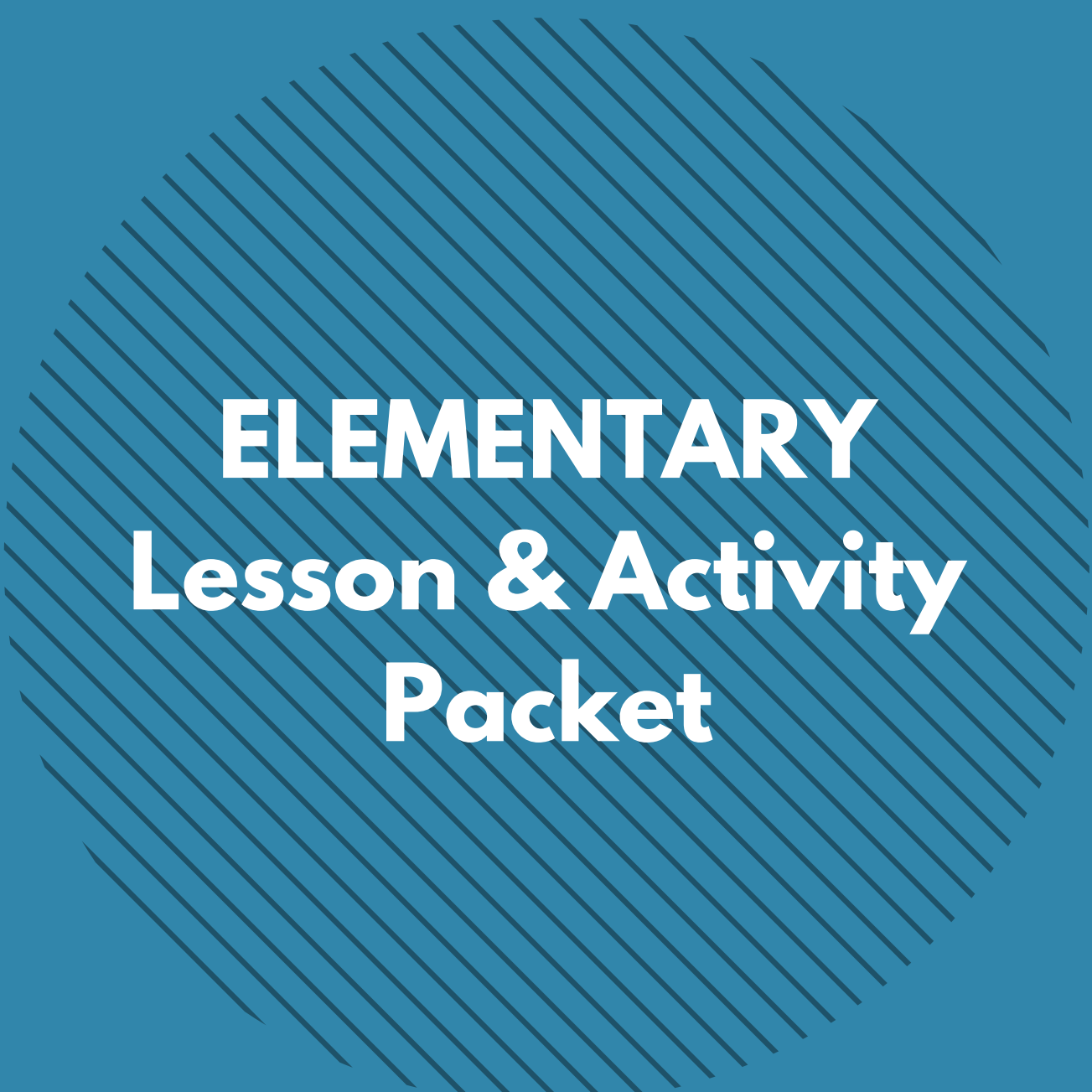


Cottonwood Kids

CHILDREN'S
MINISTRY



ELEMENTARY Lesson & Activity Packet

MAY 2020

MAY WEEK 4

BIBLE STORY OVERVIEW

Bible Story

Keep Holding On
Stephen
Acts 6:1-7:60

Bottom Line:

Keep going because God knows the end of the story.

Memory Verse

Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right
time we will gather a crop if we don't give up.
Galatians 6:9, NIV

Life App

Determination

Deciding it's worth it to finish what you started

Basic Truth

I can trust God no matter what.

This Month's Theme:

determination.

BIBLE STORY

We've been making our way through God's Big Story together—all the way from the very beginning. This month we've been checking out what happened after Jesus went to heaven and the early church began to grow. After Jesus died and came back to life, and before He ascended to heaven to be with God, He left His disciples with a mission: to spread the news about Him. "God had given His Holy Spirit to the believers to help them with this big job.

The good news of Jesus was starting to spread, and the new church was growing quickly. There were some people among the believers who needed food and special care, so Peter and the other disciples made a plan to make sure these people were taken care of. Listen to their plan.

Open the Bible to Acts 6:2-4 (NIRV) and read.

"So the 12 apostles gathered all the believers together. They said, "It wouldn't be right for us to give up teaching God's word. And we'd have to stop teaching to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven of your men. They must be known as men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit. We will turn this important work over to them. Then we can give our attention to prayer and to teaching God's word.""

Men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit . . . ' When people thought of men like that, Stephen was top of the list.

Stephen and six other men were chosen to help care for the new believers. God filled Stephen with special grace and power to do this work.

Not everyone was a fan of Stephen, though. There were some people who chose to argue with him, but the Holy Spirit gave him wisdom to answer them.

Eventually, Stephen's enemies resorted to telling lies about him. They said that he had spoken against Moses and God, which wasn't true. But the religious leaders took advantage of this opportunity to arrest one of Jesus' followers. They arrested Stephen and brought him before their gathering: the Sanhedrin.

The leaders found people who were willing to tell lies about Stephen. The false witnesses stood and told lies in front of the Sanhedrin about Stephen, saying he was speaking against the law and Moses and even God. But Stephen didn't look upset. In fact, they noticed that his face was like the face of an angel as he stood against his accusers."

The high priest stepped up and asked Stephen if what the accusers were saying was true. "Stephen knew that God was with him. So even as he looked up at the angry faces that surrounded him, he had peace. He knew these people could do anything they wanted—even kill him. But he knew that he could trust God no matter what might happen next.

Stephen wanted the leaders to understand who Jesus was—that He was the fulfillment of a plan God had set in motion with Abraham so long ago. So he began to speak of all that God had done since the beginning of humankind. Listen to what he said to them.

Open the Bible to Acts 7:2-3 (NIRV) and read.

**"The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham. . . .
"Leave your country and your people," God said. "Go to the
land I will show you."**

Stephen continued the story of God's people, through Jacob and Joseph and slavery in Egypt. The religious leaders listened as Stephen spoke of God's work through Moses to free the Israelites and bring them to the Promised Land. They continued to listen as he reminded them of David and Solomon and the building of God's temple. Then Stephen came to the heart of the story. He accused the religious leaders of killing Jesus. He said:

Open the Bible to Acts 7:51-52 (NirV) and read.

"You stubborn people! You won't obey! You won't listen! You are just like your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your people didn't try to hurt? They even killed those who told about the coming of the Blameless One. And now you have handed him over to his enemies. You have murdered him."


This made the religious leaders very angry. They were so mad they could hardly stand it. "But Stephen calmly looked up and saw a vision of heaven

Open the Bible to Acts 7:55-56 (NirV) and read.

"[Stephen] was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up to heaven and saw God's glory. He saw Jesus standing at God's right hand. "Look!" he said. "I see heaven open. The Son of Man is standing at God's right hand."

The religious leaders dragged Stephen out of the city. They left their coats with a man named Saul. They all started throwing stones at Stephen, trying to kill him.

"While they did this, Stephen prayed to God. He asked God not to hold this horrible act against the people. He asked God to forgive them for their sin. What faith! Even though Stephen had only done what was right, he died that day."



Jesus had told His followers to live out His love everywhere—no matter what. Through God’s power, Stephen had continued to share God’s love all the way until his very last breath.”

What happened to Stephen was terrible and very sad. Maybe it wasn’t how you expected the story to go. But the good news is this wasn’t the end of the story.

Remember, God showed Stephen a vision. Stephen knew that when he died, he would be with Jesus in heaven. “Stephen was able to keep going because he knew that God was with him. You and I need to remember that, too.

“Keep going because God knows the end of the story.

“We know for sure how God’s One Big Story ends. In the end, those who follow Jesus will be with God forever in heaven. “Let’s pray and ask God to help us trust Him.”

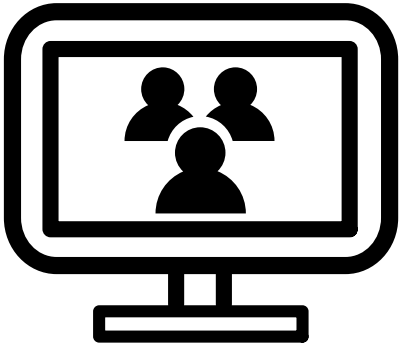


prayer

God, thank You for giving Stephen wisdom and strength in the middle of such an awful situation. Please give US Your wisdom and strength, too, so we can keep going even when we don't know what will happen. We know that we can trust You no matter what, because You know the end of the story. Please help us to remember that when we face difficult situations in life. Thank You for sending Jesus so we can have the promise of eternal life with You. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."

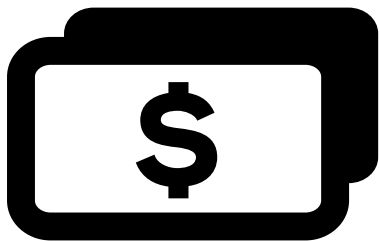


HOW YOUR ELEMENTARY KID CAN STAY CONNECTED



ONLINE SMALL GROUPS

Your child can join an online small group and connect with leaders & friends. Small Groups take place every Wednesday.



BIBLE BUCKS

Your child can earn bible bucks each week by completing challenges or homework



VIDEO LESSONS

Your child can learn bible stories and engage in worship

For more information, follow Cottonwood Kids on facebook and instagram ([cottonwood_kds](#)). You can also go to [cottonwood.org/kids](#) to find resources such as pinterest activity page, bible buck submission or join a small group.

DETERMINATION

Deciding it's worth it to finish what you started

WEEK 4
K-1st

BOTTOM LINE: Keep going because God knows the end of the story.

Read Isaiah 41:10

DAY 1

I'm Scared!

Grab a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. Draw a picture of something that you are afraid of. Did you know that every person in the world is afraid of something! It's true! Determination is also about never giving up even when it gets scary. Ball up that piece of paper and show it who the boss is by throwing it away like a basketball! If you think of something else this week that you are scared of do it again! Ball it up and throw it away!

Know that God is with you so you don't have to be afraid!

DAY 3

Pillow Talk

Grab a flashlight and go hide under the covers for just a minute so you can talk to God. Close your eyes and think of a time when you felt afraid. Do you know that even when you are afraid, we can go to God and He will help you to keep going? He's ALWAYS there. Close your eyes and pray.

Dear God,
Thank You that I don't have to be afraid. Thank You that you are ALWAYS with me. I don't have to worry because You are right there beside me. God, when I feel scared, remind me that You will help me keep going because YOU know the end of the story.
I love you. Amen.

DAY 2

God Is Our Helper

Ask an adult to help you turn to **Isaiah 41:10** in a Bible. Ask your parent about any big words you don't understand. This verse can give comfort because God is telling you that He is always with you. Now take a minute to learn these hand motions to help you memorize this verse.

Do not be afraid – Wave your index finger back and forth
I am with you. – Point up to God and then to a friend or your parents.

