

THE PRISONERS, THE EARTHQUAKE, AND THE MIDNIGHT SONG

LESSON PLAN

2-4
year-olds

Session Summary: God's word tells us that Paul and Silas shared the good news about Jesus. We can hear and talk about Jesus too!

Pray

Let's talk to God before we read the story:

Father God, please make us excited by this true story and by the good news about Jesus. Amen.

Listen*

(Read the story from *The Prisoners, the Earthquake and the Midnight Song*.)

(Note for parents: The consequence for the jailer's life of any prisoners escaping is dealt with carefully but fully. Depending on the age and/or sensitivity of your child, you may want to paraphrase further or omit certain phrases. *It is worth looking at those spreads beforehand.*)

Game and Thinking

Make a prison den under a table/on a sofa/using cushions etc. Choose a simple song about Jesus and sing it together in your 'cell'. Have fun shaking everything about pretending there's an earthquake (the more mess the better!) and leap out shouting, 'We're here!'

Did God set Paul and Silas free from prison?

Did Paul and Silas tell the jailer all about Jesus?

Does God want us to hear and talk about Jesus too?

Listen to God from the Bible

This is John 3 verse 16:

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. (NIRV)

Pray

Let's talk to God again now:

Father God, you sent Paul and Silas to share the good news about Jesus with the jailer. Wow!

Thank you that what they said about Jesus is good news for us too. Amen.

Craft Idea

Threading activity: Draw a picture of Paul and Silas singing in prison. Punch rows of holes at the top and bottom of the page and use string/wool/a lace for your child to thread through from top to bottom as jail bars.

See ideas at the end of the session below for things to do "In the Week".



* *The Prisoners, the Earthquake, and the Midnight Song* by Bob Hartman/Catalina Echeverri is available from Christian retailers and at thegoodbook.com (US) / thegoodbook.co.uk (UK).

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OTHER CRAFT/ACTIVITY IDEAS

Using minimal resources... Draw/paint/collage your own copy of the three-picture gospel summary that features throughout the storybook.

Using things you may have around...

- you'll need a map of your local area: make or print one out and mark on it places you often spend time. Write on it one of the memory verses below, or draw the gospel symbols on it, and put it near your front door to remind you to be ready to listen/look out for opportunities to share the good news.
- you'll need paper strips and glue: make paper chains like prison chains and add the gospel picture symbols to them

More of a project... Make "Good News Cookies": look up a fortune cookie recipe online and draw the gospel pictures or a verse, or the Q&A "What must I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus."

IN THE WEEK

Learn a memory verse. As a family, learn this verse over the course of the week. You could write up the memory verse somewhere and cover words with post-it notes or write out the initial letters only, or try setting it to a familiar tune for instance as you learn it...

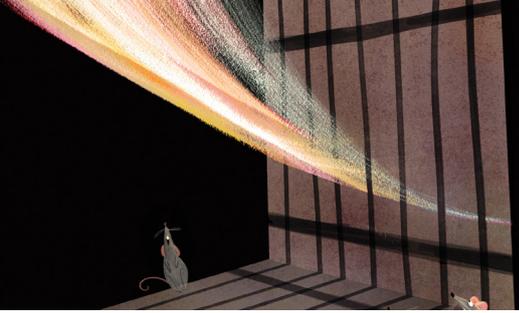
"Jesus...said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...'" (Matthew 28 v 18-19, NIV)

Enjoy singing about the apostles' gospel mission. "The Apostles Were Jesus' Witnesses" (*Colin's New Testament Big Bible Story Songs*). Another about the charge to believers today is "Go and Make Disciples" (*All Together Now*). Songs that teach the content of Christian gospel belief: "We Believe (Apostles' Creed)" (*Getty Kids' Hymnal*), "He lives! (An Easter Song)" (*The Jesus Hokey Pokey*), and "This is the Gospel", "Remember the Lord", "God showed us his love" and "Justified" (*This is Awesome Cutlery*).



TALES THAT TELL THE TRUTH LESSONS

INTRODUCTION



You can use these suggested lesson plans to give you a quick-to-prepare way of engaging with a story in the *Tales That Tell the Truth* Bible storybook series, and with the Scripture that underpins it, helping children see what it means for them.

Each session includes:

- A “Session Summary” to help the adult leading the session know where it’s going.
- A suggested session for pre-school age children (3-4 years).
- A differentiated lesson plan for children from 5-11, with different activities signalled as being for “Younger” (approximately 5-7 year-old) and “Older” (approximately 8-11 year-old) children. In some instances, there are also possible further questions/activities you can use for older children in a family.

Use what you judge appropriate for your children’s experience, understanding and concentration. (You may find the “younger” questions more helpful for an older child who is unfamiliar with the Bible or the gospel message.) But try to include something from the “Let’s listen to God”, “Let’s think” and “Let’s pray together” sections, as well as the story-telling. Feel free to cover the material in more than one sitting!

Each lesson is put together so that it can be read out directly as it is written, with any explanatory notes for adults included in brackets. It is as light on necessary materials as possible but includes many of the elements your children might be used to from Sunday church:

- An introductory activity that establishes a key concept the children will need to help understand the passage.
- Activities to help them engage as they listen to or read the Bible story.
- A story-telling segment that seeks to tell the Bible story in a memorable and visually engaging way. (This involves using part of a book from the *Tales That Tell The Truth* series. In some of the sessions, the book is deliberately read in two parts so that you can look at the Bible before reinforcing the message using the remaining pages of the book.)
- An opportunity to think about a passage of Scripture and what it means using appropriate questions.
- An activity or discussion that encourages the children to understand what the passage means for us today.
- Encouragement to children to pray in light of what they’ve learnt about Jesus in the lesson.
- Games that reinforce the learning, but that also provide a concentration break and a chance to move around!
- Craft activities, ranging from those requiring minimal resources to more complicated projects.

Each session ends with specific suggestions for ways you can revisit what you have been thinking about over the course of the week. Here are some other ideas for ways to recap what you have learnt:

- Show your craft proudly over Zoom/Skype/Facetime etc... to a family member or friend!
- Replay the game. Can your children remember what it reminds us about Jesus?
- Encourage children to have a go at re-teaching the lesson to their dolls/playmobil/Sylvanian families.
- Read the storybook at bedtime.

As far as is currently allowed, why not try to get together with another family with children of a similar age? You can share around the “leading” and enjoy precious time together!

We pray that these resources will give families and churches a way of engaging their children with Scripture at a time when normal church family life has been disrupted and grow all of us in love for our powerful, loving, saving Lord!

