

Bible Point ▶

We worship God by praying to him.

Bible Verse

“Shout with joy to the Lord!” (Psalm 100:1a).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- learn that praying is talking to God,
 - make prayer bracelets,
 - hear a story about Paul and Silas praying, and
 - pray with a partner and in a group.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Paul and Silas pray in prison.



Paul and Silas traveled to many countries, telling people of God’s love. Their travels and adventures required a strong faith and a willingness to obey God in any circumstance, even in prison. Prayer and praise reconnected these battered and bruised missionaries with their faithful God and reminded them of his goodness. Even terrible circumstances couldn’t keep Paul and Silas from praising the God they loved.

The preschoolers in your class face fearful circumstances, too. When parents divorce, families move, or grandparents die, children may feel lonely and afraid. Talking through doubts and questions can help reassure children that God is in charge and that he will take care of them. Use this lesson to teach your preschoolers that in uncertain situations, they can always talk to God.

Prayer

- Read Philippians 4:6.
- Think of your prayer life as a constant, ongoing conversation with God. How might this help you in times of trouble and worry?
- Pray: Dear Lord: Help me model for my preschoolers a vibrant and alive relationship with you as I...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags and be greeted by the teacher.	Butterfly name tags from Lesson 1, washable markers, scissors, safety pins or tape	
Let’s Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Sand Quakes —Make sand earthquakes, and hear about the earthquake Paul and Silas experienced.	Plastic tablecloth, cake pans, sand, spray bottle with water	
	Option 2: Chains of Paper —Make paper jail chains, and hear how Paul and Silas wore chains in jail.	Construction paper, scissors, glue sticks	
	Option 3: Earthquake! —Knock down a building-block jail, and hear how an earthquake opened prison doors.	Building blocks	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Setting the Stage —Pray at prayer stations, and collect stamps on prayer bracelets.	Construction paper strips, tape	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, CD player	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Hear a cut-and-tell story about Paul and Silas’ adventures from Acts 16:16-34.	Bible, scissors, paper, “Cut-and-Tell Praying Hands” handout (p. 34)	
	Do the Bible Story —Pray, and then break free from paper chains.	Paper chains from Option 2, tape, sack	
Closing 	All Tied Up —Teach Whiskers that when we pray, we worship God.	Yarn	
	Hidden Worship —Find hidden pictures, and learn that God is doing good things even when we can’t see them.		

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: butterfly name tags made in Lesson 1, washable markers, scissors, safety pins or tape

- Bend down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week's "Today I Learned..." discussion. Use questions such as "What songs did you sing?" and "What did you tell your family about Paul and Silas?"
- Say: **Today we're going to learn that ► we worship God by praying to him.**
- Hand out the butterfly name tags children made during Lesson 1, and help children attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged or if children weren't in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.
- Direct children to the Let's Get Started activities you've set up.



◀ BIBLE POINT



It's important to say the Bible Point just as it's written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help children remember it and apply it to their lives.

Let's Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed and direct children's conversation toward today's lesson. Ask questions such as "Have you learned some special prayers?" or "When do you talk to God?"

■ Option 1: Sand Quakes

SUPPLIES: plastic tablecloth, cake pans, sand, spray bottle with water

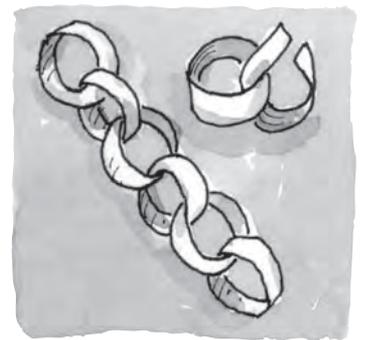
Cover the floor underneath a table with a plastic tablecloth. Set out cake pans with sand in them. Help children lightly spray the sand with water from a spray bottle. Let children build sand mountains in their pans.

Explain that when an earthquake occurs, the ground shakes for a few seconds. Show children how to gently shake their pans to create "earthquakes." Tell children that today's Bible story is about a time when God sent an earthquake to free Paul and Silas.

