



## Keep Holding On

**Bible Story:** Keep Holding On (Stephen) • Acts 6:1–7:60

**Bottom Line:** Keep going because God knows the end of the story.

**Memory Verse:** *Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up.* Galatians 6:9 (NirV)

**Life App:** Determination—Deciding it's worth it to finish what you started

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

### Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

*Host enters.*

Opener

**HOST:** “Hey, everybody! It’s a great day to be in [your environment’s name]. My name is [your name], and I’m so glad you’re here!

“Sometimes, in life, we can feel a little stuck. (*Pretend that your foot is ‘stuck’ as you try to take a step.*) Things might get challenging or confusing, or just plain hard. But there’s a way you can get UNstuck: if you have determination!

**“Determination is deciding it's worth it to finish what you started.**

“The awesome thing is that God gives us the determination we need to see things through until the end.

“Guess what? I’ve got another sticky game to help us remember to have determination. I call it ‘Sticky Hand’!

*Hold up one of the sticky hands.*

“This is a game you’ll play with your small group, so first, let me give your Leaders their supplies.

*Pass out a stack of index cards and a sticky hand (or two) to each Small Group Leader.*

“Everyone go ahead and circle up with your group. Leaders, you can go ahead and spread out your cards on the floor in the middle of your circle.

“When I say, ‘Go,’ you’ll take turns passing around the sticky hand(s). When the sticky hand gets to you, you’ll use it to try to grab an index card—like this. (*Demonstrate.*) Each person gets three tries. Then you’ll give the sticky hand to the person next to you, and you’ll keep going around the circle until the music stops. If you

successfully pick up a card, give it to your Leader. We'll see at the end how many cards your group can get as a team.

“Are we ready? *(Pause for response.)* Let's get started. Three, two, one, go!

**SFX: Fun music**

*Walk around the room, giving commentary and encouraging the kids. When you get the sense that every kid has had at least one turn, stop the music and end the game.*

**SFX: Cut music (follow the Host's lead)**

*Ask different groups how many cards they've gotten, but in a fun (not super-competitive) way. Cheer for everyone and collect their supplies.*

“Wow! Great job, everyone! That wasn't easy, but it sure looked fun! Let's keep that energy up as we sing and worship God together.”

*Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.*

**Worship**

**Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.**

**SETTING UP THE STORY**

**STORYTELLER:** “Today we're picking up God's Big Story by looking at the life of a man named Stephen. Stephen lived when the church was just beginning—not long after Jesus died and came back to life.”

“As the church grew, there were some believers who needed food and special care. Peter and the apostles made a plan for how to help these believers.

“Here’s what happened.

*Open the Bible to Acts 6:2-3 (NirV) and read.*

“The 12 apostles gathered all the believers together. They said, “It wouldn’t be right for us to give up teaching God’s word. And we’d have to stop teaching to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven of your men. They must be known as men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit. We will turn this important work over to them.”

*CG: Bible story image #1 (bread)*

*Hold up the bread.*

“Stephen was one of the seven men who were chosen to help care for the new believers and make sure they had everything they needed.”

*Set down the bread.*

## **TELLING LIES**

**STORYTELLER:** “Some people tried to start arguments and fights with Stephen, but the Holy Spirit gave him wisdom to answer them. Stephen’s enemies couldn’t make him angry, so they decided to start telling lies about him. They said he had spoken against Moses and God.

*CG: Bible story image #2 (rope)*

*Hold up the rope.*

“This made the religious leaders very angry, so they arrested Stephen and brought him before their gathering called the Sanhedrin. They found people who were willing to tell lies about Stephen. But even though Stephen was being treated so badly, he didn’t look upset. He was determined. His face was like the face of an angel.”

*Set down the rope.*

## **THE BIG STORY**

**STORYTELLER:** “The high priest asked Stephen if the things the people had said about him were true. Stephen knew that God was with him. He wanted the leaders to understand that Jesus was the One they had all been waiting for—He was the Savior whom God had promised.”

*CG: Bible story image #3 (scroll)*

*Hold up the scroll.*

“Stephen started to tell the story of God’s people. He talked about Abraham and Joseph and how God’s people were slaves in Egypt. He told them of everything God did through Moses to free the Israelites and bring them to the Promised Land. He spoke about King David, who loved God and wanted to build Him a beautiful temple.”

*NOTE: If you have the timeline story images displayed in your environment, refer to them as you recap.*

“Then Stephen told them about Jesus: God’s Son. It must have taken a lot of strength and courage, but Stephen didn’t back down. He said:

*Put down the scroll. Open the Bible to Acts 7:52 (NIRV) and read.*

*“You have handed [Jesus] over to his enemies. You have murdered him.”*

## STEPHEN IS KILLED

CG: Bible story image #4 (heart)

*Hold up the heart.*

**STORYTELLER:** “Stephen knew that Jesus was the perfect example of God’s love—even if the religious leaders couldn’t see it.

“The leaders were very angry. Stephen looked up and saw a vision of heaven, with Jesus standing at God’s right hand. He knew that God was with him.

“The religious leaders covered their ears and yelled in order to keep from hearing another word. They ran and grabbed Stephen and dragged him out of the city. Then they began to throw stones at him.

*Put down the heart and pick up the coat.*

CG: Bible story image #5 (coat)

“The people who had told lies about Stephen left their coats with a young man named Saul. Stephen’s very last words were filled with love.

*Put down the coat. Open the Bible to Acts 7:60 (NIRV) and read.*

*“He cried out, “Lord! Don’t hold this sin against them!” When he had said this, he died.*

“It was a very sad ending. But Stephen knew that it wasn’t really the end, because he would be able to live with Jesus in heaven forever.”

## WRAPPING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** “Jesus had told His followers to love everyone and to show the world what God’s love looks like. Through God’s power, Stephen continued to share God’s love all the way to his very last breath.

“We can **[Bottom Line] keep going because God knows the end of the story.** Even when things were going so terribly for Stephen, he was able to keep going because he knew that God was with him.

“Remember:

**[Bottom Line] “Keep going because God knows the end of the story.**

“Let’s pray.”

## Pray

**STORYTELLER:** “Dear God, it’s so good to know that **[Basic Truth] we can trust you no matter what.** Even when we don’t know the end of the story, we can keep going because YOU know the end of the story. Please help us to have the kind of determination Stephen did to do what’s right even when things around us are going wrong. Thank You for loving us and for always being with us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”

*Host enters as Storyteller exits.*

## Closer

*Optional: Place Today's Story Image on your timeline.*

**HOST:** "Stephen was determined. He trusted God. He decided to stand strong in what he believed.

"We don't always know how things will turn out. Sometimes we feel stuck because we feel like life just isn't going our way. But in ANY situation, we can trust God and remember that He knows the end of the story.

"Remember, you and I are part of God's Big Story. God has always had a big plan for an even bigger story. Abraham, Moses, David, and all the people we read about in the Bible didn't know the end of the story. But God does. He knows that the end of the story is good.

"Here's what we need to remember today:

***[Bottom Line]*** "Keep going because God knows the end of the story.

"When everything feels awful and you aren't sure what to do, talk to God. Talk to an adult you trust about how you're feeling. Don't keep it to yourself. ***[Bottom Line]*** **Keep going because God knows the end of the story.**

"You'll get to talk some more about that in Small Group. In fact, you can head that way right now. See you later, friends!"

*Dismiss kids to their small groups.*



