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Paul in Athens , The Unknown God

Scripture: Acts 17:16-34

Theme: We can share Jesus with people who don't know Him yet

PreK-K (Ages 3-5)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

This Sunday school lesson explores how Paul shared Jesus with people who didn't know Him in Athens, a city full of statues and temples to many gods. In Acts 17, Paul noticed an altar with a strange inscription: "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." This shows that even in places where people worshipped many gods, there was still one true God they didn't know about, God wanted everyone to hear the good news! The lesson teaches that we can share Jesus with anyone, just like Paul did, by talking about love, kindness, and the One God who made everything. The key verse, "For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship, and this is what I am going to proclaim to you." means Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

One day, Paul and Silas traveled to Athens, a big city with many tall buildings and busy streets. While Paul walked around, he noticed many statues and altars in the marketplace. Some were for gods people worshipped, but he saw one special one: an altar with a sign that said, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' This made Paul think, 'Maybe people here don't know who God really is!

Paul stood near the altar and called out to the people, 'Friends, I see that you worship many gods, but you don't know the real God. That God made the earth and all the stars! He is the same God who loves everyone, just like Jesus loves you!' He shared how Jesus is the only way to be close to God forever. Some listened, and others scoffed, saying, 'We don't need to hear this!

The next day, Paul went to meet the wise men who studied the stars and the past. He said, 'I know a God who is not far from any of us, He is the same God who makes things happen in our lives!' The men were curious and asked, 'What should we do to be ready for this God?' Paul replied, 'Believe in Jesus, and you will have a new life with Him!' Many believed, and the city was happy to hear about the good news!

Key Verse

Acts 17:23 , 'For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship , and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.'

The key verse (Acts 17:23 , 'For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship , and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.') calls us to respond to God's truth.

Prayer Focus

Here is the revised draft, ensuring it is exactly 83 words long: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us. We love Jesus very much! Pau Paul told a story about the unknown God. He shared His love in Athens. Can we do that too? Let's raise our hands high. We want to share Jesus too. Lord, please help us talk to people who do not know Him. Give us brave hear hearts and kind tongues. Help us love everyone near and far. Show us what i it means to help. Thank You for Your love. We ask for Your help. Amen.

>> Missions Spotlight

In secular Western Europe and North America, many people have 'unknown gods' , they believe in something but don't know who God really is. Paul's approach in Athens gives us a model for sharing Jesus in post-Christian cultures.

-> To the Cross

Paul found an altar to 'an unknown god' and used it as a bridge to share the Gospel. He told the Athenians that the God they didn't know was the God who made everything , and that He proved it by raising Jesus from the dead. The cross was his climax.