

BIG IDEA

We can worship God during hard times.

THE BIBLE

Paul and Silas Worship God in Jail: Acts 16:20-34
(*Philippians 4:12-13; John 16:23; Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- **ACTIVITY** | Draw Your Perfect Party
- **ACTIVITY** | Skit: Party With No Decorations
- **IMAGE** | Pretty Party Decorations
- **BIG IDEA** | We can worship God during hard times.
- **ACTIVITY** | Acts 16:20-34
- **BIBLE STORY** | Matthew 14:13-21
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Bursting Balloon
- **SCRIPTURE** | Philippians 4:12-13
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Expanding Soap
- **RESPONSE** | Balloon Messages
- **ACTIVITY** | Balloon Pop
- **SCRIPTURE** | John 16:33; Philippians 4:4
- **ACTIVITY** | Thank You Cards
- **MUSIC** | Worship
- **VIDEO** | The Life-Changing Uber Ride
- **MEMORY VERSES** | John 1:1; Ephesians 4:29

SMALL GROUP TIME

- **DISCUSSION**
 - What were Paul and Silas doing that got them thrown in jail?
 - Why do you think Paul and Silas still worshiped God when they were thrown in jail?
 - What did Paul and Silas do when the jailer was upset?
 - When we are going through a hard time, how can we worship God?
 - We don't like to think about them, but we all go through hard times. Share one thing that you are going to do to keep worshiping God the next time you face a difficult time.
- **SCRIPTURE** | 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
 - Which one of these is the easiest for you to do: rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances?
 - What does it mean to rejoice always? How can you do this?
 - What does it mean to pray continually? How can you do this?
 - What does it mean to give thanks in all circumstances? How can you do this?
- **ACTIVITY** | Balloon Race
- **MEMORY VERSES** | John 1:1; Ephesians 4:29



WEEK 3

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

YOU'RE
INVITED

BIG IDEA

We can worship God during hard times.

THE BIBLE

Paul and Silas Worship God in Jail: Acts 16:20-34
(*Philippians 4:12-13; John 16:23; Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Draw Your Perfect Party

- This month, we're talking about a party that we're all invited to — a party that's all about worshiping God! Who's ready to party?!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a piece of paper and crayons and tell them to draw a picture of their perfect party, if they could make up any kind of party, or any kind of holiday celebration for anything they want. It could be a "hairbows and cute shoes party" or a "Rubix cube party" or "lost my first tooth party" or a "dinosaur party." Encourage them to use their imaginations and be creative. Tell them to think about decorations, food, games and any other activities they would do at their party. Let them share their pictures with the group.

ACTIVITY | Skit: Party With No Decorations

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can do this skit with one adult or two. If you do it with one adult, the person talking can change the script to pretend that a friend forgot the decorations and say most of the lines as though they are talking to themselves.
- **Person 1:** I am so excited for this party you're throwing today!
- **Person 2:** I'm excited too! So, did you get the decorations?
- **Person 1:** The decorations? What decorations? I didn't get any . . .
- **Person 2:** (Upset, frustrated.) You didn't? I thought you were going to get the decorations!

- **Person 1:** *I thought you were going to get them!*
- **Person 2:** *How can we have a party with no decorations? No balloons, no confetti, no streamers, no banners, no pretty table cloths or plates or napkins, no fun garland. This is not okay. I don't think we can have a party without any of that stuff.*
- **Person 1:** *Maybe we can make our own, or just have the party and have fun without any decorations. Look, we have all our friends here! (Point to the kids.)*
- **Person 2:** *That will never work.*
- **Person 1:** *Look. All these friends are here already, and they are ready to party with us. We can still have fun. Why don't we see if they can help us make our own decorations?*
- **Person 2:** *With what?*
- **Person 1:** *Well, we have this construction paper. Can you all help us make fun banners and confetti for the party? (Pass out the construction paper and markers to a few kids and let them help you make banners. Pass out the paper and scissors and let them help you cut it into confetti. Give them a few minutes to work while you finish talking.)*
- **Person 1:** *The decorations are not the most important things in a party. You can have a party even if you don't have decorations, or a cake, or food, or gifts. All you need to have a party is the right attitude and people who are ready to party. Are you guys ready to party?*

IMAGE | Pretty Party Decorations

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the kids the Pretty Party Decorations image from your Week 3 folder.*
- **What part of this party looks the most fun?**
- *Sometimes we think the best parties are the ones with the best and prettiest decorations. Some people go through a lot of trouble to make their parties look fancy, but you don't need decorations to have a great party.*
- *You could have a party in an unlikely place, like your living room, or in someone's driveway, or in a big empty field. If you have the right people and you're ready to celebrate, that's all you need.*
- *But sometimes we don't feel like celebrating, do we? Sometimes we've had a difficult day, or we're upset, or things in our lives are hard. It's not easy to have a party when life is difficult.*
- *But even when things don't look good, there is always a reason to celebrate.*
- *Today we're going to talk about some people who celebrated and praised God in an unlikely place. They didn't have anything fancy and didn't have the best circumstances, but they had thankful hearts.*

