

Grade 3—Unit 10

The Martyr and the Persecutor

This unit focuses on the martyr Stephen and the persecutor Saul, later named Paul. Stephen was chosen as a deacon in the early church, to care for widows. He also preached and performed miracles. Stephen was the first recorded Christian to die for his faith in Jesus as God’s son.

Saul looked after the coats of those who threw stones at Stephen. He was on a mission to persecute all Christians. However, after his dramatic conversion, Paul devoted himself to spreading the good news that Jesus was the Son of God. Paul continued his ministry by writing letters to the churches he had helped to start. His letters of encouragement and instruction comprise a large part of the New Testament.

LESSONS

1. Stephen
2. Saul
3. The Apostle Paul

Unit 10: The Martyr and the Persecutor

Unit Information

SUMMARY

Stephen, like Peter, was a leader of the early church. He served as a deacon. Students will learn about the ministry and martyrdom of Stephen. Saul wanted to persecute the Christians of the early church. He was a witness to Stephen's death. The lessons in this unit will trace the life of Saul the persecutor to his conversion on the road to Damascus. Students will learn that Paul wrote letters of encouragement to the early church.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Stephen

Acts 6—7

Paul

Acts 7:54-60

Acts 8:1-4

Acts 9:1-32

Ephesians

Memory Work

Matthew 5:43, 44 (main memory verses)

Ephesians 4:1-6

Ephesians 4:29-5:2

Ephesians 5:19-20

Ephesians 6:1-4

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The First Christian Martyr

First-century Judaism was comprised of Aramaic-speaking Jews and Greek-speaking Jews. Although both groups were faithful Jews, they had significant cultural differences. The rapidly growing fellowship of believers included Aramaic-speaking Jews (Hebraic Jews) and Greek-speaking Jews (Grecian Jews) who believed in Jesus as the promised Messiah.

The early believers shared with each other and freely contributed to an alms fund that was distributed among widows and other needy people. The term “waiting on tables” means distributing alms. We often use the term *deacon* to describe this job.

When the Grecian Jewish believers needed deacons, they chose Stephen as “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5). Stephen also performed miraculous signs and articulated the gospel message.

The church continued to grow under the teaching and preaching ministry of the apostles. Early Christianity operated as a sect within Judaism, with the believers thinking of themselves as truly Jewish. This view was strongly opposed

by other Jews. They objected to the claim that Jesus was the Christ. Those who rejected the message thought Jesus only pretended to be the Messiah, and they responded to Jewish Christians with fear and hatred. Stephen's arrest and ultimate martyrdom were a result of tensions between belief systems and unresolved hatred.

When on trial, Stephen recounted the history of the Jewish people. He reminded his deeply religious audience of the many times the Israelites had turned away from God and rejected the prophets sent by God. Stephen personalized the message, "You stiff-necked people. . . You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!" (Acts 7:51). Just as their ancestors rejected the prophets' message to worship God and live according to God's ways, so these people had now rejected the Righteous One and nailed him to a cross. Hearing such accusations enraged Stephen's audience, and they dragged him away to be stoned.

Stephen was not afraid to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. He remained faithful in the midst of opposition and suffering. The Scriptures describe Stephen's calm assurance and hope in the midst of mob hatred.

Stephen is a faith hero because he courageously proclaimed the gospel and showed love to his persecutors.

Saul Is Chosen

Saul was a Roman citizen who was born and raised in the city of Tarsus. He grew up in a wealthy home, and his parents were devout Jews. As Pharisees, they practiced strict adherence to the Law. Saul was named after Israel's first king. When young, he was sent to all the best schools and studied with the famous teacher, Gamaliel, in Jerusalem. Saul was one of Gamaliel's most gifted students.

Saul believed that Jesus had merely pretended to be the promised Messiah. Such blasphemy angered him, and he made it his mission to stop the apostles and followers of Jesus from preaching about him. He was determined to persecute anyone who claimed to be a follower of The Way. Saul's presence at the stoning of Stephen indicated that he approved of the action.

Saul traveled to Damascus for the sole purpose of persecuting the Christian believers. But on the way to Damascus, the young leader was surprised by a dazzling light and vision of Jesus. Saul, the persecutor, dedicated his life to following Jesus Christ.

Paul's Ministry

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the apostles preached the good news. After his conversion, Saul was also eager to tell others that Jesus was the son of God. Eventually, he spread the gospel of Christ to Gentiles throughout the world. Acts 13:1-2 records God's call to Saul and Barnabas.

During his first missionary journey, Saul began using his Greek name, Paul. When Paul came to a new community, he often began to preach in the synagogue, winning converts among the Jews and among God-fearing Gentiles. Believers were baptized, and their homes often served as house churches. Paul likely did some preaching in the marketplace to reach a larger population.

