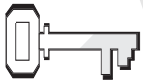


# The Unknown God



### References

Acts 17:15-34;  
*The Acts of the  
Apostles*, pp. 231–242



### Memory Verse

“God . . . is not far  
from each one of  
us” (Acts 17:27, NIV).



### Objectives

The children will:

- Know** that serving God involves knowing Him well enough to tell others about Him.
- Feel** a desire to know God better so we can tell others about Him.
- Respond** by seeking to know God better and to tell others about Him.



### The Message

I serve God when  
I tell others about Him.

### Monthly Theme

Others can see Jesus in us.

### The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Paul is in Athens. He is distressed that there are idols all around. He talks about Jesus to whoever will listen. Some people call him a babbler. Paul is invited to the Areopagus (a place where philosophers meet) to explain more about his God. He refers to their altar that was dedicated “to an unknown god,” and proclaims to them the true God. He tells them about the resurrection of Jesus. Some people sneer, some want to hear more, and some become believers.

### *This is a lesson about service.*

When we know God intimately, we will be empowered to speak boldly and confidently to the most intelligent unbeliever. Not only will we have confidence, but we will feel compelled to spread the word about Him.

### Teacher Enrichment

*Athens*—“The most illustrious city of ancient Greece. . . . It was named after Athena, the patron goddess of the city. . . . The apostle Paul came to Athens in the course of his 2nd Missionary Journey. . . . In dealing with the people and speaking with them in the agora, he found the Athenians inquisitive (Acts 17:21) and religious (v. 22, RSV). That they were religious was obvious to every observer, since there were about 3,000 statues in Athens—most of them probably objects of worship—also many temples and altars. Among the altars was one dedicated to ‘an unknown god’ (v 23). No altar with such an inscription has been found so far in the excavations of Athens, but one discovered at Pergamum bears the broken inscription to ‘The unk[nown] gods’ ” (*The SDA Bible Dictionary*, pp. 95, 96).

*Areopagus*—“The name of a barren, rocky hill northwest of the Acropolis of ancient Athens, indicating that the hill was dedicated to Ares, the god of war (called Mars by the Romans), hence the translation ‘Mars’ hill’ ” (ibid., p. 72).

### Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

# Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
<b>1</b> Readiness Options	up to 10	<i>A. Praise Session</i>  <i>B. Do You Know Him?</i>	toilet tissue cardboard tube for each student, "Praise the Lord" stickers (optional), markers picture of person you know, but children don't
<b>Any Time</b> Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering  Prayer	<i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> offering container decorated to represent where this quarter's offering is going none
<b>2</b> Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story  Memory Verse Bible Study	stepladder or something stable to stand on, brown material or crumpled paper bags, boxes or large rocks, sign that reads "unknown god," Bible-times costumes newspaper, red and black markers Bibles, paper
<b>3</b> Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>What We Know</i>	chalkboard/white board, marker or chalk
<b>4</b> Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Good News Book</i>	construction paper, lined paper, markers, pencils, stapler or yarn, hole punch (optional)

**\*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

# TEACHING THE LESSON

## Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

## Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

### You Need:

- toilet tissue cardboard tube for each child
- "Praise the Lord" stickers (optional)
- markers

### A. Praise Session

Welcome the children, but instead of talking to the children, mime: "Good morning, welcome, I'm so happy to see you, please have a seat" by just moving your mouth and gesturing.

Ask: **How did you feel when I did not talk to you out loud?** (wondered what was going on) **Which is easier to understand, when someone talks or can't talk?** (when someone talks, uses their voice) **All of us here can talk. We have a wonderful God and He wants us to tell others about Him. Many times we are silent just as I was when you came in. We serve God when we know Him and tell others about Him. Now we are going to use our voices to praise God.**

Distribute toilet tissue tubes to the seated children. Let the children decorate their tube. Explain to the class that these are Praise Trumpets and can only be used to praise God. Hold your trumpet to the ear of the first child and whisper a praise such as **Praise the Lord, Jesus lives, God loves you!** That child turns to the next child and repeats the phrase, and so on around the circle. When everyone has heard the praise, say it loudly in unison through the trumpets.

### Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did you like praising the Lord this way? We serve God when we tell others about Him. Have you told someone about Him this past week?** (yes, no) **Whom did you tell about Him? What did you say? Let us remember to tell others of our wonderful God. Today's message says:**



**I SERVE GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM.**

**Say that with me.**

### You Need:

- picture of person you know, but children don't

### B. Do You Know Him?

Show the picture. Ask the class to tell you different things about the person in the picture. For example: **What is (name's) favorite food? What do you like best about (name)? How long have you known (name)? Why would anyone want to be (name's) friend?**

When the students say that they don't know the person, describe your friend. Then say: **To tell about someone, you must know them. Today we'll learn about Paul. Paul knew his friend Jesus so well that he could easily tell others about Him.**

## Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when I asked you to tell about a person that you did not know?** (It wasn't fair; I couldn't do it.) **Who can answer those questions about a person that you know?** (Children raise hands.) Pick a child and have him/her tell about a person that he/she knows, answering the questions. Then ask: **How can you know Jesus?** (By reading the Bible, going to church, spending time with Him in prayer, etc.) **Do you know Jesus well enough to tell others about Him?** (yes, no)  
**Our message for today is:**



**I SERVE GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM.**

**Say that with me.**

## Prayer and Praise



### Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



### Suggested Songs

- "God Calls Us" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 130)
- "Give Me Oil in My Lamp" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 132)
- "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 120)
- "Right Now" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 123)



### Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Point out how the person in the mission story is serving God by telling others about Jesus.



### Offering

Say: **Jesus' story needs to be told everywhere in the world. This quarter our offerings are going to help tell about Jesus in \_\_\_\_\_.** **Maybe you can't go there yourself, but you can share your money to help someone else tell them.** Collect the offering.

#### You Need:

- offering container representing where 13th Sabbath offering goes



### Prayer

Have each child pick a prayer partner. Each child asks his or her partner for prayer requests. Before praying, each child is to tell the other one thing that he or she loves about God. Then tell God the same thing. An adult then prays that all will be more willing to tell others about God.

# 2

## Bible Lesson

### You Need:

- stepladder or something stable to stand upon
- brown material or crumpled paper bags
- boxes or large rocks
- sign that reads “unknown god”
- Bible-times costumes

### Experiencing the Story

#### Setting the Scene

Prepare a small “hill” with the stepladder or something stable to stand upon. Cover it with brown material or crumpled paper bags. Beside the “hill,” construct a small “altar” by stacking boxes or large rocks on top of each other. Place a sign on the front of the “altar” that reads “unknown god.”

Have an adult dressed in Bible-times costume speak the bold-faced words as Paul spoke to the Athenians. Have adult helpers interrupt occasionally saying, “You’re crazy,” “That can’t be true,” “We don’t believe you.” Tell the children to respond to the interruptions by saying, “Don’t stop, we want to hear more.”

**Characters:** Paul, Paul’s friends from Berea, scoffers at the Areopagus, those who want to hear more from Paul

**Props:** Bible-times costumes, Mars Hill, altar and sign

**“Paul” reads or says his parts as a narrator reads the story.**

*[Paul gestures to his friends from Berea.]*  
**“Thank you so much for coming with me to Athens!”** Paul said to his friends from the city of Berea who had come with him. **“Please send Silas and Timothy this way just as soon as you can!”** *[Paul waves to his friends as they walk away.]* He waved as his friends, people who had just recently learned about Jesus, left to go back home to Berea.

