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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

4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Sunday School Lesson Overview: "God Opens Doors!" Acts 16:1-40 , Paul's Second Missionary Journey Lesson Theme: "God opens doors, and sometimes He closes them for a reason. Our job isn't to rush Him, but to trust His plan!" --- Opening Hook (Engage): "Have you ever walked into a room and thought, 'Wow, this is the perfect spot!' But then someone moved your chair? Or maybe you packed for a trip, and you left out something super important? Today, we'll see how Paul and his team followed God's leading, even when things didn't go as expected. God often opens doors for us to share His love, but He also closes them so we can grow closer to Him!" --- Story Overview (Acts 16:1-40): Paul and his team traveled south to Asia Minor, then on to Greece. At a city called Philippi, they met a woman named Lydia, a businesswoman whose house became their first church! God opened a door for them to share Jesus, but when they tried to preach in the next town (Thessalonica), people got upset and threw them out. Later, in Troas, Paul had a vision: "Go to Macedonia!", so he and his crew boarded a ship for Europe. Along the way, a jailer was saved, and Paul even cast out a demon! Through it all, Paul kept trusting God's plan, even when the road got rough. Key Lesson: Trusting God's Timing "Paul didn't get mad when doors closed (like in Thessalonica) or when his team got scared (on the ship). He kept praying, asking God what to do next. That's how we learn to follow Him too!" --- Deeper Questions (Reflect & Discuss): 1. What was one thing that surprised you about Paul's journey? Why might God have led him to a place that didn't feel perfect at first? 2. Lydia's home became a church, how could God use you to open a door for someone to meet Jesus? 3. Paul and Silas were in prison... but God changed it into a moment of worship! What "prison" do you feel like you're stuck in right now? How can you trust God to turn it into something good? --- Personal Application (Grow & Apply): "God doesn't always let us walk through the easiest paths. But when we obey His call, even when things feel messy, we're learning to trust Him. This week, ask: 'Where is God opening a door for me to share His love?' Or 'Where should I trust Him to close a door for my own growth?' Write down one thing you'll pray about today!" --- Closing Encouragement (Empower): "You're like Paul's team, you don't have to figure everything out alone! God's got a plan, and He'll guide you. Start small: share a scripture verse with a friend or invite someone to church this week. Remember: 'The Lord works in all things for good to those who love Him' (Romans

8:28). That's true for you!" --- Teacher Tip: Use a visual like a map of Paul's journey (Asia Minor Greece) or a "doors open/closed" poster to reinforce the theme. End with a group prayer, asking God to help them trust Him like Paul did! 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's Second Missionary Journey: A Journey of Faith, Friendship, and Miracles (Based on Acts 16:1-40)

One evening, as Paul and his team traveled through the city of Lystra and Derbe, they noticed something unexpected. The people there had never heard the good news about Jesus before! While Paul and Silas were teaching, a young girl named Lyca, who was sold into slavery, began to speak with a spirit that made her shout, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling us about the way to be saved!" The girl's family was rich and powerful, and they were furious, especially when the girl's fortune disappeared because she was no longer possessed by a demon. Instead of stopping Paul, they encouraged him to keep speaking the truth, for they saw that God was working through him.

In another town, a man named Timothy, who had been rejected by the Jewish leaders, was now being welcomed by the local church. Paul trusted him to join their journey, even though some people were still skeptical. When they traveled to Philippi, a town with a Roman garrison, Paul and Silas met a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, who believed in Jesus. She and her household were baptized, and God blessed their home with a place to meet and pray. But things got complicated when Paul and Silas were thrown into jail for disturbing the peace. Instead of fearing for their safety, they prayed together, and God shook the jail doors open! The prison guards, who had been shocked by their boldness, brought them before the magistrates and said, "We can't stop these men! They have shown us God's power!"

Later, as Paul and Silas continued their journey, they came to a town called Thessalonica. But their work there was met with resistance, some Jews and Gentiles even started a riot, accusing Paul of bringing "foreign gods" into their city. When they were forced to leave, the church there sent them on to Berea, where they were welcomed with open arms. While in Athens, Paul met a group of philosophers who were intrigued by his teaching. Though he wasn't able to share the gospel fully there, he left them with a simple message: "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth, and he is not far from any of us." This truth stayed with some of them, and Paul used it to encourage his friends later.

As they traveled through Macedonia and Achaia, Paul wrote a letter to the churches he had planted, thanking them for their kindness and asking them to pray for him. On his way back to Jerusalem, he was welcomed by friends and family, but he knew his mission was complete. His journey had taught him that God's power isn't just in big miracles or grand speeches, it's in trusting Him, even when things seem impossible. Paul had learned that faith isn't just about being fearless; it's about loving others enough to share the good news, no matter what happens.

