Acts 17:16-34

There is but one God (1 Corinthians 8:6a).

Five centuries before Paul, Athens had been at the height of its glory in art, philosophy and literature. Its reputation in philosophy had been retained through the years and a leading university still existed there in Paul’s day. The philosophy of the Epicureans originally taught that the supreme good is happiness - not necessarily momentary or temporary. By this time, it had degenerated into a mostly sensual system of thought. Stoic philosophers taught that people should live in accord with nature, recognize their own self-sufficiency and independence, and suppress their desires. Stoicism also had degenerated into a system of pride.

The Aeropagus was located just west of the acropolis and south of the Agora and had been the sight of the meeting of the Court of Council of the Aeropagus, which governed the areas of religions and foreign gods. The Greeks were fearful of offending any god by failing to give him attention; so they felt they could cover any omissions by including an altar with the label, “UNKNOWN GOD.”

It was the presence of this altar that gave Paul an opening to proclaim to them all the God of creation who is the ONLY TRUE GOD.
Lesson Quest

What I want my students to:

Know: There is only one true God.

Feel: Safe, secure and protected by God.

Do: Trust God.

Leader’s Devotion

There are many counterfeits in our world. Whether it be counterfeit money or fake fur, there’s nothing like the real thing. The same goes for God. There may be many things that call out for our devotion - possessions, power, family, work, even church activities. But there’s only one who deserves our unbridled love and adoration. He is the only one who can give true joy and contentment in our lives. Your students may be familiar with superheroes. What a joy to be able to tell them about the one and only true God, the ultimate superhero, who loves them and saves them.
**Get Set!**

**Option A**

**Materials:** Play money and real money mixed up together in a bowl or bucket

**Procedure:** Have children stick their hands into the container of money and pull out one piece. Ask them if it’s real money or play money. After each child has had a turn, ask them how they could tell if the money was real. What’s the difference between real money and play money? (It looks different, play money can’t really buy things at a store.)

**GO TO THE BIBLE STORY**

**Option B**

**Materials:** A soft blankie or teddy bear

**Procedure:** “Do you have a special blankie or stuffed animal that you like to sleep with or snuggle when you’re sad?” (Let children answer and tell a little about their special object.) “I brought a soft teddy bear with me today. I’ll let you each have a turn to hold it and hug it.” (Pass bear or blankie around.) “If you were sleepy and I gave you something besides your special blankie or animal to snuggle up with, would it be the same? Why not? That’s the way it is with God. There’s nothing that’s quite like Him. Nothing can take His place.”

**GO TO THE BIBLE STORY**
It’s easy to be fooled into believing that something pretend is real. That’s what happened in our Bible Story today.

A man named Paul went to a town called Athens and saw that the people there were being fooled. They thought that God was a whole bunch of different statues. They would pray to these statues, not knowing they couldn’t hear or answer their prayers. They even brought food to the statues to try to make the statues like them! Paul wanted to help them understand there is only one real God, and that all the others were fake.

The people wanted to hear what Paul had to say. He told them God made the whole world and everything in it. He told them God lives in heaven, not in a church building and He doesn’t need us to bring Him food or anything else. Paul’s God would take care of them and they didn’t need to take care of Him.

We are God’s children and He cares for us. No other gods have power like the one, true God. He’s the strongest superhero that ever was. He fights for us, loves us, protects us and saves us. God knows everything and is everywhere all the time. He can’t die or make mistakes. He forgives us when we sin and make mistakes as long as we tell Him we’re sorry. But there’s one difference between a superhero and God. What do you think it is? (Let children answer.) Superheroes are pretend and God is real! The real God is so wonderful and so powerful, He alone deserves our praise and worship.
Materials: A “Toy Story” video, TV and VCR

Procedure: Show the part of the video where Buzz sees the TV commercial that shows he is just a toy, not a real superhero.

