

SESSION 5

THE CHURCH IS BUILT ON THE
BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS

DAILY PRAYER

Day 1: Acts 4:5-22

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's help to imagine yourself in the scene, as if you are really there. All the high priests, that is the Sanhedrin, show up. What do you see, smell, hear, or feel?
- Grace Desired: _____

Day 2: Acts 4:5-22

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's help to imagine yourself in the scene, as if you are really there. You hear the priests question the followers of Jesus and Peter's response, definitely uncommon since the high priests are the leaders in charge. How do you feel?
- Grace Desired: _____

- RECALL that you are in the presence of God.
- READ the passage prayerfully.
- THINK about what grace you desire.
- SPEAK to God about your desire, and anything else that's currently on your heart.
- LISTEN to God's response. *This will take time!* If you find yourself getting distracted, go back to the passage. It's more important to hear what God has to say to you, than what you have to say to God.
- END with a prayer of gratitude to God.



Day 3: Psalm 2

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's help to imagine yourself in the scene, as if you are really there. Imagine you are high above the earth and you can see everything that's happening in the world. What do you see, smell, hear, or feel?
- Grace Desired: _____

Day 4: Psalm 2

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's help to imagine yourself in the scene, as if you are really there. What is your reaction to what you hear from the angel of the Lord?
- Grace Desired: _____

Day 5: Acts 5:17-32

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's help to imagine yourself in the scene, as if you are really there. Imagine you got up early one day and went to the temple before work. What do you see, smell, hear, or feel?
- Grace Desired: _____

Day 6: Acts 5:17-32

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's help to imagine yourself in the scene, as if you are really there. While you're praying, you see Peter along with those followers of Jesus, and Peter starts to talk to everyone. What do you think about what he is saying?
- Grace Desired: _____

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. As the early Church continued to grow, the apostles found themselves being pulled in too many directions to serve the community well. Their response was to install deacons to assist them. Read **Acts 6:1-7**. How did the apostles divide responsibilities between themselves and the first deacons of the Church? How were the seven men selected for this role given the graces needed to succeed? Do you see similarities between the deacons of then and now?

2. When accused by the Jewish people and brought to trial, St. Stephen is given the chance to defend himself. **Read Acts 6:8-7:2**. Examine Stephen's response to being scrutinized by religious leaders who had already put to death Jesus. What is Stephen's demeanor? How does he speak to the people as he begins his defense? What lessons might we learn from Stephen?

3. Read **Acts 7:54-8:1**. St. Stephen says many things while on trial, but it is something unexpected that seems to push his audience over the edge and stone him to death. What does he say? Would you have expected this to be the breaking point? Why or why not? Spend some time thinking about why the people reacted the way they did. Do you think this type of response still occurs today (albeit not ending in death)?



4. St. Stephen is killed for proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ: he is the first Christian martyr killed for his faith. What comes to mind when you think of the word martyr? Do you think this is a dated term, or still relevant today? Now look up the definition of the word. Can you think of ways you are being called to be a martyr in your everyday life?