



Messy Church at home

25 October 2020 - Saved!

The story of Paul & Silas

While the pandemic is ongoing and circumstances change on a regular basis, it is still difficult for us to meet together as a Messy Church, so for the time being, how about trying Messy Church at home?

Read - Acts 16: 25-34 (NIV)

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

²⁹The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." ³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptised. ³⁴The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

Activities

Here are some activities to try, using bits and pieces you might have at home. If you can't find the exact same items, what things could you use instead?

Behind bars

You will need:

- Paper or card
- Pens/pencils

- Hole punch and scissors
- String or wool

On a rectangular piece of card punch four evenly spaced holes along the top edge and four holes in the same positions opposite, along the bottom edge. Then draw a picture of Paul and Silas singing songs and praying in prison in the centre.



When you've finished your picture, cut four equal lengths of string/wool. Take a piece of string and poke it up through one of the bottom holes, pull it over the front of your picture and poke it back down through the opposite top hole. Turn the card over and tie both ends of the string secure. Repeat this with the three other lengths of string.

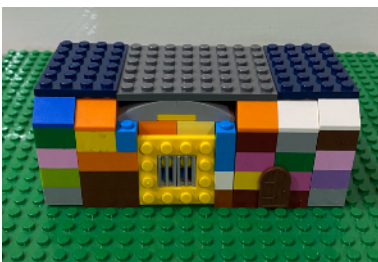
What do you think the prison where Paul and Silas were held would have been like? It probably wasn't very nice - cold, dark, damp. What would you have felt like if you were in a prison cell like that? I don't suppose most of us would have felt like singing and praying if we were in prison. But, Paul and Silas knew that God was with them and they continued to praise God, even through the hardship of being in jail.

The story in lego

You will need:

- A box of lego
- A camera or smart phone

Can you retell the story of Paul and Silas in lego? Build the scenes from the story out of lego. Take a picture of each scene as you go. Put all your photos together to show the whole story in lego.



What would you have done if you were in Paul and Silas' shoes? Would you have tried to make a run for it when the earthquake hit? Why do you think they stayed where they were? When the earthquake woke the jailer and he realised what had happened, he assumed the prisoners would have tried to escape and he would be in trouble for not stopping them. It's no wonder then, that he was so moved when he found the prisoners were still there. He realised God was with Paul and Silas and wanted to know God too.

A meal at the jailer's house

You will need:

- Paper plate (or circle of card)
- Magazines (make sure everyone has finished reading them first, as you'll need to cut bits out)
- Scissors and glue



Have a look through the magazines and find some pictures of food you'd like to eat. Cut them out carefully and stick them on your paper plate. What kind of food do you eat when guests come to your house for dinner or a party? What sort of things do you do to make people feel welcome when they visit? The jailer was so happy he now believed in God that he wanted to share his joy with Paul and Silas and offered them his hospitality, inviting them for a

delicious meal at his house.

It's not been very easy to invite our extended family and friends for dinner this year has it? How much more do we now appreciate the opportunities we do have to share a meal with those we love? How can we try to share God's love with others even though we might not necessarily be able to see them very much at the moment?

Reflect

Paul and Silas were singing and praying to God in prison. They had such certainty and faith that God was with them through what must have been a terrifying experience. How easy do you find it to turn to God when you're in an uncomfortable or sad situation?

It would have been dark and unpleasant being chained up in prison, but Paul and Silas spread hope among the other prisoners by singing and praying to God. The jailer was sure he would find the prison empty after the earthquake and would be in trouble, but Paul and Silas shared God's hope and love with him too - and he was so moved by God's Holy Spirit that he believed and was baptised. How do you try to spread hope and love when others are finding things difficult?

It's not easy in difficult times to remain faithful to God and it can be hard to keep spreading God's hope and love, especially at the moment. God understands. That's why he sends his Holy Spirit to be with us and help us. Think about what you could do in the coming week to share God's joy, hope and love with others.

Learn a new song

Don't forget to keep singing Jesus' love is very wonderful.

And perhaps you'd like to learn a new little song called "May you find peace". Have a listen [here](#) - and you could have a go at learning the actions too.

Pray

Ask God to send his Holy Spirit to help you stay hopeful in difficult times and to spread God's hope and love through your actions.

You might also like to say The Lord's Prayer. And perhaps you'd like to finish with Messy Grace - can you remember the actions we do when we say it? Here's a reminder...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out your hands in front of you)

And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)

Be with us all now and for ever. Amen (Raise hands together on the word 'Amen' and shout loudly!)