

LARGE GROUP TIME SERIES

WEEK 4: “THE GREAT (PHILIPPIAN) SHAKEUP”

Ready?

- Print the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever (see “Set ...” section below) on a poster board and hang it on the wall behind you and point to it – at least for the first several times you repeat it. This will make it easier for the kids to “pick up on it.”
- Show real pictures of the ancient town of Philippi to help kids understand that you’re talking about a true event. Several Web sites have pictures of Philippian ruins. A couple of them include pictures of the jail site, or at least where tradition says the jail was located. Even though it might not be the right jail, the kids can get an idea of what a jail looked like. Other pictures on these sites are ruins of identifiable buildings and locations in Philippi. (We are recommending these sites for the pictures. We have not evaluated the content.)

❖ www.bibleplaces.com

❖ www.ctsp/co/il/

❖ www.culture.gr

- Following are a couple of optional environmental ideas for this lesson. However, you need to know your clubbers – would these be exciting or scary to them?
 - ❖ Dim the lights during song time and talk about how difficult it must have been to sing songs of praise after being beaten and thrown in a dark prison. Sing a praise song or two that directly quotes an Old Testament verse, like Paul and Silas did.
 - ❖ If you have a group of older kids – especially boys – you could tell the central part of the story with the lights dimmed or out (as it was in the jail cell).

Set ...

- Before you teach the [Great ShakeUP](#) Large Group Time Lesson #4, remember – this is a culmination of weeks of planning and preparation. Many unsaved children may hear the gospel for the first time. Pray over the lesson and prepare to make it your best!
- Because this lesson is directed toward children who may know little or nothing about the Bible, we have chosen not to discuss the Saul/Paul name change. Other facts seemed more important, especially since Bible scholars don’t agree on why Paul’s name was changed.

- We constantly give directions for you to have your kids repeat what we're calling the "most-important-and-best-good-news-ever" ... that a person must believe that Christ (God's Son) died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. Christ did this so our sins could be forgiven, and we can have an everlasting future in heaven. Choose the times you want to insert this phrase into your lesson. You can say it fewer times or more times than we suggest. The goal is for these couple of sentences to "stick" in a child's mind. Make sure that the first time you use the phrase you also define the words:

❖ **Sin** is anything we say, do or think that goes against what God says in the Bible. (Also make sure you've explained that sin has a penalty in order to give proper context to the repeated phrase.)

❖ **Scriptures** is another word for the Bible.

- As the kids get settled for Large Group Time, ask them to find Acts 16. You may want to give them a bookmark (an index card or small piece of paper) to keep their place until you're ready to teach. Asking the kids to look up Acts 16 and having their Bibles open as you teach will help them understand that what you're saying comes from the Bible. (This is especially important for your visitors.) Bring extra Bibles for kids who might not have one. Try to have enough so that at least every two clubbers have one to share. (Even Sparkies can understand that what you're saying comes from the Bible – though many of them can't read yet.)

Go!

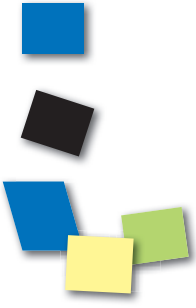
Tonight's the **Great ShakeUP**, and our Bible lesson is about a real-live shakeup! It happened to two men named Paul and Silas, in a town called Philippi, a LONG time ago. (For T&T clubbers, you can explain that Bible scholars think this took place in the summer or fall of AD 50.) Wait a minute! Who were these men and where was Philippi?!

Paul was a Roman who knew a LOT of stuff about a LOT of stuff. He lived in Tarsus, a town where a lot of smart people lived, and he learned a lot about the laws of his time. (You could "strut" back and forth as you're telling this, representing proud Paul.) That meant Paul knew a lot about the verses in the Old Testament part of the Bible – AND He knew about God, but he did NOT (*accent this so kids notice*) know the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever. What's that, you ask? (*Point to poster.*)

... that a person must believe that Christ (God's Son) died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. Christ did this so our sins could be forgiven, and we can have an everlasting future in heaven.

In fact, Paul was so angry that people believed the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever (instead of the special laws he cared about) that He spent his days arresting the believers and throwing them in jail. Then something happened! The Lord Jesus Christ actually talked to Paul and then Paul himself believed that ... (*Point to poster.*)


... Christ (God's Son) died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. Christ did this so our sins could be forgiven, and we can have an everlasting future in heaven.



(Obviously, there is a lot more to Paul's conversion experience, but that is not the main focus of the lesson.) After Paul became a believer in the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever, he wanted to tell EVERYONE about it. What did he want to tell everyone about? *(Help clubbers to repeat the news as a group.)* Right! So Paul decided to go on a trip to different towns to teach this news. Paul was willing to travel from town to town because he knew how important and good this news is. Even when people DIDN'T want to hear it, Paul kept telling it.

Silas was also a believer in the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever ... *(Repeat the news.)* He did a lot of things in the church of Jerusalem, which was a major city in the country of Israel way back then – and it still is today. The church chose Silas to go along with Paul on one of his trips to tell people the most-important-and best-good-news-ever. *(Ask clubbers to repeat the good news as a group.)*

Philippi was a town in the country now known as Greece. Who's heard of Greece? Right, the Olympics started there. A lot of people used to visit the town of Philippi because it was on the road that went from Rome to the Far East. *(Show the clubbers where Philippi was located on a map or a globe. This helps emphasize that it was a real place. Also, show pictures of Philippi from the Web.)*



On with our story. Paul and Silas traveled to Philippi to tell the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever. *(Ask clubbers to repeat the news.)* But Paul and Silas were the new guys in town! They didn't know anyone in Philippi. Where should they begin? There weren't any churches! Where would they stay? They couldn't just stop at a Super 8 or Holiday Inn.

Somehow Paul and Silas found out that a group of ladies met down at the river to pray. So they went down to the river to meet the ladies. The ladies knew all about God, but they did NOT know the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever. So Paul told them! What did he tell them? That ... *(help clubbers repeat news; use poster)*


... a person must believe that Christ (God's Son) died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. Christ did this so our sins could be forgiven, and we can have an everlasting future in heaven.

Guess what? The ladies believed!

One of the ladies who believed the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever was Lydia. We think she was rich because she had her own business selling purple cloth. She told Paul and Silas they could stay at her house during the time they were in Philippi.

Wow! Soon everyone was talking about Paul and Silas and the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever. What was that news again? *(Clubbers repeat.)* People started listening to the good news. Some believed and some didn't.

Oh, no! Paul and Silas ran into a BIG PROBLEM. See, a slave girl who lived in Philippi was making a LOT of money for her owners. People would come up to her owners and say, "I will pay you money if your slave girl can tell me what will happen to me in the future." The girl would tell them, and they would pay. But the girl was doing this by the power of Satan – the devil, the #1 enemy of God. One of Satan's evil spirits was inside the girl.



Well, the slave girl followed Paul and Silas and yelled things about what they were saying. Paul did not want people to think that he and Silas had anything to do with the slave girl and the evil spirit of Satan that was trying to confuse people. God gave Paul the power to tell the evil spirit to leave the girl – and that’s EXACTLY what happened.

Another oh, no! Another BIG PROBLEM. The girl couldn’t tell the future anymore, so her owners got VERY angry because now they weren’t making money! They went to the city leaders and complained. “Arrest those men! They are teaching and doing things that are against our law.”

The city leaders were angry about the message Paul and Silas were preaching. What was that news again, boys and girls? (*Clubbers repeat the news again.*)

Sadly, the city leaders listened to the men who owned the girl. (*Yell for emphasis.*) “Beat those men! Arrest them! Throw them in prison.” The ordinary people began yelling too. Everything was just one BIG mess.

Were Paul and Silas doing anything wrong? (*Allow clubbers to answer, but make sure the right answer is emphasized.*)

The city leaders weren’t taking ANY chances. They not only put Paul and Silas in prison (simply because they were telling the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever), but they put them in the toughest part of the jail so they ABSOLUTELY, FOR SURE, NO-DOUBT-ABOUT-IT couldn’t escape.

BUT – just to make sure, they also chained Paul and Silas’ feet to a big wooden pole so they couldn’t get away. That meant their legs were in a very UNCOMFORTABLE position and that they probably had to lie on their backs. Remember, they had just been beaten, so their backs would have been hurting and sore. Lying on the dirt floor would have made them feel even worse!

(*Stop the story here and thoughtfully say something like: “Paul and Silas KNEW they were telling the most-important-and-best-good-news message ever. Otherwise they would not have had the courage to be strong when everything seemed to be going wrong.” Make sure the kids understand what is happening.*)

OK.

