I. Women: The First Believers in Greece
   A. Low Hanging Fruit
      1. The apostles went to the place where Greeks prayed
      2. The women’s prayer meeting
   B. Lydia - the seller of purple
      1. A wealthy woman
      2. Her house became the HQ for the Philippian church

II. That Pesky Slave Girl
   A. She seemed to be on their side!
      1. She followed them daily
      2. She spoke truth
      3. She encouraged others to listen
   B. Paul’s discerning of spirits
      1. Paul, like Jesus, looked under the hood
      2. This girl was motivated and dominated by a demonic spirit
      3. Paul finally cast the spirit out of the girl

III. The Fallout: Persecution and Imprisonment
   A. The slave girl’s owners
      1. Motivated by money
      2. Motivated by self preservation
   B. The racist authorities
      1. Knew these men were Jews, but didn’t even ask if they were Romans
      2. Unjustly beat them and then imprisoned them
Table Talk

Teens

Read Acts 16:16-34

Question One:
• Share your thoughts on whether Paul and Silas’ imprisonment was justified or not justified.

Question Two:
• Describe how Paul and Silas responded to their imprisonment and beating.
• How would you have responded if you were in their situation?

Question Three:
• How did God reward their faith?

Question Four:
Acts 16:31 is a key passage on the message of faith. All that is needed for justification is faith in the Lord Jesus. The jailer had asked what he should do. The answer was that he need perform no works; he only needed to believe in Jesus who is the Lord.
The way Paul and Silas responded in the midst of challenges and trials became an incredible witness to the jailer and his family.
• Describe some ways you can be a good witness to others by your actions.

IV. The Overflow of the Spirit - Worship
A. The supernatural response to difficulty, tribulation, and persecution
   1. Boldness in witnessing
   2. Overflow in worship

B. The natural response to difficulty, tribulation, and persecution
   1. Pity party!
   2. Worship another god!

V. The Response of the Jailer
A. His initial response
B. His faith response
C. A church built on authentic worship
Life Group Questions for December 30, 2012
Message = Power of Worship

Ice Breaker: Tell about one of the greatest worship times you’ve ever experienced.

Read Acts 16: 9-40.
1. Tell what you observe about this passage.

2. Paul looked beyond the outer irritation the slave girl was causing and looked to the spiritual causes. Have you come to the place where you see the spiritual issues in peoples’ lives rather than the outer issues? When you see those issues in peoples’ lives, do you tend to judge them or pray for them?

3. If the slave girl was demonized, why do you think she was telling everyone to listen to Paul’s message and even affirming his message?

4. What motivated the slave girl’s owners to have Paul and Silas punished? What can we learn from this?

5. When you face difficulty, tribulation, or persecution, do you 1) Flow into passionate worship? or 2) Throw a pity party by sulking, pouting, or outbursts of anger? or 3) Self medicate through worshiping another god, or pursuing an old addiction?

6. Pray for one another

Table Talk

Elementary
Acts 16:11-40

Day 1 - Let’s say that you are captured and sitting in a prison. You are accused of a crime that you didn’t commit. Suddenly, there is an earthquake and the doors to your jail cell open, you are free to escape. What would you do? Would you leave? Would you punish the people who put you in jail (getting your sweet revenge)? Did you know that this exact scene played out for real in Acts 16:11-40. Read the passage and pay special attention to what Paul & Silas do when faced with the opportunity to escape.

Day 2 - We know as Christians that God is in control of all the details of our lives. Nothing is really by accident. He knows what will happen in our lives. Sometimes things happen that we do not understand. Perhaps someone we love loses a job, or our best friend has to move away. One thing we can be very certain of in the middle of any trouble is the love that Jesus has for us. He loves us and is in control of everything. Paul and Silas were stripped and beaten, then imprisoned. While in prison they sang hymns to God! Are you facing any situations in your life where you are wondering what God is doing?

Day 3 - Why do you think Paul and Silas stayed in the prison? Why would Paul want the whole city to see them freed? Could you stay in prison for Jesus? Jesus is our comfort. He brings us relief in times of trouble because He is always in control and always wants to use situations in life to draw us closer to Him. Can you think of any lessons you have learned through the years as a result of a difficult life situation? The next time you face a difficult situation, do as Paul and Silas did and praise God and trust in Him!
Day 1: Read Acts 16:16-38
Start out talking about how Paul liked traveling with his friends to tell others about Jesus. First, he traveled with Barnabas and now he is traveling with Silas. Some men were not happy about what Paul and Silas were doing and they got Paul and Silas hurt and thrown into jail. Ask who was supposed to make sure they did not escape.

