



SESSION 2 of 4

Stephen and friends

MEETING AIM

To explore the roles children have (or might have) as they serve in church.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 6

BACKGROUND

This session looks at how Stephen and his friends were chosen to continue the work of the Church and help the apostles. It's a very practical account of how they were chosen and commissioned, and a helpful introduction to our thinking about the Church today. Often we don't think about children having a role to work at and contribute with, so this session provides a fantastic chance to think seriously about the contributions children can offer your church. It is worth thinking about following up on their thoughts by giving them some practical opportunities to input into the life of your church.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Invite the group to gather together and get comfortable. As you begin to chat, ask them how their week has been. If you would like to introduce the topic gradually, you could ask: "Have you ever been chosen for something? Why were you chosen?" Give them time to think and offer up their answers.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: paper and pens

Explain the situation... There's a crisis in the world. It's a mess and things are going from bad to worse, but you have been given a secret mission to turn things around. You have some really good news about how to change the world, and your job is to let people know about it and convince them to believe in your solution. The news is that Jesus died and rose again! This is the situation the first Christians found themselves in.

If you were beginning the Church from scratch in a world that didn't know Jesus, what kind of skills and character traits would you look for in the people joining your mission team?

Ask the group to break into pairs and make a list of the top ten skills and abilities they would be looking for in their team members if they were asked to spread the news about Jesus and begin building the Church today.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: copies of the questions below; pens; Bibles

Give the group copies of the following questions (with spaces to answer them) and a pen.

- What jobs were Stephen and his friends appointed to do?
- How were they chosen?
- What other jobs needed to be done by the apostles?
- How did the apostles prepare these people for their new jobs?

Now read Acts 6 to the group, making sure that you read at a slow pace so they can pick out the answers. Ask the children to listen out for answers and write them down. When you have finished reading the passage, discuss the answers they wrote down to help the group learn from each other. Make sure leaders help those who struggle with writing.

Ask the children to imagine they were among the chosen people. How would they react to what happened to Stephen in verses 8-15?

10 CHATTING TOGETHER

Continue the discussion about the passage by asking further questions:

- How is the early Church different from the Church of today?
- How is the early Church similar to the Church of today?
- What are the main jobs the Church needs to do today?
- What can we learn from the early Church?
- Do you think we have jobs to do in the Church, and the skills to do them?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: a large sheet of paper; felt-tip pens

Explain that you're going to explore the question: what kinds of things does the Church of today need to do, and what skills are needed?

Draw out a big table with two columns on the large sheet of paper. Ask the group to think about and list what they think are the jobs of the Church today in one column.

You might want to think of some examples, such as looking after sick people, being a community for lonely people or helping people understand more about Jesus.

In the other column, ask the group to think about the kinds of skills people will need.

If you think the group is too large, or if the children might concentrate better, split into smaller groups to discuss these ideas, then come back together and share ideas as a big group.

10 PRAYER

You will need: paper; felt-tip pens

Give each child a piece of paper and some pens. Ask them to draw a simple picture of themselves. Let them have fun with it and share their self-portraits if they would like to.

Then ask the group to think about the things they are especially good at, and to write or draw them around their portraits on the same piece of paper. Ask them to share these things with their friends. If they're struggling they can ask each other for help in deciding what they are good at. Ask them to discuss these skills with their friends and think about the ways they could use these skills to help continue the work of the early Church.

Finally, ask the group to come together in a circle. Explain that in the Bible passage the apostles prayed for new team members to be ready for their jobs and ministries. It says that they 'laid hands' on each other. Explain that we're going to pray for each other so that we'll be ready to do the jobs God gives using the skills he has blessed us with.

Ask everyone to place their hand on the shoulder of the person on their right and repeat this prayer after you:

"Dear God, thank you for [name]. Thank you for the skills you've given them. Help them be ready for the jobs you give them. Bless their ministry for you and bless your Church through them. Amen."

Having done that, ask them to do the same for the person on their left.

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