

PEOPLE CAN
TELL ABOUT
GOD.

PAUL TAUGHT IN ATHENS



LEADER BIBLE STUDY

CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND PREPARATION

(For age-appropriate language, use the Bible story on the following pages.)

LIFE POINT

People can tell about God.

LEVEL OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

People tell others about God and Jesus.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Acts 17:16-34

BIBLE VERSE

Go and tell the good news about Jesus.
Mark 16:15

FOR THE WEEK OF

May 24

Paul's arrival in Athens, a city full of idols (some estimate thirty thousand idols), greatly distressed him. The Greek word used here, *kateidōlos*, means "full of idols," suggesting the city had overwhelmingly turned itself over to idolatry. Paul chose to begin teaching about Jesus in the Jewish synagogue. He knew the Jews were familiar with the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah and would most easily understand the connection between Jesus and those prophecies. Paul taught that God fulfilled His promises through Jesus. Then Paul sought out Greeks who believed in the one true God, eager to teach them about Jesus and the resurrection. Paul taught in the marketplaces, the streets, and anywhere he could gather an audience. Some men he conversed with were intrigued, while others dismissed his teaching as foolish. Paul also sought out some of the leading philosophers of the time, including the Epicureans (ep ih kyoo REE uhns) and the Stoics (STOH ihks). The Epicureans believed that while gods exist, they do not interfere with human life. The Epicureans responded to Paul's teachings with contempt. The Stoics were pantheists who believed that God (or the divine) exists in everything and does not exist as a separate entity. They thought Paul was introducing them to two new gods—Jesus and the resurrection. These philosophers invited Paul to speak at the Areopagus (ehr ih AHP uh guhs), a rocky hill near the Acropolis (uh KRAHP uh liss) called Mars Hill. The Areopagus was the center of intellectual and cultural exchange in a city known for its philosophical heritage. At this site and to these elite thinkers, Paul preached one of the most significant sermons of his lifetime. He opened his message by building a bridge to his listeners. Paul acknowledged that the men of Athens considered themselves to be very religious. He pointed out the many "objects of worship" around the city as evidence of their faith. Paul further emphasized their religiosity by referencing the statue dedicated to an "unknown god," erected lest they inadvertently omit a god. Paul explained that God is not like the Greek idols. He is the one true God who made everything in the world; human hands dictate nothing about Him. Paul's message at the Areopagus was a call to repentance, urging the Athenians to turn from their idolatry and accept the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the assurance of God's coming judgment. Paul's sermon at the Areopagus shows us that the gospel is universal, regardless of the culture or background of the hearer. As you pray this week, ask God to give you the opportunity and the courage to follow Paul's model of evangelism. Ask Him to cross your path with people who need to hear the good news of Jesus.



TELL THE STORY

Gather and sing. Move and sing to “The Dancin’ Song.” Mention that today we will learn that people can tell about God. State: “We can tell people that God loves us and sent Jesus.” Sing “That’s Who He Is.”

Tell the Bible story. Tell that in today’s Bible story, we will hear about Paul seeing idols. State: “Idols are things people choose to love more than God. Some idols are statues—people or animal figures made from wood, clay, or metal.” Open the Bible to Acts 17. Tell the Bible story. The bold lettering is for Twos and the whole lesson is for Threes-Kinder.

PAUL TAUGHT IN ATHENS

—Based on Acts 17:16-34

Paul traveled to a city named Athens. While he waited for his friends to arrive, **he looked around the city and noticed many idols (statues of false gods).** This made Paul very sad because the people were not worshipping the one true God. Paul went to the synagogue (church). He talked to the people about Jesus. Every day, Paul went to the marketplace. He told people he met there about Jesus. Some men heard Paul teaching about Jesus. They did not know what he was talking about. The men took Paul with them to a special meeting place on a hill. They wanted to know more about what he was teaching. Paul stood up in the meeting. He **said**, “People of Athens! I have walked around your city and seen the statues you worship. **I want to tell you what I know about the one true God. God created the world and everything in it. He made all people, and He loves all people. He wants people to love and follow Him.**” Paul told the people about Jesus, **God’s Son.** Some people did not like what Paul told them. Others still wanted to know more about God and Jesus. Some of the people believed what Paul said and began to follow God.

Learn the Bible verse. Ask a child to help you open the Bible to the verse strip. Read the verse aloud and invite the kids to repeat it while standing and walking in place. Say that people can tell others about things they know about God and Jesus.

Sing a prayer together to the tune of “God Is So Good”: “Help me to tell, / help me to tell, / help me to tell, / tell about You, God.”

Wrap up. Sing “Tell the World About Jesus.”





BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ART

Use stickers, crayons, and nature elements to create a “God Made It” creation collage on colorful construction paper. Encourage children to decorate with tree and animal stickers, glue on nature elements such as grass or leaves, or draw things from nature, such as flowers or birds. Say to the children, “God made it!” for each item. Remind children that God made people alike and different, and all are special to Him.

BLOCKS

Add a farm mat with animals. Explain that God created everything we see in nature - animals, insects, birds, plants, earth, and water. Remind them that God helps people do His work. Say, “Thank you, God, for letting us join you in your work.”

HOME LIVING

Add dolls or “students” to the Home Living center along with a Bible and a toy microphone, and invite each child to take a turn teaching what they know about God. Paul told people about the one true God, and children can practice doing the same by becoming “teachers”. Encourage them to say simple truths like “God loves you” or “God made everything” while the students listen. As they play, remind them that just like Paul shared about God, they can tell others about Him too.

NATURE

Use playdough and people, animal, and nature cookie cutters. Allow children to create with the playdough. Talk about what Paul taught. Remind children that God made the world and everything in it. Say, “Thank you, God, for making the world.”

PUZZLES & MANIPULATIVES

Place animal figures, artificial flowers, toy sun and moon on sorting trays. Allow children to sort the items into like kinds. Tell children that missionaries tell people about Jesus! Say, “We can tell people about Jesus just like Paul did in Athens.”