

LESSON 2

PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Is Powerful

SCRIPTURE: Acts 16

GOD'S BIG STORY: After Paul and Silas are thrown in prison, an earthquake shakes the prison, opening the doors and loosening chains. Amazed by God's power, the jailer and his household believe in Jesus and are saved!

WORD OF WONDER: Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. —Romans 8:14

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- | | |
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| • **Preservice STEM Experiment: Tornado in a Jar | 8–10 min |
| • Welcome Question: What do you think is the most powerful force in nature? | 2 min |
| • SMALL GROUP | 25 min |
| • Declaring God's Wonder | 1–2 min |
| • Prayer of Invitation | 1–2 min |
| • Worship: Your Love for Me, Love Come Down | 8–10 min |
| • God's Big Story | 5–6 min |
| • Connecting the Wonder Truth | 1–2 min |
| • Responding in Worship: Holy Forever | 3–4 min |
| • Blessing Your Kids | 1–2 min |
| • SMALL GROUP: Responding in Worship Activity | 5–10 min |



Schedule:

Pre-service Activities: 10 min before service

Small Group: 20-25 minutes

Large Group: 30-35 minutes

Small Group Response Activity: 5-10 min



[Holy Spirit Our Helper Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Is Powerful

SCRIPTURE: Acts 16

WORD OF WONDER: Romans 8:14

One of the best things about being a follower of Jesus is knowing that we have the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. What power is that? The power over evil spirits, the power over our circumstances, the power of salvation. Read Acts 16:16–36, and you can see the Holy Spirit working in each of these ways.

Through Paul, the Spirit delivered a possessed slave girl, rescued Paul and Silas by opening prison doors and loosening chains, and then led a Roman jailer to salvation—along with his whole family. Now that’s some power! The power to do it all. This is the same Spirit guiding us and working within us. He hasn’t changed.

But it’s up to us to keep trusting that the Spirit is working in our lives. Even when Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, they didn’t doubt or sulk about their situation; they praised God! They sang and prayed and continued to trust that God would show up. When have you seen the Spirit work in powerful ways? When a situation changes and things go from good to bad, how do you respond? Remember that God, through the Holy Spirit, is working powerfully, guiding us in our work to bring Him glory in all we do. When we trust the Holy Spirit, good things follow.

—Kramer Mize

Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Paul and Silas became traveling companions after Paul and Barnabas parted company. Silas was a Jewish man who was a leader and prophet in the church of Jerusalem. He had previously traveled with Paul to Antioch as a delegate of the Jerusalem Council.

WHAT?

After Paul drove out an evil spirit, he and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. They prayed and sang hymns, and an earthquake opened the prison doors, but they did not leave. Instead, they shared the gospel with the jailer and his household.

WHERE?

Philippi was a major city in the northern region of Macedonia, about 10 miles inland from the port city of Neapolis, where Paul arrived from Troas. It was a Roman colony greatly influenced by Roman culture. Philippi is in the northern part of present-day Greece.

WHEN?

This story takes place around AD 50, during what is known as Paul's second missionary journey. It comes shortly after Paul and his companions arrived in Philippi and shared the message of Jesus with Lydia, whose house became Paul's homebase in Philippi.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

In this story, the news of the risen Jesus continues spreading and the church continues growing as the Spirit moves in power even through challenging circumstances. Angry mobs, beatings, and prison walls do not thwart the advance of God's kingdom.

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Is Powerful

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As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

STEM Experiment: Tornado in a Jar

SUPPLIES: canning jars with lids (1 per 10 kids), water, dish soap (1 small bottle per 10 kids), glitter (optional), plastic water bottles (1 per kid, optional), large bucket (1 or more, optional), paper towels (optional)

SLIDE: TORNADO IN A JAR

Ahead of time, set up STEM stations, about one station per 10 kids, along with a station at the front of the room. At each station, set one canning jar filled two-thirds full of water, along with a small bottle of dish soap.

You may also want to have these optional items at the stations: glitter, plastic water bottles (one per kid), large bucket, and paper towels. You will need a youth or adult leader at each station. Alternatively, if your group is large and you have a raised stage area or live video projection, consider setting up just one STEM station at the front. It's important that all the kids have a clear, close-up view of the experiment. Help kids form small groups of about 10 kids each, and assign each group to a STEM station along with a leader. From the station at the front, show kids the canning jar partially filled with water. Invite the group leaders to copy each step as you do it. Add one squirt of dish soap. You can also add glitter for extra fun!



Secure the lid and swirl the jar around quickly in one direction. Kids will be able to see a funnel form and watch it swirl. At this point, you may want kids to make their own tornadoes using the plastic water bottles. They can start by dumping about one-third of the water from their bottles into a bucket, leaving each bottle about two-thirds full. Then they can add glitter if available. Consider having paper towels available to soak up any spills.