Day 2:
Discuss what Paul and Silas did while they were in jail. Ask how it may have made the other prisoners feel. Talk about how, at first, everyone might have been surprised and maybe even annoyed, but that the power of Paul and Silas’ songs and the heartfelt meaning in their worship caused the earth to quake and the jail doors to open and the chains to fall apart. They could have left, but then they would have still been in trouble and so would the jailer. Talk about how amazing it is that this powerful miracle caused the jailer to want to know and believe in Jesus.

Memory Verse:
“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.” - Philippians 4:6

Day 3:
Share with your children some of your favorite worship songs. Talk to them about songs that you like and why. Ask what their favorite song about Jesus is.

Activity:
Make some homemade instruments like tambourines, shakers, and drums. Decorate them and then play them along with your favorite worship music.

Personal Devotion Pages
The following pages are designed to help you enjoy a regular time alone with God. We have divided up the curriculum to help us grow wherever we are at in our relationship with God and in our knowledge of His Kingdom.

LEVELS: Since we are a Colorado church, we use skiing imagery to communicate the different levels of intensity and time involved in relating to God.

BEGINNER: If you are new in your relationship with God, we encourage you to try the exercises under this symbol:

INTERMEDIATE: If you have walked with God for some time and would like a little more challenge and more time involvement, try the exercises under this symbol:

ADVANCED: These exercises are for people who have walked with God for some time and display maturity in their relationship with Him.

These exercises provide a practical way to encounter God and His truth on a regular basis. There are no rules here. Please don’t hurry through the process. Slow meditation and memorization seems to soak in better than cramming.

Enjoy!
Day One

1. Take some time to praise the Lord for who He is and enjoy thanking Him for what He has done in your life lately.

2. Read and meditate on Acts 16: 9-40. What stands out to you in this passage?

3. As you read this passage, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you in any way He would like over the next 24 hours.

- Memorize Philippians 4: 8.


- Memorize Philippians 4: 4-9.

Day Five

*The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, “Don’t do it! We are all here!” ~Acts 16:27, 28, NLT*

The jailer knew that if anyone escaped his prison, his own government would shame him, possibly torture him, and finally execute him. After the earthquake, he saw that the dungeon was so devastated that certainly some of his inmates had escaped. He drew his sword to kill himself rather than put his family through the public humiliation of a trial and execution.

His response stands in direct contrast to that of Paul and Silas. They had endured horrible injustice and persecution, yet they were overflowing with worship... and hope. On the other hand, the jailer was filled with sorrow and hopelessness.

The jailer’s response to Paul was profound. What must I do to be saved? This is not a concern for his physical well being. Paul had just relieved his greatest concern by telling him that no one had escaped. The jailer’s question is spiritual in nature. He sees something in Paul and Silas that he envies. They have just been tortured unjustly and as a result, have sung praises from their cell and then refused to escape after the earthquake devastated the dungeon.

He wants what they have.

Paul’s answer is simple. *Believe in Jesus, and show your belief in Him with public baptism.* The man gladly received Jesus by faith.

*Father, fill me with the Holy Spirit.*
Day Five

1. Take some time to praise the Lord for who He is and enjoy thanking Him for what He has done in your life lately.

2. Meditate on Colossians 3: 1-2. Write down what you hear the Lord say to you through this short passage.

3. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you today in any way He would like to speak. Give Him permission to say things that you do not want to hear.

4. Finish your Bible memorization today.

Day One

On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we supposed that some people met for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had come together. One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying.

~Acts 16:13, 14, NLT

The fact that the disciples went to the river to a known place of prayer tells me that there probably wasn’t a synagogue in this area. This northern province of Greece, called Macedonia, consists of Greeks, but few or no Jews. Paul’s practice when entering a new city was to go to the local synagogue and speak with the Jews. The Jews were low hanging fruit for the apostles because they already had an understanding of the Old Testament. The reason they have come to this place of prayer is, again, to pick some low hanging fruit by talking with Gentiles who know the God of the Old Testament, but who have not yet heard of Jesus.

Paul and Silas come down to the river and land right in the middle of a ladies’ prayer meeting. One of the women was Lydia, a wealthy merchant from Philippi. How do I know she is wealthy? Well, it’s just a guess, but most scholars agree that purple cloth was sold almost exclusively to nobility and royals. Lydia was probably used to hobnobbing with the upper crust, and probably made a handsome profit from her sales.