Paul and his traveling companions suffered numerous hardships as they traveled to many cities on their missionary journeys. Paul's zeal and determination to spread the good news, however, did not waver. His love for the church spurred him to write many pastoral letters to the churches he had planted. He encouraged them to remain strong in their faith, hope, and love.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Stephen retold the story of God’s people to show that Jesus was the Righteous One.
- The apostle Paul, not yet a Christian, watched the stoning of Stephen.
- Saul was a Pharisee and a leader in persecuting the early Christians.
- Saul became a Christian and his life was changed.
- God used Paul to lead a vast ministry of sharing God’s word throughout the nations.
- Paul wrote letters of encouragement and instruction to the early churches.
- The Holy Spirit guides people in founding and building churches.

WORSHIP

Stephen

1. Place a card file with blank, lined index cards at the worship center in your classroom. Label it “Our Remembering Box.” Talk about the importance of remembering our stories. Students will have many ideas of how biblical characters retold stories of God’s faithfulness. Stephen is only one example. Invite students to write their stories of God’s faithfulness on the notecards and decorate them whenever they have a story they feel would encourage their classmates. They might choose to highlight a Bible story learned this year. Or they could write about something in their own lives. Read one of the stories during different worship periods.

2. Many of us do not face persecution as it was experienced by the early church. Some Christians around the world do face threats and persecutions because of their beliefs. Share stories with your class and spend time praying for persons who face such difficult situations.

3. Students may have experienced persecution in one way or another. Have they been teased for refusing to do something they knew was wrong? Some might experience pressure to dress a certain way or watch certain television shows. Discuss ways we can support each other as we seek to follow God. Encourage students to share from their own lives. Surround one another with love, prayer and encouragement.

Saul/Paul

4. Saul was called to turn from persecuting Jesus’ followers and to take the message to many nations. This was a miraculous change. Sometimes we think certain people are so bad that God can’t change them. But when people trust and obey Jesus, miracles happen and their lives are changed around like Saul’s. Have students think of someone who needs changing. Then ask God to work a miracle and not only change but use that person to tell others about Jesus.

5. Saul changed from an enemy of the church to a great preacher of the Gospel. He trusted and obeyed Jesus, and God used him to tell others about Jesus. God can change people today, too. Ask students how God can use them to spread the good news.

6. Many Christians have been put in prison for telling the good news about Jesus. Read “I Forgive You,” from pages 276-277.

7. Paul was called to turn from persecuting Jesus’ followers and take the message to many nations. Share stories of other missionaries who have been called by God

to tell the gospel story around the world. Read selections from the book, *I Heard Good News Today*, by Cornelia Lehn.

8. Invite a former missionary to visit your class during worship several times a week, to share stories and highlights from his or her ministry.

9. If someone in your church community is involved with a program that gives Bibles to people, invite them to tell about that ministry.

10. You might be able to find people in your community (especially if you live near a seminary or Christian college) who learned about Jesus from missionaries who came to their city or country to share the good news.

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers a main memory verse passage, plus several bonus passages to be used if desired. These passages are provided in large format on pages 264-268, to be used as posters or overheads.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

- Students' participation in reading, completion of activities, discussions and writing activities is a useful tool for assessment.
- The symbols students draw on their Faith Hero T-shirts may also be used to assess their learning.



You have heard that
it was said, "Love your neighbor
and hate your enemy."

But I tell you:
Love your enemies and
pray for those
who persecute you.

Matthew 5:43-44



Get rid of all bitterness,
rage and anger, brawling and slander,
along with every form of malice.
Be kind and compassionate to one
another, forgiving each other,
just as in Christ God forgave you.
Be imitators of God, therefore,
as dearly loved children
and live a life of love,
just as Christ loved us and
gave himself up for us as a fragrant
offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 4:29–5:2

As a prisoner for the Lord, then,
I urge you to live a life worthy of the
calling you have received.

Be completely humble and gentle;
be patient, bearing with one another
in love. Make every effort to keep the
unity of the Spirit through the bond of
peace. There is one body and one
Spirit—just as you were called to one
hope when you were called—one
Lord, one faith, one baptism;
one God and Father of all, who is
over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1-6



Speak to one another with psalms,
hymns and spiritual songs.

Sing and make music in your heart

to the Lord, always giving

thanks to God the Father

for everything, in the name of our

Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:19, 20



Children, obey your parents
in the Lord, for this is right.

“Honor your father and mother”—
which is the first commandment
with a promise—“that it may go well
with you and that you may enjoy
long life on the earth.” Fathers, do
not exasperate your children; instead,
bring them up in the training and
instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1-4

The Martyr and the Persecutor

LESSON 1: STEPHEN

Objective

Students will recognize the courage Stephen had to proclaim his belief in Jesus even though it led to his death.

Key Concepts

- God has given each of us gifts to use in the church.
- Each of us can be a part of the caring ministry in the church.
- Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, was the one whom God had promised the people.
- A martyr is one whose witness for Christ ends in death.
- Stephen had the courage to proclaim his belief in Jesus as the Messiah even when it led to a martyr's death.
- Stephen followed Christ's example and was loving and forgiving to the end.

Texts: Acts 6—Acts 7

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials

- Bibles
- Writing paper, pencils, and markers
- Hall of Faith cards (one set per student)
- *God Builds His Church* by Eve B. MacMaster
- Story, "The Mystery of the Thatch" (p. 271)
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: Faith Hero T-shirts, fabric crayons/markers
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: Bible memory journals, markers/crayons

Teacher Preparation

- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, invite a pastor or lay leader to visit your class.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Discuss the term *deacon* and relate it to a position in each student's church. The position could refer to an elder or lay leader who helps take care of people in the congregation. Read Acts 6:1-7 and discuss how deacons began in the early church. What might an ad for a deacon say? What kind of picture would illustrate one believer caring for another? Write students' ideas on the board. (*You may want to have them create ads and illustrate them as an Extend the Lesson activity or extra project.*)

LESSON STEPS

1. List Bible faith heroes. Read Acts 6:8—7:53, in which Stephen retells the story of God's people. Have each student list the characters mentioned (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, Solomon, prophets, etc.) in

this sermon. Next, have students use their Hall of Faith cards and Bible concordances to write a brief phrase about each faith hero. *(Students could mix the phrases for classmates to unscramble.)*

2. Read “Stephen, The First Christian Martyr” from *God Builds His Church*. Explain what it means to be a martyr. Is Stephen a faith hero? What makes a person a hero? Who are some of today’s heroes?

3. Connect to the story. Stephen was faced with an angry mob who hated him. Discuss the following questions:

- Why did the mob have such angry feelings toward Stephen? *(He believed Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus was not the kind of Messiah some people had expected. They thought Stephen was misleading people.)*
- How did Stephen act toward people who did not like him? *(He didn’t do anything against them, but did speak the truth directly and without apology.)*
- Why might Stephen have seen the vision at just the moment he saw it?
- Why might the man Saul be mentioned here in this story?

Divide the class into groups of two or three. Ask each group to brainstorm and write a list on paper of “Things to Do When People Don’t Like You.” Then have them go back through the ideas and place a star beside the four ideas they feel are the most helpful. Remind the class: we want to follow God’s ways always. Create a master list on chart paper and display it for several days, inviting students to refer to the list when needed.

4. Read the story, “The Mystery of the Thatch.” How did this couple respond to people who did not like them? Ask, “Do you think you would have the courage and love to do what they did?”

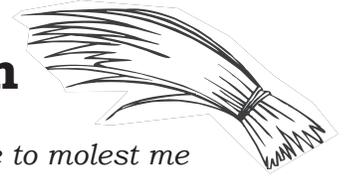
EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)

- **Invite pastors, deacons, elders, or other lay leaders** to come to your class and talk about their roles. You may want to ask them about the practice of “laying on of hands.” Prepare interview questions prior to their visit. Talk about procedures for calling a deacon/elder and ways the church supports that person in his or her ministry.
- **Have students draw a picture** of a person in their school or church who does God’s work by caring for others. Encourage them to send the picture to the person, along with a thank-you note.
- **Work on Faith Hero T-shirts.** Read and discuss Stephen’s Hall of Faith card. Then have students write Stephen’s name on their Faith Hero T-shirts and draw a symbol from his life.
- **Bible memory journals.** Have students begin adding this unit’s memory passage, Matthew 5:43-44, to their journals. As they work, think together about how Stephen loved his enemies and prayed for those who persecuted him.



The Mystery of the Thatch



If Preacher Peter had been awake, he would have heard their quick footsteps as the shadowy figures of the young men made their way down the cobblestone street of the little village in the Emmenthal, Switzerland.

Each step brought the young men closer and closer to the darkened home of the old Mennonite minister and his wife. Life for them had been very difficult, for they lived in the 18th century when Mennonites were still being persecuted in Switzerland.

“Now we will see what kind of a man he is,” muttered one of the young men. “Maybe he won’t be so loving after our visit tonight!” he laughed.

“That is the house,” whispered another as they slackened their pace. Cautiously they approached the darkened dwelling while their eyes searched the darkness.

“No one is stirring. Let us do our job well.”

The men quickly lifted themselves to the roof and soon the muffled sound of falling thatch blended in with other night sounds. They worked quickly, lest someone should surprise them in their treachery.

Inside, Peter stirred in his sleep. The strange sounds continued and Peter sat up in his bed.

Something is not right, thought Peter. There are noises on the roof.

Carefully he made his way across the bedroom floor, through the darkened room and reaching the outside doorway, he quietly opened the latch. Peering cautiously into the night, he could make out the figures of several men busily at work. “What can this mean?” he gasped as he stared in amazement. “Destroying my thatch!”

Slowly the meaning of their actions became clear to him. He knew that many people in the Emmenthal did not understand why he and his people believed it was wrong to go to war. When they had been threatened with imprisonment and death, Peter and his friends had simply stated, “We would rather die the bitterest death than disobey God.”

Now they have come to molest me again, thought Peter.

Raising his eyes heavenward, Peter asked God to help him do what was right. Then turning, he walked quickly into the little house. “Mother!” he called. “Workmen have come to us. You had better prepare a meal.”

The strange happenings of the past few minutes had startled his wife, but now she understood. Soon she was busily at work in the little kitchen. And before long, a meal was waiting on the neatly spread table.

Opening the door once more, the aged minister called to the boys on the roof, “You have worked long and hard. Surely you are hungry. Now come in to us and eat.”

Hesitatingly they came into the room and stood awkwardly around the table where the lighted tapers gave the room a friendly glow. Peter urged them to be seated and finally they found their places where they sat uncomfortably, staring at their plates.

Peter bowed his head and folded his hands while the guests sat in silence. Then, in his kindly voice, Peter prayed earnestly and fervently and lovingly for the guests and for his family. When the last words of the kindly prayer were spoken, the young men raised faces flushed with shame. The food was passed and found its way onto their plates, but it seemed they could not eat. Each sat silent before his well-filled plate.

Suddenly, as if by signal, the men pushed back their chairs and quickly disappeared through the door which they had entered moments before. Once again there were footsteps on the roof and the shuffle of thatch could be heard. But this time it was not the sound of falling thatch. They were putting it back on the roof! Then, if Preacher Peter were listening (and I think he was), he would have heard the running footsteps of his guests as they disappeared down the cobblestone street and into the night.

The Martyr and the Persecutor

LESSON 2: SAUL

Objective

Students will recognize the difference in Saul after meeting Christ on the road to Damascus.

Key Concepts

- Saul was a Pharisee and a leader in persecuting the followers of Jesus.
- Saul became a believer. Jesus changed his life.
- Jesus' love continues to change people today.
- Jesus can change each of us with his love.

Texts: Acts 7:54-60; Acts 8:1-4; Acts 9:1-32

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials

- Bibles
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: “Sword into Dove” activity sheet (p. 275), scissors for each student
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: Hall of Faith cards, posterboard or large sheets of paper, marker
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: Bible memory journal, markers/crayons
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: story, “I Forgive You” (pp. 276-277)

Teacher Preparation

- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, copy “Sword into Dove” activity sheet, making several copies per student.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make signs for categories listed on p. 274.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Making changes. Have students form pairs and spread out into the room. Partners should face each other, looking at hair, clothes, jewelry, etc. Then have them turn their backs to each other and make three changes in their looks. They might put glasses on upside down, untie a shoestring, roll up a sleeve, or a pull a sock down. When both partners have done this, they should face each other again and try to find the changes the other has made.

As a class, discuss the biggest change students have ever made. Point out that before changes can occur, people have to make choices.

LESSON STEPS

1. Give background information about Saul. Introduce him as a Pharisee, from a group of Jews who tried to show their love for God by keeping God's commandments and doing good deeds. Skim over Acts 7:54-60. How was Saul involved in Stephen's death?

2. Have a student read Acts 8:3. What did Saul do to the followers of Jesus? What does this show about his attitude towards Christians? Towards Jesus? (*Saul thought Jesus and the Christians were trying to destroy the laws that God had given to the Jews so he set out to destroy the church.*)

3. Look up Acts 8:1. Saul fiercely waged violent attacks against the Christians in Jerusalem, but he couldn't destroy the church. What happened to the Christians? (*They scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.*)

4. Read Acts 9:2. Where did Saul want to go to arrest Christians? (*Damascus.*) Damascus was a city 175 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Why would Saul want to go that far away to persecute Christians?

5. Saul makes a change. Look up Acts 9:3. What stopped Saul from carrying out his plan? (He was struck down by a blinding light from heaven.) In Acts 9:4, Saul said he heard a voice. Whose voice was it? Read Acts 9:5. What did Saul call him? (*Lord*) His calling Jesus "Lord" shows that Saul now had a new relationship with Jesus.

6. List the first change in Saul's life. Write numbers 1-3 vertically on the board. Opposite number 1, write "Relationship with Jesus." Discuss how Saul felt when he realized it was Jesus that he had been persecuting.

What happened to Saul after the light and voice were gone? Read Acts 9:7-9. (*He was blind and had to be led into Damascus.*) How did Saul act after he was led there? (*He didn't eat or drink anything for three days.*) Why do students think he reacted that way?

Read Acts 9:11. What did Saul do while he waited for Jesus to tell him what to do next?

7. Ananias obeys. Ananias was terrified when God told him to find Saul and help him regain his sight. See Acts 9:15. What did God say to reassure Ananias that it would be all right? (*God had chosen Saul.*)

Read Acts 9:17. What did Ananias call Saul when he prayed for him? (*Brother*) What does that show us about Ananias? (*He was willing to believe that Saul was really changed and accept him as a fellow believer in Jesus.*) What do the students think would have happened if Ananias had been unwilling to change his mind about Saul and disobeyed God's command?

8. The second change in Saul's life. What did Saul do next? Read Acts 9:18. Write "Message" opposite number 2 on the board. From that time on, Saul, now called Paul, preached about Jesus as powerfully as he had persecuted the Christians.

9. The third change in Saul's (Paul's) life. God chose Paul as the messenger to win non-Jews to Christ. List "Goal and direction" opposite number 3 on the board.

10. Have a student read aloud Acts 9:1. What was Paul like before God called him? (*violent, breathed out murderous threats, threatening*) After he began to follow Jesus, his life was changed to one of love, kindness, and forgiveness.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)

- **Swords into doves activity.** Explain that the sword (symbol of persecution) became a dove (symbol of peace) in Saul's life. Using the pattern and directions from page 275, illustrate this for the students. Distribute three or more "swords" to each student. After they make doves, allow children to experiment with making other Christian symbols from the swords. Give them time and encouragement. Their creations will surprise you!

- **Categorize faith heroes.** Distribute one Hall of Faith card to each student, then ask them to form groups, using the following categories (post signs in different parts of the room):

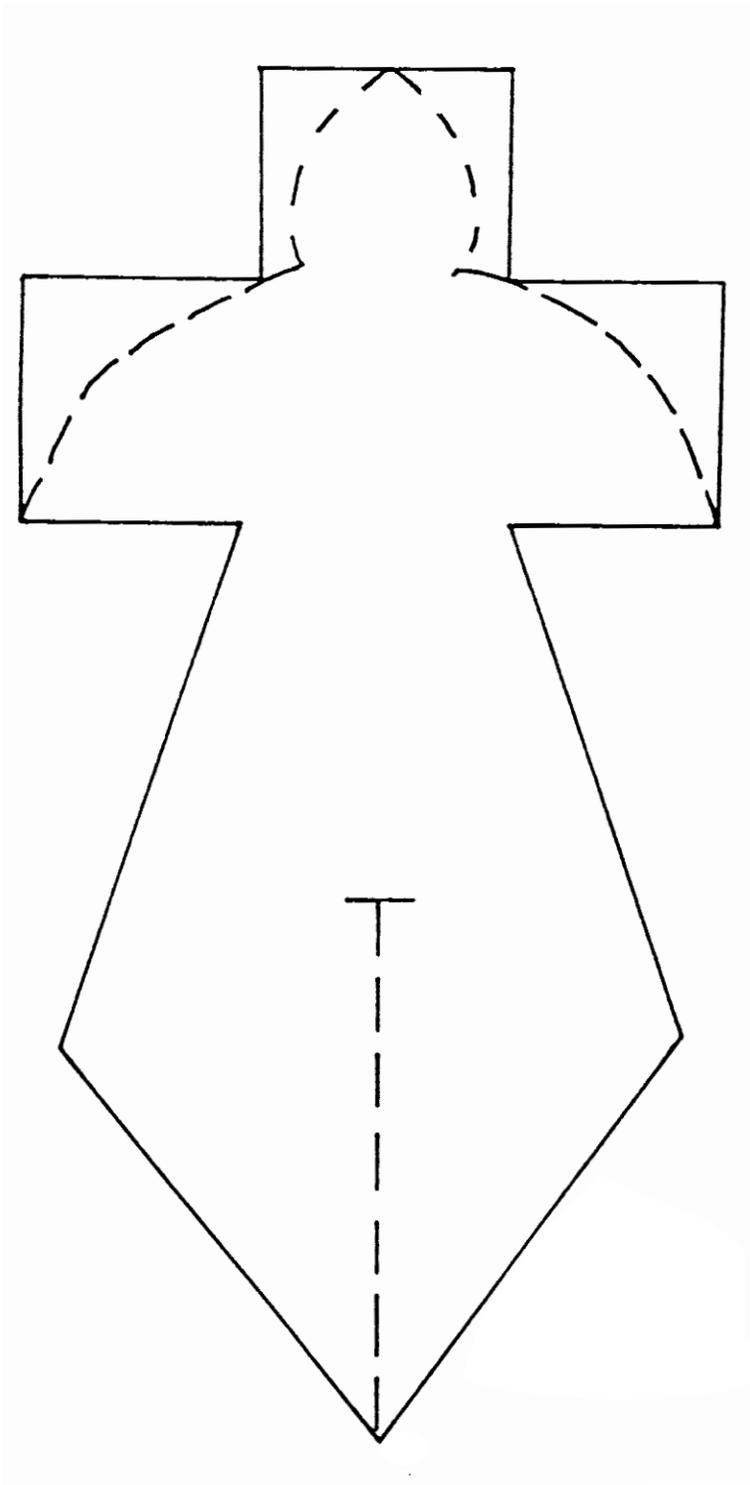
- Old Testament Prophets of God
- Kings
- Judges
- Early Christians
- Names of Books of the Bible
- Risked Their Lives to Be Faithful to God
- Performed Miracles

