

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

- Welcome Question: What do you think is the most powerful force in nature?
- Curiosity Questions
- Word of Wonder: Romans 8:14
- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Chains Art Response



[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.

Small 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

SCRIPTURE: Acts 16

WORD OF WONDER: Romans 8:14

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: **Coloring Page**, whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group. *Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.*

As kids arrive..

Invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: on the designated board:

“What do you think is the most powerful force in nature?” Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

- **What are some other examples of powerful things?**
- **Do you think there is anything or anyone more powerful than the things you named?**

Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

WORD OF WONDER

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

—Romans 8:14 (NirV)

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), Word of Wonder Poster (1/SG)

Display the Word of Wonder Poster.

"The Word of Wonder for the Holy Spirit Our Helper series is Romans 8:14. Today we've seen how the Holy Spirit is powerful and is a helper to His children. This verse tells us more about how God's Spirit leads us. Let's read the Word of Wonder together!"

Invite kids to open their Bibles to Romans 8:14 and read the verse several times together. Consider singing the verse to the tune of "Happy Birthday" or some other simple tune.

Talk about these questions:

- **How do you think God feels about us, since He's sent His Holy Spirit to lead us as His children?**
- **How does it make you feel knowing that the Holy Spirit who leads you is more powerful than anything?**

Leader Tip: Some kids might not be familiar with what it means to be children of God. Explain the amazing truth that anyone who chooses to follow Jesus and accept God's gift of forgiveness and salvation is a child of God!

Word of Wonder Activity

Explain to kids they each will have the opportunity to lead the verse in a way that they choose.

"Let's see how well we know our Word of Wonder! Our verse talks about the Holy Spirit leading God's children. We're going to take turns leading one another! Who would like to take a turn leading our group in saying the verse?" Pause for kids to raise their hands. **Great! You can have us practice any way you would like. For example, we can say the verse in a funny voice, do motions that go along with the words, or do any other creative action you think of. Who's our first volunteer?"** Select one kid to say the verse in a unique way. Then everyone else will copy him, saying the verse in the same way.

Some kids will be excited to lead, but they might need help thinking of a unique way to say the verse. Here are some ideas to get them started: talk in a silly voice (robot, slow motion, whale, etc.), jump up and down while saying the verse, whisper the verse, and tiptoe in place while saying the verse.

Allow multiple volunteers the opportunity to lead for as long as time allows. If kids are slow to volunteer, consider changing the directions slightly so the group decides together the creative way to say the verse. You may also consider having teams of kids lead the verse together.

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid); Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find Acts 16. As kids find the passage, explain that Paul and Silas were friends who loved Jesus and told people about Him everywhere they went. One day, they helped a girl who was in trouble, but some people got very angry and had them thrown into prison. Even though they were in jail, Paul and Silas sang songs and prayed to God because they trusted Him no matter what!

Read Acts 16:22–34 aloud. Then discuss the following:

Notes! Have kids turn to the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet and write the Scripture and any words that stand out to them.

- **What were Paul and Silas doing while they were in prison?** (They were praying and singing hymns to God.)
- **What amazing things happened while Paul and Silas were praying and singing?** (A powerful earthquake occurred, the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.)
- **The jailer brought Paul and Silas to his house. After learning about Jesus, what did he do?** (He and those in his house got baptized, and they believed in God.)
- **When things don't go your way, how do you tend to respond?**
- **Why do you think Paul and Silas were able to sing and pray to God even though they were in prison?**
- **What's a situation where you need the Holy Spirit's help?**

"The Holy Spirit is so powerful that He caused an earthquake to break open the prison doors and loosen the prisoners' chains! The Holy Spirit also does things we can't see, like helping us change how we think and act to be more like Jesus. Let's pray together and ask the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts as He did in the jailer's heart, making us more like Jesus."

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids into a time of prayer, and ask volunteers to pray for those who shared situations where they need the Holy Spirit's help. Close by thanking God for His presence in our lives and that His Holy Spirit is powerful enough to do all things

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), Bible Story Picture (1/SG), Paul's Journey Map (1 for every 2 kids)

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find Acts 16. Paul and Silas were missionaries—followers of Jesus who traveled to different places to tell others about God's love. In one city, they helped a girl who was being treated badly, but this made some people angry, and they had Paul and Silas thrown into prison. Even in jail, Paul and Silas didn't give up—they prayed and sang songs to God, showing their strong faith and joy in Him.

