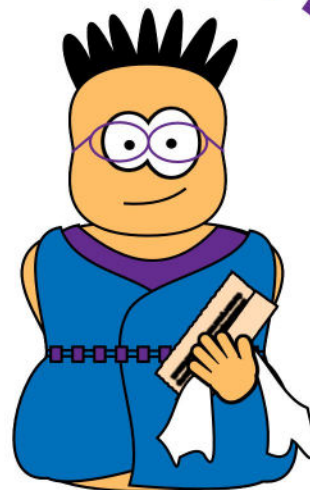


# Bible Hero's

## Stephen

## Teachers notes



Essential Teachers notes:

This story of Martyrdom is a difficult topic for some children, Stephen is also a difficult character, because of his sacrifice he is often portrayed as perfect, there is not a questionable or negative aspect to his character, and yet we know he was only human.

The biblical passage is long as it contains the great words of wisdom, it was aimed at a Jewish nation and presumes knowledge of Jewish history and law. There are parallels to the crucifixion story with unfair trails, ultimate death, and bi-passing roman law. That being said the state of martyrdom is far from gone 2 thousand years later and this story must portray that in order to be relevant to today's children.

Main Passage : Acts 7

Additional passage : Acts 6 + 8

Have you ever given something really precious away. Perhaps you gave a big present to someone for their birthday, perhaps you gave a lot of your money to a charity, or perhaps you gave a lot of your time to help somebody complete a job.

Today's hero loved to give things. His name was Stephen and he gave everything. He was part of the early church. Jesus has gone up to heaven and all the people who had believed he was the son of God started to meet together. They told everybody about what they believed and people started to join them. The early church grew really quite big. So big they made Deacons, men who were respected, men who would help lead the church, Stephen was one of those deacons.

Stephen understood that to be part of the church community meant giving, and Stephen had a lot to give. We know that Stephen was an educated man, and only the rich were educated. Stephen took all his money and gave it to the church.

Stephen had been taught all about the God, and now he saw how Jesus fit into God's big plan, and so he used his mouth to preach the message to the people.

Stephen had 2 hands and 2 feet - that was all he needed to help serve the food to the community. Stephen had time, he gave it all to serving the church, helping those people who came to join them.

Stephen was a great guy, but not everyone liked Stephen. You see not everyone liked the new church, the people who didn't believe Jesus was God's son thought the church was telling lies. And Stephen was so clever, and so wise, and so convincing he was getting more and more people to believe that Jesus was God's son.

The people who didn't like the church started to plan a way of stopping Stephen. they arrested him, they put him on trial, they got people to lie about him. Stephen listened to them and then made their trial sound foolish.

He told the truth about Jesus, he spoke so well his face shone brightly, the men couldn't even look at him. As he was finishing speaking he looked up and saw Jesus standing besides God the father, when he told the people what he saw they got really mad. They didn't even wait for the end of the trial, they just grabbed Stephen and dragged him out of the city.

Stephen thought he had given everything to the church but he had one last gift. The angry men picked up the stones by their feet and started to throw them at Stephen. As the stones started to hit Stephen he realised that he was about to die.

Stephen cried out to God to receive his spirit, and to forgive the men who were killing him, and then Stephen died.

Stephen became a Martyr, a person who dies for what they believe. Stephen knew that what he believed was more important than his time, his money, his skills and even his life. There have been lots of Christian martyrs, and there are still people today who risk death because of their belief in Jesus.