

Class: 2's and 3's

Date: Late Winter 2002
Early Spring

Lesson 5
Teacher: Mary Lynn

Text: Acts 6-7

Introduction/review

1. Our Spiritual Heritage (see explanation under intro/review, lesson1)

Lesson

2. Discuss what it means to be brave.

Discuss ways children can be brave for the Lord.

From Acts 7: 54-60, explain who Stephen was, what he told the people, and what they did to him for believing in Christ Jesus.

I took large stones in to illustrate the fact that Stephen wasn't killed with pebbles.

Visual Aids/Songs

Coloring sheet included with this lesson.

Song: Christ is My Savior (Tune: You Are My Sunshine)

Along the hill roads in old Judea, my Jesus walked in long ago;

He taught the people to love each other, and again we need to know.

Each day and night as I Travel onward, He is my light, my truth, my way;

His life will lead me. His words will teach me. He will take me home some day.

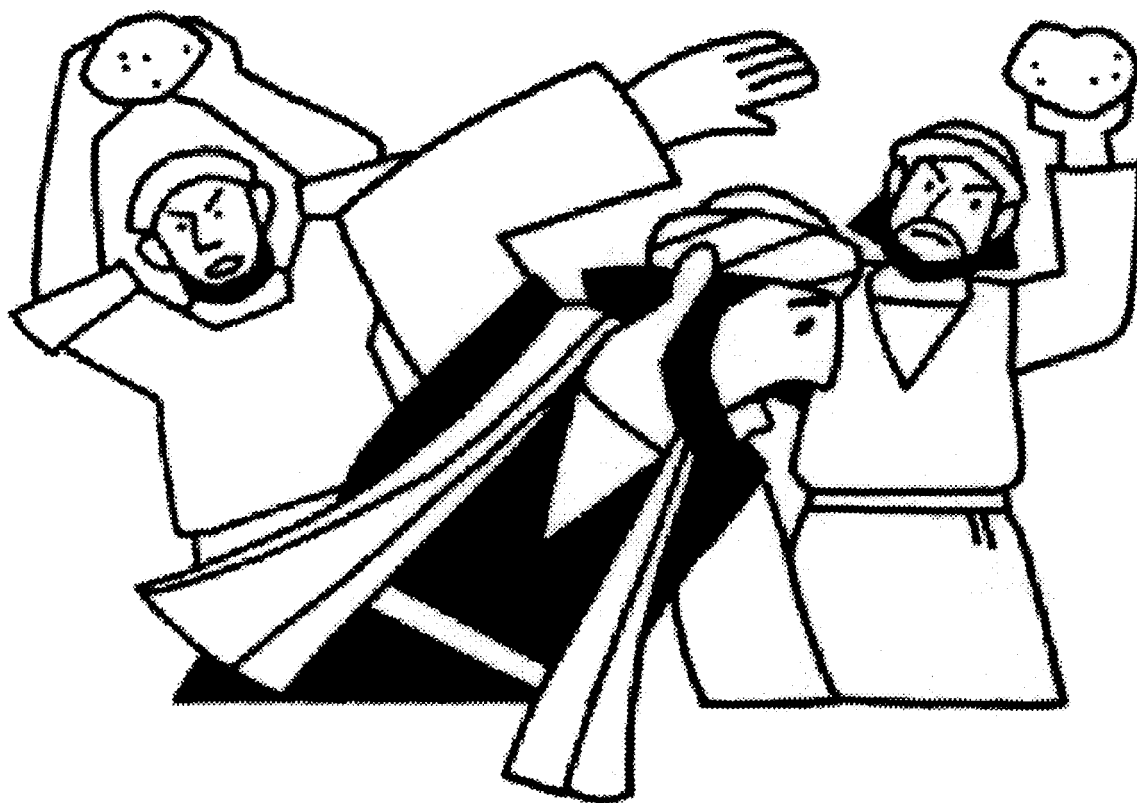
Men once rejected my Savior's message, On Calvary they crucified;

But He is risen, my Lord and Savior, He's the master of my life.

CHORUS:

Christ is my Savior. My only Savior. He strengthens me along life's way.

