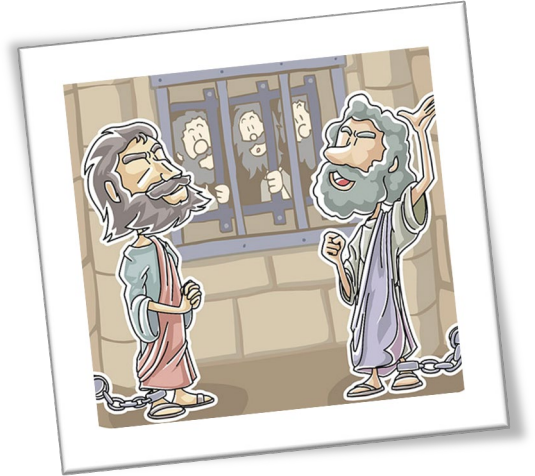

Earthquake and Jail Break!

Sunday School Lessons on Paul and Silas

Singing in Jail from Acts 16:16-34.



Earthquake and Jail Break! Sunday School Lesson on Paul and Silas. Adaptations noted for younger students. Most activities can work for all age groups.

Lesson focus: This lesson provides meaningful inspiration for finding joy in any situation. It also reminds students that God is always with us and cares for us. There might be times that feel hopeless or sad. Being a Christian doesn't mean slapping a smile on constantly, but we can find peace in the Lord's presence. Anything is possible with God in control! The lesson also reminds us of the importance of seizing any and every opportunity to share the Gospel with others.

Bible Story: Acts 16:16-34

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (children 5 years old to 12 years old)

Lesson Craft Materials Needed: Paper, beads or dry pasta noodles, markers/crayons, decorative supplies, paper towel tubes, cups, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, ropes or chains, Middle East maps, noisemakers.

More Teaching Ideas on Paul and Silas in prison

- Watch the [children's sermon video](#) and [Bible crafts ideas for this lesson](#)
- Compare our full [Sunday School lesson on Acts 16:16-34](#)
- Compare another [Bible Object lesson](#) on [Paul and Silas in Jail](#)
- Read [scripture quotes and Bible verses about singing](#)
- See our [children's sermon on Paul and Silas](#)

Games and Activities to Introduce the Bible Lesson

Lesson Opening: Kick off with some musical activities or “jail-break” inspired games. You might even enjoy an earthquake “simulation”!

- If looking at several stories involving the life of Paul, review a map of his travels, and note where the action of the story takes place, to put it into context for students. Consider placing markers on the map as you read other Paul stories.
- Karaoke time! Have students pick songs and sing and dance to them on YouTube or Spotify. You might even turn this into a “freeze dance” competition!
- Play “Jail Break”: This is essentially capture the flag. On a large playing area, split a group of children into two teams, and place teams on either side of a line. Designate an area on each side as the “jail.” Students will cross the line to try gaining access to a special item. When tagged, kids must go to “jail” in the assigned area. If other teammates can make it to the “jail” without being tagged, they can free the prisoners with a jail break and gain safe passage back to their area. Play continues until the item is captured and brought over the line, or until all players have been captured.
- Do it in chains! Have students complete challenging tasks such as an obstacle course race or relay, but with a catch: their hands and/or legs must be tied! (Older students can have both tied; younger ones can do with just one or the other). Discuss how hard it is to be “chained up.” Sometimes our attitudes or sinful behaviors act like shackles or chains!
- “Earthquake”! Gather students together in a small area. On signal, have all of them jump up and down in place or shake as though the Earth was quaking. Make a joyful noise! Use a variety of noisemaker instruments to create a happy cacophony of sound.

Describe the background of the story a little. This story takes place near Philippi, where Paul and Silas were staying with Lydia. There are some remarkable things that happened to these men, and we’ll pay close attention to how they handled some bad situations!

Ask: Have you ever been accused of doing something that you didn’t do? Have you ever gotten in trouble for something that wasn’t your fault? (*It happened to Paul and Silas in today’s story!*)

Sunday School Lesson (Acts 16:16-34) Paul and Silas in Jail

Bible Lesson: This story is an excellent one to act out, if possible. Select students to take on parts as you read or describe what is happening to Paul and Silas. Puppets would work for this, as well. You might also have older students take turns reading the verses of the story, and pause to explain and discuss it.

