

Investigating God's Word...

YEAR SIX

Acts 15-28

Sunday School Curriculum

Spring Quarter

Lesson Sequence

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The **Lesson Sequence** gives the teacher an overview of the entire quarter.

The central goal of the ***Investigating God's Word...*** curriculum is to enable children the opportunity to read and study the entire Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—by the time they “graduate” from 6th grade.

Week One	Acts 15
Week Two	Acts 16
Week Three	Acts 17
Week Four	Acts 18
Week Five	Acts 19
Week Six	Acts 20
Week Seven	Acts 21:1-36
Week Eight	Acts 21:37-22:29
Week Nine	Acts 22:30-23:35
Week Ten	Acts 24:1-25:12
Week Eleven	Acts 25:13-26:32
Week Twelve	Acts 27
Week Thirteen	Acts 28

Summer Quarter: Epistles (Part One)



Suggested Schedule

Welcome <i>Psalm 136:1-3</i>	2-3 min.
Drill Time <i>Philip and the Ethiopian</i>	5 min.
W.O.W! <i>Apologetic</i>	5 min.
Historical Context <i>Timeline</i>	2-3 min.
Bible Investigation <i>Acts 17</i>	20-30 min.
Lesson-At-Home <i>1 Peter 3:15</i>	2-3 min.

Lesson Three

Acts 17

Overview

Acts 17 opens with Paul and Silas continuing their missionary journey. When they arrive in Thessalonica, Paul goes directly to the Jewish synagogue, as was his custom. He spends three Sabbaths reasoning with the Jews, defending the Christian faith. Some follow Christ, but others create such a great riot in the city that Paul and Silas had to flee for their lives.

Next stop: Berea. Paul again teaches in the synagogue and gives an apologetic for the Christian faith. The Bereans are of a different mindset than the Thessalonians: They listen to Paul and examine the Scripture to see if he is speaking the truth. Unfortunately, jealous Jews come to Berea from Thessalonica, driving Paul out of that city as well.

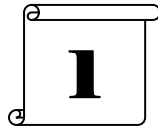
Next stop: Athens. Paul is distressed by all of the idol worship. As he teaches in the synagogue and the marketplace, the Greek philosophers take notice of him. They invite him to share his “new ideas” at the Areopagus. Paul begins this famous speech by praising the men of Athens for being worshippers. He then directs them to the worship of the true God who is the Creator of the universe, and the final Judge of all. Some of the Athenians become Christians; others only sneer at Paul.

Preparation

Read and meditate on Acts 17 this week. **It would be helpful to have a map of Paul’s missionary journeys available.**

Teaching Encouragement

Just as Paul reasoned from Scripture with both Jews and Gentile, demonstrating that Christianity is true, you do the same thing with your students each week! You are not just telling your children Bible stories. You are showing from every story of Scripture that Jesus is the Christ and there is no other salvation except through Him. You are an APOLOGIST for the Christian faith! You are defending the fact of Christianity each time you stand before your children. So even as you teach them about how Paul evangelized the Greeks, you are doing the same thing. As the Holy Spirit changes their hearts, your children can think through and believe the truths of God!

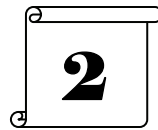


Welcome

Greet the students. Welcome visitors. To prepare the students for class today, read Psalm 136:1-3.

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. *His love endures forever.* ² Give thanks to the God of gods. *His love endures forever.* ³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords: *His love endures forever.*

Say: *This whole psalm of thanksgiving sums up why we strive to learn more about God—because His love endures forever! It is because of His love that you are here today, that you live another day. Let’s learn more about the God who loves His people!*



Drill Time

Now, let’s move on to DRILL TIME, our weekly opportunity to review what we have learned in the past. Are you ready?

