

# Great Sermon by Stephen

## Acts 7



New Testament 7  
Part 2: ABCs of Acts 7-12

## SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 7 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 6:7-15; 7:1-60; Acts 8:1-4; Matthew 6:10-12; Revelation 21

### MEMORY WORK:

“[T]he Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 7:48a).

Also help the children memorize the ABCs of Acts.

### SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- [“Dying for the Cause of Christ”](#)
- [“Oh, Be Careful Little Eyes What You See”](#)

### LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [ABCs of Acts 1-12](#) Bible fact cards (provided under “N.T. 7 Bible Facts”)
- “Acts Chapter Summary” from “[Kids Prep 2](#)” CD by Jeff Miller
- “Summary of the Bible” from “[Kids Prep](#)” CD by Jeff Miller
- Pictures/drawings from any books listed under 3rd-4th Grader Pre-Class Activities/ Learning Centers
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- Life of Paul (Series 1) A Beka picture set (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, *not the lesson book*; note that only the apostles received the Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2—skip card 1.2 or remove girl)
- Songs from “Sing a Story” Volume III (Book of Acts Stories Sung to Familiar Tunes), by Jewel Kendrick



## PERSONAL APPLICATION:

There will be sad times in my life, but I can get through those sad times by remembering that some day I will go to heaven where there will be no sadness or any problems at all.

## LESSON STARTS HERE

### INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Not everyone believed what the Christians taught about Jesus, did they? Sometimes Christians were mistreated because they tried to teach others about Jesus. How do you feel when someone is mean to you? What if they were mean to you because you believe in Jesus? It might be hard to be brave, but God has promise to always be with us, just as He was with the early Christians. Today, we are going to talk about a brave man who suffered a lot because he talked about Jesus. Let's see what happened!

### INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review previous lesson.

What does it mean to have courage? Have you ever had to be brave? Have you ever needed courage to tell someone about Jesus? In our lesson today, we will look at a man who was very brave and courageous because he knew that God was with him!

### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review ABCs of Acts covered thus far.
2. “G” is for a **Great Sermon** preached by Stephen. [Remind the children that we first learned about Stephen in Acts six, when he was one of the men chosen by the Christians in Jerusalem to be a special helper for the widows in the local church who did not have enough food.] Stephen was a well-educated young man, but more importantly, he was a Christian “full of faith and filled with [led by] the Holy Spirit.” He was also the first Christian who was not an apostle to perform miracles (Acts 6:8).
3. When Stephen was teaching people about Jesus in Jerusalem, a group of Jews from the Synagogue of the **Freedmen**, argued with him about Jesus being the Son of God. But they could not successfully argue with what he said because God was helping him. The Jews were afraid of this new religious group [“the Way,” the followers of Jesus] and wanted to try to discredit and weaken its leadership. They decided to arrest Stephen and accuse him of **blasphemy** against Moses and God. They took him to the Sanhedrin, the special council for settling problems between Jews.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** Freedmen or Libertines—“Probably originally captive Jews brought to Rome by Pompey in 63 B.C., who were subsequently liberated, and repatriated to Palestine, where presumably they built a synagogue still occupied by their descendants a century after Pompey’s Palestinian campaign (Acts 6:8)” (*The Living Bible Encyclopedia in Story and Pictures*). Most became Roman citizens. Their descendants started synagogues to study and promote the Law of Moses.





**Blasphemy:** irreverent, disrespectful, evil, or defamatory speech against God; it includes taking God’s name in vain and swearing against God. [See Matthew 27:40-44,63; Leviticus 19:12; 24:15.]

4. Even though there were men who chose to tell lies about Stephen and treat him hatefully, he did not try to defend himself. Instead, he used the opportunity to teach them about Jesus. He was not afraid. Acts 6:15 tells us that his face looked “like the face of an angel” to the Jewish men who crowded around him.
5. Chapter seven is Stephen’s speech before the court of the Sanhedrin; it is the longest single speech in the book of Acts and the turning point in the history of the Church. Like Peter in chapter two, Stephen wanted the Jews to understand that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah (i.e., the Christ, the Savior), the same Messiah for whom the Jews had been waiting for centuries. Stephen reminded them of their long history as God’s chosen people—from Abraham through the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. He told the Jews that they were ignoring the message God had sent to them through Jesus and the apostles, just as their ancestors had refused to hear the messages of the prophets. He called the Jews “betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52).