THE BIG IDEA | We can worship God during hard times.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, do a big reveal (and make it fun) when you announce the Big Idea, like:
 - *Ask the kids to give you a drum-roll by stomping their feet or patting their laps.*
 - *Shout the Big Idea, then point to the kids and have them shout it back. (Change it up by using funny voices, different volumes, or inflections.)*
 - *Have a character (either recurring or rotating) come out every week to reveal the Big Idea.*
 - *Write it on a piece of paper and hide it somewhere in the room. Have the kids go on a "hunt" for it. When it's found, ask someone to come up and read it.*
- This week's Big Idea: **We can worship God during hard times.**

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

ACTIVITY | Balloon Bop

- Since we're talking about party decorations and having fun celebrating, let's play a game with balloons.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can play this game two ways: with a couple of kids up front, or by splitting the kids into pairs. To play with a few people up front, give each person a balloon and see which one can keep the balloon up in the air by only bopping it. The person who can keep their balloon in the air the longest wins. To play with partners, give each pair a balloon. Tell them to stand 2-3 feet apart from each other. When you say "Go," they will bop the balloons back and forth to each other. They can't hold them, and they can't touch the balloon twice in a row; it has to go back and forth. See which team can keep their balloons going back and forth the longest. To make this game harder, you can tell them to plant their feet on the ground. You can also tell them to use only their elbows, their heads, or their feet to bop the balloon.*

BIBLE STORY | Acts 16:20-34

- In today's Bible story, we'll learn about two guys named Paul and Silas, who loved God and loved telling people about Him. They traveled all around telling people about Jesus. But one day, they ran into some trouble. Some people were so upset with them for telling people about Jesus that they threw them in jail.
- Jail does not sound like a fun place to be. Do you think Paul and Silas felt sad because their situation didn't seem very fun? Let's find out.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up the story in your Bible and encourage kids to do the same. Read it!*
- **When Paul and Silas got thrown in jail, were they upset because things didn't look good?** No! The Bible says they were praying and singing to God! Even when their lives were really hard, they were still worshiping! Can you believe it? They were worshiping God in jail.
- **Do you think you'd be worshiping God if you were thrown in jail?**
- Maybe you've never been in jail, but think about this: you've probably had some bad days or had things happen to you that didn't seem fair. Maybe you've had a hard time at school, or things at home haven't gone the way you wanted them to. Maybe you don't have good friends or you are in trouble at school. Maybe you are fighting a lot with your brother or sister or someone you love has been sick.
- **Can you still worship God when things don't look good or don't seem fair?** The answer is yes!
- **You can worship God when things are great, and you can worship God during hard times too.**

OBJECT LESSON | Bursting Balloon

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Do this experiment a few feet away from the kids, because the first balloon is going to burst. Light a candle. Blow up the first balloon and tie it off. Add enough water to the second balloon to fill the bottom and then blow it up the rest of the way. As you talk, hold the balloon without water over the candle until it bursts. Hold the second balloon with the water over*

the candle – because of the water, it won't burst.

- **What do you think will happen when I hold a balloon over the flame?**
- The flame represents the hard things that happen in our lives. Sometimes we get sick, we get bad grades, we get in trouble, we have to move to a new place, or we get in fights with our friends.
- We all have bad things happen to us, but how do we respond when those hard things happen? When bad things happen, we have two choices: we can choose to be angry or give up hope, and let hard things break us like this balloon that popped when it came in contact with the fire, or . . .
- Or we can choose to trust God, even when life is hard, by worshiping and praising God no matter what happens.
- Because this second balloon had water inside it, it didn't burst when it came in contact with the fire. Our hope in God is kind of like that. When we choose to trust Him and worship Him, no matter what, hard times can't break us.
- When we face hard times, we can choose to find joy and worship God like Paul and Silas did in jail.
You don't have to let the hard times break you. You can focus on your hope in God instead.

SCRIPTURE | *Philippians 4:12-13*

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up the verse and read it!*
- Jesus gives us strength to worship during hard times. You can't always choose what happens to you. But you can choose how you react to it.
- Paul reminds us that in both the good times and the not-so-good times, we can look to Jesus to give us strength, no matter what.
- **What do you think it looks like to worship God even when things aren't going well?**
- We can worship God in the hard times by:
 - *Trusting Him.*
 - *Praying to Him.*
 - *Reading our Bibles.*
 - *Singing worship songs*
 - *Telling others about Him.*
 - *Having a good attitude.*
 - *Giving thanks, instead of complaining.*
- It's not always easy to worship God when life is hard, but we can worship God because we know that He will help us through our hard times.
- In this story, God brought a mighty earthquake that shook the prison and set all of the prisoners free.
- Then God helped them even more by allowing them to continue to do what they loved – telling others about Jesus. They got to tell the jailer and the jailer's family about Jesus, and they all decided they wanted to follow Him too.
- **Even in hard times, we can worship because we know God is still with us.**

RESPONSE | Balloon Messages

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each kid a balloon. Instruct them to blow them up and tie them (or you can inflate them all ahead of time). Give them a permanent marker and tell them to write or draw something difficult they've faced in the past or are facing now.*
- These balloons remind us of party decorations, but we learned today that we can even celebrate

even without the decorations. In the same way, we can join God’s party and worship Him even when life is hard.

