Unit 23 Theme: Who God Is

God's Gift of Salvation



Life Need (5–10 minutes)

• Discuss what it takes for a person to change. □ *Bible Adventures* p. 1

STEP 2 D Bible Learning (15-20 minutes)

• **Bible Study:** Read about the Philippian jailer's salvation experience.

Bibles, Bible Adventures pp. 2-3

• **Bible Review:** Explain and restate familiar expressions about salvation.

"Salvation Sayings" Teaching Aid—separate cards before class, Bibles, pencils

STEP 3 () Bible Application (5-10 minutes)

 Memory Work: Examine the stories of three people who believed in Jesus.

 Bible Adventures p. 4

STEP 4 **()** Life Response (about 5 minutes)

- Use a bridge illustration to explain salvation.
 Classroom chairs or desks
- **Optional Activity:** Hear testimonies of how people came to Christ. Discuss prayer journal assignment.

Memory Verse

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." —Acts 16:31

indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Bible Basis: The Philippian jailer believes and is saved (Acts 16:25-34).

Bible Truth: Those who believe in the Lord Jesus are saved.

_esson Aim:

That your students will believe in Jesus and receive His gift of salvation.

UnderStanding



This week we learn what God wants us to do to receive His gift of salvation.

Paul and Silas were imprisoned in the city of Philippi for casting a demon out of a slave girl. While in prison, there was an earthquake, and all the prisoners were miraculously freed from their chains. Instead of escaping, Paul used this event to lead the awestruck jailer to faith in Jesus Christ.

The action of today's story takes place in Philippi. Paul visited Philippi during his second missionary journey. (Acts 15:39—18:22.) It was during this visit to Philippi that Lydia and her household became believers (Acts 16:13-15).

The city of Philippi was named for Philip of Macedon, who conquered it in 360 B.C. Philippi was in the Macedonia region (Acts 16:12). The city also was a Roman colony.

Places of prayer were usually located by running water where the few Jews in Philippi met in lieu of a synagogue. Paul and Silas were going to one of these places of prayer when they encountered the slave girl who was possessed by a spirit. Evidently a few local businessmen had been making a profit from this girl's ability to tell fortunes (Acts 16:16-21).

—continued on next page

Understanding the Bible —*cont'd*

Paul and Silas were arrested and thrown into prison after they cast out the demon from the girl. Around midnight an earthquake shook the prison. The jailer, convinced the prisoners had escaped, attempted to kill himself. Under Roman rule, if any prisoner escaped, the life of the jailer would be demanded in his place. Paul stopped the jailer's suicide attempt and assured him that no one had escaped. The jailer's familiar question about salvation in Acts 16:30 may have been a reference to saving his own life rather than his soul. Paul, however, calmed the jailer's fears and offered him salvation through faith in Christ.

Whether God uses miracles or the simple preaching of the Gospel to bring us to salvation, God will do as He promised—He'll save all who believe in His Son.

Tips

assroom.

How can you help your students take another look at these "same old" stories?

- If you have time, consider reading Scripture passages in more than one version of the Bible. Doing this can help clarify a passage or emphasize a new point.
- The teaching aid used in this lesson, "Salvation Sayings," has students take a second look at familiar expressions associated with salvation. As students explain these sayings in plain language, they'll not only gain an understanding of salvation but also a deeper appreciation of it.
- When your students are familiar with a Bible story, quickly move through the fact questions and spend more time on the interpretation (meaning) and application questions.
- Encourage your students to explain their answers and defend their positions. When a student gives the right answer, you could say, "That's a good answer, Jason. Why do you think that's true?"

Choose from these activities to do as students arrive.

Before class, record one- or twominute descriptions of salvation experiences you and several other people have had. Students can listen to these testimonies and help each other repeat them back to those who arrive later.

\Box voice recorder

PRESESSION ACTIVITI

■ To get your students thinking about things they don't understand, yet still believe, write the following words on a whiteboard: gravity, electricity, black holes, microwaves, and vaccinations. Ask students to select an item from the list and explain why people believe in something they don't fully understand.

□ whiteboard, marker

For Worship Time, use the songs for this quarter on the DisKit CD from the Creative Teaching Aids packet.

DisKit CD, CD player



Understanding Your Students

Some of your students may be "lifers"; that is, they've been attending Sunday school all of their lives. These students have heard the Bible stories before (often many times before) and know all the right answers. However, the right answers and the minute details don't always equal a clear understanding of God's Word and its teaching. Your upper-elementary students can be challenged to look at God's Word again and see how it applies to them. Encourage and take time to answer their questions. Lesson 8



Lesson Aim:

That your students will believe in Jesus and receive His gift of salvation.

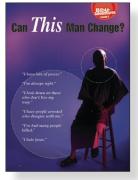
Objective: That your students will discuss what it takes for a person to change.

Materials:

□ Bible Adventures p. 1

To prepare students for the lesson, from Acts 16:25-34, that teaches Jesus has power to change lives, students will engage in an activity that gets them thinking about people whose lives have changed.