--- Deeper Questions for Discussion: 1. Why do you think Lydia and her family believed Paul's message so quickly? What made it special to them? 2. How did Paul and Silas react when they were thrown into prison? What can we learn about their faith in tough situations? 3. What did the guards in Philippi realize when they saw Paul and Silas praying? What does this teach us about trusting God in hard times? 4. Why do you think Paul wrote a letter to the churches he had helped? How can we show appreciation for others who help us grow in faith?

--- Personal Application: Paul's journey shows us that God's work often begins in unexpected places, through people we might not expect, in situations we'd rather avoid, and in ways that don't always look like what we imagine. Just like Paul, we can bring the light of Christ to others, even when it feels risky. Next time you're facing a challenge, ask: How can I trust God, like Paul and Silas did? And remember, His power is greater than any obstacle, whether it's a riot, prison, or just feeling alone.

--- Why This Story Matters: Paul's journey reminds us that God uses every person, even those who look different or are in tough positions, to share His love. His life teaches us that faith isn't just about what we do but who we trust, and that trusting God means trusting Him to work through us, even when we don't understand. This story helps us see that God's power is always present, waiting for us to step out in faith. What will you do to share the light of Christ this week?

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.'"

Acts 16:9 , A Vision for a Mission This Bible verse tells the story of an exciting dream that Paul, one of the first Christian missionaries, had one night. While he was resting in prayer, he saw a man from Macedonia, a country far away, running toward him and asking for help. The man's message was clear: "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" Paul didn't know what Macedonia was, but he knew God was telling him to go there to share the good news about Jesus. God always leads us in the right direction when we listen and trust Him. Paul's vision was like a big, bright sign that God had a plan for him. Even though he had been traveling for a long time, this was a special sign that God wanted him to move in a new direction. In the same way, God often sends us clues or "visions" (or even just quiet whispers) to tell us where to go, what to do, or even who to help. Maybe you've felt a little nudge in your heart before, like, "Hey, I wonder if God wants me to try something new?", just like Paul did. But here's something exciting: even though Paul didn't know what Macedonia looked like or what was waiting for him there, he obeyed right away. Sometimes, God leads us to do something scary or different, but we don't have to figure it out alone! If God says, "Go there!" or "Help them!", we can trust Him to give us the strength and wisdom we need. Have you ever felt called to do something kind or brave for someone else? How can you trust God to guide you? One of the deepest parts of this story is that Paul's vision was for other people, not just for himself. God uses us to share His love with the world, just like Paul did. When we feel a little "calling" in our hearts, it might be God asking us to help a friend, share a kind word, or even pray for someone who needs it. What's one way you could use your time or talents to help someone else this week? Maybe it's as simple as making someone smile or showing kindness, just like Jesus did! Sometimes, though, we might wonder: What if I'm not ready? or What if they don't want my help? But Paul knew that God's work isn't always about how brave or prepared we feel, it's about trusting Him. God loves us so much that He wants to use us to make a difference in the world. Even if it's just one small step, like Paul's first little trip to Macedonia, God can grow big things in our hearts and lives. So next time you feel a little push in your spirit, ask God, "What do You want me to do?" and trust Him to guide you. You might just be where God needs you! This story reminds us that God's plans are always bigger than ours, and sometimes, He calls us to places we never expected! Have you ever felt God asking you to step out in faith? How can you be brave like Paul and trust Him today?

Activities

Activity 1:

Students act out key scenes from Paul's imprisonment in Philippi, focusing on his and Silas's courage during difficult times. This activity reinforces trust in God, even when facing opposition.

1. Set Up the Map: Give each student a large sheet of paper and have them draw a simple outline of a map with a coastline or rivers to represent Paul's journey (e.g., from Asia Minor down to Europe).
2. Locate Key Places: Read Acts 16:1-40 aloud (or in small groups). Ask students to find and mark Philippi, where Lydia lived, and where Paul and Silas were imprisoned. Label these spots with simple text like "Lydia's House" or "Prison."
3. Draw Connections: Have students sketch a route from Paul's first stop (Troas) to his final stop in Europe (Europe). Encourage them to include symbols like ships (for crossing water) or cities (e.g., Thessalonica, Berea).
4. Share & Reflect: Have students present their maps for 1 minute each. Ask: "Where did Paul go, and why do you think God led him there?" Then, discuss how following God's leading can guide our own decisions today.

