



## Helping Kids Choose Joy God's Way

When Happiness Fades, But Joy Remains

### Lesson Aim:

Children will learn that joy comes from God's presence, not from circumstances, by seeing how Paul and Silas sang in prison.

### Scripture Focus:

- "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them," (Acts 16:25, *ESV*)
- "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." (Philippians 4:4, *ESV*)

### Connect

- **Connection Point:** Ask: "When was a time you felt upset because things didn't go your way? Did it change your day? What if you could still have peace and joy even when things were hard?"
- **Explain:** Happiness can disappear when something goes wrong, but joy is different. Happiness is like a bubble—it pops when life gets tough. Joy is like a brick—it's strong and stays steady because it comes from God.

### Teach

- Read or retell the story of Paul and Silas in Prison (Acts 16:16–34).

#### Paul and Silas in Prison

Paul and Silas traveled to cities telling people about Jesus. In Philippi, they met a girl who was being treated unfairly by some men who made money from her fortune-telling. Paul prayed in Jesus' name, and Jesus set her free from the spirit that was hurting her. She was free! But the men were angry because they couldn't make money anymore. They dragged Paul and Silas before the rulers, who ordered them to be beaten and thrown in prison.



## Church Lesson | The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy

Their backs were sore, their feet were in chains, and the prison was dark and cold. Most people would have complained or cried. But at midnight, Paul and Silas began to pray and sing hymns to God. The other prisoners listened in amazement—who could sing in a place like this?

Then suddenly, there was a great earthquake! The prison shook, the doors flew open, and everyone's chains fell off. The jailer woke up and thought everyone had escaped. He was about to harm himself, but Paul called out, "Don't hurt yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer rushed in, trembling. He asked Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." That very night, the jailer washed their wounds, brought them into his home, and he and his whole family were baptized.

Even in prison, Paul and Silas showed that joy isn't about everything going right. Joy comes from trusting that God is good and near in every situation.

- **Discussion Questions:**

1. What did Paul and Silas choose to do instead of complaining?
2. How do you think the other prisoners felt when they heard the singing?
3. What happened because Paul and Silas trusted God and chose joy?
4. How can we choose joy when something doesn't go our way?

- **Explain:**

- Joy is a Fruit of the Spirit. It doesn't depend on what happens to us. Joy comes from knowing that Jesus is with us. Paul and Silas were hurt and chained, but they sang because they knew God was still in control.

### Model

- **Teacher shares:** a time you had to choose joy in a hard situation.
- **Student activity:** Invite kids to act out short scenes that show what it looks like to choose joy—like when an event is canceled because of rain, losing a game, or being left out. After each scene, ask, "What would choosing joy look like here?"

### Pray

- *"God, thank You that joy doesn't depend on what happens to us. Help us trust You and rejoice in Your presence, just like Paul and Silas did. Fill our hearts with Your joy that never goes away."*

### Craft/Activity

- **Joy Chains:** Give each child strips of paper. On each strip, have them write something they can thank God for—even in hard times. Link the strips together to make a paper chain. Each link reminds them that joy can grow in every situation because God's love never breaks. Write the tagline *"Happiness goes away, God's joy is here to stay!"* on one strip to close the chain.

### Takeaway

- Joy comes from knowing God loves us no matter what.