



# Paul, Silas, and the Jailer

**Lesson Aim: To know God uses all things  
in the spreading of the gospel.**

## THE WORSHIP

**Who God Is:** The God Who Saves Us

## THE WORD

**What He Has Done:** God used Paul, Silas, and an earthquake to spread the gospel.

**Scripture Focus:** Acts 16:22-34; 1 Peter 3:13-18 **Key Verse:** Acts 16:31

**Christ Connection:** Habakkuk 3:17-19

## THE WAY

**The Big Question: What is your greatest challenge in talking to others about Jesus?**

## UNIT 3 FOCUS VERSE

"Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now,  
you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,  
for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls." 1 Peter 3:8-9

Unit 3: The Promise of Salvation			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim*
12	Paul Visits Macedonia, Acts 16:6-10; Galatians 5:25; John 16:7-15	The Holy Spirit led Paul to Macedonia.	To know the Holy Spirit can lead us in specific ways.
13	Paul and Lydia, Acts 16:12-15; Ephesians 2:8-9	God opened Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's message.	To know God opens our hearts to respond to Him.
14	Paul, Silas, and the Jailer Acts 16:22-34; 1 Peter 3:13-18	God used Paul, Silas, and an earthquake to spread the gospel.	To know God uses all things in the spreading of the gospel.
15	The Resurrection: New Life, Matthew 28:1-7; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6, 20-22, 51-52, 55-58	God raised Jesus from the dead.	To understand the resurrection and its relevance today.
16	Priscilla and Aquila, Acts 18:1-6, 9-11, 24-26; Romans 16:3-5; 12:4-8	God brought Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila together to build up the church.	To see how God gives us different key roles in the community of believers.

**LEADER'S ENCOURAGEMENT** This week, read Romans 8:28-39. Please join us in praying, "We praise You, Lord, for the plan You have for each day of our lives. Help the children trust You and praise You even during difficult times. Amen."

**Lesson Aims** are based on reflecting God's character as we participate in His actions to, for, and in the world.

**Take Home Elements:** The Journal Entry, Action Card, and Family Discussion Card may be sent home to encourage students to reflect on the lesson. The Journal Entry is an in-depth personal study. The Action Card is a visual reminder of the Bible story, God's action, and how we can join into that action. The Family Discussion Card gives parents and guardians a way to engage their students in what they are learning.

**Leader's Tip:** For larger gatherings, teach THE WELCOME, THE WORSHIP, and THE WORD in a large group setting and divide into small groups for discussion with THE WAY.



Getting started

## THE WELCOME

**Suggestion:** Choose a game that focuses on ideas such as jail, singing hymns, earthquakes, prison chains, or spreading the gospel.

### **ACTIVITY OPTION 1: GOOD NEWS**

**Purpose:** For students to get practice sharing the good news of Jesus with others.

**Supplies:** None

**Preparation:** Before you meet, ask a few leaders, helpers, or students to briefly share their personal testimony with the group. Let them know how much time they will have to share.

Many of your students may have never shared their faith with another person. The purpose of this activity is to give them practice telling others about Jesus.

#### **Directions:**

1. Have the leaders, helpers, or students you asked in the preparation step to share their testimony.
2. Break into small groups.
3. Give the groups a topic from below or one of your own for discussion. Give students the option to answer an easier question or to pass if they are not ready to share.
  - Give students the opportunity to briefly share their personal testimony.
  - If you have accepted Jesus as Lord of your life, how is your life different now?
  - Share an experience, time or place where you felt close to God.
  - Give an example of how other Christians have encouraged you to grow closer to God.

### **ACTIVITY OPTION 2: YELLING MATCH**

**Purpose:** To introduce the idea of sharing a message with others.

**Supplies:** Paper, pen

**Preparation:** On slips of paper, write several common phrases or Bible verses relevant to your topic with about 5-10 words in it.