2. "Courage in the Face of Persecution: Paul & Silas"
6. Divide into Teams: Split the class into small groups (3, 4 students). Assign roles (e.g., Paul, Silas, jailer, or "shouting crowd").
7. Reenact the Scene: Read Acts 16:23, 34 together. Have students act out the imprisonment (e.g., Paul and Silas chained), the earthquake (with dramatic gestures), and their song. For the prison scene, use paper plates as "bars" and have students move slowly to emphasize their bondage.
8. Add Persecution: After the earthquake, have students "pretend" that a crowd of angry people is outside, shouting. Ask the jailer to stay calm and trust God. Encourage students to shout, "We're not worshippers!" to show their confidence.
9. Reflect & Apply: Ask each group to share one lesson from their scene. Then, discuss: "How did Paul and Silas stay brave even when facing trouble? How can we trust God like they did?" Have students write or draw a "courage promise" (e.g., "I'll trust God even when things are hard").
10. Note: Both activities encourage teamwork, creativity, and deeper reflection on Paul's story. Adjust time or complexity as needed!

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for upper elementary students (ages 9, 11) about Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16:1, 40), designed to encourage deeper thinking, reflection, and personal application:
 - 1. Courage and Faith in the Face of Challenges
 - Paul and his companions faced many obstacles on their journey, including persecution, fear, and doubt. The Bible says Paul didn't give up, even when things seemed impossible. How do you think Paul's faith helped him stay strong? Can you think of a time in your own life when you felt afraid or unsure about what you believed? How did you (or how could you) handle that situation with courage, just like Paul did? Why do you think God wanted Paul to keep going even when things were difficult?
 - 2. Kindness and Welcoming Strangers
 - When Paul and Silas arrived in Philippi, they met Lydia, a woman who believed in Jesus and invited them into her home. Later, they also met a slave girl who had a spiritual gift (maybe she could speak in tongues!). Paul wasn't afraid to help people who were different, even if they weren't part of his usual group. How can we, like Paul, show kindness to people who are new to our faith or who might seem different from us? Do you know someone who feels welcome in your church or community? What can you do to make sure they feel that way?
 - 3. Obedience and Trusting God's Plan
 - Paul and his team followed God's guidance even when it wasn't always easy. They left a place (Troas) because God told them to, and they didn't question it, even though it meant traveling by sea instead of taking a faster road. When have you had to trust God's plan, even when it didn't feel right or convenient? Did you ever feel like you should have done something differently? How did trusting God in that moment change your story?
 - 4. Sharing the Good News with Others
 - At the end of the passage, Paul and Silas were freed from prison and told to go back to the place where they were arrested. The guards and even the jailer believed in Jesus because of their example. Paul and his team didn't just preach the Bible, they showed it in action! How can we share God's love and faith with others, not just by talking, but by how we live? Do you know someone who might need to hear the story of Jesus? What could you do to help them know God's love, like Paul did?
 - These questions encourage students to connect the biblical story to their own lives, think critically, and reflect on how their faith can inspire them to act with courage, kindness, and obedience. Would you like any adjustments to better fit a specific lesson or group dynamic?

Prayer Focus

Here's a prayer focus for upper elementary students (ages 9, 11) based on Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16:1, 40). This prayer encourages trust, courage, and kindness while connecting to real-life questions and applications: --- "Lord Jesus, You called Paul to share Your love with everyone, even when it's hard! We pray that like Paul, we might trust You fully, even when things feel uncertain. Help us to listen to Your heart for others, just as Paul did when he saw Lydia in the marketplace. Teach us to be brave like Paul, who stood up for what was right, even when people disagreed with him. And remind us to share Your kindness, like Paul did with Timothy, who was young and new to the faith. Help us to be kind to those who are different from us, just like Paul was to the Gentiles who had never heard about You. What if we're afraid to speak up for what's right, like Paul did in Philippi? Or what if we feel left out, like Timothy did when he traveled with Paul? Help us to remember that You're always with us, guiding and protecting us. Show us how to trust You, even when the journey feels messy or confusing. And remind us that our words and actions can change lives, just like Paul's did. Amen." --- Deeper Questions for Discussion: 1. Paul had to travel with a man named Timothy, who wasn't very experienced. What do you think made Paul trust Timothy with his journey? 2. When Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, they didn't give up. What are some ways we can be brave like them when things are difficult? 3. Paul met Lydia, who believed in Jesus right away! How can we be as welcoming and open as Lydia when meeting new people? 4. Have you ever felt left out or nervous to share your faith? How can we pray for others to have the courage to trust God too? --- Personal Application: - Write down one way you can trust God like Paul did today. - Think of someone who might need kindness, how can you be brave enough to show it?

>> 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.