved Jesus and served the church.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

### Watch or tell the Bible story

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • The Jewish leaders were angry when Stephen told them that Jesus was the Messiah and that they were wrong to reject Him. **People hurt Stephen because he followed Jesus.** Jesus told His disciples that people would hurt them for loving Him. When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too. Jesus died and came back to life, and one day we will live with Him forever.

### Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at Romans 12:5. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Place a small chair in front of preschoolers. Invite children to take turns sitting in the chair and saying the key passage. Encourage the rest of the group to do the motions from last session as each child says the key passage.

**SAY** • Stephen stood before the leaders and spoke the truth about Jesus. Those of us who love and follow Jesus are part of the church. Our key passage reminds us the church is one body made up of all of those who believe in Jesus.

Sing the key passage song, “One Body in Christ,” and the theme song, “One Foundation.”

### Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our key passage helps us answer our big picture question. *What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.* Anyone who trusts in Jesus to save them from sin is part of the church.

### Missions moment

Ask volunteers to hold “Nache Family” pictures for the rest of the group to see. Read the captions aloud.

**SAY** • Stephen told other people about Jesus even when he would be hurt for it. Some of the people who come to the Nache (NAH ch) family's church understand what it means to be afraid. The Naches want people to know about Jesus and boldly follow Him, even if others in their community do not believe.

### Pray and transition to experience the story

- chair
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “One Body in Christ (Romans 12:5)” song
- “One Foundation” song

- Big Picture Question Poster

- “Nache Family” printable

## EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Stephen's Sermon

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**KEY PASSAGE:** Romans 12:5

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.

### LOW PREP

- paper
- marker
- "One Body in Christ (Romans 12:5)" song (optional)
- "One Foundation" song (optional)

#### Suggested messages:

- Jesus is the Messiah.
- Jesus paid for our sins.
- Jesus is alive.
- Jesus is coming again.
- Jesus makes us brave.

### Say it loud and proud

Form a circle on the floor. Write a message about Jesus on a piece of paper and wad it into a ball. Give the paper ball to a child. Play music while preschoolers pass the paper around the circle. When you stop the music, the child holding the paper should open it and give the message to a leader. The leader will whisper the message to the child. The child will stand up and proudly say the message to the group. Play as time allows, changing the message periodically.

**SAY** • You spoke up and told about Jesus. Stephen spoke up and told the Jewish leaders that Jesus is the Messiah and they were wrong to reject Jesus. This made the leaders angry. They were so angry that some of the **people hurt Stephen because he followed Jesus.** Jesus told His disciples that people would hurt them for loving Him. When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too. Jesus died and came back to life, and one day we will live with Him forever.

### LOW PREP

### Sing about the church

Sing the following lyrics to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Guide preschoolers to do the provided hand motions as they sing.

*"The church belongs*

(raise arms above head in the shape of a roof)  
*to Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ*

(one hand at a time, point at each palm with the middle finger of the opposite hand)

*The church belongs to Jesus Christ*

(Repeat above)

*All Christians everywhere."*

(Spread out arms wide)

**SAY** • *What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.* All Christians everywhere are part of the church, and the church belongs to Jesus. When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too. Jesus died and came back to life, and one day we will live with Him forever.

### Spell brave

Write **BRAVE** in large block on several pieces of paper. Place colored pom-poms, buttons, or stones in a small bowl or bin. Show a child how to place the items on the lines of the word to spell out the word **brave**. Invite them to put the items back in the bowl when they finish for the next person.

- copy paper
- marker
- small items: pom-poms, buttons, or stones
- small bowl or bin

**SAY** • God made Stephen very brave. The religious leaders got angry at what Stephen said about Jesus. They made Stephen leave the city, and then they threw rocks at him. **People hurt Stephen because he followed Jesus.** Jesus told His disciples that people would hurt them for loving Him. When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too. Jesus died and came back to life, and one day we will live with Him.

- smocks
- unpolished stones
- foam plates
- washable paint
- paintbrushes

## Paint crosses on stones

Put on smocks. Place a stone on a foam plate for each child. Squeeze washable paint on another foam plate. Invite preschoolers to paint their stones one color and paint a cross on the stone with another color. Set the stones aside to dry.

**SAY** • The Jewish leaders made Stephen leave the city, and they threw rocks at him. **People hurt Stephen because he followed Jesus.** Jesus told His disciples that people would hurt them for loving Him. When you get home, put your painted rock somewhere to remind you that when people are mean to you because you love Jesus, you can be brave because people hurt Jesus too.



## Build tall city buildings

Invite preschoolers to use blocks to build tall city buildings. Make sure a preschooler builds no higher than her chin.

**SAY** • Some missionaries live in big cities to tell people there about Jesus. Sometimes people from other countries move to the big cities. They may not speak the language or have the things they need to make a new home. Missionaries work with churches to give them what they need and to tell them about Jesus. ***What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.***

- blocks

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve graham crackers spread with cream cheese for snack. Offer preschoolers dried cranberries to arrange in a cross shape on their crackers. Talk about how Jesus told His disciples that people would hurt them for loving Him. **People hurt Stephen because he followed Jesus.** When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Who loved Jesus and served the church? (*Stephen*)
2. Why did some Jews tell lies about Stephen? (*They did not like him and wanted to get him in trouble.*)
3. How did the Jewish leaders feel when Stephen told them they were wrong to kill Jesus? (*They were angry.*)
4. Who did Stephen see when he looked up to heaven? (*Jesus standing at God's right side*)
5. ***What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- graham crackers (optional)
- cream cheese (optional)
- plastic knife (optional)
- dried cranberries (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "One Body in Christ (Romans 12:5)" song
- "One Foundation" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers