

STEPHEN

LESSON TEXT

Acts 6:8-7:60

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will define the characteristics and convictions that allowed Stephen to preach the truth.
- The students will discuss what it cost Stephen to speak the truth.
- The students will identify times in their own lives when it is difficult to tell the truth.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- 1 concordance for every 4 students
- extra Bibles
- small prizes (optional)
- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student
- Page B, 1 copy for each student
- Page C, 1 copy for the teacher
- Page D, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: I Tell You the Truth
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer
 Victories
 Good News from the Kingdom

Getting into God's Word

Story: "Speaking the Truth"
 Scripture Study
 Activity: Stand Up for the Truth

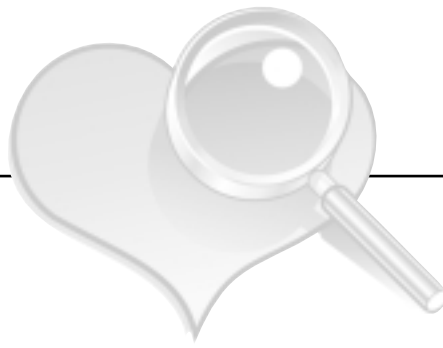
Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Ephesians 4:15
 Weekly Challenge and Snack time
 Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Ephesians 4:15



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing the lesson. Read and meditate on Acts 6:8–7:60 until you are moved by the lesson of Stephen's life and convictions. It cost Stephen his life to speak the truth. What has it cost you to speak the truth to others? As a disciple, your character and convictions should lead you to speak the truth to those around you, including your preteen students. Consider how your experiences can inspire your students and help them to grow in their own faith and convictions.

TEACHER TIPS

In the kingdom, we are richly blessed to have countless examples of brothers and sisters who have faced great hardship and persecution in order to speak the truth about Jesus. Consider members of your congregation (or a congregation nearby) who may have faced hardship and persecution on mission teams, within families, etc. Invite someone in to speak to your class as a living example of a disciple living the life of Stephen. Be sure to share the objectives of the lesson with your speaker, and remind your students to be thankful for the opportunity to spend time with this person.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

I TELL YOU THE TRUTH

The students will search the Scriptures to find situations in which Jesus used the phrase, "I tell you the truth."

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- 1 concordance for every 4 students
- extra Bibles
- small prizes (optional)

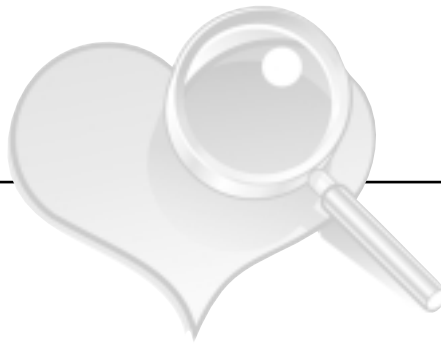
Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. As the students arrive, give each one a pen or pencil and a copy of Reproducible Page A (I Tell You the Truth).
2. Make sure they understand the instructions.
3. Ask the students to work in groups of four so they can share a concordance.
4. You may wish to award a small prize to the team that finds the most scriptures.





STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER

Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together? Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses and to be especially thankful for the chance to be together.

VICTORIES

Take the time to have the students share about the challenges they were given at the end of last week's class. *Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent quiet times? Would anyone like to share something they learned this week?*

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

INSTRUCTIONS

Now let's take a few minutes to share "Good News from the Kingdom." Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the location as you share. Remind your students that the kingdom of God is worldwide and that the victories of our brothers and sisters in other countries can inspire us and spur us on.





