

**TEXT** Acts 16:22-34

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to describe the events which took place while Paul and Silas were in prison. They will be able to explain that Paul and Silas were at peace because their trust was in Jesus, and that we, too, can trust God in trying situations.

**MEMORY VERSE** Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice. — Psalm 5:11

# Paul and Silas in Prison

## MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

**LET ALL** — With right hand flat, palm down, make large circle horizontal and clockwise.

**THOSE THAT** — Point to others.

**PUT THEIR TRUST** — At eye level, hold fists on top of each other as though holding to an imaginary rope.

**IN THEE** — Point up.

**REJOICE** — Palms toward body, make circles away from body with a bubbling motion.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

This week the memory verse is illustrated by a little girl jumping rope under a rainbow. (See pattern at end of lesson.) Cut apart the four sections as indicated by the heavy black lines. Put the arrangement back together a section at a time as your students learn the verse.

## BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

**Introduction:** Bring a large padlock to class, or a length of chain as an alternative. Remind your class how in last Sunday's lesson, Saul was determined to put Christians into jail for their belief in Christ. But by today's story, many things had changed. Saul was now called Paul which was the Latin name for Saul. And he was the one in prison, along with Silas, another worker for the Lord.

1. Because they preached Christ, Paul and Silas were beaten and thrust into prison, and their feet made fast in stocks.
2. An earthquake miraculously opened the prison doors and released the prisoners' bonds as Paul and Silas prayed and sang at midnight.
3. Thinking that the prisoners had escaped, the jailer would have killed himself, but Paul assured him that they were all there.

**Climax:** The jailer asked what he must do to be saved. When Paul told him to believe on Jesus, he did so and was converted.

**Conclusion:** The reaction of Paul and Silas to their unjust imprisonment convinced the jailer of his need of salvation.

**Response:** Your students should be able to tell how Paul and Silas's trust in God brought about the conversion of the jailer. They should recognize that their reaction to trying circumstances may very well prove to someone the reality of the Gospel.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

After Saul's conversion, he began to preach the Gospel in Damascus. He then became the persecuted instead of the persecutor.

Some of the disciples who were scattered by the persecution in Jerusalem established a church in Antioch, and Barnabas was sent to help them. He went to Tarsus for Saul and brought him to Antioch. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. It was from here that Saul and Barnabas went on a missionary trip, and it is mentioned that Saul's name was also Paul and from there on in the Bible he is called Paul. [The Jewish form of his name was Saul, but when he was sent to the Gentiles he became Paul, the Latin form of his name.]

On a second missionary trip, this time accompanied by Silas, Paul received his call to Macedonia. They came to Philippi, and when he had cast an evil spirit out of a girl who was a soothsayer, they were beaten and thrown into prison because she could no longer use her spirit of divination to bring gain to her masters.

The magistrates were hasty in casting Paul and Silas into prison. They did not realize that they were Roman citizens and should have had a trial. The jailer put them in stocks in the inner prison. God was with them and freed them with an earthquake, which event brought about the conversion of the jailer and his family.

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Paul and Silas were able to sing and praise God in the prison because their trust was in Him. Give each of your students a copy of the Trust Poster (see Patterns). If you wish, the poster could be enlarged. Help them fill

in the various parts of the poster. If time allows, the poster can also be colored with marking pens. Make sure each child puts his name on his own poster.

The flip-chart drawings of Paul and Silas are a fun way to tell this story (see Patterns). The pictures are numbered and should match the text following:

1. Paul and Silas loved Jesus and went about telling others how they could be happy.
2. There were some people who didn't love Jesus so they put Paul and Silas in jail.
3. But Jesus was with Paul and Silas all the time. Even in prison they could be happy.
4. At midnight there was an earthquake! The locks fell off and the doors opened!
5. The jailer was afraid everyone would run away and he would be in big trouble.
6. But Paul told him not to worry. Then the jailer told Paul he wanted to be saved.
7. He prayed like Paul told him to and Jesus came into his heart.
8. When sad things are happening all around us we can be happy. We just need to love Jesus and ask Him to care for us.