*If you have already been sharing some of the stories about Paul's life, you might wish to review who Paul was and what he was doing on his missionary journeys. Describe (if you have not already discussed) how Paul joined forces with friends and helpers along the way. The Holy Spirit worked through these men to do amazing miracles, but not everyone was pleased with that. In this story, Paul and Silas got into some trouble for helping someone.

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." 18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. -Acts 16:16-18

Explain that there was an evil spirit inside this girl! She was calling out things not on her own power, and Paul could tell that the demon was taking over. He ordered it out of her, and she was healed! But that meant she could no longer do fortune-telling tricks and earn her masters money. This made them quite upset, and they looked for an excuse to have Paul and Silas arrested.

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. 20 And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. 21 They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. 24 Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. -Acts 16:19-24

Wow, it didn't take much to get the people riled up! The crowd attacked Paul and Silas, for really no reason except what the angry slave owners claimed. They got so upset that they chained Paul and Silas and put them in Jail (*It might help to have a picture of stocks or of an old prison, to give an idea of what things looked like*).

Ask: What do you think you would do if you got in trouble like this? What kinds of punishments do you normally face when you do something wrong?

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. -Acts 16:25-26

This is quite the turn of events! Paul and Silas, beaten and imprisoned, weren't licking their wounds. In fact, they were in a way rejoicing that they had the opportunity to suffer for Jesus. Normally, we don't think of giving praise when bad things happen. But that is what Paul and Silas did. They sang songs and prayed to God, thankful that He was near to them. Naturally, everyone overheard this mini-concert. And then something remarkable happened: an earthquake shook the jail itself, and freed everyone from their chains!

Ask: Would you run out of the jail if this happened?

It might seem the natural reaction, but that's not what Paul and Silas did! They stuck around for the sake of the prison guard. He despaired when he saw what happened, because if the prisoners escaped, that would mean he failed his job and would be executed! But that didn't happen...

When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 And the jailer[e] called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house

and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. -Acts 16:27-34

Wow. This is an awesome story! Paul and Silas prayed and sang, even in the darkest and dreariest of places. Through wrongful accusation, they had been beaten and thrown in jail, but they continued to follow God and hope in Him. God allowed them to escape their imprisonment, but also used the circumstance to save the jailer and his family! Amazing and positive things came from an apparently bleak situation.

Ask: How can you give thanks during a hard or challenging time?

It's important to also point out that we don't have to feel or act "happy" all the time. Sometimes we might feel sad, and that's okay. And even when we do the right thing, our stories might not seem like they have happy endings right away. But God loves and cares about us, and He wants us to remember His presence and live mindful of it. We can be thankful and joyful, even in tough times, remembering that in the end all things work for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

Activities: Choose a craft or activity connected to the story:

- Review questions about the story ("Why were Paul and Silas arrested?" "What did they do in jail?" "What happened as they were singing and praying?" "What did they tell the jailer?").
- "Shaker shackles": Make noisemaker "chains" by stringing a paper chain between two homemade rattles (cups or towel tubes with beads or pasta inside). Consider writing prayer requests or praises on the prayer chain links.
- Make a creative diorama or scene to re-tell the story with popsicle sticks, decorative supplies, and paper.
- Make decorative "shackle bracelets" using beads and pipe cleaners.
- Make cards inviting someone to come to church or Sunday School.

Discussion Questions on Paul and Silas in Jail for Kids

After your children's sermon, you may have time to ask the children some lesson review questions. Here are a few suggestions:

Why did Paul and Silas prayed at midnight?

Answer: They were in prison and they prayed because they were in a difficult situation. The Bible doesn't say why they prayed at midnight, but it's likely that they did it because it was the darkest time of the night and they thought God would be more likely to hear their prayers. It's also possible that they chose to pray at midnight because it was the time when their spirits were most down. Regardless of why they chose to pray at midnight, we know that their prayers were answered.

Why were Paul and Silas imprisoned?

Answer: Paul and Silas were imprisoned because they were preaching the gospel. They were proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah and telling people to turn from their sin and believe in him. The authorities didn't like this because it was disruptive and challenged their power. So they had Paul and Silas arrested and put them in jail. But even in jail, they continued to praise God and share the gospel with anyone who would listen. And as a result, many people came to faith in Jesus Christ!

According to Paul and Silas what must we do to be saved?

Answer: The Bible says we must believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Paul and Silas preached that Christ is the only way to be saved (see John 14:6), and that we need to repent of our sins and turn to Him for forgiveness. In addition to faith in Jesus Christ, good works are also important. When we put our trust in Jesus Christ and follow Him with all our hearts, He will forgive us of our sins and give us eternal life.

