

A SOLDIER BELIEVES

A Philippian Jailer
Acts 16:16–40
AD 49

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God rescues us from fear and gives us new life through His Word.

BIBLE VERSE

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Acts 16:31

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus pours out His blessings on me in His Word and through Baptism.

LAW & GOSPEL

Without faith in Christ, we live in fear of punishment and death.

Our fear turns to joy when salvation in Jesus is proclaimed to us and we receive the blessings of Baptism by faith.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

In Philippi, Paul and Silas cast the spirit of divination from a slave girl, but her angered owner has the two thrown into prison. Around midnight, Paul and Silas are praying and singing to God when suddenly an earthquake shakes the prison. The jailer, thinking his prisoners have escaped, prepares to take his own life. Paul and Silas interrupt his plan as they share the Gospel with him and his whole family, whom Paul then baptizes.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 16:16–40 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the introduction to the Book of Philippians in *TLSB*, pages 2029–30, for more historical background on the city of Philippi.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Cardstock
- Colorful strips of paper
- Round crackers and raisins
- Bowl of water

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible
- Device with prepped music
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- Today, we'll hear how we can be joyful even when we have troubles, because we know Jesus forgives our sins and makes us God's children. When things are good or not so good, we can thank God that He loves us and is with us.**
- Do you ever sing a song when you're feeling anxious or afraid? What songs do you sing when you are afraid?** Listen to responses. If time allows, tell students of a time when you were scared and used a song of God's love to calm yourself.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for bringing us together to study Your Word. Guide our discussion today that we may learn more about Your love for us in Jesus. Bless our time together. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** The Book of Acts is action-packed, and this narrative is no different. Divide students into pairs and have each pair act out a different event from this narrative, using the italic type in the student page to guide you. When students are ready, have each pair act out their part and the rest of the group guess what they are doing, similar to playing charades.
- FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Divide your group into pairs and have each pair draw pictures of the events of this narrative. Use the bold type from the student narrative to make sure they have all the events. Once they are finished, mix up the pictures and have students put them back in order correctly. When you are all finished, collect all the pages and staple them together to make a book that students can refer to later.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- What happened when Paul and Silas were in jail?
- What did Paul tell the jailer?
- What did they do for the jailer and his household?
- How do you think the jailer's life was different after his life was spared and he and his family were baptized? How is our life different because we are Christians?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- God can take bad situations and work good through them. Paul and Silas shared the love of God through their singing and praising Him, even in jail. In the end, the Philippian jailer came to faith and was baptized.
- Paul and Silas were falsely accused and imprisoned, just as Jesus was. Following Jesus is not always easy, but we know that by following Jesus, no matter how hard the path, at our journey's end we will live with Him in heaven.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus won the victory over sin for us on the cross. We are free to live a new life in Him by His Word and Baptism.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Emphasize the story actions in italic and have children repeat the words or do the actions with you.

Do you remember Saul? He was Jesus' enemy, but Jesus changed Saul's heart and Saul became Jesus' friend. Jesus wanted Saul to tell people everywhere about Him. So that's what Saul did. Saul had another name too. It was Paul.

One time, Paul took a helper named Silas to a country far away. They went to tell people about Jesus. At first, the people were nice to them. But then some bad men grabbed Paul and Silas and took them to the city officials. They said, "These men are troublemakers." The officials tore Paul's and Silas's clothes. *Rip!* They had them beaten. *Slap!* Then Paul and Silas were thrown in jail. *Bang* went the cell door. Their feet were chained to big blocks of wood. Poor Paul and Silas!

Paul and Silas didn't cry. They weren't afraid or worried. They knew Jesus still loved them! Instead, they prayed (*fold hands*) and sang songs to God while the other prisoners listened. Paul and Silas knew that Jesus was with them and would take care of them.

Then, in the darkness of the night, they heard a rumbling sound that got louder and louder. *Rumble, RUMBLE.* What was happening? God had sent a big earthquake to shake the jail. *Shake.* All of a sudden the doors of the jail flew open. *Clang, clang.* The chains and wooden blocks fell off Paul and Silas and the other prisoners. *Click, clack, bang.*

The big noise woke the guard at the jail. He saw all the

doors open and thought the prisoners had run away. "Oh no! I'll be punished for letting them get out," he thought. But Paul called out to him, "Guard! Don't be afraid! We're still here."

The jail guard got a torch and ran to the cells. He was thankful to see Paul and Silas were still there! He said, "Come with me. I'll take you to a safe place." The jail guard must have been listening to them sing and pray earlier in the night. When they were safe, he asked the two men, "Please tell me. What must I do to be saved?"

