Saint Stephen

Serving with courage and forgiving with love

Ages about 7-11 | Video 3:58 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth Stephen served people in need, spoke about Jesus, and prayed for those who killed him.

Learning goals Recall Stephen's service and witness; explain his forgiving prayer; and distinguish loving courage from staying in danger.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask what a helpful person does when someone has been overlooked. Watch how Stephen's service and his words belong together.

Watch and notice

Notice the seven helpers, care for widows, Stephen's testimony, and his final prayer for the people hurting him.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. Why did the apostles choose seven helpers?
The growing community needed faithful people to help serve, especially those whose needs were overlooked. Stephen was one of them.

2. How did Stephen serve and speak about Jesus?
He cared for people in need and spoke with wisdom about God's saving plan.

3. What did Stephen pray when he was hurt?
He entrusted himself to Jesus and asked that the sin not be held against his attackers. His prayer echoes Jesus' mercy.

4. Does forgiveness mean letting someone keep hurting us?
No. Children should tell a trusted adult and seek safety. Forgiveness refuses revenge; it does not approve harm or remove accountability.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

Saint Stephen

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Draw Stephen helping someone in the early Church. Then draw a safe way you can help when someone is treated unfairly. Accept an oral explanation.

Read & Write Recall the story, explain its central teaching, then apply it through a specific choice.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: draw or dictate answers; revisit the named story moment together.

Ages 9-11: explain the connection between the story detail and the planned response.

Courage with a helping hand | Optional 4 minutes

Trace a hand. In three fingers write ways to serve someone whose needs are overlooked. In another write a trusted adult to ask for help; in the last write a peaceful response to unfairness. In the palm draw Stephen's basket or another sign of service.

Look for understanding Look for the named story details in the answers and a practical response connected to service, witness, and forgiveness.

Closing prayer Jesus, help us serve with courage and refuse revenge. Saint Stephen, pray for us. Amen.

At home Ask an adult about a deacon or parish ministry that serves people in need.

Handout answer notes Stephen helped widows and others in need, taught about Jesus, and prayed for his attackers. A child's response should include trusted adult help and safety.

Teach with care

Preview the account of Stephen being killed by stoning. Avoid reenactments. Allow questions, quiet reflection, or passing on an activity. Acts 6-7 is the biblical foundation. The children's baskets, dialogue, and Saul's inner response are dramatized additions; Acts does not report Saul's private thoughts. Do not reenact violence.

Words to explain Deacon: an ordained minister who serves the Church. Martyr: a person killed for witnessing to Christ. Forgiveness: giving up revenge while seeking truth and safety.

Sources for the leader

Story source: Servus Dei video and English transcript

Background: Acts 6: the choosing of Stephen and the seven

Background: Acts 7: Stephen's witness and death