I love how Paul describes her response to the message of the Gospel. She opened her heart and accepted what Paul was saying.

Father, I open up my heart and accept anything You wish to say to me today!
Day Two

1. Take some time to praise the Lord for who He is and enjoy thanking Him for what He has done in your life lately.

2. Read Acts 16: 9-40 again today.

3. When we read about the apostles in Philippi, we see that prayer is a regular part of their day. Is prayer a regular part of your day yet? If it is, write down what benefits you see because of it. If it is not, write down honest reasons why you think prayer is not important to you.

4. Paul saw the real spiritual issue in the slave girl. When you see people who trouble you, do you take time to look at the spiritual rather than at the physical?

5. Continue memorizing and meditating on the scriptures for this week.

Day Four

Trembling with fear, the jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down before Paul and Silas. He brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

~Acts 16:29, 30, NLT

Yesterday, we saw how Paul and Silas worshiped Jesus after being beaten and imprisoned. We saw how worship is the supernatural response of a spirit filled believer in the face of difficulty and persecution.

The world notices this kind of worship. It’s strange and otherworldly to them. How can someone be joyful in the face of difficulty? What motivates someone to be so worshipful in the midst of such misery?

Such worship is our greatest witness to the reality of Jesus. When I can worship in the midst of grief, misery, persecution, lack, and rejection, then the world takes notice.

Response to difficulty and persecution will take one of three directions.

1. I will worship Jesus wholeheartedly and passionately!

2. I will throw a pity party.

3. I will worship another god.

Sometimes, I just throw off my love for Jesus and throw a full blown pity party. This is evidenced by sulking, pouting, outbursts of anger, and a magnified sense of my hurt over a magnification of the King.

Finally, I can also find myself indulging in drugs, alcohol, pornography, work, or some other god to help medicate my pain.
Day Two

One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a demon-possessed slave girl. She was a fortune-teller who earned a lot of money for her masters. She followed along behind us shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved.”

~Acts 16:16, 17, NLT

This is one of those out of left field attacks from the enemy. Do you ever get those? I’ve decided Satan rarely attacks head-on. He usually surprises us with his nasty tricks.

Paul and the guys were headed to the place of prayer - minding their own business. Suddenly, a strange slave girl follows behind them shouting to everyone around. At first, her words are strangely helpful! She sounds like she is trying to help them spread the good news! Her words are true. Then Paul uses the discerning of spirits gift from the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12) and realizes that this girl is demonized!

The average American reading this story has got to be a little dubious, or even dumbfounded. Nothing like this happens in our present culture that even closely resembles this.

After some time, Paul casts the demon out of the girl. The spirit had enabled her to do her fortune-telling, and once he left her body, she was unable to practice her craft. Her handlers were furious. They could see the profits she had brought them flying out the window.

What happened next was horrendous. Read the story and see! When the Gospel is preached and Jesus’ disciples walk in power, there will be hardship, persecution, and difficulty... and revival!

Day Four

1. Take some time to praise the Lord for who He is and enjoy thanking Him for what He has done in your life lately.

2. Read Acts 16:9-40 again today. Write down what the Holy Spirit says to you through this passage today.

3. Write down in this space what you typically do when things go bad or things are hard.

4. Continue meditating on and memorizing the scripture for this week.
Day Three

1. Take some time to praise the Lord for who He is and enjoy thanking Him for what He has done in your life lately.

2. Meditate on Philippians 4:4-9 today. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through this passage.

3. Bring at least three friends or loved ones to the Lord and ask Him to bring them to repentance and faith. Ask Him to show you how you can boldly love them and speak the words of Jesus into their lives.

4. Continue meditating on and memorizing the scripture for this week.

A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn’t escape. So he took no chances but put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.

~Acts 16:22-25, NLT

Bad stuff happens to New Testament believers and what do they do? Sing. They sing praises to God!

Although Jesus Himself taught His disciples to rejoice when they were persecuted for His name’s sake, the worshipful response of the New Testament believers was not a cognitive response that came to them through adherence to Jesus’ teachings. What we see in these believers is something that wells up within them and overflows. They cannot help but worship when difficulty comes.

This is perhaps one of the greatest evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit. When bad things happen, the well within overflows and my worship erupts from my heart and my mouth. Many folks place much emphasis on the gift of tongues being the primary evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. I would place the greatest emphasis on these evidences: boldness and worship.

When the Holy Spirit fills me, I cannot help but talk about Him and sing to Him.