



[PursueGOD.org](http://PursueGOD.org)

## Lesson Overview

Today, we're going to learn about a guy named Stephen. He was a leader in the early church and he had an important job. He was in charge of making sure that everyone had food to eat. But Stephen isn't famous because of his job. He's famous for something else. Stephen was the very first person to be killed just because he believed in Jesus. In Stephen's day, there were people who hated Jesus so they would bully people who believed in him. This is what happened to Stephen. One day, a bunch of bullies surrounded Stephen and started throwing rocks at him, eventually killing him. How would you feel if this happened to you? Well, how Stephen responded to his attackers can teach us an important lesson. Stephen's last words were all about forgiveness. He could have been angry but he chose to forgive instead. You know why? Because he knew that he would be in Heaven with Jesus so he wasn't afraid. Instead of focusing on the bad behavior, he prayed that God would forgive the people for what they had done.

### Big Idea

*We can choose to forgive when it really hurts.*

### Key Question

*Why should we forgive others?*

### Memory Verse

*Acts 7:56 | "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!"*

## Classroom Agenda

1. (5 min) **PLAY:** Let kids start working on Activity Page #1.
2. (5 min) **WARM UP:** Describe a time you felt picked on by someone. How did that feel? How did you respond? (Tip: No one likes to be picked on by someone. It hurts our feelings and makes us sad. But we get to choose how we respond to it. In today's story, we'll learn the best response we can ever have.)
3. (5 min) **PREVIEW:** Write out the Big Idea, Memory Verse, and Key Question on a whiteboard. Have the kids copy it down on Activity Page #1 (if applicable).
4. (20 min) **LARGE GROUP:** Gather for songs and videos with other kids. Then return to class to finish this guide.
5. (2 min) **RECAP:** Read the Lesson Overview (see above).
6. (3 min) **KQ:** Answer the Key Question. (Answer: **Because Jesus forgave us when we didn't deserve it.** (Jesus chose to die on the cross to forgive our sins even though we didn't deserve it or even ask him to do it. Jesus understood that we could never have a relationship with him if the sin problem wasn't fixed, so he fixed it. Because of Jesus' example, we should be forgiving people, too. Even when people don't deserve it, we should forgive.
  - **Bonus Questions:** What did Jesus do for us? Why did he have to do it? **4-5th:** Who do you need to forgive?
7. (5 min) **EXPLORE:** Read [Colossians 3:13](#). What does this verse tell us to do? Why should we be forgiving people? (Answer: This verse tells us to make allowances for others which means we should expect that our friends will mess up some times. And, when they do, we should choose to forgive them. Jesus has forgiven us for every mistake we've ever made, or ever will make, so we should choose to forgive, too.)
8. (10 min) **PLAY:** Choose a group activity from Activity Page #2.
9. (5 min) **CLOSE:** Share prayer requests and pray as a class. Encourage kids to use the Family Guide at home with their parents - and remind them to go online to [pursueGOD.org/kids](http://pursueGOD.org/kids) to find this week's lesson video.

**Teacher instructions:** Choose an activity for your classroom.

## OPTION 1: THE STORY OF STEPHEN JEOPARDY

### Instructions:

- Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a bell or ringer.
- Ask a question from below. First team to ring in gets a chance to answer. If correct, they get a point. If wrong, the other team gets a chance to answer for a bonus point. Team with the most points, wins.

### Supplies needed:

Bells or ringers

### Questions:

1. Who was our story about today? (Stephen)

2. What was Stephen's job? (feeding people)
3. What book is full of God's truth? (Bible)
4. T or F: Stephen loved Jesus. (T)
5. Why did people hate Stephen? (follower of Jesus)
6. Where did Jesus die for us? (Cross)
7. T or F: Stephen was the first person to die for believing in Jesus. (T)
8. Why did Jesus die for us? (Our sins)
9. How did Stephen respond to the crowd? (Forgave)
10. From what book is our memory verse found? (Acts)

### Bonus Activity: "Memory Verse game"

Say the memory verse as a class. Say it again while **marching** in place. Say it again while **spinning** around.

## OPTION 2: CHOOSE TO FORGIVE BRACELET

### Instructions:

- Give each kid a piece of twine and beads (1 red, 1 white, 1 green)
- Work as a class to make the bracelets by doing the following:
  - Have the kids take the **red** bead and put it on the twine. Tell them that the red bead symbolizes Jesus and what he did for us on the cross.
  - Have kids take the **white** bead and put it on the twine. Tell them that the white bead symbolizes Jesus' forgiveness of our sins.
  - Have kids take the **green** bead and put it on the twine. Tell them that the green bead symbolizes our choice to forgive others.
- Then help kids tie their bracelets onto their wrists and tell them that the bracelet can remind them to be forgiving people because Jesus has forgiven them.

### Supplies needed:

Twine (cut into 8 in pieces, 1 per kid), Beads (red, white and green, 1 of each color per kid)

### Bonus Activity: "Telephone"

Have the class sit in a circle. Whisper the **Big Idea** in the ear of one kid. Have them whisper it to the kid on their right. Continue around the circle. Last kid has to say the message they heard.

2

SERIES: FAMOUS LAST WORDS

## Stephen

[PursueGOD.org](http://PursueGOD.org)**Stephen Was Just a \_\_\_\_\_ Guy**

You can read about him in [Acts 6](#). He was in charge of giving food to people who needed it. Even though Stephen had a pretty boring job, his life was anything but boring. When he wasn't feeding people, he performed miracles and taught people about Jesus. And that got him into trouble. He was arrested by some religious people and was thrown in jail. For no good reason!

And then some mean crowds started throwing stones at him to kill him! Can you imagine how that would feel to be surrounded by people throwing big rocks at your head! Stephen had to have been scared but look at his last words he spoke before he died.

**Acts 7:59-60** As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He fell to his knees, shouting, "Lord, don't charge them with this sin!" And with that, he died.

**Stephen's Last Word Was "\_\_\_\_\_"**

Well, Stephen's words surprised a lot of people that day. People expected him to be angry and thought he would pray for God to punish the people, not forgive them. But Stephen was a follower of Jesus and he knew how Jesus responded when he was mistreated. Look at what Jesus said on the cross.

**Luke 23:34** Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

**We Can \_\_\_\_\_ to Forgive Even When It Really \_\_\_\_\_**

The lesson applies to all of us today. We need to choose to forgive others whether they're just kind of mean or really mean. That's what Stephen and Jesus were able to do. And, you know what was the key for them to be able to forgive? Stephen's story gives us a clue.

Stephen saw the bigger picture. He knew that he was going to be in Heaven with Jesus so he had nothing to worry about.

Answers: Regular, Forgiven, Choose, Hurts      Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions:**

1. What was Stephen's job?
2. Why were people trying to hurt Stephen?
3. What was Stephen's last word?
4. What should we learn from the story of Stephen?
5. Read [Colossians 3:13](#). What does this verse tell us to do? Why should we be forgiving people?

**Instructions:** Color the picture.

# WE CAN CHOOSE TO FORGIVE WHEN IT REALLY HURTS

## Key Question

Why should we forgive others?

## Memory Verse

Acts 7:56 "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!"



Stephen was a new believer who taught many people about Jesus. But the Pharisees and Sadducees did not like the preaching of Stephen and Jesus' disciples. Eventually, Stephen was captured and killed for his faith.