

Paul Preaches in Athens on Mars Hill

Acts 17:16-34



New Testament 6
Part 1: The Apostle Paul

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 6 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 17:16-34

MEMORY WORK:

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the Earth” (Colossians 3:2).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

“[Saul of Tarsus](#)”

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Paul & the Fruit of the Spirit](#) Bible fact cards (provided under “N.T. 6 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)
- “Summary of the Bible” from “[Kids Prep](#)” CD by Jeff Miller
- Pictures/drawings from any books listed under 3rd-4th Grader Pre-Class Activities/ Learning Centers
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- “[Map of Paul's Evangelistic Trips](#)” (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- Life of Paul (Series 2) A Beka picture set (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, *not the lesson book*)
- Pictures or examples of idols

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I must never let anything or anyone become more important to me than God.



LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Who can tell me what we studied about last week? What happened to Paul and Silas? (Review) Even though Paul sometimes got into trouble for preaching and doing the Lord's work, he kept on preaching and teaching about Jesus. Today we are going to talk about Paul preaching at a place called Mars Hill. This was a place where people worshipped idols. Idols were statues of things or gods that the people worshipped. (Briefly explain idols or show pictures in an age appropriate way.) There is only one true God in heaven and that's Whom we should worship. Paul wanted to teach the people about the one true God!

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week's lesson.

Discuss what idols are, showing pictures of ancient and modern idols (from Internet or *National Geographic* magazine, etc.). The Bible is full of examples of people worshipping idols and of God's reaction to this. Today we are going to talk about Paul visiting a place called Mars Hill in Athens. In Athens he was shocked at how many idols he saw. Paul wanted to teach the people about the one true God. Let's see what happened.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. When Paul left Philippi (about A.D. 50), he continued his travels preaching about Jesus. There was more danger and mistreatment for him everywhere he went. Jews from other cities would even follow him from one city to another to stir up trouble against Paul and his friends. Sometimes he was lonely (1 Thessalonians 3:1). Even though Timothy and Silas later joined Paul, sometimes they left him to preach in other places (Acts 3:1; Acts 6; Acts 18:5; 2 Corinthians 11:8ff). So Paul went to Athens by himself.
2. At this point in history, Athens was no longer the great center of education and philosophy that it had been (during the days of Plato and Socrates, etc.—300-400 B.C.), but it was still important because of its art and architecture. The great monuments (like the Parthenon) did not impress Paul as he walked through the great city. The streets were probably lined with statues of men and Greek gods. Paul, being very well educated, knew about the Greek idols, but he was most concerned about how to turn the peoples' attention away from idols and toward the one true God. [You may want to describe some of the Greek gods, as age appropriate.]
3. Paul tried to teach the Jews and the "God-fearing Gentiles" in the synagogue and in the marketplace. He became involved in a public debate with different **philosophers** (Acts 17:21). He spoke to a crowd at a place called Mars Hill. They accused him of being a "**babbler**" when he told them about Jesus and His resurrection; the idea of a man coming back to life was ridiculous to them.



NOTE: The Greek word for "**babbler**" literally meant "a seed-picker," like a bird hopping about looking for seeds, i.e., "one who makes his living picking up scraps." It came to mean something like "bird brain."



Philosopher: well-educated man who was known for his "deep," logical thinking

- Paul was taken to a place called the **Areopagus** to explain what he was teaching. He spoke to them about the one true God who created the Universe and everything in it—the One who designed and ordered the whole Universe, of which they were a part. Paul said the Creator is the Source of all things—not a god who has to be given food, not a god that had been shaped with man’s hands. He is the Creator of all the world. Paul told them that God revealed Himself through what He has made, has been active in human history, and is not far from each one of us.



NOTE: The “Areopagus” was also called Mars Hill or the Hill of Ares, the god of war.

- Paul ended his lesson by telling the Athenians that the one true God (whom they called “the unknown god”) expects us to obey Him. He told them that they needed to repent (change their ways of thinking which would then cause them to change the way they lived) because a day of judgment, and a final resurrection, is coming for all men everywhere. Some of those listening to Paul made fun of him, some believed his message, and some wanted to hear more.



HISTORICAL NOTE: Greeks believed different things about the soul and afterlife, but none of them believed in a resurrection. They believed that time and earth would have no end and that men would not face a final judgment.

- The Greeks and Romans were not the first to worship idols, of course. Throughout the Bible we can read about people who worshipped idols. The Egyptians worshipped the Sun, the Moon, the Nile River, crocodiles, and many other things. Even today, there are people who worship animals, plants, angels, and even other men. God has never approved of idol worship, and many scriptures teach against it (e.g., Exodus 20:3; Matthew 4:10; Revelation 19:10).
- Even if we don’t worship statues or things in nature, if we aren’t careful, we can worship things instead of God. If anything becomes more important to us than God (TV, video games, sports, friends, etc.), we make God just as unhappy as if we were to worship a statue.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Paul and the Philosophers Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “Get the Scoop on Paul” review game: On a poster board, glue ice cream cones on which you have questions about Paul from this unit. Write the answers on ice cream scoops of different colors. Stick Velcro® to the poster board where the scoops should go and then put Velcro® on back of scoops so they can be matched to the right cones. Help the children match the correct answers with the review questions. (“Ice Cream Scoop Cutouts” and “Ice Cream Cone Cutouts” [provided in activity sheets](#))
- Make sight word cards using key words from this and previous lessons in this unit (Paul, Saul, Lydia, Silas, jailer, Stephen, etc.). Hide the words around the classroom before class. After you have gone over each word with the children, let them go on a “scavenger hunt” to find the words in your classroom. For each card a child finds, he must tell something about that word/person. (“[Sight](#)

