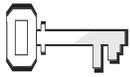


Midnight Song Service



References

Acts 16:16–40;
The Acts of the Apostles,
pp. 211–220



Memory Verse

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God” (Acts 16:25, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that we can worship God at any time.

Feel that God responds to our worship at all times.

Respond by worshipping God even when things go wrong.



The Message

I worship God when I praise Him no matter what happens.

Monthly Theme

We praise God in our times of worship.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Paul and Silas are beaten and thrown into prison because they have cast a devil out of a slave girl. In the prison they are chained together, but they are not sad. They sing songs praising and worshipping God. God sends an earthquake and the prisoners can escape, but don't. As a result, the jailer and his family become believers.

This is a lesson about worship.

Paul and Silas worshipped God when it seemed as if He had forgotten them. Through their worship and witness the jailer and his family learned to know God. Like Paul and Silas, we too can worship God no matter what our circumstances.

Teacher Enrichment

“Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost Paul commanded the evil spirit to leave the woman. Her immediate silence testified that the apostles were the servants of God and that the demon had acknowledged them to be such and had obeyed their command.

“Dispossessed of the evil spirit and restored to her right mind, the woman chose to become a follower of Christ. . . .

“[The magistrates] saw the woman . . . and were struck by the change in her countenance and demeanor. In the past she had caused the city much trouble; now she was quiet and peaceable. . . . They realized that in all probability they had visited upon two innocent men the rigorous penalty of the Roman law” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 212–214).

“A mob spirit prevailed and was sanctioned by the authorities, who tore the outer garments from the apostles and commanded that they should be scourged” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 213).

“The apostles were Roman citizens, and it was unlawful to scourge a Roman, . . . or to deprive him of his liberty without a fair trial. . . .

“The apostles did not regard as in vain their labors in Philippi. . . . The news of their unjust imprisonment and miraculous deliverance became known through all that region, and this brought the work of the apostles to the notice of a large number who otherwise would not have been reached” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 217, 218).

Stocks. “The word refers to the stocks, an instrument of tor-

ture, a wooden frame with holes into which head and feet and hands were thrust, thus placing the prisoner in a most uncomfortable position. . . . With Paul and Silas the feet only were fastened, and the rest of the body was left lying on the ground, a particularly agonizing position for men punished as the apostles had been" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 333).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 9.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Activities	up to 10	A. <i>Tied Up</i> B. <i>Behind Bars</i>	strips of cloth, stones paper, crayons/markers, strips of black or brown paper, glue
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> offering container from Lesson 9 beanbag
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes, bandages, "sword," chains none Bibles, slips of paper, pen
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Worship Chain</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Sharing Worship</i>	Bibles, songbooks

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week's memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- strips of cloth
1 yard (1 m)
long
- stones

A. Tied Up

Divide the children into pairs. Ask them to sit on the floor and tie their ankles together. Place a stone just beyond their reach. Say: **You are in prison. The stone is the key to your cell. If you can reach it, you can escape. Your legs are in stocks. This means that you cannot bend them or stand up.** Let the children try to find a way to get the key. Then untie the children.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did it feel when you were tied up and unable to move? What would it be like if you had been beaten and then tied up? In our story today two men were beaten and put in prison. Their feet were put into stocks, and they were unable to move. After all that they were still able to sing praises and worship God. Today's message is:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I PRAISE HIM NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- paper
- crayons/
markers
- strips of black
or brown paper
- glue

B. Behind Bars

Ask the children to draw a picture of a place they would like to go. When they have finished, admire the pictures. Then ask them to glue bars of black or brown paper over the picture.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do the bars do to the picture? (Spoil it. It is not as nice to look at.) What do you think about looking at the picture through bars? How would you like to be inside a prison and have to see the world through bars? In our story today two men were put in prison even though they had not done anything wrong. In spite of their circumstances they still praised and worshipped God. And that leads us to today's message:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I PRAISE HIM NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Dare to Be a Daniel" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 116)
- "God Is So Good" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 13)
- "This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 134)
- "A Little Talk With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 98)
- "Sing Praises to the Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 2)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize worship in the story.