Tell students that their heroes will most likely fit into more than one category. They should choose the category they feel reflects their heroes most. When students have moved into groups, challenge each group to discover what the heroes in that group have in common. Share findings with the rest of the class.

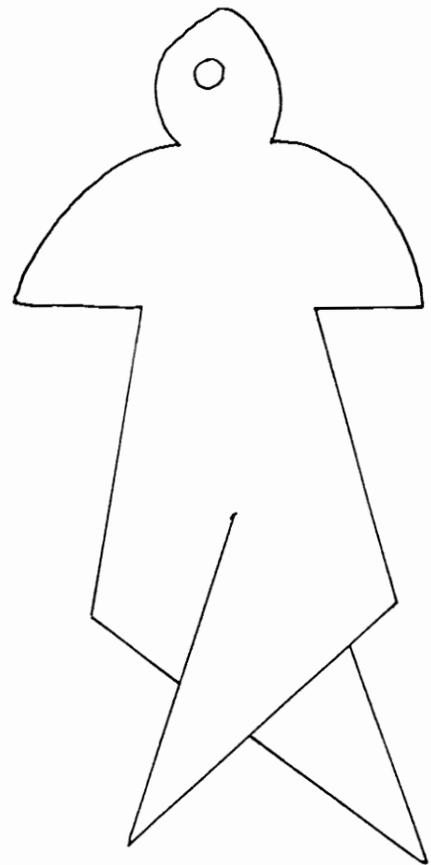
- **Bible memory journals.** Students may continue adding Matthew 5:43-44 to their journals. How did Saul end up loving his enemies?

- **Read "I Forgive You,"** a story about missionaries and forgiveness. After Saul's conversion, he became a missionary and traveled all over, preaching about Jesus. Now he was the one who was persecuted, but he responded with forgiveness. How is the Judsons' story like his?

Sword into Dove



1. Cut around sword on solid lines, then cut on dotted lines.



2. Add an eye and cross the "blade" to make a dove.

I Forgive You

To be a missionary in a foreign land is always hard, but Ann and Adoniram Judson, in Burma in the early 1800s, had more than their share of difficulties.

The officials, who were against Christianity, were cruel. People were afraid to be seen with the Judsons. They knew they would be persecuted if they became Christians. Only a few came secretly to ask about the Savior the Judsons were so eager to introduce to them.



During the first five years, not one person became a Christian. How could the church of Jesus Christ ever be built in Burma?

Ann and Adoniram kept on working faithfully as best they could. Finally, Ann had a class of about twenty women who wanted to know more about this God who loved women as much as men. They were utterly astounded at this news.

In spite of the danger, several men and women eventually became followers of Jesus. Adoniram worked hard at translating the New Testament into the Burmese language, so the people could read the good news of Jesus for themselves.

Then war broke out between Britain and Burma. The Burmese were immediately suspicious of the English-speaking missionaries. What were they doing in their country? Perhaps they were spies.

One day in June 1824, when Ann and Adoniram were eating their dinner, the door was rudely opened and an official marched in to arrest Adoniram. He tied Adoniram so tightly with a small, hard cord that he could hardly breathe. Then he was dragged off to prison and flung into a dark, filthy room crowded with condemned criminals.



Ann was closely guarded at home, so she could not leave the house. She was terribly worried about her husband. What was happening to him?