■ Option 2: Chains of Paper

SUPPLIES: construction paper, scissors, glue sticks

Set out glue sticks and 1x9-inch strips of paper. (You may want to cut the strips from magazine pages. The slick paper is easier for little fingers to glue.) Help children make chains by gluing the strips into links and looping them together as shown. Have children make their chains 10 to 12 links long. As they work, tell children that Paul and Silas wore chains when they were in jail. Point out that even though they were chained up, Paul and Silas still prayed to God. Explain that praying is talking to God and ► we worship God by praying to him.



◀ BIBLE POINT

Set the paper chains aside until “Do the Bible Story.” You’ll need one chain for each child and one for yourself. Have volunteers make extra chains if necessary.

■ Option 3: Earthquake!

SUPPLIES: building blocks

Place building blocks on a table and help children build a “jail.” As children work, explain that Paul and Silas prayed to God in jail, and God sent an earthquake to set them free. When the jail is built, tell children that ► we worship God by praying to him, too. Then have everyone hold on to the edge of the table and shake it to make an “earthquake.” Watch the jail come tumbling down!



BIBLE POINT ►

When everyone has arrived and you’re ready to move on to Bible Story Time, encourage children to finish what they’re doing and get ready to clean up.

■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



track 2

Lead children in singing “Come Along With Me” with the CD (track 2) to the tune of “Come and Go With Me.” Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.



SING

**Come along with me and pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things.
Come along with me and pick up all our things
So our room will be clean.**

(Repeat 2x.)

**teacher
tips**

If you don’t have enough adult or teen helpers for each station, have the children move together to each area and pray as a group.

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: construction paper strips, tape



Before children arrive, set up three prayer stations in different corners of the room. Set up one area for prayers about family, one for prayers about friends, and one for prayers about preschool or Sunday school. At each area, set up a table or chair with a stamp and an ink pad. (You can use stamps from previous Learning Labs.) If possible, station an adult or teen helper in each area.

Tell children you’ll shake the *clapper* to get their attention. Explain that when you shake it, the children are to stop what they’re doing and raise their hands. Practice this signal a few times. Encourage children to respond quickly so you’ll have time for all the fun activities you’ve planned.

Ask: • **What did you make or do when you came to class today?** (Made an earthquake with sand; made paper chains; built a jail and made it fall down.)

Say: **If you made an earthquake by shaking a pan of sand, stand up quickly and then sit down.** Pause. **If you made paper chains, wrap your arms around yourself.** Pause. **If you helped build a jail out of blocks and shook the table like an earthquake, stand up and shake yourself all over; then sit down.** Pause.

When you did each of those things, you were learning important things about our Bible story. Today we're learning that ► we worship God by praying to him.

We're going to be like Paul and Silas today by praying together like they did. First, I want you each to find a partner.

Help children find partners, and then continue: **Now I'm going to give each of you a prayer bracelet. In a little while, we're going to pray together. Each time you pray, you can put a pretty stamp on your bracelet. When you take your prayer bracelets home, the stamps will remind you of the things you prayed for.**

Help children tape construction paper strips loosely around their wrists. Say: **Now stand with your partner, and I'll show you what to do.**

Lead children to the family prayer area and say: **In this area we'll pray for our families. When you get to this area you might say, "Thank you, God, for my family" or "Jesus, please help me share with my sister."**

Lead children to the friends area and say: **In this area we'll pray for our friends. You might want to pray for a friend who doesn't know about Jesus.**

Lead children to the school area and say: **In this last area we'll pray about our preschool or Sunday school classes. You might want to pray for your teacher or ask God to help you make a new friend. Remember, each time you pray, put a stamp on your bracelet. You can say more than one prayer in each area. Ready now? Let's begin.**

Assign pairs of children to each station. Instruct the helpers at each station to encourage the children to pray for the people or situations that were assigned to their area. Help children move from station to station with their partners and pray together at each one. After children pray at each station, they can stamp their partners' prayer bracelets with the stamp.

