



This week in Messy Church at home we will be looking at Acts 16

Story re-told from Acts 16

Paul and Silas found themselves in jail in the Roman colony of Philippi. Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns while the other prisoners listened – the words they spoke and sang brought hope to everyone in that prison. Suddenly, there was an earthquake.

The earthquake was so violent and loud that everyone was deafened, the doors of the prison were flung open and all the prisoners' chains fell off.

The jailer woke up with all the noise, and when he realised the prison doors were open, he despaired, as he knew he would be punished by the Romans for losing prisoners. But Paul shouted to him, 'Don't harm yourself! We are all still here!'

When the jailer heard this, he rushed in and fell down before Paul and Silas. He said to them, 'What must I do to be saved?' They told him, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' The jailer tended their wounds and took them to his house, where they ate and celebrated all that had happened. And they spent time with his whole household sharing stories and teachings of Jesus so that all present were baptised and became believers.

We are told in the rest of Acts 16 that the magistrates came to apologise and free Paul and Silas, and they returned to the home of Lydia, another new believer, so they could continue to follow God's call.

You will find the video Celebration at <https://youtu.be/Tt4KExJINTk>

Here are some ideas for activities to do together at home before or after watching the celebration.

Prayer chains: You will need: pens; strips of paper; stapler or sticky tape

Who or what do you know that needs prayer? Write or draw people or situations in the world that need prayer on the strips of paper and create a paper chain of prayers. Our prayer chain will be strong because we join together with others.

Talk about how our prayers are like prison chains – they are strong when they join together with the prayers of others, so that those in trouble can feel the power of being lifted up and supported by our community of faith.

A prison diorama: You will need: shoeboxes; a selection of pens and crayons, coloured paper and card; lolly sticks; any recycled small bits of card, plastic, etc.; strong safe glue

Make a diorama (a 3D model) of the prison where Paul and Silas were kept – remember it was dark and cold and very unpleasant. Paul and Silas would have been held in chains. The window had bars to keep them in. - Don't forget to add some people and make sure everything is stuck firmly in place so you can move it.

Talk about how the prison where Paul and Silas were kept would have been dark and cold and dirty. Some prisons around the world are still like the Roman prisons, despite international laws which call on people to be treated with respect no matter what they have done. This is hard when we remember the crimes they have committed, but following Jesus' example of justice has never been easy

The story in Lego: You will need: boxes of Lego (or other building blocks and mini-figures);

Can you retell the story using the Lego? You could make several separate scenes, or one scene in which you keep moving the figures.

Talk about what the prison would have been like. What does it mean to come to faith? It doesn't always have to be a big event like this that jolts us into believing. It can be a slower process which takes place over time.



A hospitable meal: You will need: old food magazines; paper plates or recycled paper cut into circles; scissors; glue

Look through the magazines and find pictures of food you'd like to eat. Cut them out and stick them on to your plate. What do you eat at home when guests come to your house for dinner or a party? What else do you do to make people feel like welcome guests?

Talk about how the jailer was so happy that he wanted to share what he had with the prisoners and show them true hospitality. They would have eaten a wonderful meal as his welcome guests.

Reflecting on prisoners around the world You will need: a person template; card or paper; scissors; pens; felt-tip pens; a table cross



Concertina-fold your card into three and use the template to cut out a person, making sure the arms go right to the edges. Unfold the card so that you have three people. Draw faces and clothes to symbolise people who are in prison – let's not leave them faceless. Collect them around the cross to show that, even though we may not know them, God does not forget them.

Talk about how some people are imprisoned because of their nationality, religion or political beliefs, or for many other reasons. Too often, these people are forgotten or ignored, or we never find out about them

Social Action - Write a letter: You will need: paper, pen. An envelope and a stamp.

Find out about the Amnesty International "Write for Rights" campaign prisoner.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/write-for-rights/>

Write a letter to support a prisoner.

Talk about how isolated and forgotten prisoners can feel. What difference would it make to know that strangers in another country were concerned for you?

The Holy Spirit working: You will need: clear bottles; balloons; white vinegar; measuring spoons; bicarb; funnels; spoons; towels

First, fill a bottle to a third full with vinegar. Using a funnel, put 2 teaspoons of bicarb into a balloon. Carefully place the balloon over the neck of the bottle. When you're ready to go, lift the balloon and empty the contents into the bottle, but remember to hold the balloon on the neck of the bottle! The bicarb will react with the vinegar and fizz, inflating the balloon with gas. (Be very careful how you empty the bottle and dispose of the balloon properly.)

Talk about how the Holy Spirit, like the bicarb in this activity, definitely got to work in that prison. I wonder how those prisoners reacted to what they heard. The Spirit moves in our hearts so that we are inspired to go out and show God's love to everyone, the whole of creation.

Sound effects: You will need: handheld instruments (optional); recycled materials to make instruments, e.g. plastic bottles or yoghurt pots, gravel (not food) for shakers, rubber bands, anything that can be banged (like old saucepan lids), old spoons

The noise of the earthquake would have been enormous. No wonder the jailer woke up! What do you think an earthquake might sound like? Make instruments using the recycled materials, or play with the instruments provided and see what different types of noise they make. Have your instruments ready with you for when we retell the story during our Celebration online.

Talk about how earthquakes are very scary and dangerous – some people say it sounds like a train. They make the ground shake, buildings become unstable, trees are lifted out of the ground and people are thrown around. It can feel very unsafe. When do you feel unsafe? How does God help you when you feel like this?