

HEROES

OF THE

FAITH

Ordinary Men and Women . . .
Super Ordinary Power



STEPHEN-FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH

HEROES OF THE FAITH CURRICULUM—2012

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Arlington † Metroplex
Taking church to the people



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STEPHEN-FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH

Memory Verse:

Don't you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God. You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honors God.
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NCV)

Lesson Goals:

#1 - Understand how ordinary Stephen was

#2 - Discover what obedience led Stephen to do

#3 - Desire to let God do extraordinary things in the life of the ordinary student

Audience:

Young, un-churched learners

Adaptable for all ages, including adults (See **For more training** on Activities page)

Scripture to Study:

Acts 6:1-8:4



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STEPHEN-FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH

Acts 6:1-8:4

Who can tell me what a hero is? A hero is someone who is courageous and brave and compassionate. There are heroes and heroines in the Bible. All of them are brave and courageous and more, but not in the way you would expect.

Our hero: Stephen

His Heroic Feat: Full of Faith and the Holy Spirit

Being full of faith and the Holy Spirit may not sound very heroic, but let's look at the facts and see what you think when you have heard the whole story!

After Jesus' death, resurrection and return to heaven, more and more people were choosing to follow Him, even many of the priests. The community of believers began to have a problem, though. There were more and more widows to take care of and the twelve disciples couldn't stop teaching God's word to serve food. They suggested choosing seven men to be in charge of serving the widows. In that way the disciples could "continue to pray and to teach the word of God." (Acts 6:4 NCV)

The seven men they were looking for needed to have a good reputation. They also needed to be men who were "full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom." (Acts 6:3b NASB) They found seven men and they placed their hands on them and prayed for them as they began this new ministry. One of those men was named Stephen. Stephen was full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

"Stephen was richly blessed by God who gave him the power to do great miracles and signs among the people." (Acts 6:8 NCV) There were some people, though, who were against him. They argued with Stephen, "But the Spirit was helping him to speak with wisdom, and his words were so strong that they could not argue with him." (Acts 6:10 NCV) That wasn't the end of it, though. The people who had argued with Stephen found others who would lie about him. Stephen was grabbed and taken to the council of religious leaders. They brought in more people to tell lies about him before the council. Stephen wasn't furious with anger, though. The people had been "watching Stephen closely and saw that his face looked like the face of an angel." (Acts 6:15 NCV) But the high priest was determined to continue questioning Stephen. He wanted to know if the accusations against Stephen were true.

It was then that Stephen began a long explanation. He started with their forefather Abraham, then Isaac and Jacob. Then Stephen began to talk about Moses. As he talked, he explained how Moses had been mistreated by the people of Israel, how they had resisted what God was doing through him. Stephen even accused these religious leaders of doing the same thing! He said, "You stubborn people! You have

not given your hearts to God, nor will you listen to him! You are always against what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell you, just as your ancestors were. Your ancestors tried to hurt every prophet who ever lived. Those prophets said long ago that the One who is good would come, but your ancestors killed them. And now you have turned against and killed the One who is good. You received the law of Moses, which God gave you through his angels, but you haven't obeyed it." (Acts 7:51-53 NCV)

The council was furious. What Stephen had said was true, but rather than repent, they chose to lash out. Stephen, though, was full of the Holy Spirit. And at that moment he was able to look right into heaven. He saw God's glory and he saw Jesus standing there to the right of God, which is a place of honor. "He said, 'Look! I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at God's right side.'" And that did it. The council didn't want to hear anything Stephen had to say. They shouted and rushed at him and ran him out of the city. Then they did the unthinkable, proving that they truly were against what the Holy Spirit was telling them. They picked up rocks and began to throw them at Stephen. When their coats got in the way, they handed them to a young man there named Saul. But Stephen, who was still sensitive to the Holy Spirit, prayed, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:60 NCV) There was not an ounce of repentance or mercy in his accusers. They continued throwing rocks at Stephen until he was dead.

Some godly men buried Stephen's body. They cried for him. But throughout Jerusalem something evil was happening. "On that day the church of Jerusalem began to be persecuted." (Acts 8:1b NCV) Except for the disciples, all the believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. What the evil religious leaders in Jerusalem couldn't predict was that, "wherever they were scattered, they told people the Good News." (Acts 8:4 NCV) Their lack of sensitivity to the Holy Spirit didn't extinguish what Stephen was willing to die for. God's word would be spread wherever His people went, from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria . . . even to the ends of the earth!

YOU CAN BE A HERO, TOO!

When you live a life of faith in Jesus Christ, you don't have to leap tall buildings to be a hero. Stephen was full of faith and the Holy Spirit. Are you? Our memory verse says, "Don't you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God. You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honors God." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NCV) Have you decided to give your life to the Lord and follow Jesus? If you haven't, but you are interested, that's the Holy Spirit at work. Be sensitive to what He wants to do for you. Once you decide to surrender your life, you receive the Holy Spirit into your life. He guides and teaches. Are you sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? Won't you follow Stephen's example?



NEXT WEEK
Paul

PRE-SCHOOL!

LESSON

Who can tell me what a hero is? A hero is someone who is courageous and brave and compassionate. There are heroes and heroines in the Bible. All of them are brave and courageous and more, but not in the way you would expect.

Our hero: Stephen

His Heroic Feat: Full of Faith and the Holy Spirit

Being full of faith and the Holy Spirit may not sound very heroic, but let's look at the facts and see what you think when you have heard the whole story!

After Jesus' death, resurrection and return to heaven, more and more people were choosing to follow Him. With more and more followers there were more and more people who needed help. The twelve disciples couldn't stop teaching God's word to help, but they could choose men who would do the job.