He gives me comfort when I am lonely. He will take me home some day.



Stephen Is Stoned and the Apostles Are Persecuted

Acts 5:17-42; 6:8—8:1

250. STEPHEN

(ACTS 6:2-8:2)



"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
ACTS 7:59

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Seven Helpers Chosen

MEMORY VERSE: "Be thou faithful into death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2:10

SCRIPTURES: Acts 6; 7

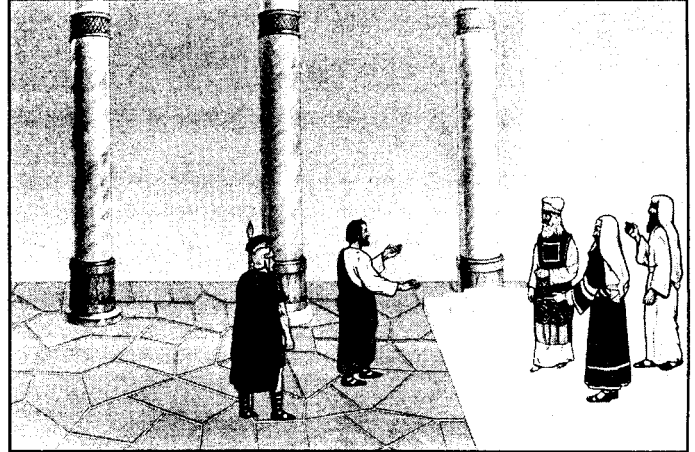
AIM: To teach that the lives of the first Christians should encourage us to be faithful.

THE BIBLE IN LIVING SOUND: Volume 7, Tapes 63, 64, Stories 377-380



First show group together. Then separate out the seven, 87.

S4
S7
T1
T4
29
31
36
38
50
56
60
79
87
89B
89



When Jesus went back to heaven, only the disciples and a few people had chosen to love and obey Him. But when the Holy Spirit came, the apostles began telling everyone about Jesus. Soon there were many people who were Christians.

Everyone was made welcome and any in need were looked after. But so much of the apostles' time was taken up with caring for others' needs, they didn't have time to preach and pray as Jesus had told them to do.

The twelve apostles called a meeting. They said, "We shouldn't stop preaching God's message. So we want you to choose seven men whom you know to be wise and fair. They can take care of the orphans and widows. Then we can continue our work of prayer and teaching the people."

The believers chose seven men. Among the seven was Stephen, a man of faith and full of the Holy Spirit. He was a great preacher and also performed many miracles.

God's message was preached in ever-widening circles, and the number of believers increased greatly in Jerusalem. Many priests also believed. This made the other priests and rulers very angry.

One day some men came and started to argue with Stephen. But they couldn't stand up against Stephen's

answers. So they persuaded some men to lie about him. The lies made the crowd very angry. Stephen was arrested and brought before the council.

When the high priests asked Stephen if the things the men had said were true, Stephen did not answer "Yes" or "No." Instead he told them how, one after another, the rulers had ignored God's voice and killed His prophets. Then he said, "Now you have rejected and murdered God's most important Messenger, His Son, Jesus."

The leaders were furious. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, said, "Look, I see the heavens opened and Jesus standing beside God, at His right hand."

At this, the angry mob rushed at him, seized hold of him and dragged him outside the city. They picked up rocks and began to hurl them at him. As he was being stoned, Stephen sank to his knees.

"Lord Jesus," he prayed, "receive my spirit." And, thinking of his persecutors he cried out, "Please do not hold this sin against them!" Then he fell to the ground and died.

A man named Saul had held the coats for the people who stoned Stephen. Later, after he was converted, Saul (who was then called Paul) was sorry that he had consented to the death of Stephen.

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Stephen



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Work a Jigsaw
Puzzle



Stephen's Song

Stephen was one of the great men of faith in the early church. Though he was not an apostle, he holds a special place in scripture because he was chosen to minister to the widows who were being cared for in Jerusalem. It seems that some of the widows were being overlooked and neglected, so Stephen and six other men who were "full of faith and the Holy Spirit", were chosen to take care of them.