Today’s questions: *An angel sent Philip out into the desert. Who did Philip meet there? What was the Ethiopian man reading? What did the Ethiopian ask Philip to do? What did Philip tell the Ethiopian man? What else did Philip do for the Ethiopian?*

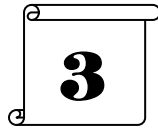
Call on volunteers or select students to make attempts.

Answers:

1. An Ethiopian eunuch.
2. He was reading the Book of Isaiah.
3. Explain the Book of Isaiah to him.
4. He told him all the good news of Jesus.
5. He baptized him.

Say: *Philip was one of the church’s first deacons. He was also a man who God used to share the gospel with many people, including this Ethiopian eunuch. From the Book of Isaiah, Philip explained all about Jesus to this man. But, Jesus’ name is never mentioned in the Book of Isaiah! How could Philip do that? Because the entire Bible points to Jesus, that’s why!*

The answers to today’s Drill Time questions are found in **Acts 8**.



W.O.W!

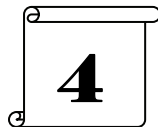
Our *W.O.W!* (*Word of the Week*) this week is the word **APOLOGETIC**. **Write it on the board.** Who knows what it means to be **APOLOGETIC**? **Allow answers.**

Yes, you may be **APOLOGETIC** when you have done something wrong. An **APOLOGY** is saying, “I’m sorry. I was wrong.”

Yet there is another definition of **APOLOGETIC** that I want you to learn today. The root word of **APOLOGETIC** means “to defend.” So when you give an **APOLOGETIC** for something, you are offering a **DEFENSE** for what you believe.

For example, you may offer an **APOLOGETIC** for why you believe your favorite football team will win the championship. Or you may give an **APOLOGETIC** for why your way of doing something is better than someone else’s way.

The most important **APOLOGETIC** all Christians are required to give is an **APOLOGETIC** about our Christianity. We must always be ready to tell others **WHY** Christianity is the only right religion. Can you give others an **APOLOGETIC** yet?

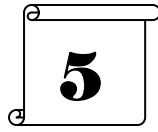


Historical Context

As you continue in the Book of Acts today, put this timeline on the board to give your students some context.

Book of Acts Timeline





Bible Investigation

Have your students open their Bibles to Acts 17.

Introduction: *Paul and Silas are still on their second missionary journey throughout Asia Minor. How did they get out of prison in Philippi? [The LORD sent an earthquake that set them free.] God even used them to save the jailer and his family. The gospel is spreading to the GENTILES! Let's see what happens today.*

Let's read. Read Acts 17:1-3.

¹ When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.

Discussion: *What did Paul do when he came to a new city? [He went to the local Jewish synagogue.] It was Paul's regular custom to reach out to the Jews first, showing them from Scripture the gospel of Jesus. He gave an APOLOGETIC for the Christian faith. He "explained" and "proved" that we are only saved by the death and resurrection of Christ. Paul's reasoning style is a perfect example of someone giving an APOLOGETIC.*

Let's continue. Read verse 4.

⁴ Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

Discussion: *That's good news! Jews and Gentiles, men and women, believed the gospel and accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord. The combination of Paul's APOLOGETIC and the work of the Holy Spirit brought these people into the family of God.*

But listen to what else happens. Read verses 5-9.

⁵ But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶ But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over

the world have now come here,⁷ and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."⁸ When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.⁹ Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

Discussion: *Why did the Jews cause a riot in the city? [They were jealous.] They didn't like people becoming Christians! So they persecuted Paul and Silas, as well as those who put their faith in Christ—like Jason.*

Application: *The preaching of the gospel has one of two effects: Some people will accept Jesus as their Savior, all others will reject Jesus. It's one or the other! And some people may get angry when you talk about Jesus with them. And, you may even be persecuted like Paul. Should that stop you from giving an APOLOGETIC for Jesus? No way!*

Let's continue. Read verses 10-12.

¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue.¹¹ Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.¹² Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

Discussion: *So what did Paul and Silas do when they first got to Berea? [They went to the Jewish synagogue.] What did they do there? [Gave an APOLOGETIC of the Christian faith; taught the Bereans the Scripture.] The Bereans received Paul's teaching eagerly. What else did they do? [They studied the Scriptures themselves to see if Paul was teaching the truth.]*

Application: *Boys and girls, that should be our practice too. Whenever we hear a sermon or some other Christian teaching, we should go back to our Bibles and see if the teaching is true! Every professing Christian must study the Bible for themselves to keep from following false teaching. Be like the Bereans!*

Let's move on. Read verses 13-15.

¹³ When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.¹⁴ The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea.¹⁵ The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

Discussion: *Wow! Those Jews from Thessalonica were really troublemakers, weren't they? So where is Paul going now? [To Athens.] All this persecution is keeping Paul on the move. Yet the kingdom of God is spreading too!*

Application: *Throughout church history, God uses persecution of His people to move the kingdom from place to place. He may send you to far countries to spread the gospel one day too!*

Let's keep reading. Read verses 16-17.

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.

Discussion: *Where did Paul go when he arrived in Athens? [To the Jewish synagogue.] He also gave his Christian APOLOGETIC in the marketplace. What was Paul most distressed about? [All of the idol worship.] Athens was filled with shrines to hundreds of gods and goddesses.*

Let's continue. Read verses 18-21.

¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babblers trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." ²¹ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

Discussion: *The Areopagus was the place where the Greek philosophers would go to talk about their new ideas. Paul received an invitation to speak there because the gospel of Jesus Christ was something new to these Greeks—and they loved to talk about new things. Philosophers believe that they will figure out the truth the more they talk about it.*

Let's read what Paul says to these men. Read verses 22-23.

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 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. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

Discussion: *Think about how Paul starts his APOLOGETIC. Even though he is distressed about all of the idol worship in Athens, he begins by praising the men for being worshippers. They worshipped so many gods that they made a shrine to a no-name god, so they wouldn't leave one out! Paul tells them that this no-name God is the true God of the universe!*

Application: *Do you understand that ALL people worship something or somebody? We either worship the one true God or we worship idols. My prayer for you is that you will always be worshippers of Jesus!*

Listen to more of Paul's speech. Read verses 24-28.

²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷ God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

Discussion: *Do you hear what Paul is saying? He is giving an APOLOGETIC for the Christian faith by showing the futility of idol worship. If God is the one who has made all things, then how can we worship something God has made instead of God Himself? It doesn't make any sense! So Paul praises these men for being worshipping people, but tells them that they were worshipping the wrong things. We should only worship the God who created us.*

Listen to more. Read verses 29-31.

²⁹ “Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”

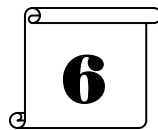
Discussion: *Again, Paul makes it clear that God alone is to be worshipped. It's foolish to worship things made out of gold or*

silver or stone! And, he lets them know that God is also a judge. So he calls them to repent!

*Let's finish our reading today. **Read verses 32-34.***

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." ³³ At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴ A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

Conclusion: *How did the men of Athens respond to Paul's APOLOGETIC? [Some sneered; others wanted to hear more; a few became followers.] God's kingdom continues to advance, even though many reject Christ. Paul is being used by God to share the gospel of Jesus all over the world. The gospel always stirs things up, that's for sure. As we continue to read about Paul's missionary journey, my prayer is that God would choose to use you to spread His Word all over this world too!*



Lesson-At-Home

Distribute the "Lesson-At-Home" bookmarks. Read the Scripture Memory verse (I Peter 3:15) together.

I Peter 3:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

Say: *This verse is exactly what Paul was doing in all his travels—he was always prepared to give an answer to everyone about Jesus: An APOLOGETIC! As you follow Jesus, this verse also applies to you.*

Review the verse. Direct the students' attentions to the bottom half of the bookmark. It includes reminder points of today's lesson that can be discussed with their parents and reviewed during the week.

Close in prayer and dismiss the students.