

THE ISLAND

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| LEADER | DATE (am) 17 May 2009 |
| HELPERS | TIME (mins) 40 minutes |
| PUPPETEER | No. of KIDS (m/f) |

- **SERIES / LESSON:** Witnesses for Jesus / Stephen
- **SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:** Acts 6-7
- **CONCEPT:** The Holy Spirit helps me forgive

GOALS:

- To encourage kids to engage in worship through singing.
- To help kids realise that God's Holy Spirit empowers us to tell others about Jesus, and to forgive others.
- To invite kids to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.
- To lead kids into a prayer time and help them understand that God listens.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- ✓ DVD player / laptop / projector / screen, etc.
- ✓ Song DVD
- ✓ Treasure chest with memory verse paper chain inside (from last week's activity)
- ✓ A few stones or rocks scattered over the floor close to your story-telling location
(not among the children)
- ✓ Prayer Net
- ✓ Prayer cards and pen
- ✓ Name tag box
- ✓ Evangelical literature

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| <p>A. Worship through Music (with puppets) 8 minutes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome kids. 2. Sing 2 songs together (<i>One Way / God you make me smile</i>). 3. Open in prayer. 4. Ask kids to get their mats and sit down. | <p>You'll need ...</p> <p><i>DVD player / projector</i> <i>Song DVD (Hillsong Kids – Super Strong God)</i></p> |
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| <p>B. Message 15 minutes</p> <p>1. Recap Ask a child to help you open the treasure chest and take out the memory verse paper chain you placed there last week. Ask for someone to explain what the chain should remind us of in last week's story. Ask a few follow-up questions to recap the story of Peter and John being arrested for preaching and healing in the name of Jesus.</p> <p>Nothing the leaders said was going to frighten Peter and John into keeping quiet. The leaders couldn't decide how to punish the two men so they let them go free. Peter and John went back to the people and told them what had happened while they were in jail. All the believers were together, praying and praising God for healing the crippled man who sat at the gate, for being with Peter and John and freeing them from jail, and thanking God for showing His power. All the believers were filled with God's Holy Spirit, God's power, God's help, and they were all able to tell others the story of Jesus with no fear. The church was growing and growing each day.</p> <p>If you have time, you could also recap last week's Bible verse, or refer to it if you displayed it in your room: <i>Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name ... by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)</i></p> <p>Finish by eliciting the concept: The Holy Spirit helps me.</p> <p>2. Set the scene One of the new believers was a man called Stephen. Stephen's job was to give out food to the people. The Bible tells us that Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit, full of God's power. He did many great and wonderful miracles among the people through God's power working in and through him. Stephen followed God and allowed the Holy Spirit to be in control of his life. Stephen was a good man who believed in God with his whole heart.</p> <p>3. Tell the story Not everybody liked Stephen. Some of the leaders didn't believe that Jesus was alive and living in heaven. These leaders didn't understand that God had sent His Holy Spirit to live in the believers' hearts. These leaders didn't like what Stephen was saying to the people. They didn't like Stephen much at all because when they tried to argue with him, they couldn't stand up against the Holy Spirit who was helping Stephen to speak. God's Holy Spirit was helping Stephen to say the right words to the bad leaders.</p> <p>The leaders were getting nowhere. They decided that the only way they could get Stephen into trouble and get rid of him was by telling lies. They spread lies among the people, saying that Stephen had</p> | <p>You'll need ...</p> <p><i>Treasure chest / Memory verse paper chain</i></p> |
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said evil things about Moses and about God. The people believed these terrible lies and they got angry, and poor Stephen was arrested and taken to court to answer questions! People stood up in court and told lies about Stephen. The leaders asked Stephen questions to see if the lies were true. Stephen, with the help of the Holy Spirit living inside Him, answered their questions. He told them many stories from times long ago before Jesus was born. He told them how God had helped so many people in the past, even though some of them had forgotten about God and turned their backs on Him. As the people in the court listened to Stephen talk, they watched him carefully and they saw that Stephen's face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen could see that the leaders didn't live by God's Holy Spirit. The leaders knew what God's Word, the Bible, said but they had never believed that Jesus was God's Son. These leaders had many rules but they wouldn't let God take control of their lives and live only for him like Stephen did. Stephen, who was very brave because of the Holy Spirit living inside him, said to the leaders:

"You stubborn and hardheaded people! You are always fighting against the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors did. Is there one prophet that your ancestors didn't treat badly? They killed the prophets who told about the coming of [Jesus]. And now you have turned against him and killed him. Angels gave you God's Law, but you still don't obey it." (Acts 7:51-53, based on CEV)

Well! When the leaders heard this they got so angry! So angry that they were grinding and gnashing their teeth at Stephen! But Stephen, still full of God's Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and God allowed him to see Jesus standing beside God, at His right hand. "Look," Stephen said, "I see heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56) The leaders went nuts! They covered their ears! They didn't want to hear a single word more from this crazy man! They screamed and shouted and they ran towards him. They grabbed Stephen and dragged him along the ground, out of the court, outside the city walls.

The leaders rushed towards poor Stephen with stones in their hands and started to throw them at him *(take a stone or rock in your hand and pretend to throw it)*. Lots of people had gathered around to watch what was happening. The people took off their coats and gave them to a man called Saul to look after. Saul was a young man who was happy to see Stephen in trouble ...

The stones were flying through the air and they knocked Stephen to the ground. The leaders were full of hate and they threw those stones as hard as they could at Stephen. But Stephen, while he was being hit by rocks all over his body, prayed to God. Just like Jesus forgave His killers when He was dying on the cross, Stephen did the same. He cried out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ... Lord, don't hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:59) Stephen forgave his killers. After he said this, he died.

That day, many of the leaders in Jerusalem began to hurt and punish the people who believed in Jesus. Lots of the believers had to pack up their things and move away to different places because they were

Stones/rocks scattered over the floor

scared of being attacked and hurt. But even that didn't stop the believers from telling others the good news about Jesus. When they moved away to new towns and cities, they told the people they met and their new neighbours about God's plan to save the world through Jesus. The Holy Spirit was living in them, helping them to be brave enough to tell others about Jesus. And so, the number of believers kept growing.

4. Explain

What a terribly sad story, boys and girls! Doesn't it seem such a shame that Stephen had to die? Stephen was a good man, faithful, full of God's power, the Holy Spirit. How awful that Stephen was killed! But, where did Stephen go when he died? To heaven! As soon as Stephen's eyes closed when he died, he went to be with Jesus in heaven! Wonderful!

Boys and girls, we are sad when someone dies because we miss them and we don't get to see them and have fun with them again. But it's not always a bad thing to die. If you know Jesus and trust Him, if you allow God's Holy Spirit to live inside you like Stephen, then you have nothing to be afraid of when you die. Just like Stephen, you will wake up in heaven and see Jesus.

It's difficult for us to understand that Stephen seemed to die for no reason. He didn't do anything wrong. He didn't deserve to die. Sounds like someone else we learnt about at Easter, doesn't it? Remember Jesus? He had never done *anything* wrong in His life. Jesus died because *you* and *I* have done bad things. But because Jesus died, there is a way for you and me to get to heaven and be with Him. To go to heaven, you must believe in Jesus and ask God to forgive all the bad things you have thought and said and done. You have to learn to live in a way that pleases God by letting the Holy Spirit live inside you.

Stephen stood up for Jesus. And because he was good and did the right thing, he died. Stephen was the first person to die for Jesus. That probably won't happen to you and me these days, but sometimes we can still be hurt when our friends and family don't want to listen to our news about Jesus. Will you still stand up for Jesus? Will you do whatever is right, even if other people don't believe you or laugh at you? Will you forgive them for what they say to you like Stephen did?