He also was the first Christian martyr (MAR ter). A martyr is a person who holds to a belief so strongly that he/she is willing to die for it. Such was the faith that Stephen had in Jesus Christ.

Stephen was able to work miracles among the people. He began to

preach and some of the Jews would argue with him about his beliefs. These evil men persuaded some men to say that Stephen was speaking against Moses and even against God. This wasn't true, but many people got upset about it because they believed it was true.

They took hold of Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish rulers. In the picture you can see him appearing before the group. Directly in front of him is the high priest with the beautiful breastplate on the front of his garment. It contained gold and twelve different precious gems. On each stone was written the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

These were powerful men who were able to make life and death decisions about people. But Stephen was not afraid to speak the truth. As he stood before them, they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

He began to speak to them. He told about the whole history of the Jewish people beginning with Abraham. Then he accused the men, and their fathers before them, of hurting and killing the prophets, and even of killing the Righteous One, Jesus.

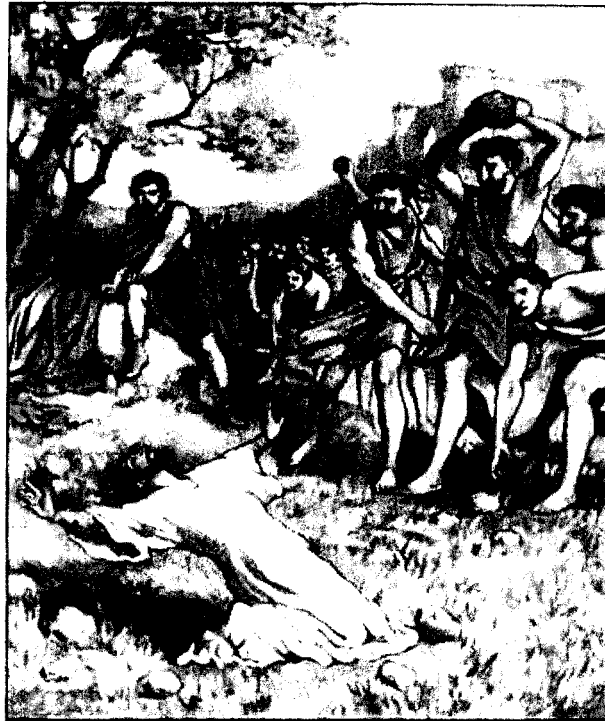
The rulers became very angry with him, but Stephen looking up to heaven, saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He told the men what he was seeing.

They put their hands over their ears because they didn't want to listen to him. They yelled at the top of their voices. They rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him to death.

While they were throwing stones at him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," and "Lord do not hold this sin against them." Then he "fell asleep" (died).

He had the same forgiving spirit that Jesus had when he had said the same words when he was on the cross.

The young man who was consenting to Stephen's death was Saul of Tarsus.



What does this story
mean to me?

Stephen was brave, and he was not afraid to speak the truth.

Suppose you and your friend are in a store, and you see her take something from a display and hide it under her coat. What do you do? Do you also take something to see if you can get away with it? Do you just say nothing? Or do you say to your friend, "You need to put that back. Stealing is not right, and you will be in big trouble when they catch you."?

You may lose your friend, but you will be doing her a favor if you can stop her bad behavior.

Stephen, by telling the truth, was willing to give up his life in order to please God.













 **Memory Verse**

But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

First Thessalonians 5:8 (NIV)

REVIEW

(Rest the mouse lightly over the ??? to see the answers in the alternate tags.)

1. To which group of women did Stephen provide help? 
2. How many men were chosen for this work? 
3. What do we call a person who is willing to die for his/her faith?

4. What did the evil men say about Stephen? 
5. What were the Jewish rulers called? 
6. What was on the breastplate of the high priest? 
7. How did Stephen's face look when he began to speak? 
8. Who did Stephen accuse them of killing? 
9. What did Stephen see when he looked up toward heaven? 
10. What did he pray? 
11. Who had prayed this prayer at an earlier time? 
12. Who was approving of Stephen's death? 

250. STEPHEN

(ACTS 6:2-8:2)



"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
ACTS 7:59