

2 Praise for the first of martyrs
Who saw You ready stand
To help in time of torment,
To plead at God's right hand.
Like You, our suff'ring Savior,
His enemies he blessed,
With "Lord, receive my spirit,"
His faith, by death, confessed.

3 Then let us praise the Father
And worship God the Son
And sing to God the Spirit,
Eternal Three in One,
Till all the ransomed number
Fall down before the throne,
Ascribing pow'r and glory
And praise to God alone.

WORD SCRAMBLE

- henSept _____
- yamtrr _____
- uaSl _____
- nsedot _____
- rcwno _____
- loyH priSti _____
- stAc _____
- ulPa _____
- irCsth _____
- someipsr _____

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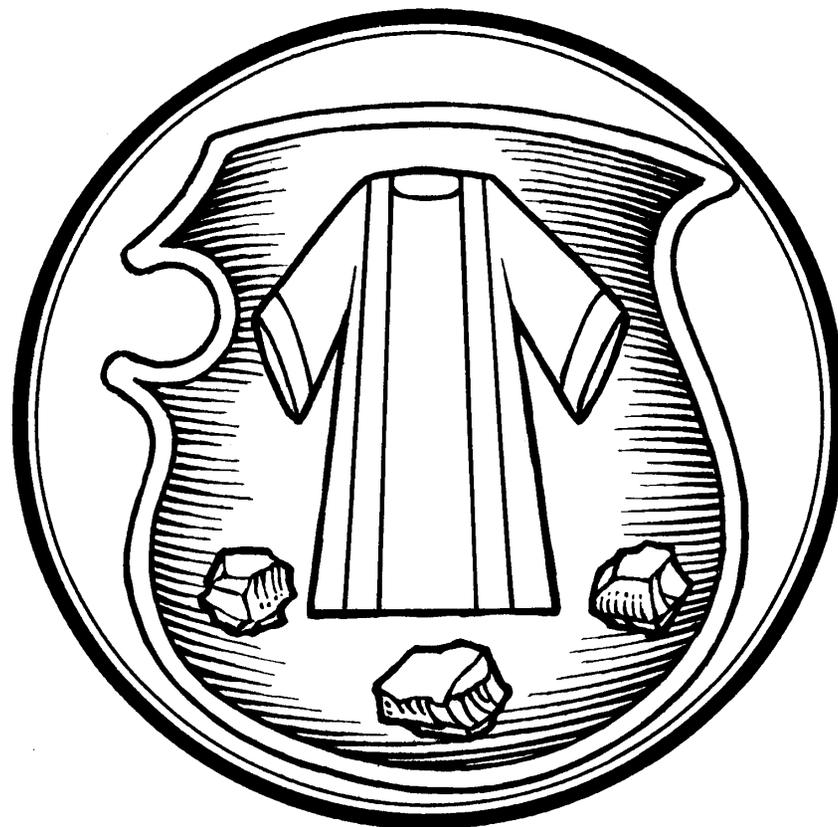
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LESSONS FOR LAMBS

ST. STEPHEN, MARTYR (DECEMBER 26)

The color for St. Stephen, Martyr, is red.



What to listen for during the service?

Listen for music during your service. What instruments do you hear? Do you hear an organ, a piano, or any other instruments? Are there any special pieces of music being played today? Do you know that you have an instrument that you can use every time you are in worship? Your voice is an instrument to sing along with the other people during the service. You can sing the liturgy and the hymns to learn about and proclaim God's Word, and to sing Him praise.

Reading: Acts 6:8-7:2a, 51-60

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. 11 Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12 And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, 13 and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us." 15 And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

7:1 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" 2 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me."

51 "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Questions to talk about with your parents:

- 1) What was Stephen doing at the beginning of the reading? Why did this anger some of the people?
- 2) What did the upset people say Stephen was doing?

- 3) What did Stephen say the "fathers" did to the prophets? What did he say they did to Jesus?
- 4) Stephen was proclaiming the Messiah that had come, but these words enraged the people. What did the people do to Stephen toward the end of the reading?
- 5) Even though they killed Stephen, making him a martyr, Stephen still hoped the people might believe and be saved. What did Stephen say just before he died? Who else said words like these at His death?

People of the Bible: Stephen

Stephen is described as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 6. He was one of seven chosen to help the apostles in proclaiming Christ. He did many great things among the people. Some of the Jews from a synagogue said Stephen was speaking against God even though he wasn't, rather he was preaching about how God has always kept His promises to His people. However, when Stephen spoke to the people of the synagogue about this, they became very angry with him. He spoke about Christ but these evil men did not want to hear about Christ, so they killed him by throwing stones at him. Before he died, Stephen prayed to God that He would forgive these evil men for stoning him. One of the men from the synagogue was Saul, who tried to destroy Christ's church. However, later Jesus appeared to Saul and created faith in him too, so he became a Christian and the apostle known to us as Paul. (We learned about Paul during the Week of Septuagesima.) Stephen had faith in God and even though he was killed, God kept His promises to Stephen and gave him eternal life. The name "Stephen" means "crown," and he received his crown of life in heaven after he died.

HYMN – "By All Your Saints in Warfare"

- 1 By all Your saints in warfare,
For all Your saints at rest,
Your holy name, O Jesus,
Forevermore be blest!
For You have won the battle
That they might wear the crown;
And now they shine in glory
Reflected from Your throne.