When everyone has finished traveling to the prayer stations, gather the children and say: **Look at all your pretty prayer bracelets!**

Ask: • **What are some of the things you prayed for?** (My mom; I thanked God for my house; I asked God to help me not be scared in preschool.)

• **What was it like to pray for those different things?** (Good; I didn't want to pray; I knew God was listening.)

Say: **Praying is talking to God. ► We worship God by praying to him. I know God enjoyed hearing your prayers. Let's see what happened when Paul and Silas talked to God in jail.**



■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



tracks 3, 4

Say: **Now it's time to choose a Bible person to bring me the Bible marked with today's Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, we'll pass around our special Bible. The person who's holding the Bible when the music stops will be our Bible person today.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad for the Bible" with the CD (track 3) to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." As you sing, pass around the special Bible.



SING

**I'm so glad for the Bible.
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
I'm so glad for God's book today.
I'm so glad for the Bible.
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'—
Keep me learnin' all about his way.**

**Let me hear 'bout God's love—
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
Let me hear 'bout God's love for me.
Let me hear 'bout God's love—
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
Let's shine the light for all to see.**

(Repeat first verse.)

When the music stops, invite the child who's holding the Bible to bring it to you. Stamp the child's hand with the *trumpet stamp*, and thank the child for bringing you the Bible. Then stamp the other children's hands. As they come up to you to get their hands stamped, take time to show them the Bible and explain to them that the Bible is God's Word for them.

Say: **I'm thankful for [name of child who brought the Bible], and I'm thankful for everyone in our class today. Let's thank God together for all our friends in this class.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad We're Together" with the CD (track 4) to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp."



SING

**I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'.
I'm so glad we're all here today.
I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'—
Prayin' for each other every day.**

Lead children in folding their hands and bowing their heads as you continue to sing.

**Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful.
Thank you for everyone who's here.
Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful—
Thankful for our friends both far and near.**

teacher tips

You can also choose children to be the Bible Replacer (to put the Bible away) and the Cheerleader (someone who can encourage everyone to take part in the lesson). Just be sure to keep track of who fills your roles each week, so each child gets a chance to feel special.

Make sure to return the Learning Lab items back to the box when you're done using them so they can be used in future lessons!

■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors, paper; “Cut-and-Tell Praying Hands” handout (p. 34)

Photocopy the “Cut-and-Tell Praying Hands” handout, and cut out the pattern. Cut a piece of 8½x11-inch paper in half lengthwise, and tape the halves together to make one long strip. Fold the strip into eighths, and then use the fold lines to fold the paper accordion-style. With the paper still folded, tape the praying-hands pattern onto the top fold so E and F are on the fold. (See illustration in the margin.)

Hold up the Bible and say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of Acts in the Bible. Last week we looked at pictures in our Bible Big Book. Today I’m going to tell you the story while I cut out a surprise.**

Tell the story as you cut the folded paper as directed below.

Cut from A to B as you say: **Paul and Silas were friends. They loved to tell others about Jesus. But sometimes when they told people to stop doing bad things, people got mad at them. People didn’t like being told they were doing bad things. One day Paul and Silas got thrown in jail by some of these angry people.**

Cut from C to D as you say: **Paul and Silas were chained up in the jail. They might have been scared at first, but they knew Jesus. So instead of getting scared, what did they do?** Let children respond. **That’s right. Paul and Silas sang praises to God. They also prayed. God was listening to them.**

Cut from D to E as you say: **Suddenly an earthquake came. It shook the whole jail. Can you show me how everything shook in the jail?**

Have children wiggle their arms and legs. Then continue: **That’s right. And all the prisoners’ chains fell off! They were free!**

Cut from F to G as you say: **But Paul and Silas didn’t run away. They stayed and told the jail keeper all about Jesus. He was happy to learn about God. Paul and Silas were happy, too. And you’ll be happy when you see the surprise I’ve made!**

Unfold the praying-hands paper to reveal many praying hands together. Then say: **God always answers our prayers.**

Ask: • **How did God answer Paul and Silas’ prayers?** (He sent an earthquake; he showed that he was watching them.)

