

“These people are servants of the Most High God! They are proclaiming a way of salvation to you!” (Acts 16:17b)

Paul and Silas in Prison – Acts 16:16-40

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: PROCLAIM

Everywhere Paul went he searched for opportunities to preach and share the good news. Paul’s news wasn’t always welcome, however. In this week’s Bible story, we read about one of the multiple times Paul was put in prison.

Paul was thrown into prison for healing an enslaved woman. While healing a woman sounds like a good thing to do, especially for the woman, the woman’s owners were angry. Once the woman was healed, they were no longer able to use the woman as a fortune-teller to make money for them.

The experience of Paul and Silas in prison illustrates Paul’s zealotry in spreading the good news. While Paul and Silas were in prison, there was an earthquake which opened the prison doors and broke their chains. Presented with an opportunity to escape, Paul and Silas stayed instead and told the jailer about Jesus.

Fellowship with others and education were central to Paul’s ministry. When we gather together as a community of faith, we are recognizing what Paul knew, that for the church to grow and thrive, people need to meet together and learn about God.

TIP: Kids with incarcerated parents can be in your classroom. Go here for more information on how to be sensitive to them. (<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents/federal-tools-resources/tip-sheet-teachers>)

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This month’s unit is about proclaiming the good news of God’s love. St. Francis is credited to have said, “Teach the gospel always and use words when you have to.” St. Francis knew that actions are also proclamations about God’s love. How are your actions proclaiming God’s love?

Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, white cloth, battery-operated candle, musical note*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a white cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Place a musical note inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster, and invite the children to wonder about what the word *proclaim* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are hearing stories about a man named Paul. In today's story, Paul and his friend, Silas, go to jail.

ASK: Why do you think they were put in jail?

- We recommend reading a story each week from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary kid to read, "Paul and Silas in Prison" (pp. 294–5), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, help us to show your love through our actions. Amen.

Paul and Silas in Prison – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Paul and Silas in Prison" (Reproducible 12A) for each preschooler.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture. Invite elementary kids to help the preschoolers follow the directions on the pages.

SAY: Paul and Silas traveled together to proclaim Jesus' message of love. There were some people who didn't like their message, so they were put in jail.

ASK: What do you think happened next?

Songs of Praise – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, pens or pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Songs of Praise" (Reproducible 12B) for each child.*

SAY: Paul and Silas were arrested and put in prison. That didn't stop them from proclaiming Jesus' message of love through songs of praise.

- Invite the kids to match the musical notes on the left with the ones on the right..

Missing Memory Verse Vowels – Older Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, CEB Bible

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Missing Memory Verse Vowels" (Reproducible 12C) for each child.

SAY: This month we have been learning a memory verse about proclaiming. The verse comes from this week's story.

- Invite the kids to add the vowels back into the words to solve the puzzle.
- Encourage the kids to read the memory verse once they have solved the puzzle.

Proclaiming Jesus' Message – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Proclaiming Jesus' Message" (Reproducible 12D) for each child.

SAY: Paul and Silas proclaimed Jesus' message of love. This was the most important message to them.

ASK: What is the most important message to you?

- Encourage the kids to reflect on what cause they want to tell others about.
- Invite the children to draw or write a message about their causes on their papers.
- Encourage them to share about their messages with the group.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages from the Reproducible Kids' Book, 12F–12G. Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16).

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story, one section at a time.

WONDER: What were Paul and Silas teaching through their actions?

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you, and to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 12 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Lay out the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Cut out the Unit 3 story figures (Class Pack—p. 3).

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat.

SAY: Today's Faith Word is *proclaim*.

- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).

SAY: Proclaim means to share out loud what you believe about your faith.

- Point to the portrait of Paul.

WONDER together:

- How do you think the enslaved woman felt when she was healed?
- Why did the jailer invite Paul and Silas to his house?
- How will your actions proclaim God's love?
- Add the portrait of Silas to the poster.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the musical note.

WONDER: Why do you think there is a musical note in our Wonder Box this week?

Experience Wonder

Advocacy is Faithful (Art)

Supplies: posterboards, markers, optional: magazines that can be cut up

SAY: Paul and Silas helped the woman in today's story. They healed her and that set her free. Their actions showed God's love and desire for everyone to be free and cared for.

SAY: Today, this is called advocacy. Advocacy is standing up for others. Advocacy is making sure everything is fair and just.

ASK: What is a cause that you feel needs to be stood up for?

- Invite the kids talk about the causes they drew about in “Proclaiming Jesus’ Message”.