- Paul and Silas are in prison.
- They are in the inner, most-secured part of the jail.
- They are chained to a big wooden pole.

Could they escape? No way!

But the city rulers still did something else – they told the jailer to watch the prisoners. They said (*say angrily*), “If you let those prisoners escape you will be KILLED!”

So Paul and Silas were locked in the horrible prison even though they didn’t do anything wrong. They were in the dark. (Remember they were in the inner part of the jail, away from the windows.) They were sore, and we can imagine how tired they were.

Did they yell?
Did they complain?
Did they whine?

No! Paul and Silas knew that they were teaching the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever:

... that a person must believe Christ (God's Son) died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. Christ did this so our sins could be forgiven and we can have an everlasting future in heaven.

Paul and Silas were willing to go to prison for that message. They were glad to have the privilege to share the good news. And so they sang. Yes, really and truly, they started singing praises to God!

And then a real **GREAT SHAKEUP** happened! A HUGE earthquake hit Philippi!
(Cut lights here if desired.)

The prison foundations shook, the doors opened, the chains fell off, and every single one of the prisoners got loose! The jailer started running around acting crazy! He was in BIG trouble. He thought all the prisoners were escaping – and the jailer knew that meant HIS LIFE. He would be killed for letting them escape!

But Paul said loudly (after all, a lot of shaking and rattling was happening),
“Don’t worry about it! None of the prisoners are getting away!”

Wow! Talk about relief! The jailer ran for a torch and went into Paul and Silas’ cell. He understood that the God of Paul and Silas was the one true God. He said, “What must I do to be saved?” which is another way of saying “I want to trust, or believe, in the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever.” *(Have clubbers repeat the message once again.)*

Paul’s answer was simple. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you’ll be saved.”


The man did believe in the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever. Then he took Paul and Silas to his house, washed their wounds, and gave them food. And the jailer’s entire family believed too!

Do you know that the message Paul and Silas preached in Philippi is STILL the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever? Who can say it now, without the poster?
(Cover the poster; see how clubbers do on saying it from memory. Offer helps if needed.)

Maybe you’ve never heard this good news before. Maybe people have told you the good news isn’t true. Maybe you don’t understand what the good news means. Maybe you think the good news is for adults and not for kids.

But the good news is for you, tonight, right where you’re sitting:

- No matter what church you go to.
- Even if you don’t go to church at all.
- Even if your Dad or Mom already believe it. (You must make YOUR own choice.)
- Even if your Dad or Mom believe something different.



See, we are all sinners and we all do sin. That means we don't measure up to God's perfectness. Because we are sinners, we deserve death and to be separated from Him forever. We can't do anything to help ourselves out of this problem. That's why we need to believe in the most-important-and-best-good-news-ever. We must believe that the Lord Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins, that He rose from the dead, and now lives in heaven. His gift to us is forgiveness (He paid the penalty for our sins) and everlasting life with Him (we will never be separated from God). All we need to do is trust that Jesus did this for us!

Remember, this good news is true whether or not you believe it. Jesus Himself said, ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."***

At this point, ask the kids to bow their heads and close their eyes so there is no looking around. Ask those who want to make the decision to trust Christ to raise their hands.

(If you have younger children in your group, modify your invitation to "talk to a leader after Large Group Time" to ensure a genuine response. Young children will often raise a hand just to please a leader. Also, do not promise kids anything if they respond such as, "We will give anyone who talks to a leader a bookmark or certificate." You don't want kids to respond because of what they're getting rather than a true desire to trust Christ.)

Have your leaders quietly lead interested kids (AND the clubbers they came with) to another room where leaders can explain salvation in more detail and answer any questions kids may have. Note the importance of having your clubbers accompany their friends who want to trust Christ. This increases the comfort level of the visitors and "closes the loop" for your clubbers as they see their friends trusting Christ after praying for and inviting them.

While you're waiting in the Large Group Time room:

- *Spend a few minutes praying for the leaders and kids talking in the other room.*
- *Thank God for what He has done that night and how He has answered prayers.*
- *Tell your clubbers that there will be another [Great ShakeUP](#) wristband (if you choose to purchase these) for them and their visitor if they both return next week.*
- *Show other evangelism tools like "TransPort", the Gospel Flipper-Flapper™, the EvangeCube™ and the bead bracelet (pages 10-13 of the Awana Ministry Catalog).*
- *Plan to give the "What's Next?" follow-up book to clubbers who trust Christ!*