Do not be terrified. – wave index finger back and forth and cross your arms as if you are upset

I am your God. – Point up to God and then lay your hand on your heart

I will make you strong – Do a strong pose as if you are showing off your muscles

and help you. – Act like you are helping the person next to you get up

I will hold you safe in my hands. – Cup your hands in front of you like your holding a small object

I always do what is right. – Point to your eye, wave your hands in front of you and then give a thumbs up

Isaiah 41:10, NIrV

DAY 4

My Rock

Ask an adult to go outside with you and see if you can find a small rock. Paint the rock and write on it, "God is my rock." Keep this rock in your pocket and the next time you are scared, hold it and remember that God is our rock so we don't have to be afraid!

Thanks Jesus that you don't have to be scared because He is on your side!



**Keep going because God
knows the end of the story.**

When were
you scared but
kept going?

Day 5

Have you ever been reading a book that was a little scary, so you skipped to the end just to make sure that everything would turn out okay?

**We can't do that in real life,
but we can do something even better.**

We can trust God, who knows the end of the story, and who has promised He will work things out for our best in the end. Paul writes this in Romans 8:28: "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him," (NIRV).

That doesn't mean things will always turn out what we want them to now, but it does mean that even when things aren't going well, we can trust that there's more going on than we can see or understand, and that God is going to carry us through no matter what.

Grab a sheet of paper and cut out a bookmark. Then write the words from Romans 8:28 on it and decorate it however you want. Whenever you're wishing you could skip ahead to the end of a situation remember that you're being held by the One who is writing the story, and that's even better.



Day 1

Go to Studio252.tv and watch this week's episode of The So & So Show. (Click on Fun2Watch! then The So & So Show.)

Even if you already saw it at church, feel free to check it out again!

SO & SO TOP 3

After watching, write one thing that . . .

1) YOU LIKED: _____

2) YOU LEARNED: _____

3) YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW: _____

Day 2

Read Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

After you read Acts 6:8-15 and Acts 7:51-60, go back and look at all the verses in between. It's a lot, but it's basically a summary of God's Story. Stephen believed so strongly in Jesus as God's plan for the world that he shared the whole story, knowing his life was at risk.

The first 50 verses of Acts 7 are determination in action. Stephen didn't back down. He may have been scared, but he kept going. And we see in verses 56 and 57 that before he even went to heaven, Stephen was blessed with a vision from God: Jesus, welcoming him into heaven:

"But he was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up to heaven and saw God's glory. He saw Jesus standing at God's right hand. 'Look!' he said. 'I see heaven open. The Son of Man is standing at God's right hand,'" (NIRV).

Stephen didn't know the end of the story, but he trusted the God who did, and that very day, he was welcomed by his Savior to spend forever with God.

Day 3

All month long, you've prayed for determination for yourself. But you probably also know some other people who are struggling to keep going. Who do you know that is facing a hard journey—perhaps because of sickness, death, losing their job, or having to move? If you can't think of anyone, just ask an adult—they'll likely know of someone who you can pray for. Use the sample prayer below to ask God to help them to keep going even when they don't know the end of the story.

"Dear God, please be with _____ who is having a really hard time because of _____. I imagine they are scared because _____. It's so hard when we don't know how things will turn out. . . but we do believe that you know how things will turn out. You know the end of the story, and we can trust you no matter what. Please help _____ to remember that, and to keep going even when they're scared. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen."

Day 4

Who is the person you prayed for yesterday? Today you're going to encourage them to keep going. There are lots of ways you can do this.

- Make them a card. Consider including a Bible verse to encourage them, like Psalm 27:1.
- Send them a text or email and just let them know you're praying for them.

- Give them a call so they know you're thinking of them.
- Bake them some cookies or drop off some flowers at their house.

Pick a few of these things. Whenever someone is going through something scary, it means so much to know that other people are cheering you on. No matter how you choose to encourage your friend, be sure and continue to pray for them to keep going.