• **How did God take care of the jailer?** (Paul and Silas told him about Jesus; Paul and Silas didn’t run away so he didn’t get in trouble.)

• **Tell me about a time God answered your prayers.** (God made my dad better when he was sick; God kept us safe on our vacation.)

Say: **God sent Paul and Silas to help the jailer learn about Jesus. They worshipped God together when they prayed. ► We worship God by praying to him, too.**



If you have time, make extra praying hands for children to take home. Encourage them to tell their families about Paul and Silas praying together.



This Bible story is featured in the new *My First Hands-On Bible™*. Order several now for your ministry at group.com.



■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: paper chains from Option 2, tape, sack

Bring out the paper chains from Option 2. If you didn’t make chains during Option 2, children can pretend to be chained up by wrapping their arms around themselves. Say: **Let’s pretend we’re Paul and Silas. We’ll get wrapped up with these paper chains, pray together, and then break free. When I put chains**

on you, sit against the wall like the prisoners did in our story. If you want, you can sing songs while I put chains on everyone else. When everyone is chained up, we'll pray together and then break our chains!

Lead children to a wall and instruct them to sit down. Have children place their hands at their sides while you put paper chains around them. Use tape to attach the chains. Be sure to wrap chains around yourself.

When everyone is in chains, say: **Look at all the prisoners! It's time to pray. Who would like to pray first?** Have several volunteers pray simple sentence prayers. Then pray: **Dear God, thank you that you hear our prayers. We're glad that you're with us and you take care of us. Amen.**

Say: **Uh-oh, I feel the earthquake coming! Can you stomp your feet to make the sound of an earthquake?** Stomp your feet. **Something's happening to my chains!** Break your chains. **I'm free! How about you?** Wait while children break free.

Say: **The prisoners must have felt happy to have their chains off. Let's thank God by saying our Bible verse together. It's from Psalm 100:1. Do you remember it? Let's say it together:** ▶**"Shout with joy to the Lord!"**

But now we have a messy jail. I'm going to have a helper come around with a grocery sack. You can help by putting your chains in the sack.

Have a helper pass around a grocery sack and collect the paper chains.

BIBLE VERSE ▶

Closing

■ All Tied Up

SUPPLIES: yarn

Before this activity, tie Whiskers' paws together with a length of yarn or jute. Bring out Whiskers and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Whiskers away and out of sight.



Whiskers: *(Comes out with his paws tied up, trying to get untied.)* Whew! I finally got away! Now if I could just get out of this...

Teacher: Hi, Whiskers! You're all tied up!

Whiskers: Oh, hello. Yes, Cousin Joey and I were playing jail. Could you help me get untied?

Teacher: Of course, Whiskers *(untying his paws)*. There.

Whiskers: Thanks. Boy, that was supposed to be fun, but I didn't like it.

Teacher: What happened, Whiskers?

Whiskers: Joey made me be the prisoner. I wanted to be the guard—that's more fun. But he wouldn't let me, so I sneaked away.

Teacher: That reminds me of our Bible story about Paul and Silas in jail.



Whiskers: That's right. They got thrown in jail, didn't they? Were they tied up like I was? Did they sneak away, too?

Teacher: It was worse than being tied up, Whiskers. Paul and Silas had their feet bound by big, heavy blocks of wood and some of the prisoners had chains on their hands.

Whiskers: Wow! They must have been mad! When Cousin Joey made me go in our jail, at first I thought it would be fun. But he made me stay in there so long, I got mad.

Teacher: Whiskers, do you remember what Paul and Silas did when they were in jail?

Whiskers: Yes, they sang songs and praised God. It made them feel better.

Teacher: They also prayed to God. Children, tell Whiskers what happened after Paul and Silas prayed and sang.

(Lead children in telling Whiskers how God sent the earthquake to set the prisoners free.)

