

THE MESSENGERS

WEEK 5

BIG IDEA

God sends help.

BIBLE

Paul and Silas in Prison: Acts 16:16-34;
(Psalm 97)

FREE TIME

PLAY | Free Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tables will be set with games and activities for kids to play until the lesson begins.*
- *This is a great opportunity to get to know some kids and work on building relationships.*

QUESTION | Have you ever needed to be rescued?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This question will be written on the board as a discussion starter while kids arrive.*
- **Tell us about a time you needed to be rescued, or helped in a big way.**

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play a selection of worship music videos during free time. Some may choose to dance along while it may be background music for others.*

- *Alternatively, learn a few of the motions yourself, introduce them to the class and dance along together to kick things off!*

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT?

ACTIVITY | Chain Reaction

- Welcome to the last week of “The Messengers”! We've been discovering more about the people who delivered God's message all over the world.
- Many people, when they learn about Jesus for the first time, say they feel free . . . as though they are broken free of chains that used to trap them.
- It's such a good feeling that once you experience it, you can't help but spread the message. It starts a chain reaction – a different kind of chain – like the one we're about to explore in this next activity!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Set up a craft stick chain reaction using [this website](#) as a guide. After breaking the chain, show the kids how to make the chain. Give them time to reassemble it. You may have to guide them by letting kids take turns placing one stick at a time. Then, set off the chain reaction again!*
 - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Provide “Barrel of Monkeys” game for kids to connect together.*

ACTIVITY | Hula Help Heroes

- Welcome to the last week of “The Messengers”! We've been discovering more about the people who delivered God's message all over the world.

- There are lots of people whose jobs are to help people in trouble. **Can you name some?** There are firefighters, ambulance drivers, paramedics, forest rangers, and tow truck drivers. There are also doctors, nurses, social workers, counselors, pastors, and humanitarian aid workers!
- Let's play a game where you all get to be rescuers!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Create two teams. Have one kid from each team be the first rescuer, and place the rest of the team at the other end of the room to be rescued. The rescuer will run over with a hula hoop "life preserver" to rescue one person by putting the hula hoop around the both of them and running back to the start line. Then, the first rescuer will join the rest of the group to be rescued while the first rescued person becomes the next rescuer, running over to rescue a second person with the hula hoop. Repeat until everyone has been rescued. The first team to finish wins!*

SO WHAT?

BIBLE STORY | Paul and Silas in Prison

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids open their Bibles to Acts 16. Print out Acts 16:16–34 in your desired translation (preferably in landscape mode) and cut out each verse into strips. After you read each strip, hand it to an assistant who will tape them into loops to make a paper chain. Hang the chain up across the room when finished.*
- We left off our story with Paul in Macedonia, the place where God told him to go, where he met Lydia and helped her know about Jesus.
- Let's read more about Paul's adventures.
- *[Read verse 16.]*
 - **Who did Paul and Silas meet?**
 - **What kind of work did she do?**
 - We don't know if she could actually tell the future, but the Bible tells us that this is how she made money for the people she worked for.
- *[Read verses 17–18.]*

- **How do we know the spirit that was controlling the girl was a bad one?**
- Even though the girl was telling the truth about who Paul and Silas were, she wasn't saying it to help people know God. She was probably saying it in a way that made people avoid Paul and Silas. Anyway, when Paul mentioned Jesus, the spirit left her!
- *[Read verse 19.]*
 - **Why were the owners so mad?**
 - When Paul commanded the spirit to leave the girl, the girl lost the ability to tell fortunes. She probably realized what she was doing was a scam and a dishonest way to make money.
- *[Read verses 20–24.]*
 - The angry crowd beat Paul and Silas, and threw them in prison.
 - **What do you think Paul and Silas were doing while they were in prison?**
- *[Read verse 25.]*
 - They sang hymns and prayed!
 - **Do you think you would do the same thing if you were in prison?**
 - Then, while they were singing and the other prisoners were listening, something shocking happened!
- *[Read verses 26–34.]*
 - **Why was the jailer so afraid when he saw that the cells were opened?**
 - **How did Paul and Silas save the jailer and his family?**
- Paul and Silas were in chains but it did not lock up their courage or their trust in God. Even though they were not physically free, they knew they had the best freedom of all that only Jesus could give.
- When they gave praise to God even though they were in such an awful situation, they were set free, and they helped one more family come to know God!