STORY

"SPEAKING THE TRUTH"

In this story, the daughter is instructed by the father to let him know if someone is watching while he steals from his neighbor's field. Her pure heart, her faith and convictions about the truth compel her to inform her father of God's watchfulness.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

- Page B, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page B ("Speaking the Truth").
2. Read the story aloud to the students.
3. Explain and discuss the story concept.
 - How would you describe the father's character?
 - Contrast the father's character with the daughter's character.
 - Did the girl obey her father?
 - What would you have done in this situation?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Have the students take out their Bibles and turn to Acts 6:8–7:3 and Acts 7:48–7:60. Either read the selections yourself or call on volunteers who are especially good readers. The drama of the passage needs to be evident. Discuss the following questions:

- Describe some of Stephen's Christ-like qualities. (a man full of God's grace and power / wise / spiritual / truthful / courageous)
- How did these qualities help Stephen to powerfully preach the truth? (Because of these convictions and qualities, he faced persecution without backing down. / He was also able to confront respected religious leaders.)
- What did it cost Stephen to speak the truth? (his life)
- Why did the people not want to hear the truth? (because they would have had to admit they had been wrong and they, too, were responsible for the death of Jesus)

- Stephen knew the people were angry with him to begin with, but this did not prevent him from speaking the truth. It took guts for Stephen to speak the truth. When he realized the consequences of continuing, he did not shrink back. When are some times we shrink back from speaking the whole truth? (when we will get into trouble if we speak the truth / when we might have to do redo something we have spent time on / when it might cost us time, money or friends / when we are embarrassed)
- The Jews apparently listened quietly as long as Stephen was reviewing their history. Why did they react differently to his speech starting in verse 51? (He got personal! / He tied their history to what was happening with Jesus. / He accused them of betraying and murdering Jesus.)
- Have you ever seen a mob scene in a movie or on the TV news? Remembering that scene will help you know what was happening to Stephen. What are the descriptive phrases in the passage that show that people were out of their minds in rage? (v9 - began to argue / v12 - stirred up the people, seized Stephen / v54 - furious, gnashed teeth / v57 - yelled at top of voice, rushed at him / v58 - dragged him, stoned him)

ACTIVITY

STAND UP FOR THE TRUTH

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

- Page C, 1 copy for the teacher
- Page D, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to the students that as you read the statements on Reproducible Page C (Stand Up for the Truth) to the class, each student is to stand up if the student believes the statement to be true. If the student believes the statement to be false, the student is to sit down. If the student gets the answer wrong, he or she is to step outside the group and wait for the game to finish.
2. The last student (or students) still in the game at the end wins.

NOTE: The pace of this game should be fast.



GETTING INTO GOD'S WORD

3. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page D (Memory Verse), which contains the lines of the first verse of "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus."
4. To close out your study of Stephen standing up for Jesus, sing the first verse of "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" with your students.
5. If you are not comfortable leading the song, record someone else singing it and simply sing along with the class.

Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus 400

Bb/F

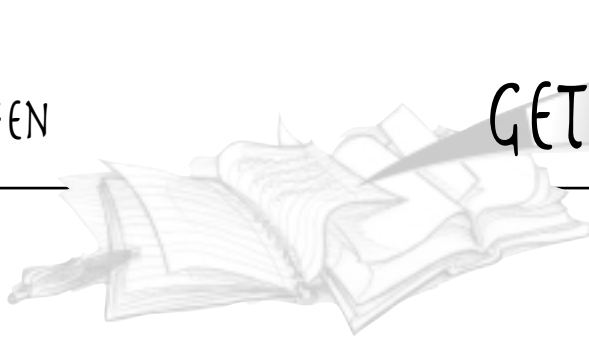
1. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus! Ye sol - diers of the cross;
 2. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus! The trump - et call o - bey;
 3. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus! Stand in His strength a - lone;
 4. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus! The strife will not be long;

Lift high His roy - al ban - ner, It must not suf - fer loss.
 Forth to the might - y con - flict In this, His glo - rious day.
 The arm of flesh will fail you, Ye dare not trust your own.
 This day the noise of bat - tle, The next the vic - tor's song.