Offering

Say: **Bringing money to Sabbath School is one of the many ways that we can worship God. When we give willingly, God will bless our offerings.**

You Need:

- Bible offering container (see Lesson 9)



Prayer

Have the children stand in a circle and take turns tossing the beanbag randomly around the circle. As each one throws it, they are to say: **Thank You, God, that we can worship You in** [insert a place where you can worship God]. When everyone has had a chance, or you have exhausted the possibilities, pray for the class. Emphasize the ability to worship God in any place and in all circumstances.

You Need:

- beanbag

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- bandages
- “sword”
- chains

Experiencing the Story

Characters: slave girl, her owners, judge, Paul, Silas, jailer, jailer’s family

Encourage the children to act out the story as you read or tell it. The other children can play the part of the crowd and the jailer’s family.

Setting the Scene

Say: **Paul and Silas were on a journey to visit some of the newer churches and to help spread the gospel to other places. When they arrived in Philippi, something strange happened.**

Read or tell the story.

“These men are servants of the Most High God.” The slave girl’s voice rang out as she followed Paul and Silas down the street. *[Girl follows Paul and Silas.]* She had been following them for days, shouting over and over, “These men are servants of the Most High God.” Finally, Paul decided she should be stopped. *[Paul turns and makes a gesture.]* He turned and ordered the evil spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!”

Immediately the slave girl became silent. Her masters looked on in astonishment. *[Looks of astonishment, anger, and then they grab Paul and begin to drag him away. The crowd joins them.]* Their astonishment turned to anger as they realized what Paul had done. The slave girl had made them wealthy by telling people’s fortunes. Now that the evil spirit had left her, she would not be able to tell fortunes and earn money for her owners.

Her owners grabbed Paul and Silas

and dragged them to the market place to stand before the local judge. They accused Paul and Silas, saying, “These men are Jews. They are stirring up trouble and encouraging people to accept non-Roman practices.” Quickly an unfriendly crowd gathered. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into jail. *[Pretend to beat Paul and Silas and take them to the jailer.]*

The jailer took Paul and Silas into his deepest dungeon. He put their feet in stocks and locked the door, leaving them in darkness. *[Seat them on the floor, tie them together, and leave them.]* It was cold and damp in the cell. Their backs were bleeding and sore. The stocks dug into their ankles, and they could not move.

As they sat in the dark cell, Paul and Silas began to pray and sing hymns to God. *[Sing one of the children’s favorites.]* The more they sang, the better they felt. They forgot about their sore backs and ankles. They praised God for keeping them alive. They praised Him for being with them and looking after them. The other prisoners listened in amazement. How could these men sing after being so badly beaten?

Around midnight an earthquake began to shake the prison. *[Sway about as if the ground is moving.]* The prisoners’ chains fell off. *[Remove chains.]* The doors flew open. They could walk out of prison.

The jailer ran out of his house. He saw the open prison doors and was sure that all the prisoners had escaped. Immediately he took out his sword to kill himself. *[Draw sword.]* He knew the penalty for letting prisoners escape was a painful death. He would rather take his own life.

Paul called out to the jailer, “Stop! We are all here.”

The jailer called for lights. He rushed to the cell where Paul and Silas were

held. Yes! They were still there! Chains no longer held them fast and the cell door was wide open. Paul and Silas could have escaped—but they hadn't.

The jailer fell to his knees, trembling. Then he stood and led Paul and Silas out. "What must I do to be saved?" he asked as he led them away from their cell.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," responded Paul and Silas.

The jailer took Paul and Silas to his home. [*Jailer goes to Paul and Silas and leads them out of the prison.*] He had heard Paul and Silas singing and worshipping God in their cell. As he washed their cuts and bruises, he asked the men to tell him more about the God they worshipped. [*Bandage a "wound" on Paul and Silas.*]

As they told the wonderful story of how God had sent His Son Jesus to die for their sins, the jailer and all his family decided that they wanted to follow Jesus. They joined with Paul and Silas in worshipping God and were baptized. [*Sing a praise song with the class.*]

The next morning Paul and Silas were released. The judge apologized when he found out that they were Roman citizens. As they left the town, they worshipped God for giving them the opportunity to witness to the jailer and his family.

