



Date: _____
Series: Holy Spirit Blaze
Summer Year 1, Lesson 1

Memorial Day

Take Home Point: *Anything worth living for is worth dying for. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Acts 7:54-60

Key Verse: 1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight for the Christian faith. Take hold of everlasting life to which you were called and about which you made a good testimony in front of many witnesses."

We will help kids know:

- Believers who practice their faith will experience some kind of persecution.
- The Holy Spirit gives them power to make a stand for Jesus Christ. If he is worth living for, then he is worth being persecuted (even dying) for.
- The Biblical account of Stephen's stoning.

We will help kids feel:

- Relaxed and comfortable when talking about fights and struggles they have faced.
- Passionate and convinced about the importance of making a stand for their faith.



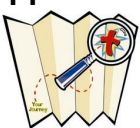
We will help kids do:

- Play a thumb war game.
- Identify ways in their life that they get persecuted for their faith. Discuss how they might respond.
- Watch a video about a 12 year-old boy who is persecuted for his faith and learns a lesson from Stephen.

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THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

Today's lesson is designed for simplicity since it is Memorial weekend.

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids play a "Thumb War" game to see who has the most "fight" in them today.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none needed
Large Group 	4 6	Overview Video: Stephen's Test of Faith The kids will watch a video about a twelve-year-old boy who faces persecution for his faith.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • video: <i>Stephen's Test of Faith</i>, 1998, The Voice of the Martyrs, Inc., Vision Video, Box 540, Worcester, PA 19490—order from www.visionvideo.com
Small Group Application 	4	Kids discuss the video and Bible event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none

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Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

Memorial Day may be a time when shepherds and students are out of town for vacation. This lesson considers that and uses a video as the primary teaching tool. Warm-Up and Application activities require no supplies. Even though the lesson is adapted for simplicity, the content of the lesson can have a great impact. The video is engaging and the discussion following can bring up some significant conversation. If your groups are bigger than eight, divide the group into triads (groups of three). The shepherd can easily monitor the groups.

Begin by saying:

Today we will find out who has the most “fight” in them. We will determine this with a “Thumb War” contest. This is how it will be done.

Face another player and extend your right hand toward him/her like you are going to shake hands. Curl the four fingers of your hand and hook them with the person facing you. Then, while moving the thumb back and forth in rhythm from left to right, say, “1, 2, 3, 4. I declare a thumb war.” Now battle to see whose thumb can end up on top.

As you finish each round, let the winners go on to compete against other winners of the round until you have one winner left. Have those who lost the round sit down and watch as the winners continue on.

Congratulations to _____ (name of winner). You have proven to have the most FIGHT today.

Have kids gather in triads discuss with each other the following questions.

What is something you believe in so strongly that it is worth fighting for? (*Country, freedom, protecting another person, faith.*)

If you have had a conflict based on one of the things you mentioned, tell your story to your group.

Ask for a couple of people who seem to have a good story to share it with the entire group.

Then say:

In today’s Bible event we will see how **anything worth living for is worth dying for.*

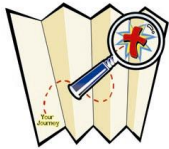
Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

The kids watch the video *Stephen's Test of Faith* about a twelve-year-old boy who faces persecution for his faith. Order from: www.visionvideo.com.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Many people have been persecuted for their faith in Jesus over the years. Who were some of the people mentioned in the movie who had to endure persecution even to the point of death? (Stephen, Christians in Rome put into the coliseum with hungry lions, William Tyndale for translating the Bible into English, Christians that met secretly and were arrested by KGB.)

All of these people made a choice to stand up for Jesus and not deny him.

What in your life is worth standing up for or possibly dying?

What are some ways people in the world today are persecuted?

Do you ever feel persecution for standing up for Jesus?

We all have to make a choice about Jesus. Have you put your faith and trust in Jesus? Life on earth is temporary, and we will all die someday. At the point of death, we will either be welcomed into heaven and into the presence of God for eternity, or we will not be allowed into heaven and will be sent to hell...completely alone and away from God.

What will you do with Jesus? You need to choose to accept or deny him. Persecution is a part of the Christian life. Jesus told his

disciples this at the last supper. In John 15:20, Jesus says, “...*If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.*”

But, God also tells us in Joshua 1:5 “*No one will be able to oppose you successfully as long as you live. I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will never neglect you or abandon you.*” God is with us no matter what kind of persecution we may face. He will give us the strength to endure. He will never abandon us.