Close with prayer, thanking God for using us to spread His good news throughout the world. Ask God for help in sharing His love with all people.

Sunday School Craft Ideas for Paul and Silas

The story of Paul and Silas in jail is an encouraging reminder that God is always with us, and we never know how He might work in and through our lives! Paul and Silas rejoiced and sang, even in a hard circumstance, and their chains were broken as a result! We can make a joyful noise to the Lord and know He hears us, even if we don't always feel joyful. These crafts remind children of the story and the importance of music. A 3-D scene uses paper and puppets to re-create the story. "Shaker Shackles" serve as fun noise-making tools that also feature chains to reflect on the tale from Acts 16.

Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider... (Acts 16:16-34)

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them... Acts 16:25

Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. -Acts 16:34

Even in chains... I can make a joyful noise!

Paul and Silas sang songs in the night... so can I!

Earthquake and jail break! Paul and Silas gave prayer and praise.

Craft one: "Paul and Silas Jail Break"

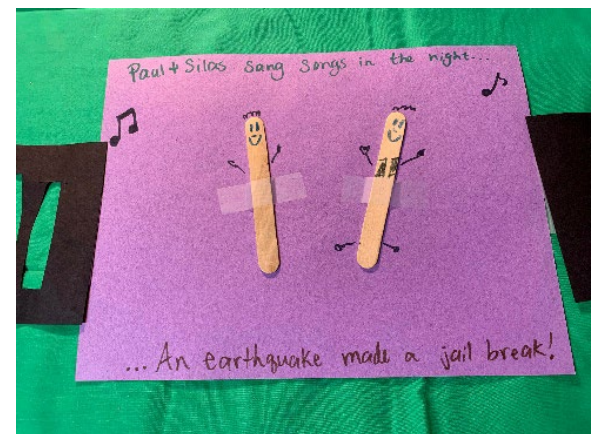
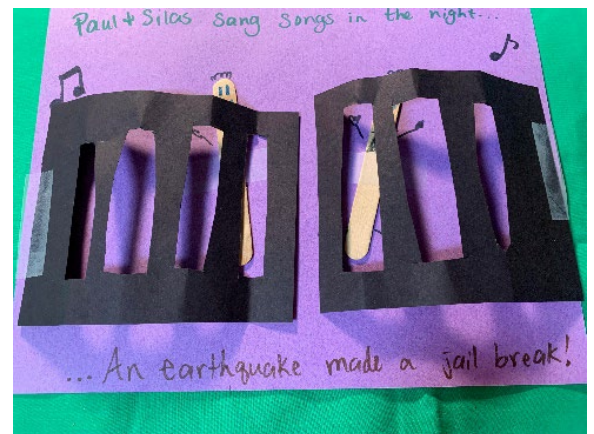
You will need:

- Construction paper or cardstock
- Crayons or markers
- Popsicle sticks (any size)
- Stapler (optional)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape



Procedure:

1. If using the popsicle sticks as puppets, decorate and add "human" features.
2. Cut "jail cell doors" out of paper.
3. Place verses, captions, and decorations on paper. Add popsicle sticks, if using.
4. Attach jail cell "doors" over the featured puppets. Hang and enjoy!



Craft Two: "Shaker Shackles"

You will need:

- Construction Paper or cardstock
- Paper towel tubes
- Rubber bands
- Stickers and decorative supplies
- Scissors
- Dry beans, beads, or pasta noodles
- Markers or crayons



Procedure:

1. Decorate paper towel tubes (cut in pieces) with verses, captions, and stickers.
2. Fill tube pieces with beads, dried pasta, or rice.
3. Cover each end of the tubes with foil or paper and secure tightly with rubber bands and/or tape.
4. Cut strips of paper out of cardstock or construction paper. Option: include prayers or praises on the strips.
5. Staple the strips together as "chains." Attach to the shaker tubes for the noisemaker element. Wear or shake the shackles to recount the story!



Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through Ministry-To-Children since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader. In addition to children's curriculum, she shares her student ministry activities and lesson ideas on [YouthGroupMinistry.com](#)

My name is [Tony Kummer](#) (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. I am building three new websites. One is called [Ministry Answers](#) to help Christians find answers in God's Word. The other two are [Devotional Christian](#) and [10 Bible Verses](#) to help you focus on personal prayer and quiet times.



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Tony Kummer