

Lesson No. (46)

Forgiveness

St. Stephen

References

Acts 6-7.

Notes for Servants

- ★ Turn your toil and sacrifice for the Lord into earnest prayer and honesty in your work. You can be assured that the Lord is with you. Stephen saw the glory of God when he was on earth.
- ★ St. Stephen was a deacon. If you are a deacon of the church, practise teaching, perform your service with honesty, go on worshipping and contemplating and be a good example for everyone.

Objectives

General: Honour saints and praise their firmness of faith.

Specific: The children will be able to:

- A. Express the spirit of love and forgiveness that Stephen showed towards those who stoned him;
- B. Confess their belief and witness Christ before non-Christians;
- C. Answer others when they ask them about their religion;
- D. Know that the only way to answer when others ask them about their religion, is to know the Bible very well, as Stephen did.

Bible Verse

**"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die,
we die unto the Lord."**

(Romans 14:8)

Teaching Aids

None.

Instruction

- (1) Review last week's lesson.
- (2) Who remembers the verse?
- (3) Remind the children about the church occasions for the coming week.
- (4) Teacher should prepare the appropriate questions to emphasize the objectives during the

lesson.

Story Time

The Christian faith was spread by the apostles whom Christ sent. The Christians lived in close fellowship with everyone and shared their belongings with one another. The time came when they needed men to devote themselves to the service of widows, orphans and the poor. They chose seven deacons, known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. Stephen was among them. He served the poor and the needy and distributed gifts and money to them. He also preached in the church and converted many to Christianity.

One day, a large crowd of Jews gathered and discussed religious matters with Stephen. He answered them quoting texts from the Scriptures. He explained that Christ was the only Saviour through whom we can enter the kingdom of Heaven. Of course, being Jews, Stephen's words did not appeal to them so they took him to the synagogue to persecute him.

The Jews were angry with Stephen because he told the truth. They wanted to kill him, so they accused him of blaspheming against God and Moses. They grabbed Stephen, dragged him in the streets and when they were out of the city, the men stopped, stripped him of his clothes, and stoned him. The witnesses left their cloaks in charge of a young man named Saul, who approved of the murder. The Jews picked up big stones and rocks and threw them at Stephen's head, legs, back, chest and arms. His body was broken. He fell to the ground. The Lord strengthened him. He knelt down and prayed lifting his eyes up to Heaven. The Heavens opened and Stephen saw Jesus surrounded by angels in great glory, and a host of angels dressed in white and shining with bright light.

The people stood in great surprise because Stephen was happy in spite of the stones thrown at his body. They asked one another why Stephen looked towards Heaven. What was it that he saw? They continued to throw stones at his head. The stones were thrown at him but Stephen was happy. He said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." The Jews threw the stones at his mouth to prevent him from speaking.

Stephen said, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Stephen's face shone as the face of an angel, then he died.

Discussion

- 1 - Follow up the story by talking about it with the children.
- 2 - Continue the discussion while they do the activity.

Learning Activities

Activity Sheet.