

Unit 29 • Session 2

**Session Title:** Stephen’s Sermon

**Bible Passage:** Acts 6–7

**Story Point:** Stephen preached about Jesus no matter what.

**Key Passage:** Romans 12:5

**Big Picture Question:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

**The great debate**

Provide the group with two opposing options, such as whether they like tacos or pizza better. Form two teams based on who selects which option. Challenge each team to provide reasoning and evidence to explain why their choice is the better choice. Can any of the kids convince others to change teams?

SAY • Something like a favorite food or favorite game to play isn’t particularly important. We can all have a different opinion, and no one is wrong. However, something like whether or not Jesus is God’s Son, who died on the cross for sin and rose on the third day? Whether you agree with that is super important. Today we will learn about a time Stephen preached to convince religious leaders that Jesus is the Messiah.

**Right hand man**

Challenge kids to complete a task—such as drawing a simple figure, writing their name, or tossing and catching a ball—using only their left hands. Then ask them to do the same challenge using their right hands. Compare the results of both.

Say • It’s tough to complete tasks with your non-dominant hand! The majority of people in the world are right-handed. As a result, it is often considered a great honor to be at someone’s right hand. Someone’s “right hand” man or woman is their most trusted helper or advisor. Did you know Jesus is at God the Father’s right hand? Let’s learn more about that.

**On the spot history**

Before the session, write on separate index cards items or events that have an origin. (Examples: *ice cream, birthday cakes, shaking hands*, and so on) Put the cards in a gift bag. Call for volunteers to pull a card from the bag and begin speaking about the history of the item or event. Consider timing kids for 30 or 60 seconds. Emphasize that kids can make up the story if they do not know the true history. Encourage creativity. Applaud volunteers for their efforts.

Say • Was it hard or easy to tell about the history of something? In today’s Bible story, a man named Stephen preached to a crowd about the history of God’s people. We will find out why.

**Take a stand**

Prepare two sets of cards—actions cards and statement cards. Write simple group actions on several index cards. (Sample actions: *Do 10 jumping jacks, give someone a high-five, jump as high as you can, say the alphabet as quickly as you can*, and so forth.) Put the action cards in a bag. Write several statements on separate cards. (Sample statements: *I think that dogs are the best animals in the world. My favorite food is pizza. Math is my favorite subject in school.*)

Position two hula hoops on the floor, several feet apart Instruct kids to stand. Explain that you will read a statement. If kids agree, they should put one foot in the first hula hoop. If they disagree, they should put one foot in the second hula hoop. After kids have moved to a hoop, draw an action card for kids at the first hoop to complete. Then play again with another statement and another card. Each time, the first group should complete the action.

Say • Did any of you disagree with the statement just so you could avoid doing the action? In today’s Bible story, a man took a stand for what he believed even though it cost him his life.

**Upgrade**

Place a variety of items around the room. Provide the kids with paper and pencils. Instruct the kids to list the items least to most valuable. Encourage the kids to think about more than just the price, but also how much they would want to own or use each item. Compare different kids’ lists.

Suggested items: playground ball, candy, bicycle, first aid kit, action figure, baby doll.  
Say • For some of you, trading one of those items for another might be an easy choice. You might see it as an upgrade to give up a playground ball to get a bicycle. In a way, that helps us think about our the choices Stephen made in our story today.

What did Stephen give up? [*His life.*] What did Stephen gain? [*He got to be with Jesus in heaven, he got to stand up for the truth, he got to be a part of God’s plan to spread the gospel, and so forth.*] Stephen understood that Jesus is more valuable than anything, even our lives! For believers, even death is an upgrade because we get to be with Jesus forever.

### Is this true?

Form two teams of kids. Explain that you will read a statement and then give a Bible verse. Kids should race to find the verse and determine if the statement is true or false. If false, kids should correct the statement. Use the following statements or include your own:

I heard that God told Abram never to leave his home. Is this true? (Gen. 12:1)

I heard that God promised to give Abram a big family. Is this true? (Gen. 15:5)

I heard that Joseph's brothers sold him to traders going to Jerusalem. Is this true? (Gen. 37:28)

I heard that Joshua led the Israelites across the Nile River. Is this true? (Josh. 3:17)

I heard that David fought a giant who was more than nine feet tall. Is this true? (1 Sam. 17:4)

Say • The Jews lied about Stephen and said he had spoken against God. Yet **Stephen preached about Jesus no matter what**. Stephen was killed because he was a Christian. Jesus told His followers that they would be persecuted—hated, hurt, or even killed—for loving Him. 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.