

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

(Acts 17:16-34)

1. **REMEMBERING** What are challenges you have faced with communication of any kind, when trying to communicate in any setting?
2. **REFLECTING** In each of those circumstances, how did you address those challenges and how successful were you in meeting them, so you could communicate clearly?
3. **DISCOVERING** Read Acts 17:16-34 aloud. Answer the questions that follow.
 - What three different groups does the text say Paul addressed?
 - From what you know of the people in those groups, in what ways do you guess Paul addressed them differently?
 - What do you make of Paul's ability to quote philosopher-poets to these philosopher poets?
 - What can you conclude from Paul's failure to even name the author or source of the texts he quoted?
 - How does Paul's message express the heart of the Christian message and the gospel?
 - How would you describe the language of today's 21st century listeners and the challenges we have in communicating to them?
 - If time allows, what do you understand Dorothy Sayers to be saying? (I've included the full title of her book in the quote below to assist you.)
4. **CONNECTING** Given Paul's example and the language of today's listeners you described above, what might you be able to do as a person/church to connect with today's audience, capture their attention, and communicate the gospel clearly in a way they appreciate?
5. **RESPONDING** What will you do in the coming weeks to support your church or others trying to communicate the gospel in ways this generation understands?

Let us, in heaven's name, drag out the divine drama from under the dreadful accumulation of slipshod thinking and trashy sentiment heaped upon it, and set it on an open stage to startle the world into some sort of vigorous reaction. If the pious are the first to be shocked, so much worse for the pious—others will pass into the kingdom of heaven before them. If all men are offended because of Christ, let them be offended; but where is the sense of their being offended at something that is not Christ and is nothing like him? We do him singularly little honor by watering down his personality till it could not offend a fly.

Surely it is not the business of the Church to adapt Christ to men, but to adapt men to Christ.

(Dorothy Sayers, *Letters to a Diminished Church: Passionate Arguments for the Relevance of Christian Doctrine*)