

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen to serve as leaders in the early church at Jerusalem. (See Acts 6:1-7.) God blessed Stephen and gave him power to do wonders and miracles like some of the apostles.

Some of the Jews accused Stephen of blasphemy and dragged him to the Sanhedrin, a group of Jewish leaders who acted as a legal council. Stephen addressed the group. He drew from the Jewish history, which the leaders in the Sanhedrin would have known well. But Stephen taught from the Old Testament things the Jewish leaders had likely never realized.

As Stephen preached, he showed how the Old Testament pointed to a coming Savior and how that Savior was Jesus. Stephen pointed out that the Jews’ ancestors had rejected God’s prophets. And they were just like their fathers; they rejected the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. Not only did they reject Jesus, they killed Him!

The Jewish leaders rushed at Stephen. Stephen looked into heaven. He saw God’s glory, and Jesus was standing at God’s right hand. The Jews forced Stephen out of the city, and they stoned him.

Remind your kids of Jesus’ words in Matthew 10:22: “You will be hated by everyone because of My name. But the one who endures to the end will be delivered.” Following Jesus will include difficulty and suffering. Jesus gives words of both warning and comfort: “Don’t be afraid” (Matt. 10:26).

# **Stephen was killed because he was a Christian. Jesus was crucified, and He 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. (Matthew 5:11) 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.**

# Check this session’s Activity Page and Big Picture Card as well as the Gospel Project for Kids Family App for ways to interact with the Bible content this week.

# FAMILY STARTING POINTS

# **Babies and Toddlers**

* + The Holy Spirit helps us.
  + The Holy Spirit helped Stephen.
  + Stephen told about God’s plan to send Jesus.
  + Stephen said that Jesus is the Messiah.

# **Preschool**

* + What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians.
  + Stephen told people about Jesus, even when He would be hurt for it.
* **Kids**
  + What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.
  + Stephen was not afraid to die so that others would hear about Jesus.

# UNIT KEY PASSAGE

# **Philippians 2:13**