

THE UNKNOWN REVEALED

Paul
Preaches
in Athens
Acts 17:16–34
AD 49

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God makes Himself known through His Word.

BIBLE VERSE

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

LEARNER GOAL

I know God wants me to know and love Him.

LAW & GOSPEL

I sinfully act as if I don't know the identity of the true God. **Through the Word, the Holy Spirit reveals Christ's identity as true God.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

As Paul waits for the other disciples to join him in Athens, he spends time in discussion with philosophers and others in the marketplace. Many temples and altars fill the city of Athens, including an altar dedicated to the “unknown god.” One day, Paul speaks at the Areopagus—also called Mars Hill. He uses the altar to the unknown god as an opportunity to teach the people concerning the true God.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the Bible text and notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the articles on pages 1425 and 1493 in *The Lutheran Study Bible* for more on Christian witness.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Construction paper or tagboard & tissue paper
- Blocks & toy figures
- Hand mirror & Buddy puppet
- Finger Jell-O or sugar cookies in witness shapes (e.g., crosses, hearts, fish)
- Homemade clay ingredients (e.g., coffee grounds, water, flour, salt & cream of tartar) or purchased self-hardening clay, faith imprint symbols, straw or toothpick & string

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible, songbook & classroom supplies
- Copies of *Discover Leaflet*, stickers & music downloads
- Supplies for bonus activities
- cph.org/digitalcontent



LEADER NOTE

Direct the children to an activity that will connect what they know to what they will learn. If class time is short, omit these and start with Jesus Time.



LEADER NOTE

Gather the children by singing to tune “Where Is Thumbkin”: **Come and worship, come and worship** (*motion to come*), **Father, Son; Father, Son** (*put both hands up, then spread out as if on a cross for each mention*); **And the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit** (*roll hands in barrel tumble, then cover heart*); **Three in One, Three in One** (*hold up three fingers, place them into other cupped hand, and pull out with one finger pointing up*).



BONUS ACTIVITY

Use “Gifts for Others.”



LEADER NOTE

Show Bible and remind the children that the Bible is the most important book of all because it is God’s true words for us. It tells us everything we need to know about God and His Son, Jesus.

LAUNCH

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

CREATIVE EXPRESSION Cut cross shapes from construction paper or tag-board and 1-inch squares of multi-colored tissue paper. Have children use glue sticks to glue tissue paper squares to crosses. Ask, **What do crosses remind you of?**

BLOCKS Suggest children build roads and buildings with blocks and use toy figures to walk along the roads, stop at the buildings, and tell others about Jesus. Say, **Today we’ll hear how Paul told others about Jesus.**

JESUS TIME

SING “I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus” (digital resource center) or “Our Church Family” (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 11)

SAY I’m glad to see you! **Who tells you about Jesus?** Accept answers. **Today we’ll hear more about missionary Paul and how he told about Jesus.**

PRAY Dear God,* **thank You* for loving us* and sending Jesus* to be our Savior.* Thank You* for making us* Your children.* Amen.***

LEARN

INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

Buddy holds a hand mirror and tells you to look at who’s in his mirror. Look at the mirror and at puppet. Tell him you know who is in the mirror. It’s him! Buddy asks how you know it’s really him, and not someone else. Say, **I know it’s you because I can see you here, and it’s the very same face I see in the mirror.** Tell Buddy this reminds you of today’s story. **Paul, the apostle, was visiting people in Athens to tell them about Jesus. They believed in many pretend gods. So Paul told them about the real God. Jesus is the mirror image of God the Father. Jesus tells us in the Bible that if we have seen Him, we have seen God the Father. It would be like God looking in a mirror and the face of Jesus showing there.**

Ask Buddy where we learn about God and Jesus. He says, “In the Bible!” **Yes, the Bible shows us who Jesus is. It tells us God loves us so much He sent Jesus to be our Savior! Today, we’ll hear how some people had been waiting a long time to learn about Jesus. Buddy says he wants to learn more about Jesus too. Reply, That’s great! Let’s listen and learn more about Jesus together right now.**

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Tell the Bible story in your own words, using the *Discover Leaflet* as a guide.

SAY THE BIBLE VERSE

Say, **Paul told the people in Athens how God was the one true God. He told them how God made the world and God made them! He told them how God loves us and sent Jesus to save us from the wrong things we do. What did Jesus do? Point to cross. He died on the cross and rose again. How do we know this? Show Bible. The Bible tells us, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). That means that when we hear God’s Word, God the Holy Spirit brings us to faith in Jesus! Through Jesus, we have God’s forgiveness.** Divide children into groups to learn the verse.

Group 1: **Faith** (*touch heart*) **come from hearing** (*cup ears*),
Group 2: **and hearing** (*cup ears*) **through the word of Christ** (*open hands like Bible*).

LIVE

DISCOVER LESSON TRUTHS

Separate each *Discover Leaflet* into two pages. Send the first page home with each child, or put the page into a purchased binder. Hand out the second page, stickers, and crayons.

SIDE 1 Review the story as the children color Paul's robe. Say, **Paul was sad that many of the people in Athens did not know the true God, so he told them about Him.**

Our God is the one who created everything in the world. Have the children find the crosses hidden in the picture and put a cross with heart sticker on the unknown god altar to show that the true God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us and come alive again.

