

The Case of the God Who Was Different

Acts 17:16-33



Story-telling Tips

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and prepare storyboard figures/Story Scenes, if using. (In Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard figures/Story Scenes, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues/hold up Story Scenes as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS (Optional)

“Our story is called: The Case of the God Who Was Different. Here is your listening assignment... ” *Read the assignment for your lesson using Detective Dan’s Listening Assignment sign or the text below:*

Detective Dan’s Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:

I need to find out:

- 1. Who was the God who was different?**
- 2. What made Him so different?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:

Our Bible Verse is Psalm 100:1-6 ESV

“Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!”

I need to find out:

- 1. Who urged people to worship the LORD and serve Him as their king?**
- 2. Who did worship Him? Who did not?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found six clues, but only 4 of them are in the story.

They are: a camera; a temple; a stone altar; a sword; the world; and, laughing people.

Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.

I need to figure out:

- 1. Which four belong in the story and which two don’t?**
- 2. What did the people of Athens need to confess to the LORD? Did any do this?**

Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,

“Ok, Deep Down Detectives! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan’s questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions.”

Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.

Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.

The Case of the God Who Was Different Acts 17:16-33

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics) Numbers correspond to storyboard pictures and placement upon the storyboard. Always feel free to use less pictures, if it's best for your kids. Simply black out the numbers next to pictures you do not plan to use. All pictures are found in the Visual Aids book. Put BG (background) pictures on storyboard ahead of time. SB pictures (listed below in story text) are added to board as you tell the story. These numbers are also found on the back of each picture.

Tip: Stack pictures in numerical before telling story for easy use. Use sticky-back velcro to attach pictures to storyboard felt. Use sticky-tac putty to stick a picture on top of another picture.

Gods! Gods! Gods! Athens was a city (SB1) full of fake gods! On buildings. On hills. Everywhere you looked, there was another god. (SB2) Apollo and (SB3) Artemis. (SB4) Demeter and (SB5) Dionysius; (SB6) Pan and (SB7) Poseidon. (SB8) Hera and, of course, (SB9) Zeus, the king of all the gods. You might not know these names, but the people of Athens certainly did. And these were just a FEW of the HUNDREDS of gods they worshipped! Wow!

The people of Athens took good care of their gods. They built them beautiful temples. They laid rich (SB10) worship gifts at their stony feet. They (SB11) celebrated them with big, worship parties. They even (SB12) laid a stone to honor an Unknown God. The people of Athens didn't want to leave out any god.

Yes, the people of Athens worshipped hundreds of gods, but the only god they SHOULD have been worshipping was that "Unknown God." He was the REAL, the one, true God! Not many people in Athens knew His name, but I think you do.

Can you tell me His name?

It was the LORD! He was God, the Father, who sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. He sent His Holy Spirit to live inside those who trusted in Jesus as their Savior. He made the way for us to become His people forever. What an amazing God was this one, true God! He was not like of the fake gods of Athens!

Maybe most of the people in Athens didn't know about the one, true God, but there was (SB13) a man named Paul who did. Paul knew the LORD and loved the LORD and lived for the LORD. He trusted in Jesus, God's Son, as his Savior. He had the Holy Spirit living in his heart.

And if there was ONE thing that Paul wanted to do with his life, it was to tell others how they could know and love and live for the LORD...and trust in Jesus as their Savior, too.

So, across the sea, over the mountains, and down through the valleys went Paul, telling everyone he could about the LORD and how they could know Him through Jesus.

One day, all this traveling led Paul to a city he had never been to before.

Can you guess the name of this new city?

It was Athens!

Now Paul had been to many cities that were SMALLER than Athens. And Paul had been to cities that were BIGGER than Athens. But there was something that Paul saw in Athens that he had NEVER seen before in any of those other cities--big or small. It was so many fake gods!

How do you think Paul felt when he saw all those fake gods?

(SB14) Paul was so upset! Oh, how these people needed to hear about the LORD, the one, true God! How they needed to stop worshipping these fake gods and start worshipping the LORD, instead! How they needed to know His Son, the Savior Jesus! And Paul decided to do something about that, right then and there!

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

Into the synagogue-worship place, (SB15) went Paul. **“The gods of Athens are just fakes. The LORD has sent His Son Jesus, to save you, just as He promised. Believe in Him!”** he told the people gathered there.

Then down by the temples and into (SB16) the marketplace, went Paul. **“Let me tell you about the LORD, the one, true God, and Jesus, His Son, sent to save you! Worship Him, not these fake gods!”** Paul urged everyone who would listen.

Word about Paul and his strange, new teaching soon spread through Athens and to the city leaders. They found Paul and said, (SB17) **“Come up to our important meeting place on Mars Hill and tell us about this new God. We want to hear about Him, ourselves.”**

So up, up, up the big, stony hill called Mars Hill went Paul with the city leaders and many others. How excited Paul was to tell them about the real, one, true God and His Son, Jesus! He hoped they would put their trust in Him!

