

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Fifth Sunday in Easter**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**  
*Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One*

**Scripture: Acts 7:55-60**

The Easter season is when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Easter Season is a very special time of year. There are fifty days in the season. The season has seven Sundays, and this is the fifth Sunday of Easter. The Easter season brings about a lot of happiness as we celebrate the coming of spring and Jesus Christ's resurrection. During this time children should be reminded that after Jesus Christ died on the cross he came back to be among the disciples for forty days.

**Peace and Justice**

These 7 Easter Season lessons will explore peace and justice issues. Jesus the role model for Christians, throughout the lessons you will want to compare how the values of the persons being highlighted reflect the values we have been taught by Jesus. The person highlighted for each lesson will serve as a modern day role model for others in your community, be sure to share how their actions reflect the values we learned from Jesus. The Easter season is a good time for children to look at what they have in their community, good and bad, and to look beyond their community and into the past to learn about some challenges that the United States and other parts of the world have faced.

Today's role model is Robert F. Kennedy.

You might consider finding videos online to learn more about the person being highlighted each Sunday.

**A Notation for this week's Scripture**

In this reading, Stephen asserts to the Jewish Council that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. The Jews do not take well to this assertion because they believe in only one God. Stephen is stoned to death and becomes the first Christian martyr. Like Jesus, before he dies Stephen commends his Spirit to God and asks God to forgive those who murder him.

**Theme: Spirit and Courage**

God fills us with spirit so that we might pass it on to others in our daily lives. Our spirit is filled daily often through the help of others that are followers of Jesus Christ.

**Before Class:**

You will need colorful magazines that you want to recycle, paper fasteners (at least one per flower), and tape

You will need UTO Boxes and copies of the UTO information sheet (found in Easter Sunday Lesson).

**Beginning:**

Invite the children to gather into a circle and tell them:

During the Easter season, we are doing some special things. Each Sunday, we will hear a story from the Acts of the Apostles, which is the book of the bible that tells the story of the early Church. We will also hear a story about a role model that lived the way Jesus teaches us to live. We will also be looking at how we can serve Jesus' mission in the world as the Apostles and role models have done.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you for people that show compassion to others. Continue to make people that are kind and full of your spirit. Please help us all feel your spirit daily. Amen.

**The Story:**

[Hold a stone in your hand as you speak. Pass it to the children at the appropriate moments.] This is a story about stones. Stones that hurt and stones that helped. Stephen was a wise and fair man, full of the power of the Holy Spirit. Among the followers of Jesus he had a good reputation and was well respected. The apostles needed help taking care of the people. They needed their time to preach and teach. So they made Stephen a deacon. He would be the person to make sure that the food and help were shared fairly among all the people.

Some people in the synagogue were jealous of Stephen's power. The ones that were not followers of Jesus were furious when Stephen said Jesus was God's son and a part of God. They decided to kill him by throwing stones at him. Stephen was not afraid because he knew Jesus was with him, in fact he was able to see Jesus in heaven. The last words Stephen said before he died were asking God to forgive his enemies. [Pass the stone around telling the children to feel how solid and strong it is.]

Years later the apostle Peter wrote a letter, an epistle to the followers of Jesus. He called Jesus the stone that was rejected, that God used as the corner stone. When you build a building all the other stones rest on the corner stone. Peter invited the followers to come to Jesus, like living stones that God could use to build his church. Remember we said the church is not the building, but the people? Peter told them not to worry if people rejected them. God would use them to build his church. God chose them in those Bible days. Today God chooses us to be the living stones of his church, the ones who proclaim the good news of Jesus by our words and actions.

**Exploring the Role Model:**

Each story during the Easter Season will highlight a role model that the children will learn about each week. Each week as you tell the story highlight the values each person displays reminding them that Jesus is the best role model of all. Today's role model is Robert F. Kennedy.

- Robert F. Kennedy was a proponent of human rights. He was running for president of the United States when he was assassinated in California in 1968. He believed and fought for the rights of others even though many did not agree with him. He was someone that helped many and he gave his life helping others.
- Robert was a spirited person because when he spoke to people they felt better while also feeling hope for their future. Robert spoke to people that were poor, being treated unfair by many, and that often felt taken advantage of. Robert believed in them and shared his spirit with them to help them feel like someone cared for them.

Robert and Stephen were both very brave people. Stephen stood up to say that Jesus Christ was at the right hand of God. He knew that many did not agree with him but he believed this so strongly that he shared it with others. Robert believed that others needed to be treated fairly and that they needed someone to speak up for them. He knew this was not popular. Both Stephen and Robert gave their lives for what they believed in.

### **Questions:**

- What do you remember or what do you know Robert Kennedy's life?
- Do you think your community has some of the problems that the United States had in 1968?
- How should you or your church help others that are fighting for others' rights?
- How can we reflect Jesus' love in the world?

### **Reflection:**

People need to see spirit in others around them before they feel it themselves. Think of two people in your life that need to see spirit.

- How can you show them that spirit is within them?
- Do you know someone that is often full of spirit?
- Sometimes people that are close to us are spirited people.
- How can we show appreciation to those that are spirited?
- How can we reflect Jesus' love in the world?

### **Art Activity: Magazine Flowers**

Ask the children to look through the magazines and to select four colorful pages. Have the children cut three different size circles from three of the magazine pages. They will put the smallest circle on top and the largest on the bottom.

The children will now roll up the fourth page that they selected as the stem of the flower. It will need to be secured with tape.

An adult will need to help the children put the paper fastener through each layer of flower and the stem.

### **Closing Prayer:**

On this Fifth Sunday of Easter we remain grateful to God for filling people with spirit. God fills people with spirit so they might share it with others. Some will be brave and stand up for others. We thank you for those that feel the spirit and help others with it. Thank you for the many people that are filled with spirit. Help us to appreciate them and to see you in them. God thank you for sending Jesus Christ to us and helping us see the spirit in him and in those around us. Amen.

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