



Date: _____

Series: The Early Church
Spring Year 1, Lesson 56

The Winning Church

Take Home Point: *Winning is giving your best for Jesus. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Acts 6:8-8:3 Stephen is stoned after being faithful even to the point of death.

Key Verse: Revelation 2:10 "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

We will help kids know:

- Above all else, we need to be faithful to Jesus by doing our very best for him.
- Steven was faithful. Because of that he was a winner, even though he lost his life.
- Jesus was faithful, even though he gave his life. He won salvation for all of us so we could be faithful, too.




We will help kids feel:

- Passionate in their dedication to Jesus that they would do their best for him even if it hurts.
- Comfort when they lose at certain games, knowing that they win when they have done their very best for Jesus.

We will help kids do:

- Game-like situations that help them get in touch with their feelings about winning and losing, to demonstrate in every day life their faithfulness...doing their best for Jesus.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids have fun playing tic-tac-toe. The outcome of this warm-up is for the children to experience winning and losing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blank tic-tac-toe boards (see appendix) • bowls of edible snacks for tokens
Large Group 	3 6-7 7 8-9 10-11	Overview Puppet Presentation: <i>I Won, You Lost</i> --Gordy thinks "winning" means having the highest score in a game. Video: <i>The Visual Bible: Acts:</i> 6:8-7:15, 7:51-8:3 Puppet Presentation Conclusion: <i>I Won, You Lost</i> ---Gordy learns that winning Jesus' way means staying faithful and doing your best for God. Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordy with a sport's medal • football with cross taped to it (<i>from Fall curriculum</i>)
Small Group Application 	4-5	Kids play another version of tic-tac-toe and learn that winning is giving your best for Jesus. Winning is being faithful to Jesus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tic-tac-toe boards with questions (see appendix) • bowls of edible token snacks for markers

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

The outcome of this warm-up is for the children to experience winning and losing.

Play tic-tac-toe using a blank tic-tac-toe sheet and two bowls of two different snack tokens such as mini chocolate chip cookies and mini Ritz crackers (or other appropriate small snacks).

Divide the children into two teams. Each time it is the team's turn to play, a new member from that team will place the edible token on the tic-tac-toe board. The winning team gets to eat all the pieces. On cat's games both teams get to eat.

After playing several games, or you are out of tokens, have the kids talk about when they won or lost. Ask each child to share one time they felt the best about winning. If enough time is left have them share one time they felt the worst about losing. Conclude with this question before going to large group:

If you were to ask Jesus what it means to win, what do you think he would say?

**Today we will hear about the winning church. We will learn that
*winning is giving your best for Jesus.**

Large Group: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Overview:

Puppet Presentation: *I Won, You Lost*---Gordy thinks "winning" means having the highest score in a game.

Video: *The Visual Bible: Acts: 6:8-7:15, 7:51-8:3*

Puppet Presentation Conclusion: *I Won, You Lost*---Gordy learns that winning Jesus' way means staying faithful and doing your best for God.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to Acts 6:7-8:3 in their Bibles.

How did Stephen show his faithfulness? How did he do his very best for Jesus? *(Acts 6:7-7:60. Stephen kept his witness strong even though he was persecuted and eventually stoned to death.)*

How did the people react to Stephen's witness? *(Acts 7:54-60. They were angry and upset and stoned him to death.)*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

How do you think Steven was feeling as he was stoned to death? *(Acts 7:59 and 60. Even though he was probably scared, he remained faithful to God.)*

Why do you think Steven wanted to do his best for Jesus? *(He knew how faithful God had been throughout the Old Testament and through Jesus, and he had complete confidence that God would be faithful to him.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Today's key verse from Revelation 2:10 says, *"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."* From what you have learned today, what do you think this means?

**Winning is giving your best for Jesus. Just like Stephen, we can be faithful to Jesus and give him our best, even if it costs us.*

What is it you want to do your very best for Jesus? What might it cost you?

Application Activity:

For this version, use the tic-tac-toe board with questions on every square. Once again, you are playing with your snack tokens but each time a game is completed, ALL get to eat a token. To place a token on one of the spaces, one must read and answer the question on that square. Another option is for the shepherd to read the question for the entire group to hear while one person places the token on that square and answers the corresponding question.

To place a token on the center square, one must recite the take home point or the key verse for the day.

Be sensitive and not evaluate or comment much after the kids' responses. This encourages them to speak freely and honestly. Applications can come from the group's response to a child's answer.

Repeat the take home point: ****Winning is giving your best for Jesus.***

Closing Prayer:

Thank Jesus for giving us his best and winning heaven for us so we can have the crown of life.

Ask each child to pray about one thing that they would like to "win at" for Jesus. Then pray for strength to be faithful and that all would be reminded of Stephen and how he was given the crown of life for his faithfulness.

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Large Group Presentation

“I Won, You Lost”

Puppet Script

Take Home Point: *Winning is giving your best for Jesus.

Gordy appears with a sports medal around his neck. He is elated because he won. The skit begins with Gordy’s voice from behind the stage.

Gordy: Gordy! Gordy! He’s our man! If he can’t do it, no one can!

Mr. King: I wonder what I hear back here. Gordy, is that you chanting?

Gordy: *(Appearing from behind the stage)* It sure is. Gordy! Gordy! He’s our man! If he can’t do it, no one can! Let’s hear it, kids. Come on!