Whiskers: Paul and Silas were so brave. I'll bet they weren't even scared during the earthquake!

Teacher: They worshipped God instead of getting mad or afraid. We can worship God, too.

Whiskers: I know we worship God when we sing to him. Do you mean that ► we worship God by praying to him, too?

Teacher: Yes, Whiskers, God loves it when we pray to him. Praying is talking to God.

Whiskers: Oh boy, I'm going to find Cousin Joey and tell him about how God rescued Paul and Silas.

Teacher: That's a great idea, Whiskers. See you next week!

Whiskers: 'Bye, everybody!

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■ Hidden Worship

SUPPLIES: none



Bring out the *Bible Big Book: Paul and Silas Go to Jail*, and gather children around you. Say: **Paul and Silas were probably scared at first when they were thrown into jail. They hadn't done anything wrong. But God made something good come out of a bad thing.**

Open the *Bible Big Book* to pages 4 and 5, and lay it flat on the floor. Say: **Here are Paul and Silas in jail. When something bad happens, we can't always see the good things God is doing.**

Ask: • **What good things did God do by having Paul and Silas in jail?** (An earthquake set them free; the jailer learned about Jesus.)



Say: **Many good things happened because Paul and Silas were in jail. The earthquake came and set the prisoners free. They all learned that God hears our prayers. Paul and Silas told the jailer about Jesus. He became a believer and so did his family.**



Say: **Paul and Silas knew that loving Jesus is the most important thing in the world. It is more important than escaping from jail, more important than being safe. Jesus wants us to share the good news about him with everyone. God will help us do this, just the way he helps us in everything else we do. All we have to do is ask, and we can do that when we pray.**

Point to page 4 of the *Bible Big Book*, and say: **Look very closely now. Somewhere in our picture is a hidden surprise. Do you remember the Bible verse we read last week about worshipping God with harps and trumpets? Well, there's a picture of a trumpet hidden on this page. Can anyone see it?**

Give children a chance to find the hidden trumpet. Point to page 5. Say: **There's also a trumpet hidden on this page. Can you find it?** Give children time to find it. Don't reveal the trumpets on the other pages of the book.

After children have found the trumpets, say: **God is always busy taking care of us—even when it looks like something bad is happening. ► We worship God by praying to him. Let's all pray together.**

Close the book and pray: **Dear God, thank you that you're doing good things even when we can't see them at first. Thank you for being there so we can always talk to you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Say: **I'd like to give each of you a trumpet stamp on your hand. It will remind you of our hidden pictures and that God is always doing something good, even when we can't see it.**

Stamp each child's hand with the *trumpet stamp*. Then return the *trumpet stamp* and *ink pad* to the Learning Lab.



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with the children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ **Lively Learning: Earth Shaking**

Bring in an old blanket or sheet to give children an “earth-moving” experience! Have children take turns sitting in the middle of the blanket. Instruct the other children to stand around the edge of the blanket. When you say, “Earthquake coming!” have everyone pick up the edge of the blanket and shake it back and forth, jiggling the rider. Then have children set the blanket down and let another child get on the blanket.

Continue playing until everyone has had a turn. Then pray and thank God for the earthquake that freed Paul and Silas. Remind children that Paul and Silas prayed while they were in prison, and ► we can worship God by praying, too.

■ **Make to Take: Paul and Silas in Jail**



Make one copy of the “Paul and Silas in Jail” handout (p. 35) for every two children and cut out the pictures. You’ll also need a 6-inch square piece of poster board (old file folders work well) for each child. Cut ½-inch slits around the edge of each square, about one inch apart. Tape one end of a 4-foot length of black yarn to the back of each card and pull it through one of the slits.

Have each child glue a picture of Paul or Silas onto the center of a poster board square. Then show them how to wrap the yarn around their pictures and through the slits to make jail bars. Children can crisscross their yarn to make designs or make only vertical lines. As children work, remind them that Paul and Silas prayed when they were in jail. Point out that God heard Paul’s and Silas’ prayers and that God hears our prayers, too.