On top of Mars Hill, Paul spoke to the crowd. **“(SB18) People of Athens, what a lot of gods you worship! he exclaimed. “But you are worshipping the wrong one! I’ve come to tell you about Him, the one, true God.- He’s the one you call ‘the Unknown God.’ His name is (SB19) the LORD. He’s the one you should worship. He’s the one who (SB20) made heaven and earth and everything in it,”** Paul told them.

“Your city is filled with the big temples you built to worship your gods, but the LORD is too great to live inside even your biggest temple!” Paul exclaimed.

“You bring worship gifts to take care of your gods. You honor them with worship parties. You (SB21) keep them looking bright and shiny. You make sure they don’t fall over. But the LORD doesn’t need people to take care of Him,” Paul explained. **“He’s the living God...He takes care of Himself...and all of us, too! He made us and gave us life.”**

“The LORD is (SB22) our King and we should obey Him and His good laws; but, the sad news is that (SB23) we don’t. We have all disobeyed Him and deserve His punishment for our sins,” Paul told them.

“But the LORD is so merciful that He made the way for us to be forgiven.” Paul explained.

Who did God send so we could be forgiven, do you know His name?

“God (SB24) sent His Son, Jesus, to suffer and die on the cross to pay for sins. On the third day, He raised up Jesus from the dead in victory. Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior can be saved. They can be God’s people and have eternal life with Him,” Paul told them.

“So turn away from worshipping your fake gods. Turn to LORD. Trust in His Son, Jesus, and be saved! You can be God’s people, too,” Paul urged them.

What do you think the people of Athens will do? Will they believe in the LORD or not?

The people of Athens hardly knew what to think. They had never heard of a God like this! A God who was supposed to be greater than Zeus, the king of their gods; yet, who came to die for sinners...then rose from the dead! Incredible!

(SB25) Many people laughed. **“Ha, ha! Your God sounds silly! Who would ever believe in him?”** they said.

(SB26) But others, like Dionysius and Damaris, went to Paul to hear more. As Paul talked, God’s Holy Spirit worked in their hearts. He helped them turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. How happy Paul was! Maybe there still were many fake gods in Athens, but now there was a little group of believers living there, who could keep on telling others the good news of Jesus.

Cracking the Case: (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

Detective Dan's Lesson 1 Listening Assignment:

1. Who was the god who was different? The LORD was the God who was so different.

2. What made Him so different? He was the one, true, living God. He was no fake god, like those the people of Athens worshipped.

For You and Me:

Paul told the people of Athens how they could know the LORD as their God, by turning away from worshipping their fake gods and trusting in Jesus as their Savior. We can know the LORD, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 100:1-6, ESV**

"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!"

1. Who urged the people to worship the LORD and serve Him as their king? Paul did.

2. Who did worship the LORD? Who did not? Dionysius and Damaris and a few others worshipped the LORD. The rest laughed and kept worshipping their fake gods.

For You and Me:

Like the people of Athens, we have so much to worship the LORD for being and doing. He is the one, true God! He has made us and wants us to know Him and love Him. He has offered us to be saved from our sins through Jesus, just like the people of Athens heard.

Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:

Our six clues were: a camera; a temple; a stone altar; a sword; the world; and, laughing people.

1. Which four belong in our story?

The temple; stone; world; and laughing people.

2. What did the people of Athens need to confess to the LORD? Did any do this?

The people of Athens needed to confess that they had worshipped fake gods, not the LORD, the one, true God. They needed to trust in Jesus as their Savior. Dionysius, Damaris and others did this.

For You and Me:

Like Damaris and Dionysius, we should also confess our sins to God. Perhaps we have not worshipped fake gods like they did, but we have all disobeyed God and lived our own way. We all deserve His punishment. But, if we confess our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God will forgive us and make us His people, just like He did for Dionysius and Damaris, long ago.

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****What is the Gospel?****It's Salvation through Faith in Jesus Christ...****God made us and we should obey Him!**

God made all people--including you and me! And He made us to know Him, love Him and obey Him. He's our good King. But just like the people of Athens, we need God's forgiveness for disobeying Him. God freely offers it to us when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. He loves to help us do this. Ask Him!

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** God, we praise You for being the good Creator and King of the world.
- C** We confess that many times we rebel against You and Your good ways. We choose to live life our own way, instead. We need a Savior!
- T** Thank You for being our good Creator and King. Thank You for making everything in the world for Your good purposes. Thank You for being so merciful to us! Thank You for offering us salvation through Jesus, when we repent of our sins and trust Jesus as our Savior.
- S** God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from rebelling against You. Help us to trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to joyfully obey You, our good and great King. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.