

# Leaders for God

by Amanda Ingram and Carol Duerksen

## MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Copies of the skit for all characters
- 2 Give the skit and instructions to a guy who will portray Stephen. He should be very familiar with Acts 7:2-53 from The Message translation and be prepared to share it dramatically with the group.
- 3 Newsprint and markers

## SESSION OUTLINE

### FOCUS

Divide the class into groups of 4-5 and give each group newsprint and markers. Ask half of the groups to make a list of "Leaders for God" that they can recall from memory from the Bible, and ask the other half of the groups to make a list of "Leaders for God" that are not Biblical characters. When groups can't think of any more leaders, bring them together and compare the lists.

Discuss: What makes these people leaders for God?

### CONNECT WITH THE BIBLE STORY

Do the drama based on Acts, chapters 6-8.

### REFLECT

Discuss:

- How was Stephen a leader for God?
- What did he **say** that showed he was God's leader?
- What did he **do** that showed he was God's leader?
- What is significant about Stephen's last statement?
- How was Stephen rewarded for being a leader for God?

## RESPOND

Stephen did several things that every one of us can do, whether or not we view ourselves as leaders. What were they? How does that make us a leader for God?

(Answer: He knew the history of his faith. He knew why he believed what he did. And he defended his faith. He was willing to give his life for his faith. We may or may not have to give our physical life for our faith, but we are certainly called to “take up our cross and follow Jesus.”)

Allow for some quiet time for students to reflect on what it means for them to be a leader for God.

Close with a prayer.

## SKIT: “STEPHAN—A LEADER FOR GOD”

Props:

- Table and chairs for council members
- Balls of paper for the “stoning.”

Characters:

Stephen

Narrator

Teacher 1

Teacher 2

Council Members (3-4 people)

Witness 1

Witness 2

Witness 3

Witness 4

Narrator: Hi! I’m the narrator. I’m just here to help the story flow smoothly.

Stephen: I’m Stephen. God used me to speak to people about him. He filled me with his wisdom, power, and grace.

Teachers 1 and 2: We were the teachers of religious law. We didn't like Stephen at all, and made up stories about him to get him killed.

Council Members: We didn't like Stephen either and wanted him dead.

Witness 1: I was paid to lie about Stephen. Hey- I needed the money!

Witness 2: Ah, a little white lie never hurt anything!

Witness 3: I made stuff up too. I was told it was for the good of the community.

Witness 4: I never liked the guy, anyway.

Narrator: Our story begins with teachers of the law who were very angry with the Apostles, and looked for reasons to put them to death. You see, the apostles were just glowing with God's spirit, and they were talking about Jesus with such power that people were getting converted left and right. But the teachers of the law didn't want to accept these words about Jesus. Whenever they would argue with the apostles, the apostles would win the argument. No one could stand against them, because God was with them.

There was a certain apostle named Stephen. God filled him with His spirit, and gave him wisdom, grace, and power. The people adored Stephen, but the religious leaders who would not accept the idea that Jesus was Lord despised him. They were continuously looking for reasons to put him to death. When they couldn't find any, they decided to make some up.

Teacher 1: Man, I am SICK of that Stephen. You just can't win with him! He acts like he knows God personally! Give me a break!

Teacher 2: I totally agree. And what's so disgusting is that people are believing him! They're believing him and doubting us!

Teacher 1: Yeah, we have to get rid of him! But how? The people really like him!

Teacher 2: Hm... But what if the people didn't like him?! What if they heard him say things like, "Moses was an idiot?"

Teacher 1: Yeah, but he'd never say that!

Teacher 2: Maybe not, but I know quite a few people who would vouch that he did! Money buys everything! Even false witnesses!!! Hehehehe....

*Teachers leave.*

Narrator: The religious teachers paid people to make up stories about Stephen. People came with stories, and the case was taken to the Council.

*Council members bring in their table and chairs and sit down. Witnesses come in.*

Council Member: We are here to public ally try Stephen for speaking blasphemies. Witnesses, please make a line and come up one at a time, telling us what you heard this man say.

Witness 1: I heard this man say Moses was in idiot.

Witness 2: I heard this man call God a fake.

Witness 3: I heard this man say that this church was evil!

Witness 4: I heard this man say that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this entire town and change the customs that Moses gave to us!

Narrator: Stephen began his defense.

Stephen reads Acts 7:2-53 from The Message.

*Council Members shout things at Stephen, yelling insults, demanding that he shut up, and then threatening to kill him to shut him up.*

Stephen: Go ahead and kill me! I can already see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!

*Council members stone him with paper balls. Stephan is on the floor, trying to protect his head, but dying.*

*With his last breath, Stephen says: Lord, do not hold this sin against them.*