■ **Treat to Eat: Prayer Cones**

Give each child an empty ice-cream cone and a napkin. Set out bowls of snack items, such as chocolate chips, M&M’s, and Cheerios cereal. Or use fresh fruits, such as blueberries and banana slices. Have children take turns naming things to pray about and then pray for those things together. After each prayer, allow children to put one spoonful of each snack into their cones. Lead children in thanking God for all the good things he gives to us. As children enjoy their treats, remind them that ► we worship God by praying to him.

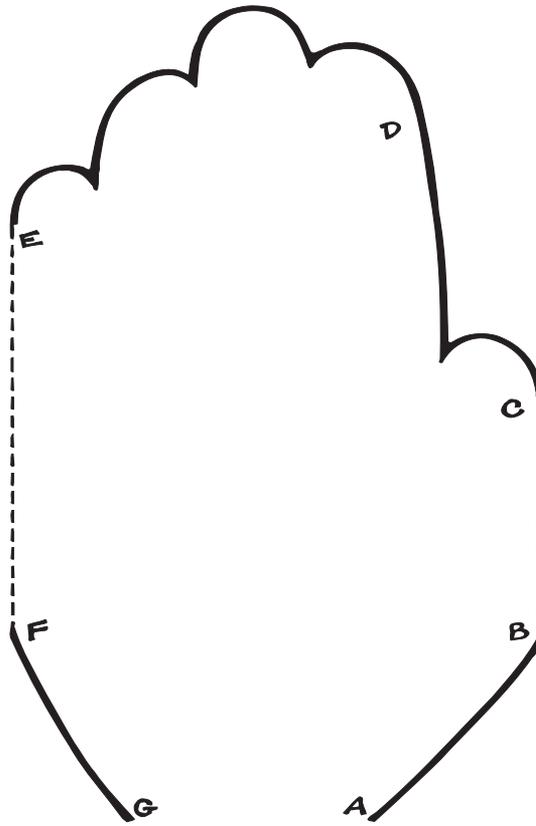


■ **Story Picture: Paul and Silas Pray in Jail**

Give each child a copy of the “Today I Learned...” handout. Set out crayons, glue, wooden blocks, and bowls of large tube-shaped pasta. Have children color their handouts and then use the wooden blocks to break (but not crush) the pasta. Let children glue the pasta to their handouts, near Paul’s and Silas’ feet, to represent the broken chains. As children work, review the details of the Bible story. Remind children that ► we worship God by praying to him.

