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Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Scripture: Acts 16:1-40

Theme: God opens doors and closes doors , we follow His leading

1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: God Opens Doors God loves us and always leads us in the right direction. In Acts 16, Paul and his team had to wait and trust God's plan. Sometimes He opens doors, like when they met Lydia, a kind woman who welcomed them, and sometimes He closes doors, like when they couldn't go to Asia. But no matter what, God is with us, guiding us step by step. God opens doors for His work, just like He opened the door for Lydia! Paul and his team traveled through the city, and God used Lydia to share the love of Jesus. Even if we don't see the "doors" God opens right away, we can trust that He's working in mysterious ways. Today, think of a time when God led you somewhere new, maybe to a friend who shared a Bible story or to a place where you felt His presence. God wants us to notice and trust Him! God closes doors sometimes too, and that's okay! In their journey, Paul and Silas couldn't go to Asia, so God led them to a new place: Macedonia. When doors close, we might feel sad or confused, but God is still with us. What if we learned to wait patiently, like Paul and Silas? God's plan might not look the same as ours, but He's always faithful. How do we follow God's leading? Today, let's ask God to help us be open to His direction, just like Paul and Silas were. Maybe He'll open a door for us to share the Gospel, or maybe it'll be to rest and wait, either way, we can trust that God loves us and has a good plan. Let's ask Him to show us today how to be brave and trustful, just like His disciples! --- Simple Application for Volunteers: - Read Acts 16:1-15 aloud with the kids, pointing out how Paul and Silas waited for God's direction. - Use a simple visual (e.g., a keyhole drawing for "open doors" and a locked door for "closed doors") to discuss God's plan. - End with prayer: "God, help us trust You when You open or close doors for us!" - Encourage kids to share one way they've trusted God this week! Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

Paul and Silas: Sharing Jesus in Prison One day, the apostle Paul and his team, Timothy and Silas, traveled through a place called Philippi. They stopped at a place where women gathered to pray by a river. There, a girl named Lydia had been sold into slavery. Though she was sad about her hard life, she trusted Jesus and wanted to help others know Him. Paul and his friends sat down with her and her family, sharing about Jesus, who loved people like her, even those who were poor or mistreated. Lydia believed in Jesus and invited them to her home, where they stayed for many days.

As they traveled to another town, Paul and Silas noticed a slave girl who was very skilled at fortune-telling. She made money by telling people the future, but God wanted her to serve Him differently. One day, she began to follow Jesus, and her magic disappeared! The leaders of the town grew angry because their money would no longer come from her. They grabbed Paul and Silas and threw them in prison, telling the jailer to watch over them.

That night, Paul and Silas prayed together, even though they were in a dark, cold prison. Suddenly, a great earthquake shook the building! The prison doors flew open, but the guards were afraid. A kind jailer watched as all the prisoners were safe inside. He knelt down in front of Paul and Silas, asking, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved!" The jailer and his whole family believed, and they were filled with joy.

The next morning, Paul and Silas were set free because the Roman governor, named Gallio, had heard about their case and dismissed it. As they left, the jailer and his family gave them gifts, a sign of their thanks. Paul and Silas thanked God for everything, even the hard times, and promised to share Jesus with others wherever they went. Their story showed that no matter where we are, God can use us to tell others about His love.

Why This Story Matters: This story reminds us that God can use even the most unexpected people, like a slave girl or a prisoner, to spread His good news. Just like Lydia and the jailer believed in Jesus and shared His love, we can help others know Him too! Even when things seem hard, God wants us to trust Him and trust others, just as Paul and Silas did. Let's ask God to help us be like them, kind, brave, and ready to share His love!

Key Verse

Acts 16:9 , 'During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'

God Says, "We Need Your Help!" This verse is about a special moment when God gave a clear message to a man named Paul. Imagine you're sleeping and you dream that someone is asking you to do something really important. For Paul, this dream was like a big, kind signal from God, "Macedonia needs your help!" Macedonia was a place far away where people needed Jesus to share the good news. God often uses people like Paul to help others just like He does with you! Sometimes, He might put a thought in our hearts to tell us to share kindness, help a friend, or do something brave for someone else. Like Paul, we can listen to God's little whispers and act on them. When you feel God calling you to do something kind or brave, remember, He's saying, "I need you!" Here's a fun way to think about it: If you see someone alone in the playground and feel like helping, that might be God's way of saying, "Come and play with them!" Maybe He wants you to be kind, share your toys, or even just smile and say hello. Just like Paul helped the people of Macedonia, you can help others too, one kind act at a time! You don't have to be super brave or do big things to help. Even small things, like helping a sibling, teaching someone a new game, or just being a good friend, are ways to share God's love. When you do something kind, you're answering God's little call, just like Paul did! Prayer time can be a great time to ask God, "What should I do today to help?" Sometimes, the answer comes right away, like when you want to share your favorite snack with a friend or help a classmate who fell down. Remember, God sees everything you do, and He loves when you choose to help others!

