



BIG STORIES OF THE BIBLE 51

PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON

Scripture: Acts 16:16–34

Open: Greet, Praises, Requests, Pray

Supplies: Paper chains, lots of paper/plastic cups OR cardboard boxes, beans, paper plates, staples

Ask:

- Who remembers what we talked about last week? (Paul's missionary journeys)
- He went through some hardships to preach the gospel, didn't he? Do you remember any of those hardships? (Allow for answers like shipwrecked, stoned, whipped, riots, etc)
- Through these journeys, Paul wrote letters. Does anyone remember what those letters are? (Much of the New Testament)
- Today, we're going to talk about a specific time that Paul went to prison for his faith in Jesus.

Summarize

Paul often worked with other men on his missionary journeys. He had many helpers but probably the two most well-known were Timothy and Silas. In this story today, Paul was with his fellow worker Silas in Philippi. (Have the kids locate Philippi on their map from the previous lesson). Eventually, Paul would write the letter of Philippians to this church, but here is how the church began.

Read: Acts 16:16–34

Ask:

What stands out to you in this story?

Do you have any questions?

- (If they ask questions about the demon possession, know that commentaries suggest Paul could have been annoyed for a few reasons: 1. She was in bondage to an evil spirit. 2. She was trying to proclaim that the men knew the way to be saved for money. 3. People were misled by this woman's evil spirit. 4. Her shouting would eventually stir up trouble for him.

Ask Continued:

- If they ask why the jailer would want to kill himself, note that it was common in Roman times that if a person escaped, the guard would face the punishment meant for them, or be killed because of their failure which would bring much shame.

How would you feel if you experience an earthquake?

Do you think you could sing praises in prison?

Reenact the Story:

Place people in a “prison” of blocks or cups on cardboard strips that you can move. Have paper chains around their wrists and build the prison around them. Have your prisoners begin singing songs and praising God. Have those outside the prison begin to shimmy the cardboard base back and forth like an earthquake until the walls fall down.

Craft:

Make a craft of a tambourine from dried beans and a paper plate. Have the kids decorate the plates on the back and write “Praise” on them. Then, place the dried beans on the plate, fold it, staple it, and make music.

Apply:

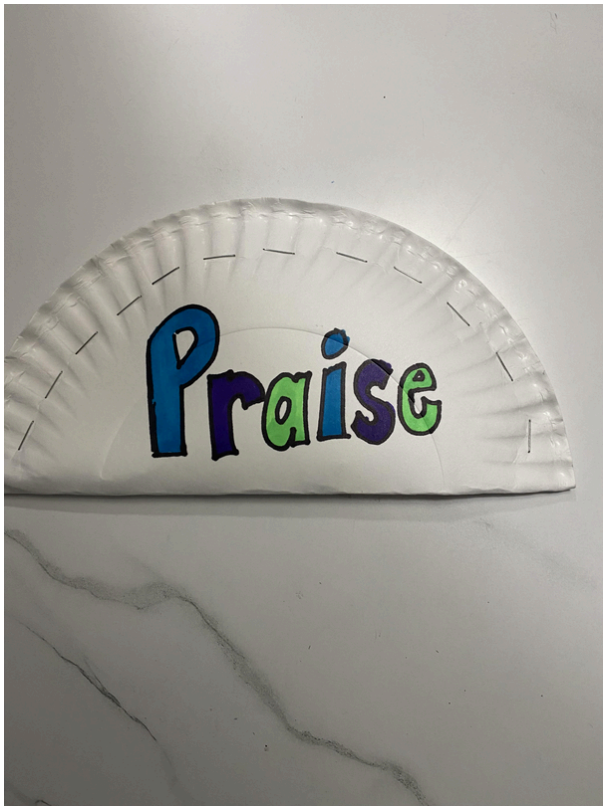
We can praise God even when we are suffering because we know that he is with us. He hasn’t left us in hardship, he is near, helping us and reminding us that he is in control. Next time you are bullied, or struggling, try praising God. It is amazing how looking to him and his great power and might helps us to feel better, even during hardship.

Comic Book Bibles:

Have the kids draw the story of the beginning of the Church at Philippi in their comic book Bibles.

Memorize: Acts 16:31

Close in Prayer



Color in the word Praise on a plate. Insert beans, then staple it together, ensuring the gaps are too small to allow a bean to escape.



For the "Prison chains" cut out colored paper strips and glue or staple their ends together. Make sure your end pieces can fit over the hands of the kids playing Paul and Silas.