They chose seven men with a good reputation. Stephen was one of those men. Stephen was full of faith and the Holy Spirit. God blessed Stephen and gave him the power to do great miracles. There were some people, though, who were against Stephen. They argued with Stephen, "but the Spirit was helping him to speak with wisdom, and his words were so strong that they could not argue with him." (Acts 6:10 NCV) So they made up lies and took Stephen before the council of religious leaders.

Stephen was close to God and knew what God wanted him to do. Stephen was obedient. The religious leaders, who were supposed to be obedient, were far away from God. The more Stephen talked to them the angrier they got. They ran Stephen out of town and killed him. Some godly men buried Stephen's body. They cried for him.

But something evil was happening in Jerusalem. That very day the church of Jerusalem began to be persecuted. (Acts 8:1b NCV) Except for the disciples, all the believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. What the evil religious leaders in Jerusalem didn't know was that, "wherever they were scattered, they told people the Good News." (Acts 8:4 NCV) God's word would be spread wherever His people went, from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria . . . even to the ends of the earth!

ACTIVITIES!

- Memory Verse Activity - Trace each student's body outline onto butcher paper. Encourage them to draw in faces. Print the memory verse in large letters across the body.
- Continue adding heroes' names and heroic feats to your "Heroes Banner."
- Sing the "Sweet, Sweet Spirit," "(This is the Air I) Breathe," "Touch Through Me," "Open the Eyes of My Heart," "As We Seek/Jesus Draw Me Close," "One Pure and Holy Passion" or other praise songs related to the lesson.
- Print "Father forgive them." on small stones. On the reverse side, print Acts 7:60.
- **For more training:** Read Acts 7:2-53. This is information that all Jews knew, especially the religious leaders. Discuss their reaction in light of what Stephen said to them. They were repeating the pattern. Also discuss the disconnect between their hypocrisy and Stephen's holiness.
- **For more training:** Read Acts 8:1-4. Then read Acts 1:8. Discuss the two together.
- **For more training:** Read and discuss Acts 7:59-60 and Luke 23:33-34.

Don't you know
that your bodies
are temples of the
Holy Spirit? . . . So
use your bodies
in a way
that honors God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Don't you know that
your bodies are temples of the
Holy Spirit?

The Spirit is in you. You have
received Him from God.

You do not belong to yourselves.
Christ has paid the price for you.

So use your bodies
in a way that honors God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

HEROES

OF THE

FAITH

Ordinary Men and Women . . .
Super Ordinary Power

HERO IN TRAINING

Stephen - Faithful Until Death

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HERO TRAINING!

Scripture:

Acts 6:1-8:3

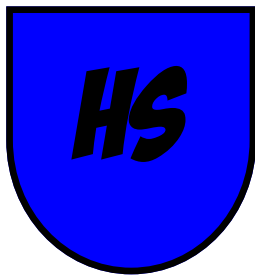
Memory verse:

Don't you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God. You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honors God. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NCV)

Our Hero: _____

What did our hero do that was so heroic? _____

What can you do to be a **Hero of the Faith**? _____



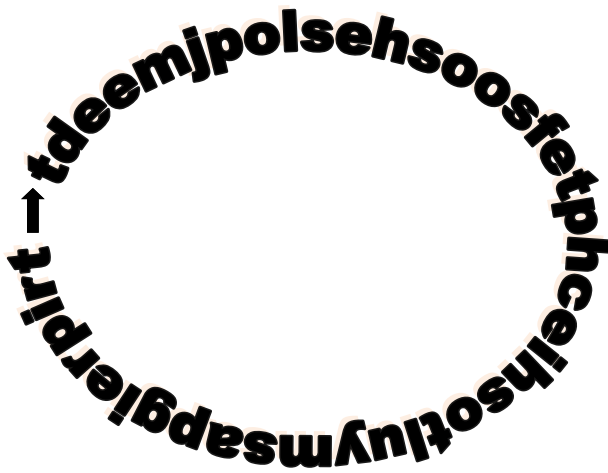
What power do Heroes of the Faith possess?

Do you have the power? _____

In your own words, rewrite the memory verse in the space below.

HIDDEN MESSAGE!

Can you crack the code to find the Hidden Message?
 Beginning at the arrow of each circle, cross out every other letter.
 Write the hidden messages in the blanks below.



Don't you know that your bodies are _____?
 The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God.
 You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you.
 So use your bodies _____.
 (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NCV)



WORD

SEARCH!

S N L F J A T B O M F H B
N E H P E T S D E N O T S
O E R R N E V E S R R E T
L D G S N S Y R L Y G H D
D H W P S N W E T M I T E
O E E H S A W G N A V I S
T L I A H C N N F G E A H
S P T R D N A A D N N F B
T I R I P S Y L O H E F W
E J E S U S E I O L S O F
P B V E P O T C O E S L L
H A V E M O N N Y N L L K
E E S S S T A U F E O U S
N H D U L S E O L L O F N
B S W O R G H C R U H C G

- church grows
- need help
- seven
- Stephen
- full of faith
- Holy Spirit
- council angered
- stoned Stephen
- forgiveness

HIDDEN MESSAGE!

Answer Page

Can you crack the code to find the Hidden Message?
Beginning at the arrow of each circle, cross out every other letter.
Write the hidden messages in the blanks below.

→ tdeemjpolsehsoosfetpncelhtuysapgylerpirt

Don't you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?
The Spirit is in you. You have received him from God.
You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you.
So use your bodies in a way that honors God.
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NCV)

→ idnratwuakyltohsavtthaaonpogresdgyros

WORD

SEARCH!

Answer Page



- church grows
- need help
- seven
- Stephen
- full of faith
- Holy Spirit
- council angered
- stoned Stephen
- forgiveness