

## LESSON SIX

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: Stephen: The Spirit Makes Us Like Jesus

**AIM:****TIME: 60 minutes****General:** To introduce Stephen and show that, filled with the Holy Spirit, he became like Jesus as he:

1. Worked miracles and great signs
2. Was accused unjustly
3. Spoke with great wisdom and eloquence
4. Forgave his murderers
5. Saw God's glory.

**Personal:** [1] To awaken in the children a desire to become more like Jesus (and Stephen)

[2] To help them believe that this is possible by the Holy Spirit's working.

[3] To lead them to take a step in this direction.

**Texts used:** Acts chapters 6-8:2; Selected texts from the Gospels.**I. STARTER:** [10 minutes]

(Give out slips of paper and ask the children to write the name of one hero/heroine, i.e. one person whom they consider really great: a film-star, pop singer, sports person, author, leader, etc. Let different children share whom they have chosen and what they consider great about that person. Now ask- 'What percent chance is there of you becoming like your hero/heroine ?' Let them give their idea- eg. 60%, 2% etc.)

Many of us feel it is not very possible to become like our hero/heroine. They are like stars, far above us, impossible to reach. Today we are going to look at a man who had a hero, someone whom he looked up to greatly. The man's story is given in the book of Acts. His name was (*guess!*) Stephen. His hero was (*guess again!*) Jesus, a hero who is the highest of stars, the most difficult to imitate. Lets read and find out if Stephen did, in fact, become like his hero.

Today we are going to swing our camera away from the apostles and focus it on Stephen, before we move on to possibly the greatest missionary of the Early Church.

**II. DEVELOPMENT:** [35 minutes]

[Divide the students into groups of about 4 each. Make sure there are at least one or two Bibles with each group. Give out the handouts and instruct them to read the references and try to find the similarities between Jesus and Stephen.]

Announce a prize (make sure you have something which can be given to 4 students) for the groups that find the most similarities within 20 minutes. It would be good if you attempt this exercise yourself at home. Time yourself. When 20 minutes is up, let the groups exchange papers and check the answers]

1. Both were filled with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 7: 55**) (**Luke 4: 14**)
2. Both worked miracles and signs (**Acts 6:8**) (**Luke 4: 40,41**)
3. Many leaders came to find fault with Stephen and Jesus, but could not get the better of them. (**Acts 6: 9, 10**) (**Luke 20: 20-26**)
4. Both were accused falsely, by paying witnesses. (**Acts 6: 11**) (**Mark 14: 56-59**)
5. Both bravely condemned the wrong doers. (**Acts 7: 51 - 53**) (**Luke 11: 46**)
6. Both experienced God's glory. (**Acts 7: 55-56**) (**Mark 9:2-4**)
7. Both forgave their murderers. (**Acts 7: 60**) (**Luke 23: 34**)
8. Both gave up their spirit to God. (**Acts 7: 59**) (**Luke 23:46**)

You all have proved that, in many ways, Stephen is like his Lord Jesus- to the point of forgiving his murderers. We know that he must have gone straight into the arms of God.

- We now come to an important question. How was it possible for a man to become so much like Jesus?  
[*Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit*]

### **III. PRAYER:** [15 minutes]

That same Holy Spirit, who transformed Stephen into another Jesus, is available for you and me. He is ready to change us and make us like Jesus. If you are ready for it, all you have to do is ask. Are you ready?

(Encourage the children to think and answer honestly...some might feel afraid of facing persecution and opposition...Tell them-)

‘The Spirit will make us brave, and give us the right words. You only have to say- ‘I want to be like you, but I’m afraid! Help me!’” God can work with you as you are.

Let some of the students pray aloud asking the Holy Spirit to fill and change them.

Sing in a prayerful way- ‘**More Love, More Power**’ and ‘**To Be Like Jesus**’ [Praise the Lord Hymnal 118]

#### **YOU WILL NEED:**

- Slips of paper for Starter.
- One handout per student
- Bibles- enough for group work
- Prizes for winners e.g. Sweets/ badges/ religious bookmarks.

*Try the exercise at home before asking the students to do it.*