Boys and girls, if you would like to find out more today about believing in Jesus, will you stay behind to talk to me?

C. Prayer Net

10 minutes

1. Ask a child to explain what it means when we *pray* – We talk to God and He listens.
2. Explain that prayer / talking to God is very important because that's how we get to know Him.
3. Choose a child to retrieve the prayer net. Lift out the prayer cards you put there last week. Ask the kids for updates on those situations.
4. *Explain:* When we have something to be thankful for, or

You'll need ...

Net (with last week's prayer cards)
Small cards / postcards
A pen

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| <p>something we worry about, we need to tell God about those things. Is there someone who you would like to tell about Jesus but you can't find the right words or the right time to say it? Tell us about that person and we will pray for them. Have you tried to tell someone about Jesus and they laughed at you or made fun of you? Tell us about it and we will pray for you and for them.</p> <p>5. Tell kids that we are going to make a note of some special prayers today and put them in the prayer net. Next week they will tell us what happened in those situations.</p> <p>6. Ask a few kids if they have a prayer to put into the net. As they tell you, write their name and the topic of their prayer on a small card. Ask the child to say a prayer aloud (help them to do so) before they place their card into the prayer net.</p> | |
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| <p>D. Conclusion (with puppets)</p> <p>1. Ask kids to put their mats away.</p> <p>2. <i>Explain:</i> The Holy Spirit is not a separate person from God. He is part of God, just like Jesus is part of God too. God the Father, God the Son – who died for our sin and rose to life again, and God the Holy Spirit – the power of God, sent from heaven to live in our hearts and help us. The Bible tells us that we can't see the Holy Spirit, but we know that He lives in us because He helps us to show love to the people around us, just like He helped Stephen forgive his killers.</p> <p>3. Sing a closing song. (God you make me smile)</p> <p>4. <i>Explain:</i> Boys and girls, if you would like to find out more about believing in Jesus today and making sure you get to heaven, will you stay behind please?</p> <p>5. Remind kids to come back this evening.</p> <p>6. Ask kids to put their name tags in the box before they leave.</p> <p>7. Have kids' evangelical literature to hand in case any kids respond to your invitation.</p> | <p>7 minutes</p> <p>You'll need ...</p> <p><i>DVD player / projector</i> <i>Song DVD (Hillsong Kids – Super Strong God)</i></p> <p><i>Name tag box</i></p> <p><i>Evangelical literature</i></p> |
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| LEADER | DATE (pm) 17 May 2009 |
| HELPERS | TIME (mins) 40 minutes |
| PUPPETEER | No. of KIDS (m/f) |

GOALS:

- To encourage kids to engage in worship through singing.
- To reinforce today's Bible concept by learning a related Scripture verse.
- To consolidate today's Bible story by making a forgiving rock friend.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- ✓ Song DVD / DVD player / projector / screen, etc.
- ✓ Memory Verse Activity: Slide (Matthew 6:12)
Bucket of paper rocks (Crumple up sheets of paper to make stones or rocks. Write the word 'forgiven' on two or three sheets before they are crumpled.)
- ✓ Activity: Tables
Pre-made rock friend (see below for instructions and photos)
Stones (one per child; can be of various shapes and sizes; gathered from e.g. a walk on the beach, in the park, etc., washed with soap and water, and dried before the session.)
Materials for decoration:
 - Eyes: self-adhesive wiggle eyes, beads or buttons
 - Noses: small pom-poms, buttons, beads or small pieces of chenille stem
 - Mouths: small pieces of chenille stem or embroidery thread
 - Hair: craft foam, feathers, wool, chenille stems, embroidery thread, ribbons
 - Paint (and brushes) or markers
 - Craft glue
- ✓ Small prizes (selection of bookmarks, stickers, pencils, etc.)
- ✓ Name tag box

