



Paul Sings in Jail

(based on Acts 16:16–34)

Paul and his friends wanted everyone to hear the amazing story of Jesus. They traveled from one town to another bringing the good news to anyone who would listen.

Not everyone was happy to hear what Paul and his friends had to say. Sometimes people became very angry.

One day Paul and Silas helped a slave woman. Her owners got very upset. They grabbed Paul and Silas and marched them to the courthouse.

“These men are troublemakers,” they said to the judge. “They are upsetting our city and disturbing the peace.”

The leaders didn’t want any trouble, so they had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison. The jailer was told to watch them carefully. He would be punished if they escaped.

The jailer put Paul and Silas into a room in the middle of the jail cell deep inside the prison. He chained their feet to heavy blocks of wood. They could not move.

Paul and Silas were sore from the beating. Their legs ached from the chains. The prison was cold and uncomfortable. But even in this very tough situation Paul and Silas began singing and praying to God. All the other prisoners listened.

About midnight the ground began to rumble. It was an earthquake. Suddenly the prison doors flew open and all the chains fell off the prisoners.

Now the jailer, who had been sleeping, awoke with a jump. He saw that all the prison doors were open and was terrified. He thought that all the prisoners had escaped. “Oh, no!” the jailer cried. “What will I do?”

Suddenly the jailer heard Paul’s voice, calling, “Don’t worry. We are all here.”

The jailer called for a light. Sure enough, everyone was still there. He rushed into Paul and Silas’ cell. The jailer trembled as he got down on his knees. “What must I do to be saved?” he cried.

“Believe in God’s servant Jesus,” Paul said. The jailer took Paul and Silas to his home. Then he and his family listened to the good news about Jesus and God’s love.

“We want to become followers of Jesus,” they said. “Will you baptize us?”

Paul and Silas baptized the jailer and his family that night. Afterward everyone had a big feast. The whole household celebrated because the people had found God’s love and became followers of Jesus.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Things could be good for Paul and Silas, like going from place to place to share stories of Jesus. Invite your children to share one good thing that they are free to do or to be.
- Things could be bad for Paul and Silas, like going to jail for telling stories of Jesus. Invite your children to share anything that is hard for them to do or to be.



Responding to God's Grace

- Sing this song to the tune of “London Bridge Is Falling Down.”

Paul and Silas went to jail, went to jail, went to jail.

Paul and Silas went to jail, singing gladly.

Then the ground shook all around, all around, all around.

Then the ground shook all around, freeing prisoners.

So the jailer was afraid, was afraid, was afraid.
So the jailer was afraid; cells were empty.

All the prisoners stayed inside, stayed inside, stayed inside.

All the prisoners stayed inside, hearing stories.

Paul and Silas shared good news, shared good news, shared good news.

Paul and Silas shared good news, of God's power.

We can share God's stories too, stories too, stories too.

We can share God's stories too; God will help us.

- Find supplies at a craft store to help your children make elastic or plastic wristbands as reminders of God's help when times are tough. Invite your children to decorate the bands with words or symbols of hope, such as a cross or “God is here.”

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Pray this prayer this week.

God, in good times and in bad times, thank you for helping me. Amen.