Paul was lonely in Athens. There was not a single person there who knew or believed in Jesus. *[Paul kneels down and*

*prays.]* **“Dear Jesus, You are the only One who can show me how to share Your love with the people of this city!”** *[Paul gets up and walks around as if sight-seeing.]*

Beautiful statues, buildings, and artwork surrounded the people of Athens. Expensive temples filled with all kinds of idols seemed to be everywhere. Athens was known as a city overflowing with very intelligent people. But as Paul walked around, he felt sorry for these people. They knew so very much, but they really didn’t know the most important thing. They didn’t know Jesus.

Paul started talking to people. It wasn’t long until his words began to make people think and ask questions. They wanted to hear what he had to say about Jesus. One day, someone invited Paul to speak to them on top of Mars Hill at a place called the Areopagus. This was a special place where the philosophers, men who were considered to be very intelligent and wise, came to talk and listen to the latest ideas. *[Paul climbs the ladder “hill.”]*

**“Friends, I can see that you are very religious. Everywhere I look I see statues and altars to different gods.** *[Paul points to the “altar.”]* **“On one statue I noticed ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ I’m here today to tell you about Him!”**

*[Adult helpers: (You’re crazy!)] [Children: (Don’t stop, we want to hear more!)]*

Carefully Paul began to speak. **“The true God made the world and everything in it. It is God in heaven who gives life and breath to everyone.”** *[Adult helpers: (We don’t believe you!)] [Children: (Don’t stop, we want to hear more!)]* As he continued speaking, many of the people listened carefully. Then Paul told them about the resurrection of Jesus. Some of the people said, “You’re crazy!

*[Adult helpers: (You're crazy!)] This is just a bunch of nonsense!* *[Adult helpers: (This is just a bunch of nonsense! This can't be true! We don't believe you!)]* But there were a few who said, "Don't stop. We want to hear more." *[Children: (Don't stop. We want to hear more.)]*

Not very many people in the city of Athens believed in Jesus. They thought their own wisdom was better than God's wisdom. But there were some people who did become Christians. Dionysius, an important man in the city government, and a woman named Damaris gave their hearts to Jesus.

Paul was able to talk boldly to the intelligent people of Athens because he knew God's message so well himself. What can you do to get to know Jesus better? Remember, we really want to know Jesus so we can tell others about Him.

### Debriefing

Ask: **Have you visited a big city with beautiful buildings, statues, and artwork?** (yes, no) **How would you feel if you planned to preach there?** (nervous, scared) **Why was Paul not afraid to tell about Jesus in such a big city?** (Because he knew Jesus well, and he knew that Jesus was with him.) **If you feel afraid to tell others about Jesus, what will you remember?** (That Jesus is with me and will help me.) **Let's say our message:**



**I SERVE GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM.**

### You Need:

- newspaper
- broad-tip markers, black and red

### Memory Verse

In advance, use a broad-tip marker to write the memory verse in large letters over the letters on a large spread of newspaper. You may

have to tape a sheet of white paper over the newsprint if it is too difficult to read.

Say: **Paul shared the good news, and today we can read the good news for ourselves.** Read the verse together with the children a few times and place your newspaper where everyone can see it.

Place a large piece of newspaper at tables, one piece for every four children. Write the word JESUS in red letters in the middle of the newspaper piece. Explain that Jesus is the center of everything. Ask the children to find and circle the words of the memory verse, within their newspaper, using the verse in the large newspaper as their guide.

When all teams are finished, have all the children repeat the verse together. Continue until all know the verse.

### Bible Study

In advance, write the texts and answers below on separate small pieces of paper. Be sure the answers are on separate pieces of paper. Make sure you have enough papers for each child to find one. Before the children arrive, hide the texts and answers around the room for a treasure hunt.

- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 Thessalonians 5:17 | Pray          |
| Psalms 96:2          | Sing          |
| 2 Timothy 3:14-17    | Read the Word |
| Proverbs 1:33        | Listen        |
| Psalms 37:3, 5, 7    | Trust         |

Say: **Search for one piece of paper, then return to your seat. When you find a paper, look up the text and answer the question "What does this text tell me to do to get to know Jesus better?" Then find the child with the correct answer and sit (or stand) together.** Ask each pair, **What can I do to get to know Jesus better?** Allow time to respond.