Mr. King: Okay, kids, let’s try it. *(Together)* Gordy! Gordy! He’s our man. If he can’t do it, no one can. Well, I can see you are pretty excited today, Gordy.

Gordy: I sure am because I won! I won! I won! I won!

Mr. King: What did you win?

Gordy: I won the soccer game!

Mr. King: You won the soccer game?

Gordy: I sure did. I even scored a goal.

Mr. King: And what about your team?

Gordy: Well, they helped me a little bit.

Mr. King: I am happy for you, Gordy, but I wonder...is that what it really means to be a winner? Just having the winning score?

Gordy: Well, it means more than that. It means I won! I won! I won! And You lost! You lost! You lost! Loser! Loser!

Mr. King: You mean because you won that makes me a loser?

Gordy: Well, I don’t see a medal around your neck.

Mr. King: **What do you think boys and girls?** (*Takes comment from audience.*)

Gordy, I would have to agree with the kids that winning and losing is much more than just whether you have the best score at the end of the game. Winning really means that you win at something much greater than a ball game.

Gordy: What could be greater than a soccer game?

Mr. King: **The way you live your life. Today we will find out from the Bible event about someone who truly was a winner, but he won at what Jesus says determines a winner.**

Gordy: What's that?

Mr. King: **Watch the Bible event today from Acts chapter six and find out about Stephen and the winning church.**

Gordy: I wonder if he is going to get as cool a medal as I got.

Mr. King: **Just watch, Gordy.**

Show Acts 6:8-7:15, 7:51-8:3 from the video, *The Visual Bible: Act*. Show Acts 6:8-7:15 then turn the video off and fast forward to verse 51.

While the tape is advancing, the presenter can refer to God's faithfulness throughout the Old Testament; a summary of what Stephen is preaching to the Jewish council.

Using the football with the cross on it from fall's curriculum, the presenter can refer to passing the promise. Dealing interactively with the kids by asking questions about some of the Bible events in Acts 7:16-50, the presenter can help the children tell brief highlights of the story of God's faithfulness to Abraham, Jacob, Moses and David. This is done to share the content of Stephen's speech in Acts 7:16-50.

Stephen's main point here is that God was faithful to his people and these leaders were faithful to him (Stephen) in presenting a witness. All the promises came true in Jesus, who is faithful even to the point of dying for our sins. Jesus did his very best no matter what.

“I Won, You Lost”

Puppet Script Conclusion

Gordy: Wow, Mr. King! Stephen didn't get a medal for winning. He got a rock in the head.

Mr. King: **That's right. But he won the way Jesus says we can win.**

Gordy: I don't understand. It didn't look at all like he won.

Mr. King: **Gordy, the Bible says, “Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life.” Boys and girls, why don't you say that with me? “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”**

Gordy: The crown of life? Is that when you get hit in the head?

Mr. King: **No, it means that you get heaven as long as you are faithful to Jesus.**

Gordy: What does it mean to be faithful?

Mr. King: **It means that you do your very best for Jesus.**

Gordy: I don't understand. If you do your very best for Jesus how could he let you die?

Mr. King: **Remember he made it possible for us to live with him in heaven. Think about Jesus. Did he die?**

Gordy: Yes, he died on the cross.

Mr. King: **Does that mean he lost?**

Gordy: No, he didn't lose. He beat the devil. He paid the price for our sins.

Mr. King: **Yes, he won. He won everlasting life for us.**

Gordy: That's right, even though he died, Jesus is alive now.

Mr. King: **The same thing happened for Stephen. He was doing his best for God just like Jesus did. That is what it means to be faithful. Jesus was faithful and so was Stephen. He won because he was faithful and got to see his reward...heaven! Now what about you?**

Gordy: Me? I've got a soccer medal.

Mr. King: **Well, Jesus wants you to have a more important medal and that is a crown of life that lasts forever...heaven. To be a winner for God means to be faithful. It means doing your very best for him no matter what.**

Gordy: Can I still win soccer games?

Mr. King: **Yes, you can still win soccer games but you can even be a winner if you lose a game. Gordy, would you say a closing prayer?**

Gordy: Okay. Dear God, Thank you for sending Jesus who defeated death for us by giving his best for God on the cross. Help us to be faithful so we can win the crown of life just like Stephen. Help us to do our best for you even when we have the losing score in games like soccer or tic-tac-toe. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mr. King: **Thanks, Gordy. Goodbye!**

(As Gordy exits you hear him chanting...)

Gordy: I still won! I still won! I still won!

If Jesus said, “Do your best for me at home,” what do you think that would mean for you?

You are in a baseball game. You are up to bat. There is a runner on third base. If you hit the ball, your team wins. And now you swing but...oh no, you strike out! Your team loses. What do you think Jesus would say to you?

What one thing do you try the hardest to win? What do you think Jesus would want you to try harder so that you could be his kind of winner?

If you could have the power to ask Jesus to do something great to serve him, what would that be?

Have you ever wanted to win so bad that you felt like cheating? Tell about it.

What would you like to be best at now? What would you like to be best at when you are your parent’s age?

One of your friends is sad about losing a student council election. What do you think Jesus would like you to say to this person?

What is the best thing that God could give to you? What is the best thing you could give to him?