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you think the girl felt when the evil spirit left her? Why do you think her owners were so angry?**

How would you feel if you were put in prison without a chance to defend yourself? Why do you think Paul and Silas were able to praise God even though they had been beaten and thrown into prison? (They knew that God was with them. They felt that God would be able to reach others through their suffering.) **You will**

probably never go to prison for what you believe. But you will face some hard and difficult times in your life. When we meet those times we can be sure that God will help us, just as He helped Paul and Silas. Let's say our message together:



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I PRAISE HIM NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

Memory Verse

Do the following actions with the children as you repeat the memory verse. Repeat until most of the children know it.

About midnight Look at wrist as if looking at the time.

Paul and Silas were praying and Fold hands in prayer.

singing hymns to God. Point to mouth. Point upward.

Acts 16:25 Palms together; then open.

Bible Study

In advance, write each of the texts that follow on a slip of paper.

Form eight pairs or groups, depending on the size of your class. Team non-readers with readers. Have adults ready to assist as needed.

Give each pair or group one of the papers on which you have written a text. Say: **All the texts are about times people worshipped God in difficult situations. Read the text, find out who it was, where they were worshipping, and why it was difficult for them. Be ready to share what you learn with the class.** Allow time. Use the following texts.

You Need:

- Bibles
- texts on papers
- pen

Judges 16:25–30	Samson in the temple with the Philistines
Genesis 39:1–4	Joseph as a slave
Genesis 8:15–20	Noah after the Flood
2 Kings 5:1–3	Captive maid in another land
Daniel 3:26–29	Hebrews in the fiery furnace
Daniel 6:10	Daniel praying at home
John 20:19	The disciples in the upper room
Jonah 2:1	The big fish

these people still worshiped God even though they were slaves, captives, or in danger of death?

How does this compare with us today?

Where do we worship God?

What happens to us when we worship God in difficult times? (We gain new strength and courage and are able to cope better.) **Let's say today's message together:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I PRAISE HIM NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why do you think each of**

3

Applying the Lesson

Worship Chain

Say: **We are going to form a human worship chain. I'll begin by saying, I can worship God when I . . .** Name a place and activity. Have the children join the chain one at a time by holding hands and stating a place and activity.

Debriefing

Remain in the chain. Ask: **How**

strong is our chain? (as strong as the weakest link) **What will make it stronger?** (worshipping God every day)

In what situations can we worship God?

Regardless of our situation, we can always worship God. Let's say today's message together:



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I PRAISE HIM NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Sharing Worship

Plan a praise service to be implemented at a specific time. (Check with your pastor or Sabbath School superintendent for an appropriate time.)

Divide the children into small groups. Ask each group to find a Bible verse or story that either encourages us to praise God or tells of someone praising God in a difficult situation. Have them choose a praise song to go with the verse. Help the children prepare a short explanation as to why they think it is important to praise God in this way/situation.

Encourage them to invite their friends to visit during this special service.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think about when you read texts that encourage you to praise God?**

How can you praise God in difficult situations?

Is any situation too difficult for God?

How do you feel about knowing that God is looking forward to meeting with us during our worship service?

Let's reaffirm our commitment to worship by saying today's message together:



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I PRAISE HIM NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

Closing

Make a human chain again. Stretch out as far as possible. Say: **When we praise God, we reach out to others through our worship.** As you pray, ask God to bless the plans for the worship service.

You Need:

- Bibles
- songbooks

Midnight Song Service

References

Acts 16:16–40; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 211–220

Memory Verse

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God” (Acts 16:25, NIV).

The Message

I worship God when I praise Him no matter what happens.

Have you ever been blamed for something you did not do? Paul and Silas were beaten and put into prison because men told lies about them, but they still praised and worshipped God.

“These men are servants of the Most High God.” The slave girl’s voice rang out as she followed Paul and Silas down the street. She had been following them for days, shouting over and over. “These men are servants of the Most High God.”

Suddenly Paul turned and commanded, “In the name of Jesus, come out of her!” Immediately the evil spirit left her, and she became silent. Her masters watched in astonishment. Then their astonishment turned to anger as they realized what Paul had done. The slave girl had made them wealthy by telling people’s fortunes. Now the evil spirit had left her! She would not be able to tell fortunes! She would no longer earn money for them.

