**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 2 of 4

# Stephen and friends

### MEETING AIM

To explore how leadership and responsibility is not just about being upfront, but is about servanthood too.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 6:1-15

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

When we think about Stephen’s story, we often focus on his martyrdom and his speech to the religious leaders, but the start of Acts 6 shows what brought him to the notice of the authorities in the first place. With six others, he was placed in charge of the distribution of food. He was full of the Holy Spirit and in this role, he performed many ‘great wonders and signs’ (v8). Stephen and the other six are perfect examples of how all roles in the kingdom are valued and places where we can bring the presence of Jesus wherever we go.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the young people to your group, but don’t share out your refreshments yet. Chat with the young people about what their week has been like. Share their triumphs and disasters and everything in-between. If appropriate, share a story or two from your own week. Ask the group if they have ever been asked to do a task they didn’t want to do. Or if they have ever felt unappreciated for something they were doing.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** food and drink; tables; chairs; crockery and cutlery; trays; serviettes

Before the session, choose some food and drink that is easy to prepare, such as breakfast pastries or cold meats and salads (depending on when you meet). Be aware of any allergies that people in your group might have.

Split the group into pairs and ask them all to prepare a meal to share. Give each pair a task to do – putting the food onto plates, laying out the tables and chairs, making table decorations or serving the food to the others. Set the pairs to work and give them any help they might need. (Make sure they wash their hands and follow basic food hygiene.) Then enjoy eating the ‘meal’ together!

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** pens and paper; print-outs of Acts 6; highlighter pens

Give the young people a pen and a piece of paper each. Ask them to write their name in the middle and then spread the papers around the room. Ask the group to go around the different pieces of paper and write on them things that the person in the middle is good at – this could be sport skills, musical talent, their way of being with people, their kindness. After everyone is done (and you’ll need to make sure that all the papers have a good mix of comments), encourage the group to find their own paper and read what others have said about them. Chat for a moment about how sometimes we don’t think we’re good at anything, but others can see how amazing we are!

Give out the printouts of Acts 6 and make sure everyone has access to a range of highlighter pen colours. Ask a volunteer to read Acts 6 (or get two volunteers to read Acts 6:1-7 and 6:8-15). As the group listen to the passage, highlight all the different leaders (good and bad) that they come across (one colour per leader).

After they have heard the passage, encourage the young people to write words that describe each of the leaders in the relevant colours. For example, they might describe the twelve disciples as decisive or wise. Stephen might be humble, the Freedmen might be jealous or misguided. They might come up with some surprising choices, but use these as discussion points. They may have thought the disciples were too vain to do the menial tasks, or that Stephen should have kept his mouth shut. Explore why the young people decided this, and let others in the group give their opinion.

Focus on what the group thought of Stephen. How did he conduct himself? How did he perform his duties? What can the group learn from his example? What kind of a leader was he? How did he tell others about Jesus?

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the young people these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* What does this passage tell us about different jobs / roles, and how God sees them?
* Which of the people in this passage are you most like?
* Can you see any similar things in your own church?
* If you’re asked to do a more menial job, what’s your attitude as you do it?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** large sheets of paper; marker pens; information about a local food bank

Tell the group about your local food bank (or invite someone who works there to come and talk to the group). Challenge the young people with some ways to help the food bank. Give out the large paper and pens and get everyone to think of some ideas (how to raise money, collect food or publicise the food bank).

Go through all the ideas and get the group to choose one to do. Help the group come up with an action plan and then put it into action! (This will require you carrying this on after the session in the coming weeks. Make sure you involve parents and carers in the planning, so that they’re happy with what you’re asking their young people to do.)

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** Bible; reflective music and the means to play it

Play the reflective music and read out 1 Corinthians 12:12-20. Say that we all have different talents and roles, and none of them are holier or more important than the others. Have a time of commissioning for your work with the food bank (or just generally).

As the twelve laid hands on the seven they’d chosen, pray for the young people, for them to show the love of Jesus as they serve others. You could invite your church leader to do this.

**ALEX TAYLOR**

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children’s Work*.