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| E. Worship through Music (with puppets) 8 minutes 1. Welcome kids and invite them to praise God by singing. 2. Sing a song together. (<i>One Way / God you make me smile</i>) 3. Open in prayer. 4. Ask kids to get their mats and sit down. | You'll need ... DVD player / projector Song DVD (<i>Hillsong Kids – Super Strong God</i>) |
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| F. Memory Verse (with puppets) 10 minutes <i>“... forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.” (Matthew 6:12, NLT)</i> 1. Ask a few questions to recap today's story of Stephen dying for his faith in Jesus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was Stephen's job? <i>He gave out food to the people, making sure that everyone had enough to eat</i> - Some of the leaders didn't like Stephen. They tried to argue with him but they could never win the arguments. Why not? <i>Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit – God's power was helping him to say the right words.</i> - Stephen was a good man. He didn't do anything wrong. How did the leaders find a way to arrest him? <i>They told lies about him. They said that Stephen was saying evil things about Moses and God.</i> - Stephen told the leaders at court how they had always turned their backs on God in the past, and how they hadn't even realised that Jesus was God's Son. As the people watched Stephen speaking, what did they think his face looked like? <i>An angel.</i> - The leaders got very angry with Stephen for what he was saying. When Stephen looked up, what did he see? <i>He saw heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.</i> - This made the leaders even angrier! What did they do? <i>The leaders went nuts! They covered their ears! They screamed and shouted and they ran towards him. They grabbed Stephen and dragged him along the ground, out of the court, outside the city walls. They rushed towards poor Stephen with stones in their hands and started to throw them at him.</i> - As the stones were hitting Stephen, just before he died, what did he say? <i>He prayed that God would forgive his killers.</i> 2. <i>Explain:</i> It's difficult for us to understand that Stephen seemed to die for no reason. He didn't do anything wrong. He didn't deserve to die. Sounds like someone else we learnt about at Easter, doesn't it? Remember Jesus? He had never done <i>anything</i> wrong in His life. Jesus died because <i>you</i> and <i>I</i> have done bad things. But because Jesus died, there is a way for you and me to get to heaven and be with Him. To go to heaven, you must believe in Jesus and ask God to forgive all the bad things you have thought and said and done. You have to learn to live in a way that pleases God by letting the Holy Spirit live inside you. 3. <i>Explain:</i> The Bible also teaches us that just as God forgives us for the things we do wrong, so we must forgive other people. Think back to how Stephen prayed that God would forgive the people who were throwing stones at him to kill him. Think back to how Jesus prayed that God would forgive the people who were killing him on the cross. When God forgives our sin – the wrong | You'll need ... |
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| <p>things we have done – then we have to try to forgive others too, even if they don't deserve it. That's what our verse says today (<i>show verse on screen</i>).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Read verse aloud together. Repeat a few times as a group, and individually, until kids know it well. <i>Move to a blank screen.</i> <i>Initiate short discussion:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would your family be like if no one forgave each other? What would your school be like if everybody tried to forgive each other? When has someone forgiven you? How did it make you feel? Why is it important to forgive other people? When is it hard to forgive someone? Who helps us forgive? <i>Explain:</i> I have lots of rocks with me today. <i>Show kids a bucket of paper rocks and place it in the middle of the floor.