Her owners grabbed Paul and Silas. They dragged them to the marketplace and took them before the local judge. They accused Paul and Silas, saying,



“These men are Jews. They are stirring up trouble and encouraging people to go against Roman practices.” An unfriendly crowd quickly gathered. Soon the judge ordered that Paul and Silas were to be beaten and thrown into jail.

The jailer took them into his deepest dungeon. He put their feet in stocks and locked the door, leaving them in darkness. It was cold and damp in the cell. Their backs were bleeding and sore. The stocks dug into their ankles. They could not move.

As they sat in the dark cell, Paul and Silas began to pray and sing hymns to God. The more they sang, the better they felt. They forgot about their sore backs and ankles. They worshipped God for keeping them alive. They praised Him for being with them and looking after them, even in prison. The other prisoners listened in amazement. How could these men sing after being so badly beaten?

Around midnight an earthquake began to shake the prison. The prisoners’ chains fell off. The cell doors flew open. They could walk out of prison.

The jailer ran out of his house. He saw the open prison doors and was sure that all the prisoners had escaped. Immediately he took out his sword to kill himself. He knew the penalty for letting prisoners escape was a painful death. He would rather take his own life!

Paul called out to the jailer, “Stop! We are all here!”

The jailer called for lights. He hurried to their cell. “Yes!” he shouted. “They are all here.”

The jailer took Paul and Silas to his home. He had heard Paul and Silas singing and worshipping God in their cell. As he washed their cuts and bruises, he asked them to tell him more about the God they worshipped.

The two men told the wonderful story of Jesus. They told how God had sent His Son to die for their sins. The jailer and his family listened carefully. And they decided

that they wanted to follow Jesus. They immediately joined with Paul and Silas in worshipping God and were baptized.

The next morning Paul and Silas were released. The judge had learned that they were Roman citizens. He knew that the law said Roman citizens could not be imprisoned without a trial. So he apologized to them.

As Paul and Silas left the town, they worshipped God for giving them the opportunity to witness to the jailer and his family. They continued to praise God as they traveled to tell others about Jesus.

No matter where we are or what happens, we can always praise God too.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Share your lesson story with your family. Then have a praise fest. One person chooses a song that everyone knows. Then the next person chooses a song. Keep singing until you cannot think of any more songs. How many songs did you sing?
- Thank God that you can sing praises to Him.

Sunday

- During family worship, read and discuss Acts 16:16–21. (See also *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 213, 214.) What kind of spirit had controlled the girl's mind? What do you think happened to her when that spirit left her?
- Have a tug-of-war with your family. Who is "tugging" at you to get you to do wrong? Pray for strength to do what is right at all times.

Monday

- Read and discuss Acts 16:22–24 during family worship. Describe how the jailer treated Paul and Silas before he believed in Jesus. Have family members sit on the floor with their ankles tied together, then try to stand. What happens? What was it like for Paul and Silas?
- Thank God for freedom to worship Him. Ask Him to bless and encourage those in prison for their faith.

Tuesday

- During family worship, read and discuss Acts 16:25–34. What changed the jailer's treatment of Paul and Silas?
- Write your memory verse on an adhesive bandage. Put it on your finger or arm to help

you remember the verse.

- Learn how to treat cuts and scratches. Practice on your family.
- Ask God to help you help others.

Wednesday

- Teach your memory verse to your family. What time of day did Paul and Silas sing? When can you praise God?
- Use a paper plate to create a clock. Instead of numbers, write a word or draw a picture to tell what you do at each hour. How can you worship God in each activity? Explain your clock during family worship. Thank God that you can worship Him anywhere, at any time.

Thursday

- Read and discuss Acts 16:35–39 during family worship today. Why didn't Paul want to leave the prison? Now read Acts 16:20, 21. Why did the magistrates think that Paul and Silas were Jews? What difference did it make in their treatment of the men? What if someone misjudges you? Have you ever been wrong about someone? What did you do about it?
- Pray that God will help you to treat others fairly at all times.

Friday

- The jailer shared a meal with Paul and Silas. Help prepare and serve your family's evening meal.
- Read Acts 16:16–40 together, then act out the story with your family. Sing praise songs before prayer. Thank God for freedom to worship Him. Pray for those who don't have that freedom.