Turn to Page 3 of this guide and help kids understand the context of this passage.

Read Acts 16:22–34. aloud. Then discuss the following:

Notes! Have kids turn to the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet and write the Scripture and any words that stand out to them.

- **How did Paul and Silas respond to being thrown in prison?** (They responded by praying and singing hymns to God.)
- **What amazing things did the Holy Spirit do while Paul and Silas were in prison?** (The Spirit caused a powerful earthquake that caused the prison doors to open and everyone's chains to come off.)
- **What did Paul and Silas say the jailer needed to do to be saved?** (They told him to believe in the Lord Jesus and he would be saved.)
- **How would you describe Paul's and Silas' attitudes while they were in prison? How do you think they were able to have that attitude in prison?**
- **What can we learn from the way Paul and Silas responded to their situation?**
- **What's a situation where you could use the Holy Spirit's help?**

In this story from the Bible, we see many examples of the Holy Spirit's power, from big things we can see, like an earthquake, to those we can't see, like changing someone's heart to follow God. God gives His Spirit to all who follow Jesus so we can know that He will lead us and help us in any situation. Let's pray together, thanking God for giving us His Holy Spirit.

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite kids into a time of prayer. Consider having one volunteer praise God for His Holy Spirit, who is powerful. Have other volunteers pray for those kids who shared situations where they need the Holy Spirit's help. Finally, close your prayer time by thanking God for sending His Spirit to lead and guide us.

PAUSE for Large Group time, then continue...

Responding in Worship: Chains Art Response

SUPPLIES: colored paper; scissors (prep only); glue sticks, tape, or stapler; coloring utensils; trash can

RESOURCES: Responding in Worship Slide, [Holy Spirit Our Helper Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, cut colored paper to use as links in a paper chain (about 1" x 8.5" each), enough for each kid to have four, plus you may want some extras. Prepare a place where kids can spread out to make paper chains by setting out slips of colored paper, glue sticks or tape or a stapler, and coloring utensils. Invite kids to find a place near the craft supplies.

"Today we learned that the Holy Spirit is powerful! The Spirit is strong enough to help us with our biggest problems and loving enough to make us more like Jesus. We're going to spend some time thinking about situations or relationships where we need the Holy Spirit's help. For example, you might have trouble being kind to your sibling, but the Holy Spirit is powerful enough to help you!"

Make It Inclusive! Help kids who struggle with activities that require fine-motor skills by applying the glue, tape, or a stapler on each paper loop for them and working together to make a paper chain. For example, the kid can hold the growing chain as you attach the next link.



Explain to kids that they are going to make a paper chain by linking slips of paper together. Demonstrate this by gluing, taping, or stapling together two ends of a paper strip. Then take a second strip, fish it through the loop created by the first strip, and attach the two ends of the second loop together. Each time kids add a loop to their chains, they can think about a situation or relationship in which they need the Holy Spirit's help. Kids who would like to can write a word or draw a simple picture on each paper slip that represents the difficult situation they are thinking about. Give kids time to create chains containing four loops.

For the next part of the activity, kids can use their own chains, or you can invite all the kids to connect their chains together to create one very long chain. You will need extra paper slips for kids to use to link their chains together.

Now that we've all created chains, let's stand up and hold our chains in front of us. Each kid can hold her own chain, or if everyone combined their chains to create one long chain, each kid can hold one section of the long chain. **We might not be in prison chains like Paul and Silas were in God's big story, but sometimes difficult situations in our lives can feel like chains around us. Let's listen to a song that reminds us that the Holy Spirit has the power to break any chain in our lives. We don't always understand why things happen or why some things are hard for us, but the Holy Spirit is always with us and is more powerful than any situation! When we start our song, rip apart your chain as a reminder that the Holy Spirit is powerful and can break every chain!**

Play “Break Every Chain” from the [Holy Spirit Our Helper Elementary Spotify playlist](#) and invite kids to sing and dance along once they’ve broken their chains. After the song, encourage kids to clean up and throw the broken chains in the trash.