### You Need:

- Bibles
- paper

Say: **Paul knew Jesus very well.**  
**What are some ways that he told others about Him?** Have someone read Acts 17:16-18 out loud. (He reasoned with the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue, and with anyone who would listen in the marketplace. He preached the good news about Jesus and His resurrection.)

### **Debriefing**

Ask: **Which of the ways to know Jesus do you do often?** (pray, sing, read the Bible, listen, trust) **How do you “listen” to God?** (going to church; going out

in nature; reading His Word; listening to parents, teachers, pastor, etc.) **When you know Jesus well, what will you want to do?** (Tell others how great He is.) **How will you tell someone about Him this week?** (Will give them a *Primary Treasure*; invite them to church, to Adventurers, etc.; will tell how Jesus answered a prayer, etc.) **Let’s say our message together:**



**I SERVE GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM.**

## **3**

# **Applying the Lesson**

### **You Need:**

- chalkboard/white board
- marker or chalk

### **What We Know**

Discuss with the class ideas of things that the children know about Jesus and could share with others. Make a list of their suggestions where all may see.

### **Debriefing**

Ask: **How many of you have told someone who doesn’t know Jesus about Him?** (Accept answers.) **Would you like to share what happened?**

(Encourage the children to share their experiences.) **How did you feel when you shared Jesus with someone?** (happy, wished they would listen, etc.) **What things that you know about Jesus did you share?** (Accept answers.) **What will you remember?** (Say the message.)



**I SERVE GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM.**

**Say that with me.**

## 4

## Sharing the Lesson

### Good News Book

Have the children make a “Good News Book” about Jesus. Use construction paper for the outside cover and let the children decorate it. Staple or use yarn to attach lined paper inside the cover. Have the children decide to whom they will give it and write the following on the first page: (name of person), Jesus loves you.

On the other pages have the children copy some of the suggestions from the list made in Applying the Lesson. Suggest that they draw pictures on these pages.

### Debriefing

Ask: **Does the person whom you chose to receive your book know Jesus? What will you say to him or her before you give them the book?** (Here is something that I made for you. Would you like me to tell you about it? etc.) **How do you feel about telling this person about Jesus?** (Can’t wait; afraid; hope he/she doesn’t laugh at me; want him/her to know Jesus, too.) **Let’s say our message for today:**



**I SERVE GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM.**

### Closing

Pray together for willingness and courage to tell others that Jesus loves them.

### You Need:

- construction paper
- lined paper
- markers
- pencils
- stapler or yarn
- hole punch (optional)



## The Unknown God

### References

Acts 17:15-34;  
*The Acts of the  
 Apostles*,  
 pp. 231–242

### Memory Verse

“God . . . is not  
 far from each  
 one of us”  
 (Acts 17:27, NIV).

### The Message

I serve God when I  
 tell others about  
 Him.

*Have you ever pretended that you don't hear your mom the first time she calls you? Sometimes we pretend that we can't hear someone. Especially if they want us to do something we don't want to do! A long time ago Paul tried to tell some people about the good news of Jesus, but many of them didn't want to listen.*

“Thank you so much for coming with me to Athens!” Paul said to his friends from the city of Berea. These people had just recently learned about Jesus. They had followed Paul to Athens so he could teach them more as they traveled.

“Please send Silas and Timothy this way just as soon as you can!” Paul waved as his friends left to go back home to Berea.

Paul was lonely in Athens. There was not a single person there who knew or believed in Jesus. “Dear Jesus,” he prayed, “show me how to share Your love with the people of this city!”

Beautiful statues, buildings, and artwork surrounded the people of Athens. Expensive temples filled with all kinds of idols seemed to be everywhere. Athens was known as a city overflowing with intelligent people. But as Paul walked around, he felt sorry for these people. They thought they knew so much. But they really didn't know the most important thing. They didn't know Jesus.