**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the articles “[How Long Was the Israelites’ Egyptian Sojourn?](#)” “[Was Moses Ineloquent or ‘Mighty in Words’?](#)” and “[Jacob’s Journey to Egypt](#)” on the Apologetics Press Web site for responses to alleged biblical discrepancies in Stephen’s speech.

6. When the crowd heard Stephen call them murderers and accuse them of not obeying God, they became more and more angry, even grinding their teeth. (Grinding their teeth here was a very different response than those on Pentecost in Acts 2!) Stephen looked upward and told them that he could actually see Jesus standing at the right hand of God in heaven! When they heard this, they stopped up their ears, grabbed him, dragged him outside the city gates, and stoned him to death! While the angry mob was stoning Stephen, a man named Saul of Tarsus was standing nearby, holding their coats.
7. As Stephen was dying, he asked God to forgive the people who were killing him, just as Jesus had done as He was dying on the cross. “Devout men” from the Jerusalem church took Stephen’s body, buried it, and “made great lamentation” for this brave Christian man who would not compromise his beliefs (change what he believed just to be comfortable).
8. After Stephen’s death, the Jews attacked other Christians to try to stop them from preaching and teaching about Jesus, too. The Jewish leaders did not want more Jews converted to Christianity. Many Christians left Jerusalem and went to many places throughout the world spreading their faith in Jesus. These Christians, who were understandably staying together in Jerusalem in the early days of the Church, were forced to “go into all the world and preach the Gospel” as Jesus had told the apostles to do. The Church grew rapidly as a direct result of Stephen’s death.
9. Stephen died in great physical pain, but he was at peace because he knew he would go to a far better place. We are going to have many happy times in this life, but there will be sad times, too. During those hard times, we can look forward to heaven, where there will be no more sadness or trouble—only happiness and peace in the presence of God.

**PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):**

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

**Ages 2-5:**

- “[Stephen’s Sermon Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 7 provided in activity sheets)
- Write key words from the lesson on the board, with certain letters missing. Briefly show the children word cards. Then let the children fill in the blanks on the board to complete the spelling of the key words (i.e., tell you what’s missing).
- Bible Bowling: Use plastic milk bottles or plastic bowling pins lined up in a straight line, rather than the traditional triangular shape. Give bottles/pins point values. Let the children knock down bottles/pins and try to answer a review question about this and previous lessons. (You can also play Bible Bowling with toilet tissue rolls. Write review questions on pieces of paper and put them inside the rolls.)
- Leap Frog game: Cut out 10-12 lily pad shapes from green construction paper and tape them randomly onto a blue shower curtain or tablecloth (or onto the floor). Write questions on small fish shapes or small cards, and put one or two of them under each lily pad. Each student takes a turn tossing a beanbag onto one of the lily pads and answering one of the questions under the lily pad. You can keep individual scores or let the kids play in teams. (“[Fish Cutouts](#)” and “[Lily Pad Cutouts](#)” provided in activity sheets)
- “Stephen Sticks to the Truth” game: Draw a gumball machine onto a poster board without the gumballs in it. Stick little pieces of Velcro® inside the “globe” of the gumball machine. Then cut circles out of construction paper to be the gumballs, laminate them, put Velcro® on the back, a number on the front, and put the “gumballs” “in” the machine. Let each child get a “piece of gum” from the machine and read the number. The teacher, prepared with a list of review questions, will read the question that corresponds to that number. If the child answers correctly, give him/her one Skittle® or small treat. (See [N.T. 7 Review Questions](#) for example questions)

**1st-2nd Graders:**

- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 7 provided in activity sheets)
- Bible Bowling: Use plastic milk bottles or plastic bowling pins lined up in a straight line, rather than the traditional triangular shape. Give bottles/pins point values. Let the children knock down bottles/pins and try to answer a review question about this and previous lessons. (You can also play Bible Bowling with toilet tissue rolls. Write review questions on pieces of paper and put them inside the rolls.)
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- “Stoning of Stephen” sequencing game: Cut strips of cardstock. On each strip write

something that happened in this story. Divide the students into groups of two or three, and give each group a set of strips (events) to put in chronological order. (“[Stoning of Stephen Sequencing Game](#)” provided in activity sheets)

### 3rd-4th Graders:

- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 7 provided in activity sheets)
- “[Great Sermon by Stephen Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “Stoning of Stephen” game: Find 10-12 smooth rocks large enough so you can write one-word answers on them (white rocks work best). On a sheet of cardstock or inside a file folder, print questions or fill-in-the-blank sentences from the story. Write the one-word answers on the rocks, and let children match the correct rock with each question. (Make two or three sets, and divide the class into groups to complete the activity.)
- “Stoning of Stephen” sequencing game: Cut strips of cardstock. On each strip write something that happened in this story. Divide the students into groups of two or three, and give each group a set of strips (events) to put in chronological order. (“[Stoning of Stephen Sequencing Game](#)” provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
  - Acts 7 (if they did not do so in NT6)
  - *Discovery* magazine articles: “Heaven,” [April, 2012](#); “Lions and Tigers and Christians,” [August, 2000](#); “Saul the Enemy of Christ,” [May, 2007](#); [May, 2009](#)
  - *Stephen Stands Strong*, by Julie Stiegemeier, Arch books (DISCLAIMERS: p. 2—change “Easter” to “a Sunday”; p. 14—change the second line to “When Him you obey and love.”)

### SONGS:

#### “DYING FOR THE CAUSE OF CHRIST” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook

(Tune: “Standing on the Promises”)

##### VERSE 1:

Singing songs of Christians, and Ste-phen was one,  
Who was true and faithful to our God’s dear Son;  
Dying for the cause of Christ, oh let us sing,  
Dying for the cause of Christ, our King.

##### CHORUS:

Dying, dying,  
Dying for the cause of Christ our Lord and Savior,

Dying, dying;  
He was dying for the cause of Christ, our King.

##### VERSE 2:

Stephen then saw Jesus, as he looked above,  
Standing on the right hand of our God of love;  
Praying to the Father, as to sleep he fell,  
Dying for the Lord he loved so well.

(CHORUS)

**“OH, BE CAREFUL LITTLE EYES WHAT YOU SEE” ([Click to Hear](#))**

Author: Unknown\*

(Tune: See Internet)

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see.

(REPEAT)

For the Father up above,

Is looking down in love.

So, be careful little eyes what you see.

Oh, be careful little feet where you go.

(REPEAT)

For the Father up above,

Is looking down in love.

So, be careful little feet where you go.

Oh, be careful little ears what you hear.

(REPEAT)

For the Father up above,

Is looking down in love.

So, be careful little ears what you hear.

Oh, be careful little mouth what you say. (REPEAT)

For the Father up above,

Is looking down in love.

So, be careful little mouth what you say.

Oh, be careful little hands what you do.

(REPEAT)

For the Father up above,

Is looking down in love.

So, be careful little hands what you do.

\*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

\*\*\* IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



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## WEDNESDAY EVENING

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## PERSONAL APPLICATION:

There will be sad times in my life, but I can get through those sad times by remembering that some day I will go to heaven where there will be no sadness or any problems at all.

## INTRODUCTION:

Review [N.T. 7 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 7 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

## POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Briefly review Sunday’s lesson (See [N.T. 7 Review Questions](#) for example questions), as well as other ABCs covered to this point.
2. Talk more about the “false witnesses” and what they did against Stephen (and Jesus). Remember that God never wants us to lie for any reason (Exodus 20:16; Colossians 3:9; Revelation 21:8). We should never lie about someone else to make ourselves look good or make him look bad. The Jews’ lies and jealousy stirred up an angry mob that killed a great man. Lies always hurt people; they hurt the people telling the lies as well as the people against whom they’re directed.
3. Talk to the kids about being a witness in a court trial. What does a witness do? What is the importance of telling the truth?
4. Use the following scriptures as is age-appropriate for your class. Have them answer questions as a class or in teams.

Under the Old Testament, a person could not be convicted of murder without \_\_\_\_\_(witnesses) (Numbers 35:30).

- How many witnesses is **not** enough? (Numbers 35:30)
- What is the responsibility of the judge? (Deuteronomy 19:18)
- What is a “false witness”? (Proverbs 12:17)
- In Bible times, what happened if someone lied as a witness? (Deuteronomy 19:18-19)
- What part(s) of your body do you use to tell a lie? (Zephaniah 3:13)
- Where do lies come from? (Matthew 15:18-19) Explain.

## PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- See Sunday morning’s lesson.

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