

Acts 6

Stephen Chosen

Scripture: Acts 6

Memory Verse: Acts 6:8 “*And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.*”

Lesson Focus: We will introduce the kids to Stephen and see why he was appointed by the apostles to be a ministry leader. As we see him grow as a leader, we also see him do amazing things by the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray the kids will understand God can use them to also do great things for Him by the power of the same Holy Spirit.

Activities and Crafts: Stephen Serving Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Finger Puppet

Starter Activity: Pick Your Team

Consider starting off the lesson with an activity that requires kids to choose other kids. First, select two volunteers (maybe a boy and a girl) who will be the leaders of each team. Explain to them that they are going to need to select a few other kids from the class (the number of kids depends on the activity you choose) to be on their team. However, also make it clear that you won't tell them what each team is going to do until after the teams are selected!

After the teams are selected, here are a few ideas for the activity (feel free to come up with your own!):

- 1) Bring in snacks and have each team serve the class until each kid gets one. *
- 2) Bring in the carpet squares from outside the room and have each team serve the class one carpet square to sit on for the lesson for some extra cushion.
- 3) Have some sort of competition between the two teams (relay, ball toss, etc.) *

Afterwards (and consider doing more than one activity), ask the original leaders this important question which will transition the class into the lesson:

Q: WHY did you choose the kids you did for your team? Have a little discussion to get the kids thinking about how most of us would probably select those that we know and trust.

And that is where we pick things up in the book of Acts today. Because how fast the church was growing, the early church leaders had to select others to come alongside them and help with many of the ministries and services of the church. Let's open our Bibles and see what happened!

Bible Study:

Acts 6:1a: It says that the number of the disciples were “multiplying”.

Q: What does that mean? A: It means that lots and lots of people were becoming followers of Jesus! * (**Teachers:** Consider using the whiteboard to demonstrate disciples “reproducing” themselves. Draw one stick figure and ask how many you have if that person makes another disciple (2). Then ask how many you have if they both make another disciple (4). And so on! Just like in math class at school, this is multiplication.)

But let’s remind ourselves what else was happening “in those days”. Last week in chapter 5 we learned that the apostles got arrested, threatened, and beaten for talking about Jesus. See what their reaction was in **Acts 5:42**. * They didn’t care and continued telling people about Jesus!

Acts 6:1b: Now with the church getting so big they ran into a problem with certain widows not getting what they needed. *

Q: What is a widow? A: A woman whose husband had died. And back then, such women were much more vulnerable. Throughout the Scriptures * you see how God cares for the widows and His people are to care for them as well.

Acts 6:2: The twelve refers to the apostles and they did not have the time to both preach/teach the word AND to ensure the widows had their needs met. Maybe you have faced a situation where you had two good things you could do, but you could only choose one of them. You had to set priorities! (**Teachers:** Consider sharing a personal story * where you couldn’t do both activities and had to pick one or throw out a couple of “would you rather” scenarios * to help the kids better understand the idea of having to set priorities)

The twelve gave higher priority to the teaching of the Word. So, what about the needs of the widows?

Acts 6:3-4: Remember the activity that we started out the lesson with? In the same way, they chose and appointed others to make sure the widows had their needs met.

We talked a little bit about why you chose who you did for our activity.

Q: But what qualities were they looking for? (**Reread v. 3**) They were looking for:

A1: Men of good reputation and character

A2: Men “fizzing” with the Holy Spirit

A3: Men full of wisdom

They didn’t choose just anybody, but men they could trust to take good care of the widows. In a similar way, if you have pets and are going out of town, would you choose just anybody to care for your pets or someone you could trust? *

Acts 6:5-6: They made their choices and committed them to the Lord. One guy named Stephen is mentioned as being full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

So far in Acts we've seen God do amazing things through people who are filled or "fizzing" with the Holy Spirit. Let's pause and remind ourselves what this means.

(Teachers: Consider bringing in a glove and place it in front of the class. Ask them why the glove isn't doing anything. Afterwards, put your hand into it and start high-fiving the kids. What changed? Well, we are kind of like the glove and when we are "filled" by the Holy Spirit, we will "come alive" like the glove and do things that please God and bless others!)

Acts 6:7: The word of God continued to spread and the church continued to "multiply"! * It even says that some of the Jewish priests became believers! This is HUGE, as they were some of the enemy bosses that were leading the opposition last week! * Even some of the bosses have now changed sides and become believers in Jesus!

Acts 6:8: Not only was Stephen faithfully serving the widows, but God was working miracles through him! The Bible doesn't give us the details but we can be sure that he was still "fizzing" with the Holy Spirit!

Acts 6:9: Uh-oh! Here come the bad guys again! Perhaps with so many of the priests now changing sides, the bad guys decided it was time to make another move against the church. So, they start arguing with Stephen in public.

Acts 6:10: But who won the argument? Stephen! By the power of the Holy Spirit he continued to speak the truth about Jesus and they could not prove him wrong! *

Acts 6:11-12: Sadly, instead of quietly admitting defeat they showed themselves to be very "sore losers".

Q: What are some things that a "sore loser" might do after he/she loses?

A: Crying and complaining to others to try and bend the rules in their favor. Well, that is exactly what these "sore losers" do as they start crying and complaining to others to stir up all sorts of opposition against Stephen. *

Acts 6:13-14: Unable to defeat Stephen with truth, they have no choice but to spread lies about him to bring him down. You might remember from the gospel of Luke how they did the same thing to Jesus when He stood before the same religious council right before He was crucified!

Acts 6:15: And just like Jesus stood before his persecutors calm and poised, so Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, is following the example of His Lord and Master standing before his persecutors with the same confidence and composure. We will have to wait until next week to see what happens next!

Key Point: Before chapter 6 it was only the apostles that were filled with the Spirit doing amazing things. But Stephen was not an apostle! He was an ordinary guy who loved Jesus and was filled by the same Holy Spirit as the apostles. That same Holy Spirit lives in believers still today! Let's ask the Holy Spirit to fill us this week that we would do what He wants this week!

FIND THE TREASURE



Read Acts 6:2-4
 What was the highest priority for the apostles?

PARENT CHALLENGE
 What qualities were the apostles seeking as they selected men to serve widows?

Read Luke 21:12-15
 Who fulfilled Jesus's words in Acts 6?

