LESSON 7

STEPHEN: FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH



Aim: **To teach the children that sometimes God asks his followers to die in his service.**

Scripture Reading: **Acts 6:1-15; 7:51-60; 8:1**

Memory Verse: **Philippians 1:29**
[I]t has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him ...

Presenting the Lesson

Starting point

In recent years people in different parts of Africa have survived only because of famine relief food parcels. Many people feel they never get their fair share because most people lie about the size of their families. They say it is larger than it really is, because they are afraid that they will not get enough food.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Some members of the church in Jerusalem were short of food, too. As more people kept joining the congregation, the different groups started to quarrel about the distribution of food (6:1).
2. Therefore, the 12 apostles appointed seven special people to make sure that food was shared out fairly. They had to be wise and full of the Holy Spirit (6:2-5).
3. One of them was a man called Stephen. He was a very active servant of Jesus. Even opposition did not stop him, and no-one could win an argument with him. **Describe what Stephen did (6:8-11).**
4. Because Stephen's enemies could not stop him, they plotted against him and spread lies about him. They brought him to trial before the Jewish religious leaders, but Stephen remained faithful to Jesus (6:12-15).
5. Stephen told the Jews that they were deaf to God's message. They had not listened to any of God's messengers, the prophets. Finally, they had murdered Jesus Christ himself, who had come to bring everlasting life (7:51-53).
6. The religious leaders were so angry that they dragged Stephen outside the city and stoned him to death. **Show Picture 7. Point out the man Saul watching, and tell the class that they will hear much more of him later.** Through it all, Stephen was very courageous. He died a terrible death, but the Lord Jesus was with him all the time and was waiting for him at the end of his ordeal (7:54 – 8:1).

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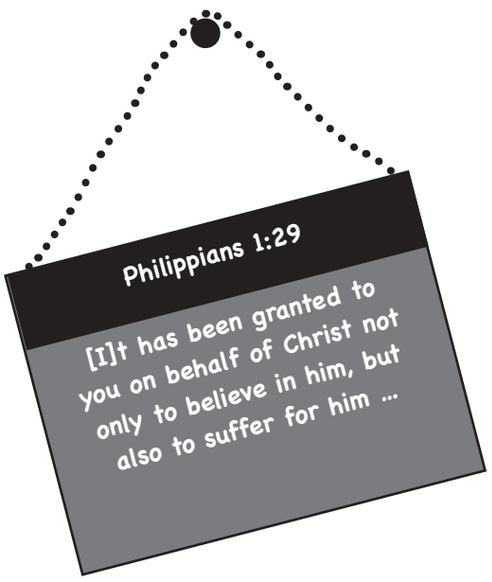


Our Response to the Story

In October 1963 the army accused the pastor and church members in Melut, Sudan, of helping the Anya-nya guerrilla movement. Pastor Gideon and four of his elders were taken away and shot. There was no trial. Their bodies were thrown in the River Nile. Many other Christians in the Sudan died in the last few years. In various parts of the world there are Christians who, like Stephen, have died because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

Come, let us pray for those who are being persecuted because they are Christians.

Instil the Memory Verse



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