From vic - t'ry un - to vic - t'ry His ar - my shall He lead,
 Ye that are men now serve Him A - gainst un - num - bered foes;
 Put on the gos - pel ar - mor, And watch - ing un - to prayer,
 To him that o - ver - com - eth A crown of life shall be;

Till ev - 'ry foe is van - quished, And Christ is Lord in - deed.
 Let cour - age rise with dan - ger, And strength to strength op - pose.
 Where du - ty calls, or dan - ger, Be nev - er want - ing there.
 He with the King of Glo - ry Shall reign e - ter - nal - ly.

WORDS: George Duffield, 1858
 MUSIC: George J. Webb, 1837
 From *Songs of the Kingdom*, DPI



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.
Ephesians 4:15

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for each student (handed out in Activity if you sang the song)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page D (Memory Verse).
2. Ask the students to pair up and practice reciting the verse aloud.

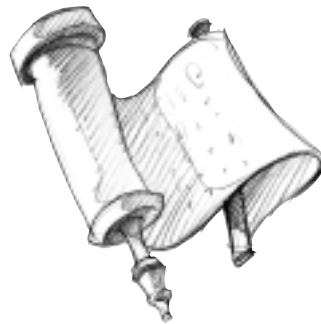
WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you explain to them the challenge for this week.

Discuss with the students specific situations in which it is difficult to stand up for the truth. Ask the students to each choose an area in which they need to be totally truthful. Encourage them to pray about their decisions daily and to look for opportunities to be truthful in these areas.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Determine one area of your life in which you will commit to speaking the truth this week. Pray about your decision, and look for every opportunity to practice your convictions.

STEPHEN

LESSON TEXT

Act 6:8-7:60

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will compare Stephen's life and convictions with those of Jesus.
- The students will recite the rewards of speaking the truth.
- The students will identify times in their own lives when it is difficult to tell the truth.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

- extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, from Core—several extra copies
- Page E, 1 copy for each student
- Page F, 1 copy for the teacher

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
 Teacher Focus
 Teacher Tips
 Preclass Activity: Guts and Glory Review
 Starting Up
 Welcome and Singing
 Opening Prayer and Review
 Great News Sharing

Getting into God's Word

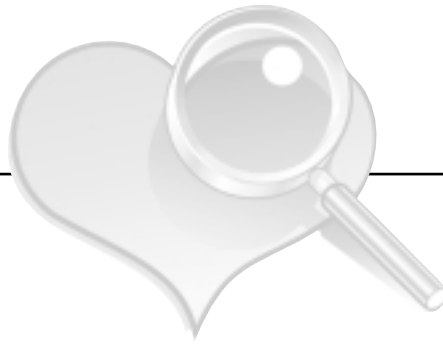
Scripture Study
 Activity: TV Talk Show

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Ephesians 4:15
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time
 Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.
 Ephesians 4:15



FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing the lesson. Read and meditate on Acts 6:8–7:60 until you are moved by the lesson of Stephen's life and convictions. Everyone likes to be rewarded for a job well done. Yet sometimes, the reward is not necessarily in a form that is pleasant. Stephen's reward for speaking the truth was persecution and death. Yet ultimately, Stephen's convictions and example must have surely affected a man named Saul as he was coming to know Jesus as Lord. Rewards are not always immediately evident, but God always has great plans for our lives if we continue to stand up for our faith and to do what is right.

TEACHER TIPS

As an incredible conclusion to this unit, you will coordinate a TV Talk Show starring the five characters that you have studied in this unit—Mary, the mother of Jesus; John the Baptist; the centurion; Mary of Bethany and Stephen. Select five campus students and/or young singles to play the parts. Give each character four to six minutes to discuss their faith and how it helped them to be gutsy in their lives. They should also share their ideas (in character) of how they would like their faith and example to impact the preteens.

Be sure to give your speakers enough time to study out their characters and to prepare their remarks. Be sure to review each speaker's remarks with them. You may also want to prepare a list of questions for the students to ask if time permits.

