

## WEEK 5 ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

the messengers



### THE BIG IDEA

God sends help.

### THE BIBLE

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

## LARGE GROUP TIME

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

### MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
  - "Messengers" (Lecrae)
  - "Send Me" (Yancy)
  - "As the World Shakes" (Hillsong Kids)
  - "Spirit Move" (Bright Ones)
  - "Love One Another" (Newsboys)

### 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 that 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

- 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!

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Theme the relay to a specific type of rescue (national guard, medical). Have them put on specific attire and safety equipment before rescuing the person to increase the challenge.

### QUESTION | Have you ever needed to be rescued?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids discuss these in small groups with a leader. Have each small group pick one story they want to share with the large group.
- **Tell us about a time you needed to be rescued, or helped in a big way.**
  - Where were you?
  - How did you feel?
  - How did you get help?
  - Who came to help you?
- When we’re feeling helpless, we can call on God! We’ll hear more about what that might look like with today’s Bible story.

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

### BIBLE STORY | Paul and Silas in Prison

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** 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.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Allow the preteens to have a slip to read to actively build the chain together. Discuss how this provides help to put the chain together in the correct order.

✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Provide these same strips in smaller format to allow kids to glue them in order on another piece of paper during the Bible story.

- 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!

### 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 | The Messengers, Episode 5

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

#### 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](#).*

#### OBJECT LESSON | TFTI (Thanks for the Invite)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Use the invitation from the Big Idea for this object lesson.*
- Sometimes when someone talks about something fun they did without you, we say sarcastically, "TFTI" or "Thanks for the invite!" What we're trying to communicate is that . . . they didn't invite you and you wish you could have been there, too.
- Like we've been talking about in this series, there is never a need to say TFTI to God. God always includes us and it's on us to accept the invitation and to pass the invitation along to others.
- Remember this invitation? The Special Messenger brought it to me when they were taking things to people who needed help.
- Did you know that all of the packages were invitations in a way? Every time you do something to help someone, you are inviting them to know God's love.
- Because of you, someone will know that **God sends help!**

#### BIBLE | Psalm 97

- After Paul and Silas had been beaten and thrown into prison, they sang hymns of praise to God. What a surprising way to act while wearing the chains of prison!
- Psalm 97 could have been one of the songs they sang!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Create a chain similar to the one in the Bible story, but this time, assign each kid a verse or a part of a verse to write on precut strips of paper. Once they are ready, have them, in order, read their strip aloud then bring it to a leader who will help put them together in a chain. You can also have half the kids be writers and half the kids be readers.*

- Look at our chain! The hymn of praise has turned it into a beautiful decoration, as though we are at a party.
- Paul and Silas were able to celebrate God, even in prison, because they knew that **God sends help**.

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

#### REFLECTION | “Do Something”

- In today’s Bible story, God sent help through an earthquake. But a lot of times, **God sends help** through people like you and me.
- Listen to this song and think about how God might send you to help others.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play *“Do Something”* by Matthew West.
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** After listening to the song, allow preteens the chance to share what they may be feeling called to do to help others. Come up with some sort of action plan for each preteen to help someone on their own or decide on a project as a group.
  - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Set up an area within your space to place “helper” pictures - teachers, firefighters, nurses, etc. Have kids touch each picture so they engage and realize this is a helper. Then have a mirror. When kids get to the mirror, have the kids say “I am a helper.” Fold a piece of paper into four sections. Have kids draw three “helpers”, then in the fourth space, have the kids draw themselves in the space.

#### 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.

- ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Fold the paper in advance for the kids and have leaders start out as the ones to hold it for the kids until they are ready to try on their own.*

### 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.*
- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Use this as a time to pray together. Have preteens stand and link arms in a circle. One preteen will share a prayer request and the person to their right will pray for that request. Then that person shares a request and so on. Continue until everyone has gone. Emphasize the idea of being connected in a prayer chain.*
- 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 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided in your Programming folder or at [growcurriculum.org/Isaiah6-8](http://growcurriculum.org/Isaiah6-8).*
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"**