## QUESTIONS

Why do you think Paul and Silas, and the other prisoners didn't run away or escape?

Why did Paul and Silas sing songs and praise God in prison?

When should we sing songs and praise God?

What was the jailer going to do when he thought everyone had escaped? Tell what he did instead.

How did Paul and Silas help the jailer?

How did the jailer help Paul and Silas?

How do you think the way we act shows others about Jesus?

Can Jesus change your enemy into your friend? How?

## PRESCHOOL SUGGESTION

Make a jail out of a small cardboard box. Use small dolls to represent Paul, Silas, the jailer, and any others used in the story. Tell the story and play a portion of a tape of two men who are singing praises to God.

Make a happiness box. Cover a shoe box with wrapping paper (bottom and lid separately). Inside the box place things that make you happy: picture of Jesus, song sheet, invitation to a birthday party, seashells, happy-face sticker, crayons, etc. Discuss with your chil-

dren things that might make them sad: being sick, a friend's moving away, rain at your picnic, etc. Reach into the box and pull some things out (leave the Jesus picture until last). These are fun and sometimes make us happy but when we are really sad about something only Jesus (show them the Jesus picture) can make us happy. When we talk to Him He makes us want to smile and sing. He helps us tell others about Him.

Give each child a copy of the happy and sad faces to color (see Patterns). Have them color Paul's and Silas's happy faces yellow. The sad faces should be colored blue or some other color. This will help show what a contrast Paul and Silas were to the people who did not know Jesus.

## REVIEW IDEAS

Ask the children how they feel when they're tired or sick. Using objects and pictures talk about ways we can deal with sadness and sorrow, ways Jesus helps us. Play some happy tunes (either record or piano), and remind children how music, especially Sunday school songs and such, can help to sooth our feelings. And when we feel good we can help others.

An overhead review would work well with this story (see Patterns). You might like to take the pictures apart and make overlays to create some action on the screen. 1. Start your story with the screen black, except for the two sets of "eye holes." Tell how even at midnight Paul and Silas were wide-awake. 2. They were happy. And this was surprising because they were in prison! Why? 3. They had been telling people about Jesus. 4. Some people didn't love Jesus so they had Paul and Silas put into prison. 5. Paul and Silas were happy and sang songs and praised God. The jailer couldn't figure out why. 6. Suddenly the prison started to shake and the doors opened. 7. The jailer was afraid but Paul told him not to worry. The jailer asked, "How can I be saved?" 8. He was told to pray to Jesus. And that's the answer for us today! 9. If you pray, Jesus will fill your heart with the same thing Paul and Silas had. Put the jumbled letters together and find out what that special something is. (Cut the word JOY into 6 pieces and put it together on the screen.)

## COORDINATING SONGS

"I Wonder How It Felt"

"Oh! Say But I'm Glad"

"Every Promise in the Book Is Mine"

"You Can Smile"

"Hallelu, Hallelujah!"

"I'm Excited in the Lord"

"Down in My Heart" (4th verse)

"Are We Downhearted?"

"It's Bubbling!"

"He's Able"

"Jesus Loves the Little Children"  
 "Why Worry When You Can Pray?"  
 "Whisper a Prayer"  
 "I Just Keep Trusting My Lord" — Sunday School Sing  
 pg. 78 by Singpiration  
 "Paul and Silas" — Sunbeam Songs No. 1, pg. 1  
 "Sunlight, Sunlight" tune. Words as follows:

Young folks, old folks, folks in every town,  
 White folks, black folks, yellow, red, and brown.  
 Jesus wants to save them, take away their sin,  
 Wants to put the sunlight of His love within.

**SUPPORT MATERIAL**

Saul of Tarsus — Charlotte Books (book and tape)

**MEMORY VERSE SONG**

♩ = 100

Let all those that put their trust in thee, Put their trust in thee, Put their trust in thee,

Let all those that put their trust in thee R E J O I C E ( REJOICE )

**MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED**