(OPTIONAL) VIDEO | The Messengers, Episode 5

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For more re-inforcement of what kids have just learned, you can play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

BIG IDEA | God sends help.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have the Special Messenger (SM) come in with a wagon full of packages as described, as well as an envelope with a card inside.
- **SM:** Special delivery! Special delivery!
- **Storyteller:** Wow! What do you have there? Is all of that for me?
- **SM:** Well, most of these are for people who need help. I have first aid supplies for a community that is hurting after a disaster, food for those who are hungry, and a flood bucket for people who are cleaning up after a huge storm flooded their city. All of this was collected to help others. But this letter is for you. It looks like an invitation!
- **Storyteller:** (Open envelope and read card.) "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." God invites us to help others in need. **God sends help**, and sometimes, God sends help through us!
- **SM:** That's the Big Idea for today! **God sends help.**
- **Storyteller:** Great! Everybody say it with me. **God sends help.**

VIDEO | Help for the Prisoners

- Paul and Silas spread God's message, even while they were in prison. **God sent help to the prisoners through Paul and Silas!**
- Let's see how **God sends help** for prisoners today.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play these or similar videos: [Prison Ministry in Oklahoma](#) or [Prison Ministry in Nigeria](#).

NOW WHAT?

RESPONSE | RSVP Yes

- When you receive an invitation, the proper thing to do is to RSVP. RSVP is short for the French phrase *répondez s'il vous plaît*, which means, "Respond please." If someone invites you to a birthday party, for example, you can RSVP by saying, "Yes, I will be there" or "No, I regret I can't be there."
- Our memory verse asks, "Whom shall I send?" and answers, "Here am I. Send me." It's kind of like RSVP-ing, "Yes!" to God.
- In your groups, go to each of the stations and write ways God could use you to help.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Place the packages from the Big Idea in spaces around the room. On the wall above each package, place a poster board or large paper and provide markers at each station. Divide the kids into groups and encourage them to write ways they could help the people represented by each package.*
- Sometimes **God sends help** in ways we don't understand, but even more often, **God sends help** through the actions of God's people.
- In any case, we know that **God sends help**.

MEMORY VERSE | Memory Catcher

- Paul and Silas were jailed for praying over a fortune teller. When I think of fortune tellers, I think of these things [*Show completed example of memory catcher*], sometimes called a cootie catcher. They don't tell fortunes or catch cooties, but I think we can use it to help us with our memory verse!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give kids a copy of the memory verse printable to decorate with different colors and designs before folding it into shape. Then, they can use it to help remember the memory verse. Have the group recite the verse by heart.*

PRAYER

- God, thank you for helping us each time we are in need, and for sending Jesus to help us escape the power of sin. Show us how we can help others, just like you have helped us. We know you will provide everything we need to share your love and be helpful, too. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **Why did Paul and Silas end up in prison?**
- **What did Paul and Silas do while in jail?**
- **What made the jailer believe that Paul and Silas were God's messengers?**
- **Read Acts 16:25. Imagine that you are one of the other prisoners. What might you be thinking?**
- **In what ways does God send help?**
- **Can you name some people you know or anywhere in the world that need help?**
- **How can God send help through you?**

ACTIVITY | Prayer Postage Stamp

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids decorate the printable with a picture of someone or a situation where they can pray for God's help. Spend time afterward praying together for what they drew.*
- If we want to deliver anything anywhere, we need to put postage stamps. If we don't put stamps, the letter or package won't get delivered.
- Praying is kind of like a postage stamp. **God sends help**, even when we don't pray, but when we pray, we are showing how much we trust that God will deliver. And sometimes, God shows us how we can solve those problems on our own!

MEMORY VERSE | Isaiah 6:8 (NLT)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Practice this month's memory verse together. Award a token to any kid that can say last week's verse from memory.*
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"Then I heard the Lord asking, "'Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?' I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'"**