Paul started talking to people. Soon his words began to make people think and ask questions. They wanted to hear what he had to say about Jesus. One day, someone invited Paul to speak at the Areopagus on top of Mars Hill. The Areopagus was a special place where philosophers met to talk and listen to the



latest ideas. Such men were considered to be very intelligent and wise. It was an honor to be invited to speak there.

“Friends,” Paul began, “I can see that you are very religious. Everywhere I look I see statues and altars to different gods. On one statue I noticed the words: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. I'm here today to tell you about Him!”

“The true God of heaven made the world and everything in it. It is God in heaven who gives life and breath to everyone.” As he continued speaking, many of the people listened carefully. Then Paul told them about the resurrection of Jesus. Some of the people said, “You're crazy! This is just a bunch of nonsense!” But there were a few who said, “We want to hear more.”

Not very many people in the city of Athens believed in Jesus. They thought their own wisdom was better than God's wisdom. But there were some who became Christians. Dionysius (*dee-on-oo'-see-os*), an important man in the city government, and a woman named Damaris gave their hearts to Jesus.

Paul was able to talk boldly to the intelligent people of Athens because he knew God himself. What can you do to get to know Jesus better? Do you really want to know Jesus so you can tell others about Him?

## Daily Activities

### Sabbath

- Studying nature is one way to know God better. If possible, take a nature walk with your family. Try to learn something new. Plan to tell a friend, or someone who doesn't know God what you learned. Find a quiet place and read your Bible lesson story together.
- Read Acts 17:24-27 together. Your memory verse is part of verse 27.
- Sing about God's love, and then pray together.

### Sunday

- During family worship, read and discuss together Acts 17:15-18. How can your family share the good news about Jesus with other people? Write two ideas here:

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- Make a "Good News Letter" about your family. Write about good things that have happened to your family. Tell about the best news—Jesus. Decorate with pictures. Give copies to your friends and relatives. Pray for each one you give it to.
- Say your memory verse together.

### Monday

- Read Acts 17:19-23 with your family. How did Paul share the good news about Jesus? Write here what was written on an altar in Athens:

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- What would you tell about the true God?
- If you have a telephone answering machine, record a happy greeting, using song, humor, or rhyming words to introduce people to the good news about Jesus. Pray for those who hear it.
- Make up a tune for your memory verse.

### Tuesday

- For worship today, read the rest of Paul's ser-

mon to the Athenians in Acts 17:24-31. What is your favorite part?

- Have you given away the "Good News Book" you made in Sabbath School?
- Unscramble your memory verse by using the code below: Gzd is nzt fqr frzm yqch zny zf xs (Qcts 17:27). CODE: q=a; z=o; y=e; x=u

### Wednesday

- If you gave away your "Good News Book," tell about it during family worship. With your family, read Acts 17:32-34. How did the people of Athens react when Paul told them the good news about Jesus?
- Which four Bible books come before Acts? They are called the four \_\_\_\_\_. (Ask your family.)
- Say your memory verse. Draw a picture of what it means to you. Thank God for always being near you.

### Thursday

- With your family, read the three Bible texts below. Find something about Jesus that you could share with others.  
1 Peter 5:7   Matthew 7:9-11   Matthew 6:25
- Make three bookmarks. Put each text and the sentence that goes with it on a different one. Decorate and give them to friends.
- Thank God for the Bible.

### Friday

- During Friday evening worship, act out your lesson story. Say your memory verse. Tell about sharing the good news this week. Who else enjoyed telling the good news about Jesus?
- Play some Christmas music while you read Luke 2:8-14. Write Luke 2:10 and a joyful message on a postcard. Decorate it and mail it to someone who needs encouragement. You can celebrate Christmas any time!
- Sing about God's love, then pray together.