</i> Everyone can take a rock, open it up and check whether you have 'forgiven' someone or not. The people who have forgiven someone can stand with me at the front and say the memory verse. Everyone else will have to pay in some way! Let each child choose a paper rock from the bucket. Tell kids to open up their rocks. Tell kids who have papers with the word 'forgiven' on them to join you at the front of the room. Have them repeat the memory verse together. Tell the other kids that they must pay because they haven't forgiven someone. Ask them to do 10 star jumps. Have kids crumple up their paper rocks again and place them in the bucket. Repeat steps 7 to 11 for as long as time allows, varying the exercise in step 10 each time (e.g. 10 sit-ups, 10 toe touches, 10 squats, 10 side bends, etc.) <i>Explain:</i> When God forgives us for the mistakes and wrong things we have done, we have to try to forgive others. Finish with a group repetition of the verse. <p>Idea: After the session, you could write the memory verse onto a sheet of card to make a poster for your room. This will add to your decoration as well as reminding kids of the Bible concept. Then you can also refer to it later in the series.</p> | <p><i>Memory verse slide (Matthew 6:12)</i></p> <p><i>Bucket of paper rocks</i></p> |
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| <p>G. Activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Set out tables as a workspace and have kids find a space around them. <i>Explain:</i> Stephen stood up for what he believed in but he was the first person to die for Jesus. That probably won't happen to you and me these days, but sometimes we can still be hurt when our friends and family don't want to listen to our news about Jesus. Will you still stand up for Jesus? Will you do whatever is right, even if other people don't believe you or laugh at you? The leaders threw stones at Stephen because they hated what he was saying. But Stephen forgave them. If someone laughs at | <p>15 minutes</p> <p>You'll need ... <i>Tables</i></p> |
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| <p>you, or does something bad to you, will you forgive them like Stephen did?</p> <p>3. <i>Explain:</i> Today, we're going to make little rock people. <i>Show kids your pre-made rock friend.</i> The rock is to remind you of the rocks that the leaders threw at Stephen. But we will decorate our rocks and make them pretty to remind us that forgiveness is a beautiful thing; that God loves us when we forgive each other, just like He forgives us. You will be able to take your little rock friend home today. You can set it on your desk to keep your papers in one place, or you can set it on a shelf like an ornament.</p> <p>4. Give each child a pre-washed stone.</p> <p>5. Help kids add eyes to their rock friends. They can use self-adhesive wiggle eyes, or use glue to stick on beads or buttons. They could even paint or draw eyes on with markers.</p> <p>6. Help kids add noses to their rock friends. They can use glue to fix small pom-poms, buttons, beads or small pieces of chenille stem. They could also paint or draw on noses.</p> <p>7. Help kids add mouths to their rock friends. Again, they can use paint or markers, or use glue to fix pieces of chenille stem or embroidery thread.</p> <p>8. Finally, help kids add hair to their rock friends. They can use glue to attach pieces of craft foam, feathers, wool, chenille stems, embroidery thread, ribbons, etc. They could also use paint or markers. Use whatever you have available.</p> <p>9. Set tables to the side and allow glue to dry on the rock friends.</p> | <p><i>Pre-made rock friend</i></p> <p><i>Pre-washed stones</i></p> <p><i>Materials for decoration:</i> <i>Eyes</i> <i>Noses</i> <i>Mouths</i> <i>Hair</i> <i>Glue</i> <i>Paint / markers</i></p> |
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| H. Conclusion (with puppets) | 7 minutes | You'll need ... |
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| <p>1. <i>Remind kids:</i> It's not very likely that we will get stones thrown at us for talking about Jesus, but sometimes it can still be scary to tell some people about Him. We should remember that we're not alone. We can ask the Holy Spirit – our Helper – to give us power and make us strong enough to tell others, and forgive them if they don't listen, just like the Holy Spirit helped Stephen. Jesus is not a secret! Tell everyone! Let's put my rock friend into the treasure chest. We'll take him out next week and see how much you remember about the story of Stephen.</p> <p>2. Ask a boy and a girl to recite the memory verse once more. Award prizes.</p> <p>3. Invite kids to praise God's goodness to us by singing. (God you make me smile)</p> <p>4. Close in prayer.</p> <p>5. Remind kids to come back next week! Ask kids to leave their name tags in the box before they leave.</p> | | <p><i>Treasure chest / pre-made rock friend</i></p> <p><i>Small prizes</i></p> <p><i>DVD player / projector</i> <i>Song DVD (Hillsong Kids – Super Strong God)</i></p> <p><i>Name tag box</i></p> |