Explain that the tornado is caused by centripetal force, a force that pulls the water toward the center of its circular path. A real tornado can form during a storm when warmer air rises and meets cooler air that is moving in a different direction and causes the rising air to start spinning.



Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. If kids make their own water bottle tornadoes, close their water bottles tightly for them to ensure no water spills.

What a cool experiment! Tornadoes are very powerful and can do a lot of damage. Today in God's big story, we're going to hear about someone who is even more powerful than a tornado. However, unlike a tornado, this person is the opposite of harmful. He is the Holy Spirit, our wise and loving helper."

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS POWERFUL.**



Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question. Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

"What do you think is the most powerful force in nature?"

Today in God's big story from the Bible, we'll discover how God's presence, the Holy Spirit, is more powerful than all of these powerful forces of nature! We'll learn how the Spirit is our loving helper. But, first, it's time for small group."



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

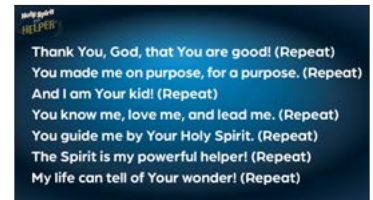
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You guide me by Your Holy Spirit. (Kids repeat.)

The Spirit is my powerful helper! Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Thank You, God, that You are good! (Repeat)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Repeat)
And I am Your kid! (Repeat)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Repeat)
You guide me by Your Holy Spirit. (Repeat)
The Spirit is my powerful helper! (Repeat)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Repeat)

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **Father God, we thank You for this time to learn about You and Your Holy Spirit. We ask Your Spirit to guide us and show us His power. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you!

"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! Let's stand together and sing!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: Your Love for Me, Love Come Down

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

Explain that Acts is in the New Testament and tells the true story of the early church and followers of Jesus. **"Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we will experience more of the story!"**



LESSON 2 PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: cardstock, chairs (4), tape (prep only), clipboard, game show host attire (optional), paper (optional), black marker (optional)

RESOURCES: [Holy Spirit and Challengers Sheets\(1/LG\)](#), Game Show Theme Sound Effect (Search on Spotify)

Ahead of time, print the Holy Spirit Challengers Sheets on cardstock. Tape each of the five images to four separate chair backs (prison door and prison chains will go on the same chair) as if the characters are all sitting in the chairs. Tape them high enough on the chair backs so the kids can see clearly.

Set the stage: Place the Holy Spirit chair on one side of the stage. Place the three challengers—evil spirit, the jailer, and the prison doors/prison chains—on the other side but not too far apart. Turn all the chairs around so the kids can't see the images. As each character is introduced in the story, flip that chair around, as though a new guest has arrived. Make sure the chairs are ones you can maneuver!



Get into character: You are the host of the game show “Who Is More Powerful?” You might wear a professional-looking suit or something tacky—however you envision a game show host. Carry a clipboard with a printed copy of the Experience It! Script on it for reference. You may want to write “Applause!” on paper and attach it to the back of your clipboard to cue the kids when to show their enthusiasm.

SLIDE: Who Is More Powerful? If possible, play the Game Show Theme Sound Effect.

Welcome back to “Who Is More Powerful?” ... the reality game show that pits strength against strength, power against power! The game is simple: Three new contestants will challenge the strength of our reigning champion, seeking to take His place. In the end we will see ... (play Game Show Theme Sound Effect)



“Who is More Powerful?” Let’s bring in our reigning champion! Everyone, give it up for the one, the only, the undefeated ... **Holy Spirit!** Turn the Holy Spirit’s chair around so everyone can see the flame. Encourage applause. **A little about our champ. After Jesus went up to heaven, the Holy Spirit came to Jesus’ followers. The Holy Spirit is God—and we have yet to meet anyone more powerful than Him!**

Let’s remember that, as God, the Holy Spirit has already defeated some powerful opponents. [Display Former Challengers Slide 1: Pharaoh.](#) Who remembers Pharaoh? King of Egypt. Incredibly stubborn. But he was no match for our champion. Goodbye, Pharaoh! [Display Former Challengers Slide 2: Sin & Death.](#) And what about the dual opponents, Sin and Death? Pretty powerful, right? But when Jesus died on the cross and rose again, He defeated them both—at the same time! Goodbye, Sin! Goodbye, Death!



[Display Former Challengers Slide 3: Paul.](#) And then, there was Paul. Wait, Paul?! Scramble through your papers like you must have missed something. **No, that’s right. The Paul we know from the Bible,**

the Paul who loved Jesus and spread the good news to so many people ... this same Paul had once been against Jesus and His followers. But God changed Paul's heart and filled him with the Holy Spirit. Pat the back of the Holy Spirit's chair. **That's our champion! He defeats opponents and wins over hearts! What's more, His power, wisdom, and love help His followers, like Paul here, spread the good news about Jesus.** Encourage applause.