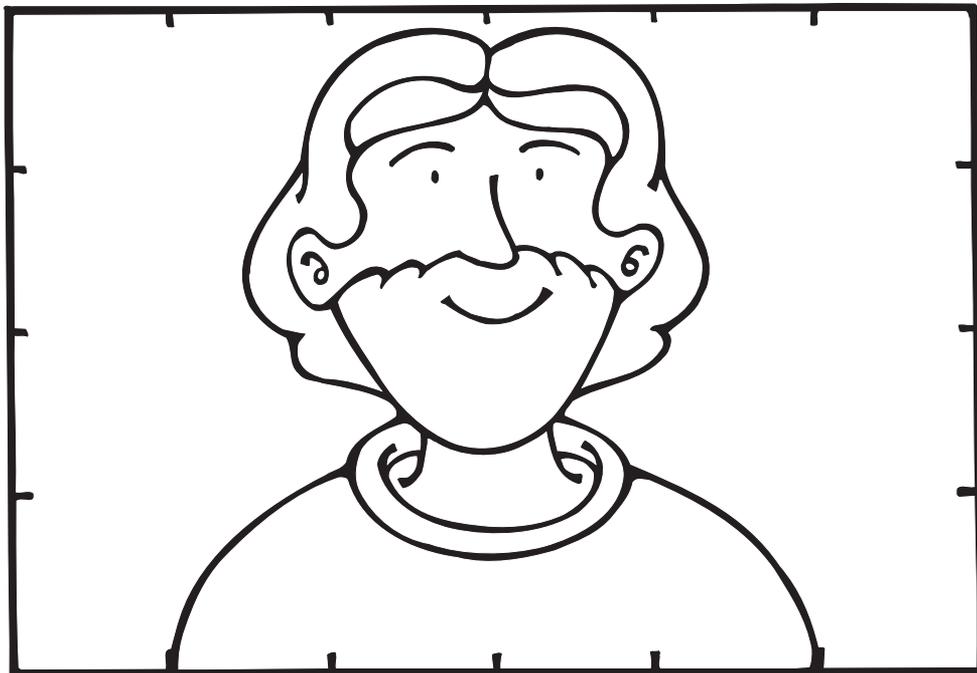
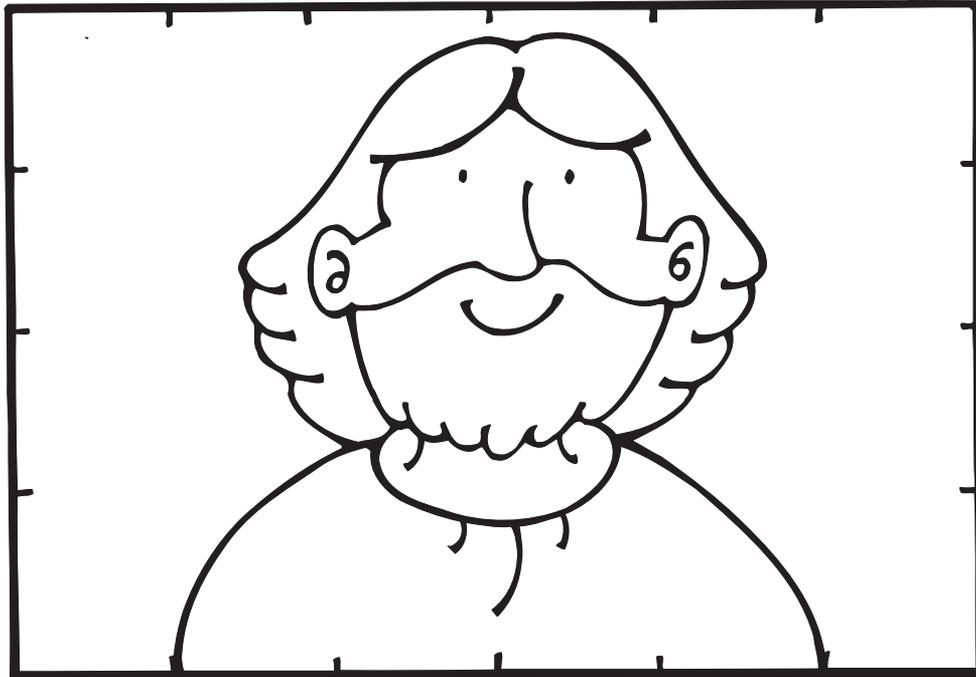
Cut-and-Tell Praying Hands

Photocopy and cut out the pattern.



Paul and Silas in Jail

Photocopy the handout and cut out the pictures of Paul and Silas.
You'll need one picture for each child.



Today i learned... @

@ We worship God by praying to him.

Help me learn this:

"Shout with joy to the Lord!" (Psalm 100:1a).

Ask me:

- How did God answer Paul's and Silas' prayers in jail?
- When do you pray to God?
- What are some things our family can pray about?

Family Fun @

- Gather pictures of family members and friends your child may want to pray for. Put the pictures in a "prayer scrapbook." Each night open the scrapbook to a new page and pray for a different person.
- Have your child lie in the middle of an old blanket. Shake the blanket gently and pretend there's an earthquake like Paul and Silas experienced in jail.

Lesson 2
Today your child learned that
WE WORSHIP GOD
BY PRAYING TO HIM.
Children discovered that Paul and Silas talked to God when they were in prison. They prayed together and learned that praying is talking to God.

Paul and Silas Pray in Jail

(Acts 16:16-34)