Paul and Silas told him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." That answer is for you too! Let's say the words together: "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*"

The jail guard took Paul and Silas to his home. Paul and Silas told the guard and his family about Jesus, our Savior, who loves everyone. They told how Jesus died and came alive again to save all people from their sins.

Splish, splash went the water. The jail guard washed Paul's and Silas's cuts and put bandages on them. *Splish, splash* went the water. Paul baptized the jail guard and his whole family! Now the jail guard and his family believed in Jesus as their Savior. Their hearts were filled with joy because Jesus had taken their sins away! Now they were God's children too. *Hooray!*

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Saul, also known as Paul, was sent by the Church to be a missionary in faraway cities. He brought some missionary friends to help him tell people about Jesus.

Paul and his friend Silas came to a city in Greece called Philippi. As Paul and Silas shared the Gospel in the city, a slave girl who had a demon followed them around, saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." **Paul turned and said to the demon, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."** And the demon immediately left her.

The people who owned the slave girl were mad that Paul did this. When she had the demon, they had earned a lot of money from others who wanted her to tell their future. **Now with the demon gone, they couldn't make money from her. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the judges.**

The judges ordered that they be beaten with rods and put in prison for the night. **But Paul and Silas didn't sit around feeling sorry for themselves. Around midnight, they were praying and singing in their prison cell,** and all the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, **a strong earthquake struck, and all the prison doors opened up**

and the chains fell off of every prisoner.

The jailer woke up and got really scared. He saw the jail doors standing open and thought all the prisoners had escaped. Since he thought that he had failed to keep them in jail, he pulled out his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted that he should not hurt himself, because all the prisoners were still there. The jailer asked for a torch and ran inside to see. **He fell down in front of Paul and Silas and asked what he had to do to be saved.** Paul told him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then, Paul and Silas told the jailer, his family, and his servants all about Jesus. **They baptized his whole household.**

The next day, the judges sent the police to the jail to let Paul and Silas go. But Paul told them that he and Silas had been wrongly beaten and thrown in jail even though they were Roman citizens. He wanted an apology.

The judges were afraid because they had thrown a Roman citizen in jail when they shouldn't have. They came and apologized to Paul and Silas and asked them to leave. Paul and Silas stopped to visit their friend Lydia and to encourage the other Christians there, and then went on their way.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

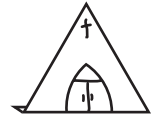
Forward and Back

Have children stand in a circle. Say, **Paul and Silas thanked and praised God, even in jail. When we have troubles, we can thank and praise God too.** You will say things that show thanks and things that show complaining. Have children jump forward for thanks and backwards for complaining. For example, say, **I whine when I don't get my way.** (*Jump backward.*) **I am thankful for my friends.** (*Jump forward.*) Continue with more examples. Ask children to suggest some too.



Church Craft

Cut one 8-inch equilateral triangle from cardstock for each child. Fold bottom edge back so the “church” can stand up. Have children draw the outside of the church (a door, windows, cross at the top point). On the other side, have children draw a pastor and people. Say, **Paul and Silas sang hymns and prayed while they were in jail. The jailer heard the Word of God from them when they told him about Jesus.** Let's make a picture of the place where we go to sing, pray, and hear God's Word—our church!



Pray for Church Workers

If your church sponsors a missionary family, write them letters of encouragement. Talk about where and how these missionaries are working. Or write letters to your district's prison chaplains to encourage them. Ask for specific ways that you might help them in their ministry to prisoners.



Prayer Chain

Cut colorful strips of paper. Have children write someone or something to pray for on each strip. For example, “We pray for . . . Grandma.” Hang the prayer chain in your classroom, and pray for one or two of the things listed each class time.



Joyful Snack

Hand out round crackers and raisins. Have children make smiley faces on the crackers with the raisins. Talk about how Paul and Silas had joy, even though they were in jail, because they knew Jesus loved them.



Baptism Connection

Have a clear bowl of water. Ask, **How did the jailer use water?** (He washed dirt from cuts on Paul and Silas.) **How did Paul use water?** (He baptized the jailer and his family.) Say, **Baptism washes away something more than dirt. It washes away sin. It isn't the water but God's Word connected to the water that does this. Baptism is a gift from God.**



Deliver Us from Evil

Talk about troubles that make the children afraid or sad. Say, **When we are afraid, we can do what Paul and Silas did. We can pray. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray, “Deliver us from evil.” Deliver means to rescue and protect us. Evil is something bad. Jesus delivers us from evil!**



LEAVE

SAY

The Philippian jailer was saved by God's Word and Baptism. God also saves us by His Word and in Baptism.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for the missionary work of Paul and Silas. Thank You for all the missionaries that have shared the love of Jesus over the years. Help us to share the message of the Gospel wherever we are. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.