Activities

Activity 1:

1. Introduce the Journey: Read Acts 16:1, 10 aloud. Ask, "Where did Paul and his team go on this trip?" Write key places on the board (Troas, Philippi, Lydia's house).
2. Divide into Groups: Split the class into 3, 4 small teams (3, 5 students each). Give each group a section of the map (e.g., one team draws the ocean route, another adds cities).
3. Draw and Label: Have each group:
4. Trace a simple route from Troas to Philippi with a line.
5. Add the city of Philippi and draw Lydia's house (where Paul met her).
6. Include a jailer scene (draw a jail with a light in the cell).
7. Use stickers or drawings for Paul, Silas, and Timothy.
8. Share & Reflect: When finished, have each group present their part of the map. Ask: "How did Paul share God's love with people he met? What can we learn about kindness and obedience?"
2. "Paul's Letters: Writing to Friends"
10. A craft where students compose a simple "letter" to a fictional friend or mission partner, inspired by Paul's work.
11. Discuss Paul's Letters: Read Acts 16:30, 31 and Acts 20:35 (Paul shared the Gospel with everyone). Ask: "How did Paul write letters to help others? What can we write to tell others about Jesus?"
12. Fold Paper into a Postcard: Show how to fold paper in half to make a postcard. Write a simple address at the top (e.g., "To My Friend in Philippi").
13. Draw the Address: Have students decorate the front of the postcard with Paul's team, a city, or a Bible verse (e.g., "Believe in Jesus!").
14. Write a Message: In the space, students write:
15. A sentence about God's love (e.g., "God loves you and wants you to know Jesus!").
16. How they can share kindness or a Bible truth (e.g., "I'll share a verse with my friend!").
17. Exchange Letters: Pair students to swap letters. Ask them to read their friend's message aloud and share what they learned about Paul's mission.
18. Both activities reinforce key themes from Acts 16 (obedience, sharing the Gospel, trusting God) while keeping it fun and interactive! Let me know if you'd like adjustments.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary children based on Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16:1-40). These questions encourage critical thinking, reflection, and connection to God's love in their lives:
- Paul and Timothy traveled far to share God's love with people who didn't know Him. How can you share kindness or good news with someone new this week? What might happen if you do?
- Example: Maybe you could invite a classmate to play, tell them about how Jesus helps us when we feel sad, or even write a kind note to someone who feels lonely. Why do you think Paul and his friends wanted to share the good news? How can sharing with others make your heart feel joyful?
- When Paul met Lydia in Philippi, she was sold her clothes and her heart opened to God. What do you think made her heart change so much? How can we "hear God" like Lydia did, maybe through prayer, reading God's Word, or listening to someone who shares His love?
- Example: Sometimes God speaks through stories like this Bible lesson, through music, or even in our own hearts when we ask Him to help. What's one way you've felt God's love or heard His guidance in your life?
- Paul and his team had to travel through dangerous places, but they trusted God. What are some "hard places" in your life that you've had to trust God with, like waiting for a big test, dealing with a friend who acts mean, or even just being brave to try something new?

- Example: Just like Paul and his friends, God can help us face tough times. What's one small step you could take today to trust Him more, even if it feels scary? (For example, praying before a game, asking God to help you be kind, or reading a Bible verse that gives you strength.)
- At the end of the story, the jailer and his family trusted in Jesus after Paul and Silas prayed. How can your family show their love for God by trusting Him with their hearts and actions?
- Example: Maybe they could pray together before big decisions, give to those in need (like helping a neighbor), or even share what they've learned from this story with others. What's one way your family could act like Lydia or the jailer, someone who believes God can change their lives?
- These questions invite kids to explore God's love in action while connecting it to their own lives. Would you like any adjustments to fit a specific lesson focus?

Prayer Focus

Here's a simple and heartfelt prayer for your early elementary lesson on Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16). This prayer can be used to start or end class, reflecting on faith, courage, and kindness, key themes from Paul's story. --- "Dear God, We thank You for people like Paul who follow You even when it's hard. They trusted You, even though they faced challenges, like Paul and Silas in prison, or when they traveled far to share Your love. Help us to have the same courage and kindness, like Paul did. When we feel afraid or unsure, remind us that You're always with us, just like You were with Paul. Give us the strength to share Your goodness with others, just as Paul did with Timothy and Lydia. Help us to listen and learn from others, just like Paul did in Philippi. Amen." --- How to use this prayer: - Start with a simple sentence like "God, thank You for Paul's story!" to lead into the prayer. - Let kids repeat parts of the prayer (e.g., "Give us the strength to share Your goodness"). - End with a time for reflection: "Who in our class can share a kind act today?" Paul's journey teaches us to trust God's plan, even when it's new or tough. May our prayers inspire brave hearts, just like Paul's!

>> Missions Spotlight

In Greece (ancient Macedonia), where Paul first brought the Gospel to Europe, secularism is now widespread. Yet a small, faithful Greek church remains. Pray for a new movement of the Gospel in the land where European Christianity began.

-> To the Cross

Paul tried to go to Asia, but the Spirit said no. Then he had a vision of a man from Macedonia saying, 'Come over and help us!' God redirected Paul. The cross had made Paul a servant, he went where God sent him, not where he wanted to go.