

THE CONTINUING ACTS OF THE CHRIST

**Week Nineteen - One Story in Different Ways****A Note to the Parents/Teachers**

In chapter 17, we read of Paul traveling to Athens, Greece. Athens was home to some of the most beautiful architecture, sculptures, art, and philosophy. When Paul arrives, instead of being enamored with the beauty of the buildings and statues, Paul sees that the city is full of idols and idolatry. So he used the idols of worship to contextualize the true story of God and Jesus to reason with the Jews and convince the Greeks that God was the true God of history and that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior they had been waiting for. Paul invites them into the true story and to worship the true and living God, displayed in the person of Jesus, and to give up their worship of worthless, lifeless idols.

- **Big Idea:** There is one true God and one true story that can be told in different ways to different groups of people.

Starter**Evidence of Grace**

- Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion:

- Have you ever tried to tell someone a story and they didn't quite understand what you were trying to say, so you had to figure out a different way to tell the same story?

Sing Together

Story - from Acts 17

Paul and Silas traveled to the city of Thessalonica. As usual, they went to the Jewish synagogue (church) and tried to explain that the Messiah Savior they had been reading about in their Scriptures was in fact, Jesus. They showed them that Jesus was the fulfillment of all of the promises and prophecies in the Old Testament Scriptures which were read in the synagogue every Sabbath. Some of the people in Thessalonica believed what they taught, but the religious leaders got jealous because people were believing Paul's teachings more than their own. They got so angry that they got a bunch of people together to start a riot in the city!

Paul and Silas left Thessalonica and arrived at a city named Berea. Just like in Thessalonica, they went to the Jewish synagogue to tell of Jesus, the Savior they had been waiting for. This time though, the Bereans responded not with jealousy, but with eager curiosity. They went back and examined all of the Scriptures and found that they was right — Jesus was the fulfillment of all of the promises and prophecies the Scriptures talked about! So, many of the Berean people believed in Jesus. But the Thessalonian leaders heard that Paul and Silas were preaching Jesus in Berea and traveled there to try and create another riot. Sensing Paul was in danger, they sent him away to Athens, Greece.

When Paul first arrived in Athens, he wandered alone around the city. Athens was a city full of great temples, beautiful works of art, and elaborate statues carved out of marble and stone. Athens was the hub of art, beauty, philosophy, and the Greek gods. But when Paul walked through the city he saw not only the beauty, but with it, all of the idols the people worshipped. Paul was distressed and filled with sadness. He understood that humans need to worship something or someone, but was frustrated and angry the people of Athens were worshiping the wrong gods.

So just like he did in Thessalonica and Berea, Paul went to the Jewish synagogue to proclaim the good news. He also told this true story of who Jesus was and what God was doing through Jesus to anyone who would listen. He talked to people in the marketplace and debated some of their popular philosophers. Paul told the same True Story to each group, but in different ways each could understand. The people in the synagogue already knew about God and had the Scriptures so Paul didn't have to explain certain words or phrases. But for the people in the marketplace and town square, Paul had to use words, phrases, and examples they would know.

Though he may have used different examples or words for different people, the message was always the same. It was the True Story of God. Paul preached that: *God created the world and everything in it and is the Lord of the heavens and earth. Sin has corrupted God's good creation and humanity, but God sent His Son Jesus to earth to break the power of sin. Jesus showed us the way of God and what God is like and made a way for us to be truly human. And one day, Jesus will come back to God's creation to judge the world and humanity in righteousness and once and for all get rid of all sin and death in all of creation.*

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- ▶ What are some different groups of people that you interact with regularly?
- ▶ Do all of those groups of people go to church or know who God is?
- ▶ If not, what are some ways that you might explain the True Story of God using words or examples that your friends would understand?
- ▶ If we are not sure, we might need to look and listen. Listen to what your friends talk most about or how they live their lives. Notice the things they worship or love. What does their life revolve around? What is most important to them?
- ▶ How can Jesus be good news to someone who doesn't even know God?
- ▶ What are some things that I worship other than God and Jesus?
- ▶ How can Jesus be good news to me?
- ▶ Even though we know the True Story of God, sometimes we are worshiping something or someone else with our lives and actions. What are some ways we can remind ourselves that God is the one true living God and the only one we should be worshiping with our lives?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything in the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshipping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshipping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit, please work in my heart to love God and love others.

Craft:

- Cut out the following pages and fold along the dotted lines to make a booklet. Numbers are on the pages to help you organize the booklet. Kids can draw pictures and color each page. Ask them, *"What would you draw for creation?"* Have them draw that on the creation page.
- After you have folded and put together the pages of the booklet, on the front cover of the booklet write, **The True Story**. Then staple the binding together.

BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the **Listen** rhythm. Maybe as you go to school, go to the store with your parent, go to your sports game or after-school activity, or even in your own home, listen and look for the idols that people are worshipping. Listen to the words people use. Look for how people act toward one another. Look around your city and neighborhood and see if you can tell what is most important to people, and what they worship.

Listen to the Spirit and ask how you can speak good news to them about Jesus.

Creation √

Restoration √

1

6

Fall X

Church >

2

5

Promise >

Redemption †