Distribute *Bible Adventures* to your students and have them turn to page 1, "Can This Man Change?" The page features a silhouette of a man. This is a description of the apostle Paul before his conversion. Keep this fact a secret until the end of this step.



Divide the class into four groups. Read a statement at a time. Allow time for the groups to discuss the following questions for the statements.

• What do you think this man will do with his life? What might happen to him?

• How would you feel about this person if you met him? How would you describe him?

• Do you think this person can change?

Gather the class back together to discuss one last question.

• How easy do you think it is to change?

Tell the students that they are probably familiar with this person. Ask volunteers to guess who the person is. Then say: This man didn't change by himself. But Jesus changed him forever. He is the apostle Paul. Not only did Jesus change Paul, but Paul also helped others find Jesus' life-changing power. Let's find out about one of them now.



Bible Basis:

The Philippian jailer believes and is saved (Acts 16:25-34).

Objective: That your students will discuss the factors that led to the Philippian jailer's conversion.

Materials:

□ Bible Adventures pp. 2-3 □ "Salvation Sayings" Teaching Aid—separate cards before class □ Bibles, pencils

Have students turn in their Bible Adventures to pages 2 and 3, "The Shake-up." Have students silently read the opening paragraph. Go over the footnotes (1, 2, and 3) before moving on.

Ask students to find and read Acts 16:25 from the Bible before discussing the following questions.

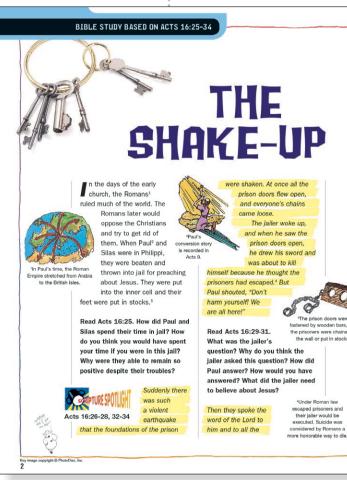
W How did Paul and Silas spend their time in jail? (They were praying and singing hymns to God.)

How do you think you would have spent your time if you were in this jail? (Students may say they would have been quiet and sad; they may have complained about being in jail.)

Why were they able to remain so positive despite their troubles? (The Scripture does not say. From their singing and praising God, and from other accounts in Acts [see 5:41], we can guess. Paul and Silas knew that they were in jail for preaching about Jesus. They knew it was an honor to suffer for Him.)

Ask a volunteer to read the Scripture Spotlight, Acts 16:26-28.

What did the jailer think had happened? (He thought all the prisoners had



escaped.)

Have a student look up and read Acts 16:29-31 from the Bible.

• What was the jailer's question? ("Sirs, what must I do to be saved?")

• Why do you think the jailer asked this question? (Allow for speculation. The jailer may have known that Paul and Silas were preachers. Since he was so shaken by his experience, he may have wanted to hear what they had to offer. Paul and Silas had been preaching in Philippi about "the way to be saved" [Acts 16:17].)

W How did Paul answer? ("Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.")

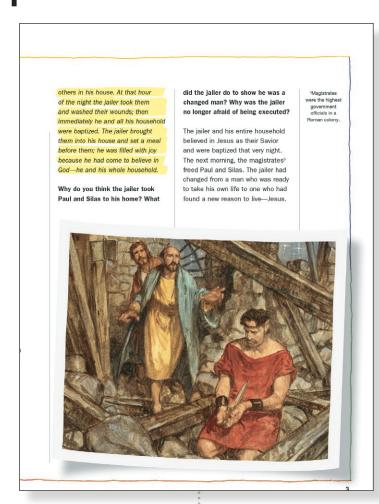
How would you have answered? (Allow for responses.)

What did the jailer need to believe about **Jesus?** (The jailer needed to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the way to salvation. He needed to trust Jesus as his Savior.)

Have a volunteer read the next Scripture Spotlight section, Acts 16:32-34.

Why do you think the jailer took Paul and

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• What did the jailer do to show he was a changed man? (He invited Paul and Silas to eat at his home; he took care of their wounds.)

• How do we know the jailer believed in Jesus? (He and his whole family had come to believe in God and were baptized.)

• Why was the jailer no longer afraid of being executed? (Students may mention that his prisoners had not escaped. Help them see that the jailer had been given a new life—one that would continue even if he were executed.)

Ask a volunteer to read the summary statement.

Bible Review

The teaching aid "Salvation Sayings," will help students understand and explain God's way of salvation. Separate the cards before class. Divide students into groups of two or three. Introduce the activity as follows:

• Have you ever felt left out of a conversation because you didn't have the same experiences as the others? (Sometimes we might leave people out when we're talking about our faith in Jesus.)

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Pass out the cards with the picture side up. In each group, students should compare the illustration on their card with what they think the saying really means. Next, they may turn their cards over, look up the Scripture, and complete the sentence starters. Call the groups back together and go over their explanations.