Encourage the students to write short notes and letters and possibly to bake some treats for the speakers to thank them for their sharing.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

GUTS AND GLORY REVIEW

A simple matching review will remind the students of the character traits of the people they have studied in this unit.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

For the teacher:

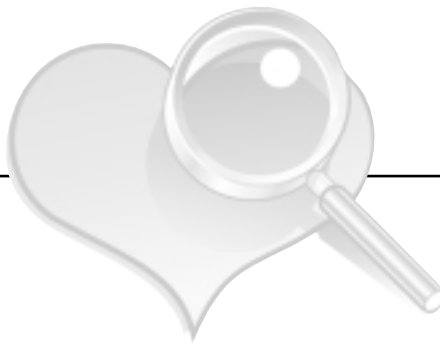
- extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:

- Page E, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. As the students arrive, give each one a copy of Reproducible Page E (Guts and Glory Review).
2. Make sure the students understand the instructions for completing the activity.



STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER AND REVIEW

- Open with a student praying for all the students to have the courage to stand up for the truth no matter what it may cost them.
- Have one student recite the memory verse for this lesson: Ephesians 4:15.
- Have a student briefly review the previous lesson (Core Lesson).

GREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief so that as many as possible can share.





SCRIPTURE STUDY

Have the students take out their Bibles and turn to Acts 6:8-7:3 and Acts 7:48-7:60. Select several volunteers to read the passage. Discuss the following questions:

- Ask the students what they learned from the story during their previous lesson. (Get as many students as possible to participate and share aspects that were significant to them.)
- *Can anyone compare Stephen's life and convictions with those of Jesus? In what ways are they similar?* (spoke the truth / preached boldly and fearlessly / challenged religious leaders / did not give in to fear / died for their faith)
- *What was Stephen's reward for speaking the truth?* (He saw the glory of God. / He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. / He saw heaven open. / He went to heaven.)
- *Do we always immediately receive a reward for preaching the truth and being righteous?* (No; sometimes we are persecuted for doing what is right. However, God will eventually bring blessings when we stand on our convictions and our faith.)
- Remind the students that part of Stephen's reward came after his death. His life and example had a great impact on Saul of Tarsus, who eventually came to be known as Paul. Stephen's faith was a great influence as Paul came to know God and as he eventually became a father in the faith.
- *What rewards do you receive when you speak the truth?* (People trust you. / You are relied upon by others. / You have a peace knowing you have told the truth. / God is pleased. / You know that if you are faithful to God, you will live with him forever in heaven.)

ACTIVITY

TV TALK SHOW

As an incredible conclusion to this unit, you will coordinate a TV Talk Show (panel discussion) starring the five characters you have studied in this unit.

MATERIALS USED

Reproducible Pages:

- Page F, 1 copy for the teacher

PREPARATION

1. Following the instructions on Reproducible Page F (Instructions for the TV Talk Show), choose disciples to play the five different Biblical characters your students have studied in this unit. Be sure to give them at least a week to prepare.
2. On the day or evening of the class, set up four chairs facing the students for the panel. Then place one chair facing the panel for you (as the moderator).

INSTRUCTIONS

Follow the instructions on Reproducible Page F (Instructions for the TV Talk Show).





The Core teacher was to lead the students in the first verse of "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus." The words are included on Reproducible Page D (Memory Verse). Hand out several copies of the sheet and lead the students in the first verse again. If you are not comfortable leading the song, record someone else singing it and simply sing along with the class.

Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus 400

B♭/F

1. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus! Ye sol - diers of the cross;
2. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus! The trump - et call o - bey;
3. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus! Stand in His strength a - lone;
4. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus! The strife will not be long;

Lift high His roy - al ban - ner, It must not suf - fer loss.
Forth to the might - y con - flict In this, His glo - rious day.
The arm of flesh will fail you, Ye dare not trust your own.
This day the noise of bat - tle, The next the vic - tor's song.