- Think of a way you can worship or a reason they can thank God even during that hard time.
- You can worship God at church, you can worship Him at home, you can worship Him when things are going great in your life, and you can worship Him during your hard times too.
- Ask God to help you choose joy and choose to worship Him during hard times.
- Hang on to those balloons, because we’re going to use them in our next game.

ACTIVITY | Balloon Pop

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Split your group into two teams and tell each team to put their inflated balloons on one side of the room. The kids will line up ten feet away from their balloons. When you say, “Go,” they will send one person from their team relay-race style to run to the pile of balloons and pop one balloon, then run back and tag the next person in line.
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** Alert kids with sensory sensitivities ahead of time that this is going to be a loud activity. You may want to let them sit in a separate part of the room.
- Just like we popped those balloons just now with our hard times written on them, we can overcome our hard times in real life by choosing to worship God instead of being angry or hopeless.
- **When you start to feel discouraged or you’re going through a hard time, how can you turn your attitude and your heart around?**
- **What can you do to remind yourself to focus on God and worship Him?**

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

SCRIPTURE | John 16:33; Philippians 4:4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Open your Bible and look up John 16:33. Read it together.
- Jesus experienced hard times too – even harder than the hard times we’ve experienced. He was killed on a cross for something He didn’t deserve.
- Jesus doesn’t promise us that our lives will always be perfect, but Paul and Silas remind us that even when hard things happen, we can still choose to worship God with joy.
- Think about some hard times you have been through. **How did God help you through them?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Open your Bible and look up Philippians 4:4. Read it together.
- **What does it mean to have joy and rejoice? Can you be joyful even when life is hard?**
- Some people can be happy only when everything in their lives goes well, but true joy comes from God. With God, we can have real joy, even during hard times.

ACTIVITY | Thank You Cards

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give the kids some Thank You cards and some markers and crayons. Let them decorate the cards.
- When we get a gift at a party, we send thank you notes to thank people for their gifts. Since God is good to us, we can thank Him too.
- **Let’s write thank you notes to God for His gifts of love, forgiveness, and salvation.**

MUSIC | Worship

- We can worship God, even in the hard times. We’re going to have a party today by worshiping God

with a song that reminds us He is with us.

- Even if you're having a hard time right now, worship God because He is with us!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Spend some time singing together. You can sing any songs you'd like, but for this lesson we like, "Take Heart," by Seeds Family Worship and "We Won't Let Go," by Gateway Kids. Encourage kids that might be going through a difficult time to find an adult leader to pray with.

VIDEO | The Life-Changing Uber Ride

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this video](#) about a little girl whose life was changed when her dad rode in an Uber with an engineer who specialized in creating prosthetic, or fake, hands.
- **What happened that changed this little girl's life?**
- **How do you think the girl felt when she found out she was getting a new prosthetic hand?**
- **What is something hard you've experienced that God has helped you through?**

MEMORY VERSES | John 1:1; Ephesians 4:29

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every kid memory verse magnets or stickers. Then work on the memory verse together. For ideas on how to do this well, check out the Memory Verse Guide in your Programming folder and give them to your small group leaders, if you'd like.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **What were Paul and Silas doing that got them thrown in jail?** (Telling people about Jesus.)
- **Why do you think Paul and Silas still worshiped God when they were thrown in jail?**
- **How did Paul and Silas get out of jail?** (An earthquake shook the prison walls down.)
- **What did Paul and Silas do when the jailer was upset?** (They told him it was okay and told him about Jesus. Then he and his family decided to follow Jesus.)
- **When we are going through a hard time, how can we worship God?**
- **We don't like to think about them, but we all go through hard times. Share one thing that you are going to do to keep worshipping God the next time you face a difficult time.**

SCRIPTURE | 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up the verse in your Bible and encourage kids to do the same. Read it!
- **Which one of these is the easiest for you to do: rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances"?**
- **What does it mean to rejoice always? How can you do this?**
- **What does it mean to pray continually? How can you do this?**
- **What does it mean to give thanks in all circumstances? How can you do this?**

ACTIVITY | Balloon Race

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Split the kids in your small group into pairs. Give each pair a balloon and a marker. Tell them to write on the balloon some reasons they can praise and worship God. Tell them to work together to get their balloon across the room and back, but they can't touch it with their hands. They

can put it between their heads or stand back-to-back and waddle to the wall and back.

- **How hard would this activity be to do without a partner?**
- **How can friends help us when we're going through difficult times? How can you help someone else who is going through a hard time right now?**
- **Do you think Paul and Silas helped each other have a good attitude and have strength when they were in jail?**

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