SIDE 2 Say, **God wants us to know Him and love Him. He shows His love for us every day. These pictures show us some of the ways God loves us.** Talk about ways we know God and His love for us. Discuss each picture and read the corresponding words while the children color that image. When finished coloring, the children can tell how they know God loves them and put a heart sticker on each picture.

ENGAGE IN ACTIVE LEARNING

Take time to reinforce lesson truths with one or more of these active-learning options. Turn to "Active Learning" on the back page for instructions to do the activities below.

□ MOVE

Clear a space and have the children line up against a wall or along a starting line to play a game.

□ SNACK

Serve finger Jell-O or sugar cookies in witness shapes. Use allergy-free cookies if you have any children with food allergies.

□ CREATE

Make small clay witness items that the children can use to tell others what they believe about Jesus. Talk about what they could say about Jesus based on the symbols (e.g., cross, heart, fish) they used for imprint.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Paul saw that the people believed in many false gods. He used the altar to the unknown god as an opportunity to share with them who the true God is. He told how God created everything and how God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from sin. Say, **God wants us to know Him and love Him too. Where do you learn about God's love?** (In God's Word) **What does the Bible tell us about Jesus?** Listen for answers and assure the children of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus. **What can you tell others about Jesus?**

LEAVE

SING "God's Word for Everyone" (digital resource center) or "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know" (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 42)

SAY Paul told the people who the true God is. He wanted them to know that God sent Jesus to be our Savior. God gives us His Word so that we can know and love Him too.

PRAY Dear God, You made all of us and the whole world. When Jesus died on the cross, You made Him alive again. Nothing is too hard for You. Help us listen to Your Word and learn more about You and Your love for us. Thanks for loving us. We love You too. Amen.



CHRIST CONNECTION

In God's Word, we learn of Jesus, the Word made flesh, who died to take away the sins of the world.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Use "Ask and Tell" to give the children practice in sharing their faith.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Make an artistic "Cross Hanging," using marbles and paint.

ACTIVE LEARNING

□ MOVE

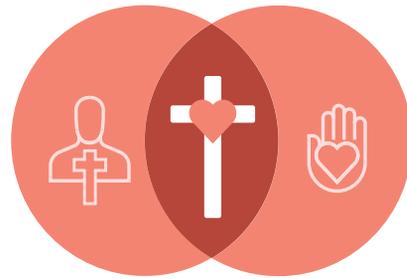
Say, **When I say, “On your mark,” stand still and wait. On “Get set,” get ready to listen for the action I tell you to do. Then listen and do what I say. Let’s practice: On your mark, get set, . . .** pause, then give a command (e.g., sit down, stand up, turn around, wait, hop on one foot, hug your neighbor, smile, jump, pat your hand). Play game, giving various commands. For final one, say, **Tell a neighbor, “Jesus loves you!”** Then have children sit down. Say, **Before you could do what I told you, you had to listen. God wants us to listen to His Word too.** Discuss how God gives us faith in Jesus and strength to live as His children through His Word.

□ SNACK

Serve finger Jell-O or sugar cookies shaped like crosses and hearts. Talk about how the shapes reminds us that Jesus loves us and died on the cross for us.

□ CREATE

Stir together 1 cup used coffee grounds, ½ cup cold water, 1 cup flour, ½ cup salt, and 2 tsp. cream of tartar (optional). This amount makes 6 to 8 portions. Knead the dough, adding extra flour if sticky. Store in refrigerator. Divide dough among the children. Have them roll dough into a ball on a waxed paper plate and use their full hand to flatten it into a circle (about ½ to ¾ inch thick). Press a faith symbol (cross, fish shape, heart, etc.) into the clay to make an imprint. To hang item, use a straw or toothpick to make a ½-inch hole in the top center for string. Craft will dry in approximately 24 hours. *Option:* Use self-drying clay. Paint when dry.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God makes Himself known to me in His Word.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can teach others about Jesus as I share His Word with them.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can explain why it is so important that God’s people remember that God makes Himself known through His Word.

YOUTH

I can give examples from the text to show how God makes Himself known through His Word.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that I can learn about God through His Word.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God wants me to know Him and love Him.

★ BONUS ACTIVITIES

GIFTS FOR OTHERS

10 minutes

Show an offering basket. Tell about a mission project or missionary your church or Sunday School supports. Bring pictures, if possible. Say, **Paul told others about how God is the one true God. He wanted them to know God was the creator and Jesus was our Savior. We give offerings to help other people hear that Jesus is their Savior too. What else can we do?** You might want to adopt a classroom project to send Bibles or Bible storybooks to the mission field or write letters to missionaries to support their work.

ASK AND TELL

15 minutes

Draw faces on a set of plastic spoons with a permanent marker. Give the spoons to pairs of children sitting by each other. Say, **Paul told the people about the true God.** Talk about how God created the world and sent Jesus to save us. God the Holy Spirit works through God’s Word to give us faith and help us grow. We can tell others this too. Have the children use the spoons to discuss: **Who tells you about Jesus? What can you tell someone about Jesus? What Bible story can you tell me?**

CROSS HANGING

15 minutes

Have the children wear paint smocks or large shirts to protect clothing. Give each child a sheet of construction paper with a large cross outline on it. Place the paper in a shallow box lid. Drop a marble coated in tempera paint onto lid and show how to roll the marble over the paper. Repeat, using several colors until design is what the child wants. When dry, cut out the cross and punch a hole in the top. String with ribbon or yarn for hanging. *Option:* Reinforce cross by gluing it to poster board first. Cut around cross through both thicknesses.