Now let's meet the challengers. As you introduce each challenger, turn their chair around so kids can see them. **We've got an evil spirit. Yikes! Don't get close to that one. We have a jailer. Wow! Muscles and a sword? Finally, we have a prison door and prison chains! Oh, the iron twins. Where one is, the other goes.**

Wow! Those are some strong and powerful opponents. Can the Holy Spirit remain our champion? Get ready to find out in (display the Who Is More Powerful? Slide and play the Game Show Theme Sound Effect, if possible) "Who Is More Powerful?" Encourage applause.

Today's episode is brought to you from the book of Acts. We hear many stories of the Holy Spirit's work in the Bible in the book of Acts. Featured in our story is Paul—yes, the same Paul—but the hero is our reigning champion the Holy Spirit, working through Paul.

Our story begins years after the Holy Spirit changed Paul's heart. The Spirit led Paul and his friends to a city called Philippi (fih-LIH -ai)—a colony of the Roman Empire—to tell more people about Jesus.

One day a female slave started following Paul and his friends around. Stand behind the evil spirit's chair. **She was under the control of an evil spirit—(yikes)—that helped her tell people what was going to happen (Acts 16:16). Her owners made money by charging people for these predictions. After she met Paul's group, she started shouting, (shout) "These men serve the Most High God! They are telling you how to be saved" (Acts 16:17). After days of this happening, Paul was annoyed. He turned to the woman and spoke to the spirit controlling her. " 'In the name of Jesus Christ,' he said, 'I command you to come out of her!' " (Acts 16:18). The evil spirit was no match for the power of the Holy Spirit working through Paul, so the evil spirit left the woman. Turn the evil spirit's chair around as though it has gone. Goodbye, evil spirit! The Holy Spirit wins again!** Encourage applause.

Make It Inclusive! Involve kids with extra energy by inviting them to come up and turn each challenger's chair around as the Holy Spirit defeats them: evil spirit, prison door and prison chains, and the jailer.

The woman's owners were so angry. How could they make money if the fortune-telling spirit was gone? The owners grabbed Paul and his friend Silas and dragged them before the town's judges. They told the judges that Paul and Silas were troublemakers and a threat to Roman law. Even the surrounding crowd joined the attack against Paul and Silas (Acts 16:22). The judges had them beaten and whipped and thrown into prison. It was terrible.

The jailer (stand behind the jailer's chair) **in charge of the prison was told to guard Paul and Silas carefully, so he put them deep inside the prison and chained their feet so they couldn't get away.** Stand behind prison door and prison chains. **With a locked door and chains keeping Paul and Silas**

stuck in prison, what would they do now? Cry? Sleep? Sit there quietly? About midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns, which are songs, to God while the other prisoners listened. Then the whole prison began to shake. There was an earthquake! The prison doors flew open. Everyone's chains fell off! Turn around prison door and prison chains chair. Goodbye, prison door! Goodbye, prison chains! That's another win for the Holy Spirit! Encourage applause.

The jailer (go back behind the jailer's chair) woke up and saw the open doors. How could this happen? He thought he had failed and that all the prisoners had escaped, so he grabbed his sword. He was going to take his own life. Then he heard Paul's voice: " 'Don't harm yourself! ... We are all here!' " (Acts 16:28). The jailer rushed in, shaking with fear, and fell before Paul and Silas. Something powerful was at work. But what or who? Whisper: The Holy Spirit!

The jailer brought Paul and Silas out and asked them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and everyone living in your house will be saved" (Acts 16:31). That night, the jailer washed their wounds. Paul and Silas shared the news about Jesus with the man and his household. They all believed and were baptized with water as a symbol that God was washing them clean of their sin, the wrong they had done. The jailer took them to his house to feed them. Early the next morning, the judges ordered that Paul and Silas be released. The jailer told them, "You can leave now. Go in peace" (Acts 16:36). Bring the jailer's chair right next to the Holy Spirit's side. And that's one more win for the Holy Spirit! Encourage applause. Just like Paul, the jailer was won over by the Holy Spirit. And just like Paul, the jailer was forever changed by God.

Stand by the Holy Spirit's chair. The power to spread the good news about Jesus couldn't be stopped, even when Paul and Silas were arrested. Doors were opened, chains fell off, and a whole household believed in the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit was still at work ... and He is still our champion! Encourage applause. This concludes another episode of ... (play Game Show Theme Sound Effect, if possible) "Who Is More Powerful?" The Holy Spirit is powerful!"

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS POWERFUL**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

In this part of God's big story, the good news of Jesus continued spreading and the church continued growing as the Holy Spirit moved in power even through difficult situations. Angry mobs, beatings, and prison walls could not stop God's kingdom from expanding!"



Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



VIDEO: BAPTISM

WORSHIP VIDEO: HOLY FOREVER

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Blessing: May the God of the universe leave you in awe as you discover the power of His Holy Spirit. May His presence go before you as He leads, loves, and guides you, and may He give you peace.