



EASTERTIDE

WEEK THREE

A QUICKGUIDE TO SCRIPTURE & CONVERSATION
ACTS 6:1-7:2, 44-60



OPENING QUESTION

Have you ever read an obituary for someone you knew who passed away and thought "What?! I didn't know all this about them!!"

Before you read Stephen's story together, spend some time in conversation discussing what you would want included in your obituary?



BIT OF CONTEXT

Stephen's gifts for ministry led him to perform wonders and signs and speak with wisdom. His words and works provoked synagogue members who were African slaves, along with Jews from parts of Asia. The reference to Jews from other nations reminds us of the diversity of Judaism in the world of the early church. There was conflict between the Hebrews and the Hellenists, a division over language and culture. Acting secretly, these Jews instigated false witnesses against Stephen, claiming he spoke against the temple and the law.



READ THE STORY

Read the story together, praying special attention to the metaphors used for the people and situation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What was the conflict that created the opportunity for Stephen and six others to be chosen to lead a new food distribution ministry? What does this tell us about the nature of conflict?

Do you think "the twelve" were right to divide the labor of those who did the food distribution and those who taught and preached? How is the Church struggling with the same challenges over leadership models today?

What does it mean to be "stiff-necked people" or to have "uncircumcised in heart and ears"? When has this been you?



MAKE A LIST

Make a list of what you think it means to be "filled with the Holy Spirit?" Then consider the ways you embody or resist the ideas on the list.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER