



ACTS 6-7

STEPHEN'S SPEECH

Scripture: Acts 6:8-15, 7

Open: Greet, Praises, Requests, Pray

Main Takeaway: Stephen was persecuted for his belief in Jesus, but he stood firm and preached the truth.

Supplies: Posters of scenes from the Bible explained in detail below, paper plates, highlighter markers/paint, crayons, paint brushes.

Ask:

Who remembers what we talked about last week? (Sharing the gospel, the church beginning to be persecuted.

As the church grows, the persecution also grows. Today, we are going to talk about the first martyr. Stephen, who we'll learn about in this chapter was killed for his belief in Jesus. Amazingly, he didn't shy away from his faith when the religious leaders were angry with him and threatening. Instead, he preached the good news to them, going all the way through Israel's history.

Read: Acts 6:8-15

Explain:

Stephen is falsely accused and brought before the Jewish ruling council (the Sanhedrin). Next, he is asked if the charges brought against him are true. Rather than answering, he gives the religious leaders a history lesson of their people and how God has brought them to this point. So we're going to look into that history lesson that Stephen teaches.

Do an Activity:

Have prepared 6 poster boards or large pieces of paper for the kids to color. You can either draw the scenes yourself and have the kids color them, or have the kids complete their own scenes depending on the time you have and the age of the children.

Activity Continued:

We will be going through the main events from Stephen's speech. Each of the posters should have a scene like the one described. Divide the kids into groups to color or create a scene on the poster. After the kids are done coloring or creating their scene, go through the history walking from scene to scene. If they want to act it out as you retell the story, they can.

Scenes:

1. Stars in a night sky
2. Egypt (Example: pyramids with the Nile off to the side)
3. A burning bush
4. The Red Sea (Example: parting of the waters)
5. The Law (Example: a mountain for Mount Sinai and a Golden Calf off to the side)
6. Solomon's Temple

Retelling the Story:

You may choose to read from the Bible itself, reading all of chapter 7. If you don't have time, you could summarize the speech and each of the events with something like this:

1. Abraham was called from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to a land that God promised him. He was promised the land and descendants, even though he didn't have children. One night, God told him to look up at the stars. He would have as many descendants as the stars in the sky. In his old age, he had a son named Isaac, who was the father of Jacob and Esau. Jacob became known as Israel and was father of the 12 Patriarchs.
2. The 12 Patriarchs became jealous of one of their brothers, Joseph. They threw him into a pit and sold him into slavery. He was taken to Egypt and enslaved there for many years. But God was with Joseph and rescued him from all his troubles and eventually made Joseph second in command of all Egypt. After a famine, his brothers came to Egypt for grain. In time, Joseph provided for his family and sent for them so they could reside in Egypt.
3. In Egypt, eventually a new Pharaoh forgot about Joseph and enslaved the Israelites. As they increased in number, the Egyptians also killed most of the baby boys. But one boy, Moses, was rescued. His mother placed him in a basket in the Nile River and Pharaoh's daughter brought him up as her son. At the age of 40, Moses visited his people and saw an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite. He killed the man and then ran away from Egypt. Forty years later (when Moses was 80), he saw God in a burning bush. God called him to deliver his people.

Retelling the Story Continued:

You may choose to read from the Bible itself, reading all of chapter 7. If you don't have time, you could summarize the speech and each of the events with something like this:

4. After years and 10 plagues, God brought the Israelites out of Egypt. As they escaped, Pharaoh's army chased after them. The people were terrified, but God fought for them. He placed a cloud between the Israelites and the Egyptians, then he parted the Red Sea so the Israelites could walk through on dry ground. Once safely across, the cloud moved, the Egyptians chased, and the waters tumbled over them.

5. As the Israelites went through the desert, Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive God's laws. However, the people refused to obey and longed once more for Egypt. They had Aaron, Moses' brother, make a golden calf that they could worship. Again and again they turned from God and chased after false gods, which led to their exile from the land.

6. Before their exile, Solomon built a temple where the Lord would dwell, but Stephen reminds the people that God doesn't dwell in buildings made with human hands. Stephen finishes his speech with strong words for the religious leaders.

Read: Acts 7:51-60

Explain:

Stephen truly knew his history and the Word of God. Because of his knowledge, he was able to explain and apply the gospel to the people with whom he spoke. He showed incredible faith, knowledge, grace, and forgiveness to the very end.

Craft:

If you have time at the end, you can have the kids create masks from paper plates. They can color these with glow paints or a similar product to remind them that Stephen's face shone like the face of an angel.

Memorize Acts 6:15

Close in Prayer