

May 10, 2020

2nd Grade Lesson: Stephen, Faithful Servant

Craft:

Take a 9"x12" or a bit larger piece of construction paper. Using yarn, string, ribbon, crayons, pens glitter - Whatever! Just be creative - write "We Forgive." Think about forgiveness and why it is important - to you, your family, your community, your friends and God. Forgiving is truly healing.

Lesson:

Today's lesson presents a servant of God who faced a catastrophic blow. It was a blow that led directly to his death.

After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, it was up to his followers to share this good news in all the world. The twelve apostles were the first to do so. (Eleven had been with Jesus from the beginning. Then Judas died, Matthias was elected to take his place.) The apostles found themselves working very hard. They taught and preached. They baptized many, many new followers. They had to oversee the daily sharing of food and to care for people's needs. "This is too much for us to do," they said. "We must choose some helpers."

The apostles asked God to help them choose wisely. Seven were elected and set apart to wait on tables and serve the poor. The apostles laid their hands on these seven and prayed. One of the new helpers was Stephen, who was "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit," and a man of "grace and power." He was able to do "great wonders and signs."

Stephen was a dynamic speaker with wisdom. Before long, Stephen's teachings made a group of religious leaders jealous, so they planned a trick. They agreed to spread the word around Jerusalem that Stephen is preaching against the law that God gave Moses. Their trick worked. They stirred up others and brought him to trial before a council, charging him with false teaching.

But Stephen was not afraid. The members of the council saw "his face was like the face of an angel."

Bravely, Stephen stood and preached. He told the full story of how God's own people had turned away from what God wanted them to hear and to do. He shared the good news of Jesus once more. Those who heard him were furious. They took him outside the city and stoned him to death. But before his last breath, Stephen forgave his enemies. He cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

A young man named Saul* watches the stoning. He is pleased at the death of a follower of Jesus.

*We will read the Story of Saul next week. His story is very exciting!

With this reading, REMEMBER:

- It matters not what one's service is, where it is, or who is aware of that service. - The only thing that matters is that one be faithful in his/her service to God.
- Honor God in all things and with all things and God will honor back.
- There is much one cannot do, but be faithful in what one can do.
- Faithful means "full of faith."
- Faith makes naturally timid people courageous and bold.