

# Easter: Seventh Sunday in Easter

## Lesson Contents

### Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

### Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

## Preparation

### Background for Scripture Readings

#### First Reading

- The first reading describes the death of the first martyr.
- Stephen's preaching angered his listeners.
- The description of his death parallels and contrasts Luke's description of the trial and death of Jesus.

#### Second Reading

- The reading from Revelation mirrors the vision from the beginning of the book.
- Again, Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."
- In the final paragraph of the Book of Revelation, a chorus of voices cries out "Come;" and the One who gives witness at the price of his blood answers "Yes, I am coming soon!"

#### Gospel

- The Gospel according to John stresses the importance of believing that God the Father sent Jesus.
- In today's passage, Jesus' prayer for his followers is that they may be one in love, as he and the Father are one.
- Jesus had revealed God to them and now they must bear witness to the world.

## Breaking Open the Word

## Leader Instruction

### Catechist Reflection Guide for the Seventh Sunday in Easter

**First Reading:** Acts 7:55-60—The stoning of Stephen.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 97:1-2, 6-7, 9—The Lord is King.

**Second Reading:** Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20—Come, Lord Jesus.

**Gospel:** John 17:20-26—Jesus' prayer for unity.

#### **Invitation to prayer** (30 sec.)

Ask the children to quiet themselves and sit comfortably. Begin the session with the Sign of the Cross. Have them take three deep breaths while you prompt them to relax as they breathe in God, our Father who loves us, Jesus Christ, his Son, our brother, and God's Holy Spirit who lovingly guides us.

#### **Listening for a word or phrase** to speak to your heart (3-4 min.)

Read the Gospel passage or special phrase slowly and deliberately while the children are silently listening. Ask them to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they pick out their "word" from God. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

For Ages 5-6 and Ages 7-8: Read aloud the words "**We are one.**" Read John 17:20-26 from a children's Bible or tell it in your own words emphasizing that Jesus wants everyone to be one with him and the Father and each other.

For Ages 9-11 and Ages 12-14: Read aloud John 17:20-26. Ask young people to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they pick out their word or phrase. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

#### **Loving God through his word** (3-5 min.)

For Ages 5-6: Direct children's attention to the illustration as you read aloud the text on the handout. Have children color the word *God*. Talk about how Jesus wants us all to be one with him. Have children add stick figures on the circle to represent all the people we are united to. Close with the prayer. You may wish to use gestures with the Alleluia or sing it.

For Ages 7-8: Have a conversation with the children using the questions on the handout. Emphasize what it feels like to belong and to be left out. Stress that Jesus wants everyone to feel they belong to him and the Father and also to one another. Sometimes we have to reach out to others and help them be one with us. Close with the prayer.

For ages 9-11: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Use the questions on the handout as a conversation starter. List suggestions for actions on the board or chart paper. Encourage young people to act on them. Close with the prayer.

For ages 12-14: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Have young people take a few minutes to reflect on the questions and have them share their responses in the large group. Emphasize ways young people can be unifiers with others. Close with the prayer.

#### **Living the Gospel** words through the week (3-5 min.)

The handouts describe one or two ways children and young people can live this reflection on the Gospel

---

through the week at home, school, or play. If appropriate, have them add one or two more personal choices to act on this week.