Our life here is temporary, but our life in heaven is for eternity. Just like Stephen and other martyrs who believed so strongly they would die for their faith, the Holy Spirit gives us power to believe **anything worth living for is worth dying for.*

God says to us in today’s key verse, 1 Timothy 6:12, “*Fight the good fight for the Christian faith. Take hold of everlasting life to which you were called and about which you made a good testimony in front of many witnesses.*”

Extra questions for further discussion, if time is available:

Observation Questions: What happened?/ Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Have kids refer to the Bible event of Stephen’s execution in Acts 7:54-60.

Even though Stephen was persecuted, he was filled with the Holy Spirit. What happened to him that probably encouraged him to stay faithful? (*Acts 7:35-36. He looked into heaven, saw God’s glory and Jesus in the position of authority that God gives.*)

How do you think Stephen felt seeing a vision of heaven opened so he could see Jesus in the position of authority? Do you think he felt fear or courage?

In Acts 7:60, Stephen said just before he died, “*Lord, don’t hold this sin against them.*” Why do you think he said this? Who also said something similar? (*Jesus.*)

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, thank you that you will never leave us or forsake us. Thank you for sending Jesus who endured death so we can have life eternally with you. If there is anyone here that doesn’t know you as their Savior, I pray that you will help them see their need. Help them by faith to receive God’s free gift. For those who have placed their trust in you, please give them the strength to endure persecution and to stand firm in you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Large Group Presentation: 20 minutes

Stephen's Test of Faith

Supplies: video Stephen's Test of Faith, 1998

Introduction:

Today we have been talking about times we had to stand up for something even if it meant a fight or disagreement. There are several people mentioned in the Bible who had to endure a great deal of persecution, and sometimes even death, for something they believed in. One of these people was Stephen.

We will watch a video about a twelve-year-old boy who is mocked for his faith. But, he learns an important lesson from Stephen, a martyr. Hopefully this will encourage you as you are also faced with persecution.

Show the Video:

Show the video. It is 22 minutes long.

After the video is shown, dismiss the kids back to small groups or their triads to discuss the questions provided. Be sensitive to children's fears and needs. Prayer and the word of God are very powerful in meeting these needs. If you feel out of your comfort zone, do not hesitate to seek godly counsel or assistance.



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Memorial Day Series, Lesson 1

Lesson Title: Memorial Day

Take Home Point: Anything worth living for is worth dying for.

Warm-Up:

Consider for a moment our country's founders. We often hear of their writings or oratory. But sometimes we forget they were targeted for prison and death because they lived what they believed. They placed themselves in mortal danger, day after day, because they believed so much in the cause of independence. And some of them did die for the cause. Years ago someone said to me, "You only really believe what motivates you to action." I think of that every so often, especially in the spiritual realm, because if I claim to believe the Bible is God's word, then what God teaches me from his word should affect my actions. If it doesn't, then maybe I don't really believe it. That's kind of scary for me. Do I act like I truly believe that God's revelation shows me the right way to live day after day?

Read: Joshua 1:5; John 15:20; Acts 7:54-60; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:12

Observation (What happened?):

In John 15:20, what did Jesus warn his disciples about?

What promise does God make in Joshua 1:5?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What was it about Stephen's words that infuriated the Sanhedrin so much they killed him?

What does it mean to "fight the good fight of faith"?

Insight:

Do you think Stephen woke up that morning thinking he would die for his beliefs before the day was over? Probably not. But what he did know was that he would live for what he believed – that Jesus paid the penalty for his sins and Stephen's life now belonged to his Savior. So it is still. You and I have no idea what the next five minutes will bring, much less the whole day. So what do we live for and how does it affect the way we live? Do we live as though the next minutes may be our last and we want them to glorify God? Or do we tend to be like the people described in James 4:13-17: *"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' ... Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."* (NIV) Some of us may die for what we believe, most probably not. But we can all live for what we believe.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What do you believe you would die for? How do you live today for the same thing?

Take a moment to thank God for those willing to live and die for what they believed was right.

Kingdom Quest Year 1 - Lesson 1



HOLY

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