

Paul and Silas in Prison

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: I can sing to God, even when things are hard.

Bible passage: Acts 16:16–40. Read it yourself before class.

Memory verse: "Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God" *Acts 16:25 (KJV)*. The old words **sang praises** mean sang songs that tell God how great He is.

You need: a Bible, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.

Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Acts 16. Clear a space where the kids can sit in a circle.

1. Opening game: Shake and Freeze (5 minutes)

Kids stand in a circle. Say, "Shake!" and everyone wiggles all over. Say, "Freeze!" and everyone stops still. Play a few times, faster and slower. Then say: "Today we will hear a true story about a time the whole ground shook, and two men were singing to God."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Acts 16. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

Paul and Silas told people about Jesus (Acts 16:17). *(Cup your hands by your mouth.)*

Some men got angry at them (16:19). *(Make an angry face.)*

Paul and Silas were hurt and put in prison (16:23). *(Make a sad face.)*

Their feet were locked in heavy boards called stocks (16:24). *(Hold your feet tight together.)*

It was dark. It was midnight (16:25). *(Cover your eyes.)*

Did they cry? No! They prayed (16:25). *(Fold your hands.)*

They sang praises to God (16:25). *(Lift your hands high.)*

Say it with me: "I can sing to God!"

The other prisoners heard them (16:25). *(Cup a hand by your ear.)*

Then the ground shook! A great earthquake (16:26)! *(Shake all over.)*

All the doors opened (16:26). *(Swing your arms open wide.)*

The jailer was scared. Paul said, "We are all here" (16:28). *(Point all around.)*

The jailer asked how to be saved. Paul and Silas told him about Jesus (16:30–32). *(Point up.)*

He and all his family were baptized that night (16:33). *(Pretend to go down under the water and come up.)*

Say it with me: "God is great!"



3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. What did Paul and Silas do in the prison at midnight? *(They prayed and sang praises to God, Acts 16:25)*
2. What shook the prison? *(A great earthquake, 16:26)*
3. What did the jailer and his family do? *(They were baptized, 16:33)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." Teach the motion: fold your hands on "prayed," then lift both hands high on "sang praises unto God." Say the verse with the motion three times: in a whisper (it was midnight), in a normal voice, and in a happy loud voice (the prisoners heard them!). Then say "Acts 16:25" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! The jailer wanted to be saved, and Paul and Silas told him about Jesus. That same night he was baptized. Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Singing in the Prison (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw a prison with the doors open and music notes floating up. Sing "Jesus Loves Me" together while they color. Ask: "What did Paul and Silas do at midnight? Who heard them?" Kids who finish early can play Shake and Freeze again.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:

"Thank You, God, for hearing me when I pray.

Help me sing to You, even when things are hard. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: this lesson leaves out the girl with the evil spirit (Acts 16:16–18) and the jailer's sword (16:27). "Some men got angry" and "the jailer was scared" are enough for little ones. Say "hurt," not more. Keep the happy part big: they sang, God shook the prison, and the jailer's whole family was baptized. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

