

BIG IDEA

Take a big step —
the Holy Spirit makes us brave.

BIBLE

Stephen Before the Sanhedrin:
Acts 6, 7:54–59; Acts 2:1–21

LARGE GROUP TIME

Ground control to space explorers! Rocket boosters are the powerful parts our spaceships need to blast off into outer space. This week we will talk about what it means for us to take a big step and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us and make us brave. Initiating launch sequence. 3 . . . 2 . . . 1! . . . *lift off!*

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Special Spaceships

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Form groups of four or five students and have them work together to build their own rockets. You can supply cardboard tubes, boxes, masking tape, scissors, red and yellow streamers, space-themed stickers, construction paper, and markers. Set a time limit of about eight to ten minutes to complete their creations. Invite students to share about their spaceship with the group.*
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Put out a giant cardboard box and have the whole group work together to build or draw on a different part of the “spaceship.”*
- We are continuing our mission zooming through the galaxy as we learn more about how followers of Jesus took the good news of Jesus to the ends of the Earth! Do you know what would have really helped get the message out to people faster? Spaceships!
- In your groups, design a spaceship that might help you be braver about your mission to let others know about Jesus. Get creative and let your imaginations be out-of-this-world!

ACTIVITY | Space Rock Toss

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each of two to four teams four balls of the same color, like [foam golf balls](#). Throw a small yellow paper plate on the ground to be the sun. Then have kids play a space-themed version of “Bocce Ball” (check out how to play [here](#)). The objective is to get their asteroids (balls) closer to the Sun than the other team’s. Let kids switch out throwers. Continue game play until everyone has had a chance to toss a ball at least once.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *To make it more challenging, lay out obstacles to act as “space rocks” (different types of balls, crumpled up paper, actual rocks) that kids will have to aim around to get their ball close to the “Sun.”*
- The path through the solar system can get pretty rocky. There are all sorts of space rocks floating orbiting

around the Sun, like asteroids, comets, meteors, and meteorites.

- Following Jesus can sometimes be rocky, too, especially when people don't want to hear what we have to say. In today's Bible story, we'll see that people were getting ready to throw actual rocks at someone who loved Jesus. But we'll find out that even in the toughest of times, we have a secret power that will make us brave.

QUESTION | "What's it like to be an astronaut?"

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids write or call out some questions they might want to ask an astronaut. Then show a video ([this one](#) is divided into chapters so you can choose which segments to show) where a real astronaut answers kids' questions about space. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- **If you could speak with a real-life astronaut, what are some questions you might ask?**
- I think I would ask about all their feelings. Were they nervous? Excited? Queasy? Most importantly, I'd imagine they would have to be really brave to blast off into outer space!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Acts 6, 7:54–59 (Stephen Before the Sanhedrin)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the Bible passage (or parts of it) and then share the talking points below. You may also consider dressing up as an astronaut each week as a storyteller in space!
- Hey, space explorers! I'm so glad you can join me today as we learn about true stories from the Bible that are sometimes even more unbelievable than the things we've learned about outer space! It's time to turn from stargazing to zooming into Scripture.
- **Let's read Acts 6 and 7:54–59.**
- This is another story about the early days of when the church was growing. Remember, Jesus had left a big job for his friends – to tell everyone on the planet about him! So they did that. As the number of people who decided to follow Jesus kept growing, the apostles, who were the main leaders of this new church, decided they needed more help.
- So they selected seven people, who were known to be filled with the Spirit and wisdom, to take care of the day-to-day responsibilities of taking care of members of the church. This is where Stephen came in – and Stephen did his job really well.
 - I guess that didn't sit right with some of the people – people who did not follow Jesus – as Stephen's popularity rose. But they couldn't argue with his teaching, which came from God.
 - So what did they do? They manufactured some lies about Stephen and made him out to be a troublemaker. So he was brought in before the Sanhedrin, which was kind of like a court made up of religious leaders.
- And Stephen gave his defense. He told them all about the history of God's people. He talked about how God had been there for them through it all but they in turn rejected the Messiah – Jesus, the Savior – when he was here on Earth. He called them out on all the ways they were disobeying God, even right then.
 - That was a risky move on Stephen's part because his life was on the line. The Sanhedrin had the power to release him or execute him, but he chose to speak the truth no matter the consequences. Sadly, the truth did not register with his listeners.
 - Because he was filled with the Holy Spirit, he wasn't afraid of public opinion or even death. Even up until the moment he died, he remained brave, and the last thing he did before he died was to pray for the people who were throwing stones at him.
- What Stephen did was more than *one small step*. He took a giant leap and risked it all for God. And he was only able to do that because the Holy Spirit was with him.