ASK: Why is this important?

- Encourage the kids to make a big poster that teaches the congregation about their causes and how the congregation can help.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Acts 16:17b. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Acts in the Old or New Testament? (*New*) Where is Acts located in the New Testament? (*right after the Gospel books*) In what chapter of Acts is our verse located? (*16*) What is the verse number? (*17*)

- Gather the kids around the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster. Read it together.

ASK: What is the reference for our verse? (*Acts 16:17*)

SAY: Our Bible verse is from the story we heard today. Paul and Silas healed the woman and this is what she says!

Peaceful Place

Supplies: *copies of the Unit 3 Faith Word (Leader Guide—p. 115); Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook; suggested book: Ordinary Mary’s Extraordinary Deed, by Emily Pearson; paper; crayons or markers; stationary; pens or pencils*

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Encourage the children to color the Unit 3 Faith Word coloring page.
- Invite the children to write letters like Paul did.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Proclamation Through Preaching

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to and spend time with God. It doesn't have to be the same thing every time, but it can be. A spiritual practice can be praying silently or out loud, dancing, singing, walking, breathing, drawing, chanting, or speaking blessings.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice and invite them to repeat after you:
 - LEADER SAYS: My voice is important.
 - CLASS SAYS: My voice is important.
 - LEADER SAYS: My voice matters.
 - CLASS SAYS: My voice matters.
 - LEADER SAYS: Thank you, God, for my voice.
 - CLASS SAYS: Thank you, God, for my voice.

PRAY: Dear God, help us proclaim your love in all we say and do. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child on the hand as you say this blessing: "You are important. You matter."

Family Spiritual Practice

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages for today (*Reproducibles 12F–12G*). Ask your family to participate in this week's spiritual practice and choose an issue to support as a family.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Building Block Earthquake

Supplies: building blocks, baking sheet

SAY: Paul and Silas were singing praises to God when an earthquake hit the jail they were in. An earthquake is what happens when the land on earth rubs together. This happens sometimes when the earth's temperature changes or something happens below the earth's crust. It makes everything on the land rumble!

ASK: How do you think Peter, Silas, and the other people in the jail felt when the earthquake hit?

- Invite the kids to build a building out of blocks on a baking sheet.
- Encourage the kids to wiggle the baking sheet and see what happens.
- Keep playing until each child has gotten to make an earthquake.

Early Elementary and Older Elementary – Graham Cracker Earthquakes

Supplies: graham crackers, miniature marshmallows, frosting, plastic spoons, wax paper, napkins, wet wipes

- Have the children wash their hands.

ASK: Do you know what an earthquake is? Have you ever experienced an earthquake?

SAY: We are going to hear about an earthquake in our Bible story today. Right now we are going to learn more about how earthquakes happen.

- Give each child a square of wax paper.
- Give each child a spoonful of frosting and encourage him or her to spread the frosting out in a thick layer on the wax paper. Show the children a graham cracker and tell them the size of the frosting layer needs to be slightly larger than a graham cracker.
- Give each child a graham cracker.
- Have each child break the graham cracker into two squares along the perforation.
- Have each child lay the two graham cracker squares on top of the frosting layer with the broken edges of the graham cracker together.

SAY: The frosting on your wax paper represents magma. Magma is a semi-liquid substance underneath the earth's surface. The graham crackers represent the earth's surface. The surface of the earth is not one large piece, but rather is made up of large pieces or "plates".

- Give each child about 12 marshmallows.
- Encourage the children to stack the marshmallows to build towers on top of their graham crackers.

SAY: Sometimes temperature changes or other events below the earth's surface will cause pieces of the earth to shift and rub against one another.

- Have each child slide one graham cracker square toward her or him while sliding the other graham cracker square away.
- Have the children observe the crumbs that form as the graham crackers rub against one another.

ASK: What happened to your marshmallow towers?

- Let the children eat their earthquake experiments.

Intergenerational Activity – Songs of Praise

Note: Each week we will feature a special intergenerational activity. Plan to invite youth and adults to join you for these activities.

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, markers or crayons

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Songs of Praise" (Reproducible 12E) for each person.

SAY: In our Bible story, Paul and Silas sing songs of praise as a way to proclaim Jesus' message of love. We're going to sing songs together.

- Give each person a copy of "Songs of Praise" and play the song "Tell Somebody" from the Celebrate Wonder Music CD.
- Sing along with the CD.
- Encourage the group to sing other songs together as a way to praise God and proclaim Jesus' message of love.