“Sometimes we may think we’re the strongest or the smartest or the fastest person. Usually when we think those things, we’re only fooling ourselves. It’s good to think highly about ourselves. But we must remember that God is the only one who deserves our praise. He’s the one who gives us our strength, smarts and speed! Let’s watch part of Toy Story and see what Buzz Lightyear learns.”

Buzz thought he was a real superhero. But he was only fooling himself. The only real superhero is God. He’s the only one who deserves our worship.
God Is Everywhere

Materials: None

Procedure: Play hide and seek. Let children take turns being “it.” After playing, ask the children what they thought the best hiding place was. “Do you think God could see you there?” Discuss with the children that although all their hiding places were fantastic, God could find us without even looking. There is no place that we can hide from God.

“One of the special things about God is that He is everywhere at the same time and can see everything. Let’s play a game of hide and seek and see if we can find places to hide that God won’t find us.”

“Our Bibles tell us in Psalm 139 that we can’t hide from God even if we were able to go up to heaven, or down to the deepest part of the ocean, or if we could rise on the wings of the dawn or settle on the far side of the sea. Even in the dark, God can see us because the dark is as bright to him as the day. God is awesome! Let’s give thanks that the one and only true God is always with us and can see us wherever we are.”
**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Assign children an impossible task, such as jumping and touching the ceiling. Have them pretend to do things that would help them reach, such as standing on an elephant or putting on shoes that have springs in the bottoms! Discuss how God might help us do the impossible task. (He might send an angel to fly us up to the ceiling. He could make us taller.)

“**We know we can’t do some things on our own because they’re just too hard. But God has the power to do anything He chooses. Remember to always trust in Him and to pray for His help with hard things.”**
Materials: 1 three-foot by two-foot fabric remnant per child, one chip clip with hole in the handle per child, fabric paints, sequins, pompoms, beads, anything suitable to decorate cape, glue

Procedure: Before class: write on each cape in permanent marker “God is my super-hero!” Trim edges of capes with pinking shears so they won’t unravel. Using the hole in the handle, sew the bottom half of the chip clip to the edge of each cape insuring that the wide part of the clip is even with the top edge of the cape. During class: Put out the fabric paints, sequins, beads, pompoms and anything else you have for kids to decorate their capes.

Have children yell out answers to the following questions:
“Is anyone more powerful than God? (What? I couldn’t hear you!)
Is there anything God can’t do?
Where can we hide from God?
Does anyone love you more than God?
Let’s make superhero capes to remind us that God is our very best, very real super-hero.”

“What’s the difference between other superheroes and God?” (God is real, others are pretend.) Thank You, God for always being able to help us with anything that’s too hard for us.
Materials: An assortment of small household items, such as a bowl, note pad, spoon, pencil, toy, book, sock, etc. Use no more than ten items.

Procedure: Set out three or four items to show the children. Let them look at the items a moment to try to remember what’s there. Take the items away and then put back out all but one of them. Have children try to remember what item is missing. Gradually increase the number of items you show them each time. You can have one or two items missing each time. Let the children play this on their own after they understand how to do it.

“There are times when we know something, but then we forget it. God knows everything all the time. He never forgets. Let’s play a game to see how long we can remember things.”

God knows so much about each one of us that He knows the very best way to take care of us. He never forgets us.
Discovery Center

This is an area or table where children can go on their own and discover more about the Bible story with more hands-on experiences.

AREA: A place with hook to hang things, or a table with chair and a large mirror.

MATERIALS: A variety of masks. Nothing scary, please!

Let kids play with the masks. Allow them to explore real vs. pretend.
With finger paints, use colors that show the way you feel about God.
God is even better than my teddy bear!
Because God is everywhere!
Draw a picture of yourself with these boys and girls!

GOD LOVES EVERYONE!
Match the picture to what God is like.

God is love.

God is powerful.

God is everywhere.

God sees everything.
Help the boy find his way to the number of real Gods there are.