

# Stephen, the Martyr

## Lesson 39

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<b>Purpose</b>	To help each child gain a greater understanding of the Godhead.
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<b>Preparation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Prayerfully study Acts 6, 7:54–60, and Doctrine and Covenants 130:22–23. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)</li><li>2. Additional reading: Acts 7:1–53 and Joseph Smith—History 1:17.</li><li>3. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.</li><li>4. Materials needed:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. A Bible or a New Testament for each child.</li><li>b. A copy of the Doctrine and Covenants.</li><li>c. Picture 7-40, The First Vision (Gospel Art Picture Kit 403; 62470).</li></ol></li></ol>
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<b>Suggested Lesson Development</b>	Invite a child to give the opening prayer.
Attention Activity	<p>Write <i>martyr</i> on the chalkboard. Ask a child to come to the front of the class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (Name of child), would you be willing to be a martyr?</li><li>• Do any of you know what a martyr is?</li></ul> <p>Explain that a martyr is a person who believes so strongly in something that he or she gives his or her life as a witness.</p> <p>This lesson is about a man who had a strong testimony of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost and was martyred because of that testimony.</p>
Scripture Account	Teach the children the account of Stephen’s life as found in Acts 6 and 7. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)
Discussion and Application Questions	<p>Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why did the Apostles call seven men to help them? (Acts 6:1–4.) How were these seven men called? (Acts 6:3, 5–6.) Why did the Apostles “lay their hands” on the men? (The Apostles gave them the priesthood authority, which they had received from Jesus Christ, to perform certain duties; all who receive the priesthood are ordained by the laying on of hands.)</li></ul>

- What qualities did Stephen have that helped him assist the Apostles and serve the people? (Acts 6:5, 8.) How did he bless the lives of the people?
- Why did the Jewish leaders bring Stephen before a council? (Acts 6:9–12.) What did the leaders of the synagogue falsely accuse Stephen of doing? (Acts 6:13–14. Explain that *blasphemous* means speaking in a mocking and irreverent way about God or sacred things.) Why did they think Stephen was speaking blasphemy?
- What happened to Stephen's face as he talked to the members of the council? (Acts 6:15.)

Briefly recount the things Stephen told the council (see Acts 7:1–53). Help the children understand that Stephen was explaining and testifying of God's blessings to the people of Israel. He also said that the people disobeyed God, persecuted and killed the prophets, and rejected and killed the Messiah.

- Whom did Stephen see when he looked into heaven? (Acts 7:55.) Who was with Stephen as he testified of Heavenly Father and Jesus? (The Holy Ghost.)
- Did the people around Stephen see the vision he saw? What did they do? (Acts 7:57–59.) What did Stephen say as they stoned him? (Acts 7:59–60.) Why do you think Stephen was able to forgive the people who killed him?

Display the picture *The First Vision*.

- Who else saw a similar vision of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ? (Joseph Smith—History 1:17.)
- What can we learn about Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost from the visions of Stephen and Joseph Smith? (You could use enrichment activities 4 and 5 to help the children learn about the members of the Godhead.)
- How can we know that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ exist? What must we do to be worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost? Help the children understand that when we obey the commandments, we can receive a testimony of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost.

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## Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Read John 17:20–21 and discuss how Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are “one” in purpose. You might refer to the example of a father, mother, and children working together for one purpose.

You might also explain the role each member of the Godhead has in our prayers: We pray to Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, and answers come through the Holy Ghost.

2. Explain that other courageous, faithful people, in addition to Stephen, have also been martyrs because of their testimony and faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Use examples such as the following from the scriptures:

Joseph Smith was persecuted when he told others about his vision, and Joseph and his brother Hyrum were later martyred.

Many of the early disciples and Apostles of the Church were persecuted and some were martyred. James was martyred (Acts 12:2), as was Paul, and it is traditionally accepted that Peter, Mark, and Matthew were also martyred (see “Mark,” “Matthew,” “Paul,” and “Peter” in the Bible Dictionary in the LDS edition of the Bible).

Have the children tell you what they could learn from the examples of these faithful people.

3. Review the fifth article of faith. Discuss how Church leaders today call people to Church positions, just as Stephen was called to help the early Apostles. Explain that when a person receives a call, he or she is set apart by the laying on of hands and given the authority to perform specific responsibilities. Help the children understand that when young men and women serve in the presidencies of priesthood quorums or Young Women classes, they will be called and set apart in the same manner.
4. Read and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 130:22–23. Help the children understand that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have glorified bodies of flesh and bones. Our physical bodies are in the image of Heavenly Father and Jesus. The Holy Ghost is a personage of Spirit, not having a body of flesh and bones.
5. Display the following wordstrips or write the words on the chalkboard:

The Godhead  
 Heavenly Father:  
 Jesus Christ:  
 The Holy Ghost:

Write the following statements describing the members of the Godhead on separate pieces of paper. Note that you need two papers with “Has a glorified body of flesh and bones.”

Heavenly Father:  
 Is the Father of our spirits  
 Is the Father of Jesus’ mortal body  
 Has a glorified body of flesh and bones  
 Listens to and answers our prayers

Jesus Christ:  
 Is our Savior and Redeemer  
 Has a glorified body of flesh and bones  
 Created the world  
 Had a mortal mother

The Holy Ghost:  
 Is a personage of Spirit  
 Bears witness of Heavenly Father and Jesus  
 Reveals the truth of all things (Moroni 10:5)  
 Can be our constant companion

Review the role of each member of the Godhead by allowing the children to choose one of the pieces of paper you have prepared. Have each child read the statement out loud, determine which member of the Godhead it refers to, and place the statement under the appropriate title.

6. Sing or read the words to “This Is My Beloved Son” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 76) or “Joseph Smith’s First Prayer” (*Hymns*, no. 26).

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## Conclusion

Testimony	Bear testimony of your knowledge of the Godhead, and tell the children how important it is to you to have this knowledge. Share with the children your love for Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Acts 7:54–60 and Doctrine and Covenants 130:22–23 at home as a review of this lesson.
	Invite a child to give the closing prayer.