BIG IDEA | Take a big step – the Holy Spirit makes us brave.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Project the [printable](#) provided and invite kids to take turns using a [telescope](#) to locate the Big Idea. You can also zoom into the image to show kids where it is. Alternatively, print a copy for each kid or pair of kids and have them circle it when they locate it.
- It looks very small, but this is a very Big Idea to take back to Earth with us: **Take a big step – the Holy Spirit makes us brave.**

VIDEO | “How To Stay Alive In Space”

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show a video about space suits ([like this](#)). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** You might want to provide some space-themed stickers, fidgets, or sensory bins for kids to play with if kids are sitting for extended periods of time. Also add in breaks for kids to move around and get snacks if necessary.
- Space suits are necessary for astronauts to complete their mission in space. It protects them, supplies them with oxygen, and keeps them from overheating. Without their space suits, astronauts could not survive in outer space!
- Just like space explorers need space suits to complete their missions, we need the Holy Spirit in our lives to help us complete our mission on Earth. **What is our mission?** To tell others about Jesus, just like Stephen did!
- Stephen had the Holy Spirit who gave him words to speak to others about Jesus. The Holy Spirit in our lives will help us make good decisions, show us how we can love people better, and give us words to say in order to spread the exciting news about God’s love!
- Sometimes we can feel worried or scared about sharing Jesus with our friends, but just like Stephen did, we can **take a big step – the Holy Spirit makes us brave!**

OBJECT LESSON | GPS Through Space And Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare a compass, a telescope, a map (if you can’t find a paper map, a printout or screenshot from Google Maps is great), and a smartphone.
- Navigating through space requires advanced technology and precise timing from experts because of the great distances involved in space travel. Finding our way on Earth can be challenging, too. That’s why all of these tools were once used to help people figure out where they were and where they were going. **Who knows what each of these objects are used for?**
 - The telescope could be used at night to see the stars, and depending on what stars you see in the sky, you would know what direction you are going and where you are.
 - The compass always points north, so you know what direction you are headed as long as you know where you’re supposed to be relative to true north.
 - A map can tell you where streets and major landmarks are so if you can figure out where you are on the map, you can plan a route to get you to your destination.
- Today, however, most of us just use our phones. I can pull up a navigation app and the phone tells me exactly where I am, how to get to where I want to go, and sometimes if there’s traffic, it gives me alternate routes. As long as I have service and my battery doesn’t run out, I should never get lost. And if I do, I could easily find my way.
- The Holy Spirit is even better than a smartphone. The Holy Spirit guides us to see the world around us as God sees it. The Holy Spirit guides us in what actions to do next, what to say, where to go! We are never lost and alone in this world because the Holy Spirit is always with us. As long as we’re connected to the Holy Spirit, we can find the courage to do the things Jesus told all his followers, including us, to do.
- **Take a big step – the Holy Spirit makes us brave.**

SCRIPTURE | Acts 2:1–21

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage (or parts of it) together.*
- This Scripture tells us the story of when the Holy Spirit first came to be with the disciples. Jesus had told his friends to wait for the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit would give them the power to do God's work.
- So this day of Pentecost was when the Holy Spirit came into the lives of the followers of Jesus. When the people gathered were able to speak all these different languages, it was a display of the kind of amazing things they could do with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Not just that, the Holy Spirit gave them the boldness to go into the world, like Jesus had told them to do. The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to continue to share the good news, start churches, care for their communities, and raise up new leaders who loved God – like Stephen.
- Here we are, more than two thousand years later, still being empowered by the same Holy Spirit! You can **take a big step – the Holy Spirit makes us brave.**

VIDEO | One Small Step, Episode 3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Press Play](#).*

