

God's StoryTM Our Story



Stephen's Witness

April 30, 2017

Devotion: Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions. You can do this alone or with others; in the morning, during the day, or at night. Find a routine that works best for you.

Pray: Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

Holy Lord,

Your servant Stephen was bold in the face of danger and death. Make us faithful in our witness, even under threat of opposition to your word, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Reflect: Reflect on the key verses from Sunday's reading.

Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died. Acts 7:58-60

Study: Study the reading and consider the background.

Introducing Stephen, a man of spirit and grace who seems to speak with the authority of God. The powerful are known for attracting attention, but it may not be the sort that Stephen would have wanted. How far are Jesus' followers willing to go?

Consider: Consider this theme for the week's text.

Sometimes the proclamation of truth is dangerous.

Read: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding of Sunday's text. After the reading, ask the follow-up questions.

Sunday: *Stephen's Witness*, Acts 6:1 – 7:2a, 44-60

Monday: *Saul Persecutes the Church*, Acts 8:1-25

Tuesday: *The Conversion of Saul*, Acts 9:1-19a

Wednesday: *Saul Preaches in Damascus*, Acts 9:19b-31

Thursday: *Peter and Cornelius*, Acts 10:1-33

Friday: *Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit*, Acts 10:34-48

Saturday: *Peter in Prison*, Acts 12:1-19

What happened to apostles that preached Jesus?

Connect: Connect in conversation with others in your household. Discuss the following questions, or simply check in with "Highs" and "Lows."

What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

How have the duties in your faith community been distributed? How might you do things differently to best honor the gifts of those in your community?

What role do you play at home, at work, or at church? How are you best using your gifts to do God's work in the world? Are you doing what God has created you to do, or is it time for a change?

Do: By acting on what we learn we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

Keep a calendar this week of everything you do. Include trips to the grocery store and time spent on your phone or TV. At the end of the week, evaluate your calendar. How is your time reflecting your values? Make one change next week so your time honors your values.

Bless: Close your devotion with a blessing.

God has created you with unique gifts. Use them well. Amen.