What must I do to be saved  
The Sovereign Lord is my strength  
Be prepared to give an answer  
Give praise to the Lord, proclaim His name  
Let your light shine before others

Go and make disciples of all nations  
For I know the plans I have for you  
Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
A friend loves at all times  
For God so loved the world

#### **Directions:**

1. Divide into two teams of 6 or more students.
2. Each team picks out a piece of paper with a message on it.
3. Teams assign one word to each person on the team. If there are not enough team members for each word, assign more than one word to a person. If there are more team members than words, the same words can be assigned to multiple people.
4. Teams line up facing each other.
5. On your signal, Team A shouts out their assigned words in unison. Give Team B 30 seconds to decipher the message. If they guess the correct message, their team gets 1 point.
6. The teams line up again. This time, Team B shouts out their assigned words in unison and Team A gets 30 seconds to decipher the message. If they guess the correctly, their team gets 1 point.
7. Play several times or until you run out of messages. The team with the most points wins.



The God who saves us

## THE WORSHIP

**Note to Leader:** The instructions below are suggestions only. Adapt this time of worship to suit your environment, resources, and cultural expression. Encourage students to broaden their view of corporate worship by including a variety of expressions such as group prayer, group praise, silent meditation, singing, listening to music, reading scripture, collecting an offering, drama, dance, visual arts, and/or a physical exploration of nature or neighborhoods.

**Ideas for Optional Visuals:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Today, we worship the God who saves us. No matter our circumstances, we always have a reason to praise Jesus as our Savior! He hears our praises wherever we are. Even in hard times, frightening experiences, or desperate situations, we can praise our Savior for who He is and what He has done.**

Read Unit 3 Focus Verse: 1 Peter 3:8-9.



Sing worship songs and guide students to focus on the God who saves us.



Read Romans 8:38-39.



Invite students to offer sentences of praise to God by completing the following sentence:  
**"Lord, we worship You for \_\_\_\_\_."**



## Paul, Silas, and the jailer

# THE WORD Presentation

**Note to Leader:** Adapt this segment to your setting (Sunday School class, youth group, multi-age gathering, youth camp, retreat, etc.). In some settings, you may choose to have a student read the scripture aloud, and then have the leader, in his or her own words, briefly communicate the Teaching Points, the Christ Connection, and the Big Question. In other settings, a teacher, pastor, or other experienced speaker may present a lecture or extended message that includes those same elements.

### Ideas for Optional Visuals:

You may choose to include an object lesson, video clip, drama, dance, song, or work of art to illustrate the teaching points.

Option 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Option 2: \_\_\_\_\_



## TEACHING POINTS

Consider current culture and influences impacting your students, and adjust the teaching accordingly.

*Read the suggested scripture and communicate each of the points noted.*

Last time, we learned Paul and his friends met Lydia in Philippi at a place of prayer by the riverside. God opened her heart and she responded to Paul's message about Jesus. Today's story begins with Paul and Silas healing a female slave by freeing her of an evil spirit that had given her the ability to tell the future. Her owners were angry because they were making money from her ability, so they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the magistrates/authorities (Acts 16:16-21).

The leader or a student reads Acts 16:22-34.

- In this story, we see examples of how God saves both physically and spiritually.
  - Earthquakes are usually considered a destructive force of nature because they can damage or destroy buildings, roadways, and personal property. Yet, through an earthquake, God set events into motion that resulted in the salvation of the jailer and his household.
  - Although the jailer could not be held responsible for the earthquake, he would have faced execution if any prisoners escaped. Rather than face execution, Romans often preferred suicide. We aren't told why the prisoners stayed, but the jailer is saved from a physical death because they stayed.
  - Through the earthquake, Paul and Silas' actions, and the conversation that followed, God spiritually saved the jailer and His household.
- The jailer was so grateful and amazed by all that had happened that he immediately asked Paul what he must do to be saved by his mighty God. Paul's answer points to the fact that our salvation is an unearned gift from God. All we have to do is believe in Jesus as Lord, and we will be saved.
- This promise of salvation is consistently repeated and supported throughout the New Testament, as well as spoken by the prophets long before Jesus was born.

# THE WORD Presentation *continued*

The leader or a student reads 1 Peter 3:13-18.

- Some people are uncomfortable talking about Jesus, even though they believe in Him and want others to know Him. They may be afraid of what others will think, say, or do. But, when we are fully committed to Jesus as Lord of our lives, we understand the importance of sharing our beliefs with others. We can see that sharing the gospel is more important than any awkwardness we might feel.
- To revere Christ as Lord (v. 15) is to give Jesus the full respect He deserves as Lord over heaven and earth. Peter refers specifically to our hearts revering Christ. When our hearts fully honor Christ as Lord, we will be changed. People will notice the difference in us and ask why we are different.
- Paul and Silas were prepared to give an answer when the jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Peter reminds us that it is important to be ready with an answer and to answer gently and respectfully.