Finally, Ann was able to get permission from the governor to visit her husband. She hurried to the prison. When she came to the door, Ann saw her husband crawling toward her over the filthy floor, bound with heavy chains that clanked every time he moved. His face, unwashed and unshaved, was haggard, but bright with unbelievable joy when he saw her. He had been tortured with fears of what was happening to her, alone and unprotected.

On the next visit to the prison, Ann carried a pillow, so hard and uncomfortable that even the jailer did not want it. Into it she had sewn Adoniram's manuscript of the New Testament. It was the only copy, and it was not safe at their house. If it were found, many years of work would be lost.

Adoniram was in the prison for 18 months. All that time, Ann took care of the little group of Christians and tried to get food and clothing to her husband, who would otherwise have starved. But, most of all, she tried to get Adoniram out of prison.

She went to the homes of members of the royal family. She knocked at the doors of government officials. She even dared to go to the governor himself. Disregarding any danger to herself, she pleaded everywhere for Adoniram's release.

One of the officials kept her waiting from early morning till noon to see him, and then dismissed her petition with contempt. More than that, as he turned to

go, he ordered her to give him her silk umbrella. It was terribly hot in Burma during this noon hour. It was dangerous to walk unprotected from the sun. Ann gave the man her umbrella, but asked if he could give her a paper umbrella in exchange. He laughed cruelly and would not even do that.

One day, when Ann went to see her husband, the prison was empty. All of the prisoners had been taken away. The pillow that contained the precious manuscript was gone.

Ann hurried to the governor. "You can do nothing more for your husband," he said. "Just take care of yourself."

But Ann would not give up. She went through the city streets until she found someone who had seen the prisoners being marched away. Then, taking the Burmese children who were in her care and her own baby, she walked in the same direction. Finally, she found the prison where Adoniram had been taken. More trouble was on the way.

The children got smallpox. Adoniram had a terrible fever. Ann, with the help of a loyal Burmese friend, nursed them back to health. Finally, she herself became very ill. She would have died if the Burmese friend had not taken care of her.

After some time, Britain won the war. Adoniram was released from prison. And when the British and the Burmese held a ceremonial dinner to mark the beginning of peace, both Ann and Adoniram were invited.

The Burmese officials who had jeered and tormented Ann when she asked them for help were there. The man who had so cruelly taken her umbrella was there. When they saw Ann they turned pale. Now she could take revenge on them. That is what they would have done in her place.

But Ann looked compassionately at the frightened officials. In Burmese she said to them, "You have nothing to fear from me. I forgive you." For the first time in their lives, they saw what it meant to be a Christian.

And what about the precious manuscript? Was it really lost? No! The jailer had torn off the first covering, but had thrown away what seemed to him a useless hard roll. One of the Burmese Christians recognized the roll as belonging to the Judsons, and had taken it away with him. The translation of the New Testament was safe.

That was the beginning of the Christian church in Burma. A hundred years after Ann and Adoniram struggled so hard to lay the foundation, the Protestant church in Burma had 117,000 members.

The Martyr and the Persecutor

LESSON 3: THE APOSTLE PAUL

Objective

Students will become familiar with Paul's letters to the churches.

Key Concepts

- Paul wrote letters to encourage and instruct the early churches.
- Many of the letters Paul wrote to the early churches are books of the Bible.
- After his conversion, Paul became a missionary

Texts: Book of Ephesians

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Student Bibles
- Costumed messenger and "letter from Paul" (scroll of Ephesians)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: Hall of Faith cards for Paul (one per student), Faith Hero T-shirts, fabric crayons/markers
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: Bible memory journals, crayons/markers
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: Unit 10 Review (pp. 281-282)
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: 8½ x 14-inch paper, tea or coffee solution, 10-inch dowels, iron

Teacher Preparation

- To prepare a scroll of Ephesians, copy the letter from p. 280 onto 8½ x 14-inch paper. Then follow directions on page 279.
- Arrange for a costumed messenger (older student or parent volunteer) to deliver the scroll and read it.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option three, make copies of the Unit 10 Review, one per student.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Arrange for a costumed messenger to enter the classroom with a letter from Paul to the Ephesians. Have him explain that he has just brought a message from Paul, who is in prison in Rome. Invite the messenger to read Paul's message to your class.

LESSON STEPS

1. Have students locate Paul's letter to the Ephesians in their Bibles. Identify other letters in the Bible that Paul wrote (Romans, Galatians, Thessalonians, Colossians, Corinthians, Philemon, Philippians, Timothy and Titus). List them on the chalkboard. Explain that Paul wrote letters to believers because he wanted to encourage them, to remind them in what way God wanted them to live, and to

answer questions they may have written to him. Have students locate Paul's other letters in the New Testament.