[Word Cards Activity](#)” provided in activity sheets)

- Make a hop-scotch grid on the floor with masking tape. Let the children take turns tossing a beanbag onto a square on the grid, jumping to that square, and then answering a question about this and previous lessons in this unit. He/she can continue until a question is missed.

1st-2nd Graders:

- “Life of Paul” egg carton game: In each section of an egg carton, write places where important events happened in Paul’s life. Write statements or questions describing what happened to Paul in each place on small scrolls or small cardboard disks. Have the students match each question to its correct answer by putting the scroll/disk in the correct section of the carton.
- “Paul’s Journey” game: Use a quarter sheet of poster board, a file folder, or to make it bigger, use a shower curtain or plastic tablecloth. Draw spaces (with a start and finish) on which to move game pieces. Game pieces can be juice carton lids, small cars, colored cardboard discs, etc. Each child spins a spinner or rolls a die to determine how many spaces to move. He/she then must answer a review question about Paul and his “adventures” (questions over the unit) before moving his/her game piece from space to space.
- “Ants in Your Pants” game: Make two copies of a blue jeans pattern (or any other pants). Label one “Paul” and the other “Peter.” Glue pants onto poster board or the inside of a file folder. Cut out 10-12 “ants” on red cardstock or construction paper. Write clues about Paul on five or six ants and clues about Peter on the rest. Students read the clues and decide which apostle is being described. Velcro® (or glue/tape) the ants to the correct pants. (“[Blue Jean Cutout](#)” and “[Ant Cutouts](#)” provided in activity sheets)
- Make a hop-scotch grid on the floor with masking tape. Let the children take turns tossing a beanbag onto a square on the grid, jumping to that square, and then answering a question about this and previous lessons in this unit. He/she can continue until a question is missed.

3rd-4th Graders:

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- Divide the class into groups. Give each group a Bible concordance and have the children look up “idol” and “idolaters.” Let groups take turns reading verses they find and discuss how God feels about worshipping idols.
- Have the children read *Discovery* magazine: [February, 2001](#); [May, 2007](#)

SONGS:

“SAUL OF TARSUS” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*
(Tune: “Billy Boy”)

Oh, what did you do, Saul of Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus?
Oh, what did you do, Saul of Tarsus?
Near Damascus saw a light, Jesus took away my sight.
He said, “Saul, why do you persecute me?”

And what happened then, Saul of Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus?
And what happened then, Saul of Tarsus?
Ananias helped me see, and then he baptized me.
I became an apostle to the Gentiles.

And where did you go, Saul of Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus?
And where did you go, Saul of Tarsus?
To Iconium and Derbe, Athens, Cyprus, and Berea,
I made three great missionary journeys.

And what did you say, Saul of Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus?
And what did you say, Saul of Tarsus?
To the Gentile world I said, “God raised Jesus from the dead,
And through baptism, we have our sins forgiven.”

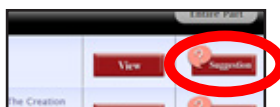
Did you have a hard time, Saul of Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus?
Did you have a hard time, Saul of Tarsus?
My Lord Jesus did not fail, when I was whipped and thrown in jail.
And I wrote 14 books of the Bible.

And who went with you, Saul of Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus?
And who went with you, Saul of Tarsus?
Silas, Timothy, Aristarchus, John Mark, Luke, and Barnabas.
I preached to the common and to kings.

What did God do for you, Saul of Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus?
What did God do for you, Saul of Tarsus?
He forgave me for my sin, so the heavenly prize I’ll win.
And my name was changed to Paul.

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



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Acts 17:16-34



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Part 1: The Apostle Paul

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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Acts 17:16-34

MEMORY WORK:

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the Earth” (Colossians 3:2).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF SUNDAY'S LESSON FOR WORDS):

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[“Saul of Tarsus”](#)

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

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INTRODUCTION:

Review [N.T. 6 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 6 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

Review Sunday’s lesson (see [N.T. 6 Review Questions](#) for example questions)

Using Paul’s words about the design of nature being evidence of the order of the Universe (Acts 17:24-26; Romans 1:18-23), discuss further the special design behind everything in our world. Emphasize that if there is design, there must be a designer behind it, just as a poem demands a poet, a painting demands a painter, and a fingerprint demands a finger. Paul and other biblical writers confirm that the evidence for God’s existence is all around us. The people who made and worshipped idols had no excuse not to believe in the one true God any more than people do today. (Refer to the following *Discovery* issues: [September, 2001](#); Digger Doug article: [May, 2007](#))

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

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