

PursueGOD.org

Lesson Overview

Today, we're learning about a guy named Stephen. He was a leader in the early church and he had an important job. He was in charge of making sure that everyone had food to eat. Stephen was also known for being the very first person to be killed because he believed in Jesus. In Stephen's day, there were people who hated Jesus so they would bully people who believed in him. One day, a bunch of bullies surrounded Stephen and started throwing rocks at him, eventually killing him. But, Stephen's response to his attackers is what's truly amazing about his story and it teaches us an important lesson, too. Instead of getting angry and throwing rocks back at his attackers, he chose to be like Jesus, and forgive the people. Do you know how he had the strength to do that? His strength came from remembering what Jesus had done for him and knowing that he would be in heaven someday. And, that means we can choose to be like Jesus and forgive those that are mean to us, too.

Big Idea

We can choose to be like Jesus, even when it's hard

Key Question

Why is forgiveness hard to do sometimes?

Memory Verse

Acts 7:56 "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!"

Classroom Agenda

1. (5 min) **PLAY: Let kids start working on Activity Page #1.**
2. (5 min) **WARM UP: Describe a time you felt picked on by someone. How did that feel? How did you respond?** (Tip: No one likes to be picked on by someone. But we get to choose how we respond to it.)
3. (5 min) **PREVIEW: Write out the Big Idea, Memory Verse, and Key Question on a whiteboard.** Have the kids copy it down on Activity Page #1 (if applicable).
4. (20 min) **LARGE GROUP: Gather for songs and videos with other kids.** Then return to class to finish this guide.
5. (2 min) **RECAP: Read the Lesson Overview (see above).**
6. (3 min) **KQ: Answer the Key Question.** (Answer: **Because it's hard to be nice to someone when they don't deserve it.** (Our natural response is to want to be mean back to someone who is mean to us. They deserve to be mistreated for what they did. But, this is what Jesus did. He gave us love and forgiveness when we didn't deserve it. Remember, the Bible says that we are all sinners, wanting to do things our own way. But, Jesus chose to die to pay for our sins even though we didn't ask for it or deserve it. We need to be like Jesus and forgive others. It might be one of the hardest things we'll ever do, but with Jesus on our side, we can do it.)
 - **Bonus Questions:** Why is forgiveness hard? What does forgiveness look like? **4-5th:** Describe a time you chose to forgive someone. What happened as a result of your forgiveness?
7. (5 min) **EXPLORE: Read Micah 7:19-20. What does this passage say God does with our sin? What does God offer us?** (Answer: God has compassion on us which means he responds with love, not anger. He throws our sins into the ocean and stamps on it with his feet. He forgives and forgets. Not only that, he shows us love and kindness.)
8. (10 min) **PLAY: Choose a group activity from Activity Page #2.**
9. (5 min) **CLOSE: Share prayer requests and pray as a class.** Encourage kids to use the Family Guide at home with their parents - and remind them to go online to pursueGOD.org/kids to find this week's lesson video.

Teacher instructions: Choose an activity for your classroom.

OPTION 1: CHOOSE TO FORGIVE BRACELET

Instructions:

- Give each kid a piece of twine and beads (1 red, 1 white, 1 green)
- Work as a class to make the bracelets by doing the following:
 - Have the kids take the **red** bead and put it on the twine. Tell them that the red bead symbolizes Jesus and what he did for us on the cross.
 - Have kids take the **white** bead and put it on the twine. Tell them that the white bead symbolizes Jesus' forgiveness of our sins.
 - Have kids take the **green** bead and put it on the twine. Tell them that the green bead symbolizes our choice to forgive others.
- Then help kids tie their bracelets onto their wrists and tell them that the bracelet can remind them to be forgiving people because Jesus has forgiven them.
- If you have time, read this passage about Stephen. [Acts 6:8-15, 7:54-59](#)

Supplies needed: Twine (cut into 8 in pieces, 1 per kid), Beads (red, white and green, 1 of each color per kid)

OPTION 2: STEPHEN LIVES FOR JESUS JEOPARDY

Instructions:

- Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a bell or ringer.
- Ask a question from below. First to ring in gets a chance to answer. If correct, that team gets a point. If wrong, the other team gets a chance to answer for a bonus point. Team with the most points, wins.

Questions:

1. Who was our story about today? (Stephen)
2. What was Stephen's job? (gave food out to people)
3. From what book is our memory verse found? (Acts)
4. Who died on the cross for our sins. (Jesus)
5. What did the people throw at Stephen? (Rocks)
6. What is the Big Idea today? (See board)
7. What was Stephen's response to his attackers? (forgave)
8. What book is full of God's truth? (Bible)
9. Where did Stephen know he would go someday? (heaven)
10. T or F: Acts is in the NT. (T)

Supplies needed: Bells or ringers

The Book of Acts for Kids #3: Stephen Lives for Jesus

 pursuegod.org/the-book-of-acts-for-kids-3-stephen-lives-for-jesus/

Memory Verse

Acts 7:56 Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!

_____ Was Just a Regular Guy

He was in charge of giving food to people who needed it. Even though Stephen had a pretty boring job, his life was anything but boring. When he wasn't feeding people, he performed miracles and taught people about Jesus. And that got him into trouble. He was arrested by some religious people and was thrown in jail. For no good reason!

And then some mean crowds started throwing stones at him to kill him! As Stephen was dying he did something really surprising.

Stephen Asked God to _____ the People That Killed Him

Stephen's words surprised a lot of people that day. People expected him to be angry and thought he would pray for God to punish the people, not forgive them. But Stephen was a follower of Jesus and he knew how Jesus responded when he was mistreated. Jesus forgave those that hurt him.

We Can Choose to Be Like _____, Even When It's Hard

We need to choose to be like Jesus no matter what. And sometimes that means forgiving people that hurt us! That's what Stephen and Jesus were able to do. And this verse tells us why.

Acts 7:56 Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!

Stephen saw the bigger picture. He knew that he was going to be in heaven with Jesus so he had nothing to worry about in this world. So next time someone is being mean to you think about Stephen's last words and choose to forgive.

Answers: *Stephen, forgive, Jesus* **Parent Signature:** _____

Questions:

1. Why did the people want to hurt Stephen?
2. How did Stephen respond to his bullies?
3. Read [Micah 7:19-20](#). What does this passage say God does with our sin? What does God offer us?
4. How will you apply this lesson to your life this week?

Instructions: Color the picture.

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TO BE LIKE
JESUS, EVEN
WHEN IT'S HARD

Key Question

Why is forgiveness hard to do sometimes?

Memory Verse

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GOD FORGIVES AND SO SHOULD WE