2. Begin memorizing the books of the New Testament, and encourage the students to continue working at this. You may know a song that sets the names of the books to music. If so, teach the song to the class.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Work on Faith Hero T-shirts.** Read and discuss Paul's Hall of Faith card. Then have students write Paul's name on their T-shirts and draw a symbol from his life.
- **Bible memory journals.** Children may finish adding this unit's memory passage to the journals. Explain that Paul was later persecuted and put in jail many times for preaching about Jesus. Now it was Paul's turn to love his enemies and to pray for those who persecuted him.
- **Complete the Unit 10 Review** from pages 281-282. You may want to use this as an assessment.
- **Make a scroll.** Letters that were written thousands of years ago looked much different from ours today. Letters were written on the skin of a sheep or goat, or on *papyrus*, a paper made from a common water plant. Letters could be several feet long. It would have been difficult to completely unroll it to find out who sent it. So the name of the person who wrote the letter was placed right at the beginning, along with the name of the person or group to whom it was sent. Have each student make a scroll of "old manuscript" paper by using the following directions:
 - 1) Crumple a sheet of 8½ x 14 paper and soak it overnight in a solution of coffee or tea.
 - 2) Lay soaked page to dry on newspapers, then iron it. This will give you a yellowed, creased look that simulates ancient manuscripts.
 - 3) Use two 10-inch dowels to finish the scroll.
 - 4) Assign one of Paul's books in the New Testament to each student. Have them write the verse that tells who wrote the letter and to whom it was sent.

Letter to the Ephesians

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God,
To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Ephesians 1:1-3)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1-6)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 4:31-5:2)

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:19-20)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. (Ephesians 6:19-24)

Name _____



Unit 10 Review

The Martyr and the Persecutor



Directions: Circle T for true and F for false.

1. T F The apostles chose seven men to serve as preachers to the town.
2. T F Deacons were to care for the physical needs of people.
3. T F Stephen spoke to the people, who listened joyfully to every word.
4. T F Stephen accused the crowd of being unfaithful to God.
5. T F The crowd dragged Stephen out of the town to be hung.
6. T F Stephen prayed that God would forgive the people persecuting him.

Directions: Circle the letter of the correct answer.

7. Stephen is a true hero of faith because he
 - a. showed courage and faith even to his death.
 - b. was a deacon.
 - c. has his story in the Bible.
8. A *martyr* is a person who
 - a. loves the Lord.
 - b. gives his or her life for what he or she believes.
 - c. has been stoned to death.
9. In “The Mystery of the Thatch” what did preacher Peter do when he saw what the men were doing?
 - a. He threatened to call the police.
 - b. He prayed and asked God for help.
 - c. He prayed they would go away.
10. Why did the men leave without eating with preacher Peter and his wife?
 - a. They wanted to go fix the thatch.
 - b. They were scared of Preacher Peter.
 - c. They didn’t like the food very much.

11. What did Peter's kindness show the men?
 - a. That preachers are better than other people
 - b. That destroying the thatch was wrong
 - c. God's love and forgiveness

Directions: Fill in the blanks with words from the following list.

Damascus	Messiah	Jesus	Ananias	Pharisee
persecuted	baptized	voice	scattered	blinded
watched	stoned	young	Saul	

12. Stephen's enemies laid their clothes at the feet of a _____ man named _____.
13. Saul stood and _____ as Stephen's enemies _____ Stephen to death.
14. Saul was a devout _____ who tried to obey all God's laws.
15. Saul believed that Jesus only pretended to be the _____.
16. He _____ anyone who followed Jesus, or spoke about him.
17. To avoid persecution, believers _____ to many places, but continued to teach about Jesus.
18. As Saul was traveling to _____ a bright light flashed around him.
19. Saul fell to the ground. He heard a _____ and was _____ for three days.
20. This experience helped Saul to see that he had been persecuting _____, the true Messiah.
21. _____ was told in a dream to go to Saul and restore his sight.
22. Saul was _____ and began preaching that Jesus is the Son of God.

Unit 10 Review Answer Key:

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. T

7. a
8. b
9. b
10. a
11. c

12. Stephen's enemies laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.
13. Saul stood and watched as Stephen's enemies stoned Stephen to death.
14. Saul was a devout Pharisee who tried to obey all God's laws.
15. Saul believed that Jesus only pretended to be the Messiah.
16. He persecuted anyone who followed Jesus or spoke about him.
17. To avoid persecution, believers scattered to many places, but continued to teach about Jesus.
18. As Saul was traveling to Damascus, a bright light flashed around him.
19. Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice and was blinded for three days.
20. This experience helped Saul to see that he had been persecuting Jesus, the true Messiah.
21. Ananias was told in a dream to go to Saul and restore his sight.
22. Saul was baptized and began preaching that Jesus is the Son of God.