Connecting the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Us

## CHRIST CONNECTION

In the whole story of God, what's the connection between this New Testament story and the Old Testament?

- In hard times, we can always pray for God to use our struggles to bring us and others closer to Him. We can always trust God has a plan for something good, even if we may never get to see it.
- Over 500 years before Paul and Silas were thrown in prison, the prophet Habakkuk and the people of Judah were going through a very hard time. Yet, Habakkuk knew the Lord was sovereign, which means in control over everything. Let's read Habakkuk's prayer about praising the Lord in hard times.
  - The leader or a student reads aloud Habakkuk 3:17-19.
- Despite all the bad things that had happened, Habakkuk chose to focus on God as the Sovereign Lord who gave him strength. Just as Habakkuk did, we can choose to focus on the God who strengthens us in hard times and trust that He always in control.



## THE BIG QUESTION

Introduce and elaborate on this question. Students will answer it in their discussion group.

**What is your greatest challenge in talking to others about Jesus?**



## THE WAY Discussion



**GETTING STARTED** Display and review the Discussion Group Covenant below:

**We will include everyone here, treating one another with respect and kindness.  
We will encourage everyone here to express their thoughts and opposing views.**

Every student shares his or her best experience or greatest challenge of the past week.



### READ IT AGAIN

Read Acts 16:22-34 and 1 Peter 3:13-18 silently or aloud.

**What were Paul and Silas doing just before the earthquake hit?**

**Why do you think Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns in the prison?**

**How did Paul and Silas respond to the jailer's question?**

**Why was the jailer filled with joy?**



**THE BIG QUESTION** Invite students to share their answers.

**What is your greatest challenge in talking to others about Jesus?**



**TAKE ACTION** Lead students in a discussion using the questions below.

**What does Paul and Silas' response to being beaten and jailed show about them?**

**What do you think caused the jailer to want to be saved?**

**What does it mean to you to be prepared to "give the reason for the hope that you have"?**

**If someone were to ask why you are a Christian, what would you say?**

Ask each student to complete this sentence: **God calls us to tell others about Jesus SO THAT others might \_\_\_\_\_.**



**PRAY** Share prayer requests and answered prayers.

Have students pray with partners, or have the whole group pray together.



**FINAL FIVE MINUTES** When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

Give each student Action Card #14 and Journal Entry #14. **Take home today's Action Card as a reminder of how we can join in what God is doing. Use the Journal Entry as your personal devotional study. Complete your Journal Entries at home and keep them together in a notebook or in your Bible.** Optional: Provide parent or guardian with Family Discussion Card #14.

# PROPHETS & PROMISES

## JOURNAL ENTRY #14

### Paul, Silas, and the Jailer

Acts 16:22-34; 1 Peter 3:13-18

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?

- **Pray!!!** Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He wants you to learn from this passage.
- **Read Acts 16:22-34 and 1 Peter 3:13-18.**
- List the series of events that took place that led to the jailer and his family being saved.
- What did Paul and Silas' singing make obvious to those around them?
- What question did the jailer ask?
- How did Paul and Silas respond?

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- How do you think Paul and Silas stayed positive in their situation?
- How did the difficult situation Paul and Silas were in strengthen their testimony?

## WHAT CAN I DO?

- Paul and Silas were unjustly imprisoned. Can you think of a time when you were falsely accused and/or punished? If so, how did you feel?
- Rewrite the words of Habakkuk 3:17-18, replacing the list of difficult circumstances with a list of your own difficulties. How might revering Jesus as the Lord in your heart give you the courage to tell others about Jesus?
- Paul and Silas sang hymns in a difficult situation and God used their actions to bring the jailer and his family to believe in Him. What might you do in your daily life that God could use to reach others?
- How confident are you in your abilities to explain and share God's Word? What steps could you take to be more prepared?



Action Card #14/P&P

## PAUL, SILAS, AND THE JAILER

ACTS 16:22-34; 1 PETER 3:13-18

GOD USED PAUL, SILAS, AND AN EARTHQUAKE  
TO *SPREAD THE GOSPEL*.

WE ARE CALLED TO *TELL OTHERS*  
ABOUT JESUS.

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