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

REFLECTION | Gravity With God

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play ambient music ([like this](#)) as kids reflect. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to do so. For more information, [read this!](#)*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Preteens are becoming more self-conscious as they enter the developmental stage of discovering their individuality and identity, ironically making them not want to stand out as individuals so much. In line with this week's Big Idea, ask questions about what kinds of choices would constitute being brave and discuss what they perceive to be the risks and rewards of being outspoken about their faith.*
- Let's lean into the pull of gravity and come down from outer space for a moment. After hearing the story of Stephen, some of us might feel more scared than brave. It must have been hard to have so many people oppose Stephen for speaking the truth and sharing about someone he loved so much.
- **Is there anything that makes you feel afraid as you follow Jesus?**
- Your fears are valid and these are things you can talk about to God and grownups you trust. God doesn't tell us to ignore our fears and just power through. But God promises us that whenever we lack the courage to follow Jesus, we can always ask for help. And God will help us **take a big step – the Holy Spirit makes us brave.**

RESPONSE | Mission Log

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Distribute the mission log you used last week. Have them respond to this week's prompts with words or pictures. Feel free to pass out fun stickers once they complete their log.*
- Preparing for an everyday mission to tell people about Jesus is like preparing for a space mission. We need to train both our bodies and minds to be ready for what lies ahead. If you have all kinds of jitters and uncertainties about how you can be brave in this way, try these five things.
- **Write the letters of the word "SPACE" in big letters. What does each letter stand for? Draw or write some**

words that connect to the prompts for each letter.

- **S: Say your questions out loud.** What are you wondering about? What question do you wish God would answer?
- **P: Pray.** Talk to God and let God know that you're a little scared or you're not sure what to do.
- **A: Ask for help.** Talk to the people you trust and see who can help you sort out what you're feeling and who can provide you with the help you need to follow Jesus every day.
- **C: Check your feelings.** Did doing the things above help make anything clearer for you or help you feel calmer? What else might you need to ask God for?
- **E: Explore your choices.** What are you sensing God wants you to do? Does God want you to show kindness to someone? Does God want you to ask someone for forgiveness? Does God want you to show forgiveness to someone? Does God want you to share about Jesus? Whatever it is, listen to what you feel God is leading you to and **take a big step – the Holy Spirit makes us brave.**

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 19:1 (NIV)

- **“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Form small groups and invite groups to create artwork that illustrates the message of this memory verse. Have them share with the large group and recite the verse together.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have kids draw the artwork using connect-the-dots, like a constellation in the night sky, using metallic or chalk markers on dark paper.*

PRAYER

- God, thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to be with us as we take big steps in following Jesus. Please make us brave so we can share the good news with others. We want the whole world to know you! Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
 - **What qualities did the chosen seven, including Stephen, have?** *They were full of the Spirit and wisdom.*
 - **Why was Stephen brought before the Sanhedrin?** *Because people made up lies that Stephen was making false statements against Moses and God.*
 - **What did Stephen pray while the people were throwing stones at him?** *For God to forgive the crowd, to not hold their sin against them.*
 - **Read Acts 2:2–4. What happened when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit?** *They were able to speak in other languages.*
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
 - **What does being brave look and feel like to you?**
 - **What can you ask the Holy Spirit to help you be brave with?**
 - **How can you help someone take their big step in allowing the Holy Spirit to make them brave for Jesus?**

ACTIVITY | Brave Big Steps

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a copy of the [printable](#) printed on cardstock paper. On the astronaut, have them draw their own face. On each of the space images, have them write or draw one way they can be brave, or they can spread out the words of the Big Idea. Then have them cut these pieces out, punch a hole at the top, and thread some string through it. Attach all the strings to a wire hanger (secure it on the hanger with tape) and hang them at different lengths. You could provide star stickers for them to attach to their strings (two stickers back-to-back) as a finishing touch to their space mobile.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Have preteens brainstorm a list of “brave” action steps together. Then pass out three to five sticky notes to each kid and have them jot down an action they might want to try this month on each card. Encourage them to place the notes somewhere they’ll see every day to act as reminders.
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Instead of constructing a mobile, help kids cut out each piece (or have them pre-cut) and have them glue it onto a large sheet of black paper. Give them star stickers to decorate the blank spaces.
- We have been taking a lot of steps toward growing in our relationship with God by following Jesus. Every time you see this hanging in your room somewhere, remind yourself to now **take a big step — the Holy Spirit makes us brave!**