For Card 1—Being born again describes our new spiritual life in Christ.

For Card 2—In this saying, "heart" symbolizes a person's life. Revelation 3:20 shows a picture of the close relationship we can have with Christ.

For Card 3—We need to admit that we have wronged God. When we confess and turn away from our sins, God is faithful to forgive us.

For Card 4—David's cry to wash away his iniquity—his sin—is a prayer for forgiveness. Washing carries the idea of purity.

For Card 5—Jesus' sacrifice was the payment for our sins. Through His death, Jesus purchased our deliverance from sin and its guilt.

For Card 6—As our Savior, Jesus rescues, or delivers, us from sin.

For Card 7—When Jesus rose from the dead, He proved that He had power over death. We, too, can have the assurance of everlasting life.

For Card 8—Ephesians 2:8-9 is clear that it is only through faith we are saved. In His grace and love, God gives us salvation as a gift.

STEP 3 D Bible Application (5-10 minutes)



Objective: That students discuss the different ways God brings someone to faith in Christ and salvation.

Materials:

□ Bible Adventures p. 4

In today's Bible study, it took an earthquake to get the jailer to think about God.

Does God always work in dramatic ways to bring people to Himself? (No, God uses many different ways to bring people to salvation.)

Have your students turn to page 4 in *Bible Adventures*. Let's take a look at the experiences of three ordinary people. Each of them came to God in a different way.

Memory Work

Ask someone to read the Key Verse, Acts 16:31, that's printed on page 4. This verse was Paul's answer to the jailer's question, "What must I do to be saved?" As we read the stories on this page, think about the people and the events that helped these three believe in the Lord. Read the introduction, then have students take turns reading.

- Who were some of the people that helped bring Carol, George, and LaQuandra to God? (In Carol's case, her parents probably helped her the most. In George's situation, the pastor of his new church helped George understand what it means to believe in Jesus as his Savior. In LaQuandra's case, her friend Taiyon was the one to tell her about Christ.)
- All three of these people trusted in Jesus; yet each story was different. What were some of the differences? (Carol became a Christian when she was young. As a missionary's kid, Carol grew up in a different culture. Carol's parents were Christians and taught her about Christ. Unlike Carol, George didn't become a Christian until he was in his forties. George knew about Christ and attended church, but he had never trusted in Jesus for salvation. LaQuandra, on the other hand, was headed for destruction. She thought she was too far gone for the Lord to do anything.)

What do these stories tell us about the ways people come to God? (People come to God in a variety of ways. People can become Christians at any age, under any circumstance, and at any time.)

God offers His salvation to all people—no matter what their ages, backgrounds, or experiences are.

Lesson 8



Bible Truth:

Those who believe in the Lord Jesus are saved.

Objective: That your students will choose to believe in Christ and receive His gift of salvation.

Materials:

□ Classroom chairs or desks

To illustrate the point that Jesus is our bridge to God, put chairs or desks in a line across the middle of your classroom. Tell the students to pretend that the chairs represent a wide canyon or gorge. Have all of them stand on one side and tell them that God is on the other side of the canyon.

• What separates people from God? (Sin.)

What is sin, and why does it separate us from God? (We sin when we think or act in wrong ways. We sin when we ignore God and don't obey Him. Because God is holy and good, He hates sin. This row of chairs represents the separation between us and God when we sin.)

Just as we are on this side of the canyon and can't get to the other side, we can't reach God on our own—and that leaves us in a terrible predicament.

The good news is that God doesn't want us to stay separated from Him. God loves us and wants to forgive us. So God built a bridge between Himself and us.

What was this bridge? (Some of your students may know that God had to send His Son, Jesus, to die and take our punishment for sin.)

When Christ died for our sins, His death on the cross bridged the gap made by our sins. (Move one chair and walk through the line of chairs as if walking across a bridge.)

Jesus' death is the foundation of the bridge to God. We can't start across the bridge to God until we are really sorry for our wrong thoughts or actions. God forgave all our sins when Jesus died on the cross. But we must repent and receive His forgiveness before we can be a part of God's family.

Emphasize that a person can believe a lot of facts about Jesus without being saved. Saving belief involves a choice: each person must admit his or her sinfulness, ask for God's forgiveness, and trust Jesus to save him or her from punishment by God.

Closing Activity

Have a time of silent prayer to give students a chance to receive God's forgiveness and cross the bridge, or to thank God for sending Jesus to bridge the gap. For more information on leading a student to salvation, see the inside back cover of this teacher's commentary. Close with a short prayer, thanking God for His gift of salvation.

Optional Activity

Invite an adult and a teenager to come and share their salvation experiences with your class. Perhaps one of these people could be a new Christian who can describe the recent transformation Christ made in his or her life.

Prayer Journal: Tell your students to write the names of any family members who need salvation. Then pray for them each day this week.