From vic - t'ry un - to vic - t'ry His ar - my shall He lead,
Ye that are men now serve Him A - gainst un - num - bered foes;
Put on the gos - pel ar - mor, And watch - ing un - to prayer,
To him that o - ver - com - eth A crown of life shall be;

Till ev - ry foe is van - quished, And Christ is Lord in - deed.
Let cour - age rise with dan - ger, And strength to strength op - pose.
Where du - ty calls, or dan - ger, Be nev - er want - ing there.
He with the King of Glo - ry Shall reign e - ter - nal - ly.

WORDS: George Duffield, 1858
MUSIC: George J. Webb, 1837
From *Songs of the Kingdom*, DPI

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.
Ephesians 4:15

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask the students if anyone can recite the memory scripture for this week.
2. After several have quoted the verse, recite it together as a class two or three times.

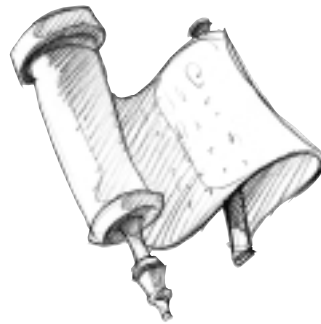
WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you remind them of their challenge for the week.

The challenge for this week was for the students to choose areas in which they need to be totally truthful. Encourage them to continue to pray about their decisions daily and to look for opportunities to be truthful in these areas.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Determine one area of your life in which you will commit to speaking the truth this week. Pray about your decision, and look for every opportunity to practice your convictions.

I TELL YOU THE TRUTH

Instructions:

1. There are seventy-eight times that Jesus is recorded as saying, "I tell you the truth."
2. Using a concordance, find as many scriptures as time allows in which Jesus says, "I tell you the truth." (Look in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.)
3. List the scripture references in the spaces below.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH

A man decided to sneak into his neighbors' fields and steal some wheat. "If I take just a little from each field, no one will notice," he told himself, "but it will all add up to a nice pile of wheat for me." So he waited for the darkest night, when thick clouds lay over the moon, and he crept out of his house. He took his youngest daughter with him.

"Daughter," he whispered, "you must stand guard, and call out if anyone sees me."

The man stole into the first field to begin reaping, and before long the child called out, "Father, someone sees you!"

The man looked around, but he saw no one, so he gathered his stolen wheat and moved on to a second field.

"Father, someone sees you!" the child cried again.

The man stopped and looked all around, but once again he saw no one. He gathered more wheat and moved to a third field.

A little while passed and the daughter cried out loudly, "Father, someone sees you!"

Once more the man stopped his work and looked in every direction, but he saw no one at all, so he bundled his wheat and crept into the last field.

"Father, someone sees you!" the child once again called loudly.

The man stopped his reaping, looked all around and once again saw no one. "Why in the world do you keep saying someone sees me?" he angrily asked his daughter. "I've looked everywhere and I don't see anyone."

"Father," whispered his daughter, "Someone sees you from above."

Bennett, William J., ed, *The Book of Virtues* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 604

STAND UP FOR THE TRUTH

Instructions:

1. Explain to the students that as you read the statements on Reproducible Page C (Stand Up for the Truth) to the class, each student is to stand up if the student believes the statement to be true. If the student believes the statement to be false, the student is to sit down. If the student gets the answer wrong, he or she is to step outside the group and wait for the game to finish.
2. The last student (or students) still in the game at the end wins.

NOTE: The pace of this game should be fast.

QUESTIONS:

1. Genesis is the first book in the Bible. (True)
 2. The centurion was a Roman soldier. (True)
 3. Mary, the mother of Jesus, married a man named Joseph. (True)
 4. "Repent" means to do something again and again. (False)
 5. John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey. (True)
 6. There are sixty-six books in the Bible. (True)
 7. Jesus was Mary's fourth child. (False)
 8. Jesus was born in Jerusalem. (False)
 9. According to the Bible, it's okay to tell a little lie. (False)
 10. Gabriel was the angel who spoke with Mary. (True)
 11. John the Baptist baptized people in the Jordan River. (True)
 12. Nard is perfume. (True)
 13. The centurion called the Jews a brood of vipers. (False, it was John the Baptist.)
 14. Stephen was known to be wise. (True)
 15. Stephen died of leprosy. (False)
 16. King Herod ordered John the Baptist to be killed. (True)
 17. Pharisees and Sadducees were religious leaders of the Jewish people. (True)
 18. John the Baptist preached in the desert. (True)
 19. The centurion wore clothes made of camel's hair with a leather belt. (False)
 20. Mary of Bethany put cheap perfume on Jesus' feet. (False)
 21. John the Baptist was a relative of Jesus. (True)
 22. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth" seventy-eight times in the Gospels. (True)
 23. Mary had more children after Jesus. (True)
 24. Jesus healed the centurion's wife. (False)
 25. Peter was the leader of the Pharisees. (False)
 26. Stephen saw God's glory and Jesus standing by God. (True)
 27. Mary of Bethany had a sister named Martha. (True)
 28. Stephen preached about the history of God's people. (True)
 29. Mary poured the perfume on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. (True)
- NOTE: Give the students another chance by starting the game again, as time permits.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Instead, speaking the truth in love,
we will in all things grow up into him
who is the Head, that is, Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:15

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS
Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high his royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory
His army shall he lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Determine one area of your life in which you will commit to speaking the truth this week. Pray about your decision, and look for every opportunity to practice your convictions.



GUTS AND GLORY REVIEW

Match the items in the two columns below by drawing a line from the Bible character in the first column to the trait for which they were known in the second column:

Person

Mary, the mother of Jesus

John the Baptist

Centurion

Mary of Bethany

Stephen

Character Trait

was an example of sacrifice

had deep convictions

confidently accepted God's will

spoke the truth at all costs

had amazing faith

Read the following scriptures and list the rewards for each Bible character's act of courage:

Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:41-42) _____

John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11) _____

Centurion (Luke 7:9) _____

Mary of Bethany (Matthew 26:12-13) _____

Stephen (Acts 7:55-56, 59) _____



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TV TALK SHOW

As an incredible conclusion to this unit, you will coordinate a TV Talk Show (panel discussion) starring the five characters you have studied in this unit:

- Mary, the mother of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56; Luke 2:1-20)
- John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-15; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:7-20)
- the centurion (Luke 7:1-10)
- Mary of Bethany (Mark 14:1-9; John 12:1-8)
- Stephen (Acts 6:8-7:60)

Instructions:

1. Choose creative, out-of-themselves, spiritually strong college students or young singles for this activity. (Obviously, you will need two women and three men.)
2. Assign each person his or her character at least one week ahead of time.
3. Give him or her the scripture references above from the lessons about the Biblical character whom they will portray.
4. Ask them to dress in first-century clothing (sheets draped around the head and body would be enough—or the characters could get more creative if they desired).
5. Tell them to prepare to share for four minutes about their faith and how it helped them to be gutsy in their lives. They should also share their ideas (in character) of how they would like their faith and example to impact the preteens.
6. Plan to meet an hour before class with your panel to allow them to share with you their “speeches” so you can make sure they are both age- and Biblically-appropriate.
7. Welcome the audience to your show (give it a name), and then introduce your guests one at a time. Have each come out and sit down when you call his or her name. Ask each person to share their story of faith with the audience.
8. After each has shared with the students, allow the students to ask questions of the panel. Guide the discussion to keep the students on track, asking serious questions and not getting silly.
9. At the end of the “show,” thank the guests and the audience for joining you and sign off with a professional air.

