



## GETTING READY

### 1. Welcome/Opener

**What You Need:**

- Host
- Four Small Group Leaders
- Disposable painters coveralls
- Chocolate pudding pies in pie tins

*Music and Sound Effects (SFX):*

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room

*Large Group Visuals:*

- Theme Slide

*Optional Videos (available for purchase through the 252 Media Package):*

- Theme Loop Video
- Countdown Video
- Theme Video

**What You Do:**

- Wall Sit activity: Use the back wall of your stage or a wall near the front of the room. Preset a tarp on the floor and/or wall to protect it from getting too messy. Do not put down the chocolate pudding pies until volunteers are on stage and ready to play.
- Preselect your volunteers and explain how the game will work. Make sure they are fine with the possibility of getting messy. Have the coveralls available for them to wear for the opener. (*Note: requires some physical exertion*)

### 2. Communicator Script

**What You Need:**

- Communicator
- Bible
- Host
- Kid volunteer
- Two suitcases

- Megaphone or cone
- Gauze bandages
- Handcuffs or cardboard stocks

*Music and Sound Effects (SFX):*

- Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room
- Earthquake

*Large Group Visuals:*

- Map of Paul's second missionary journey
- Key Question Slide

**What You Do:**

- Download music from a resource such as iTunes® and have it ready to play. Download "Earthquake SFX" from the curriculum downloader. This file can be found in the folder labeled "1904\_SFX\_Preteen\_W2"
- Make old-fashioned stocks out of cardboard (big center hole for head, two small holes for hands).
- During the story there will be a simulated earthquake. Use lights and the earthquake SFX if possible for effect.

### **3. Worship**

**What You Need:**

- Every Beat
- Through It All

# I Won't Back Down

**Bible Story:** I Won't Back Down (Paul and Silas in Prison) • Acts 16:16-40

**Bottom Line:** You can choose joy when life gets hard.

**Key Question:** Why is it worth it to keep going?

**Memory Verse:** *But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.* Isaiah 40:31 (NIRV)

**Life App:** Perseverance—Refusing to give up when life gets hard

**Basic Truth:** I need to make the wise choice.

## **Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)**

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

**SFX:** Play high-energy music as kids enter.

**CG:** Theme Slide

**Optional Video (Media Package):** Theme Loop

**Optional Video (Media Package):** Countdown

**Optional Video (Media Package):** Theme

*Host enters.*

### **Welcome**

*Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sporting event, movie opening (Avengers 4, Aladdin), a viral video on YouTube®, or holiday (Mother's Day, International Tuba Day, Star Wars Day, Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day), etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.*

### **Opener**

**HOST:** "Hey, everyone! Great to see you today. Question for you: have you ever had a time when you had to endure through a physical activity of some sort? Like when I was a kid, we would do these endurance exercises to see who could last the longest . . . wow, those were tough! Any of you have to do those in PE class or anything? Yeah, so you know what I'm talking about. Well, I always thought that the wall-sit was the worst, most grueling of them all! Speaking of grueling, where are my volunteer Small Group Leaders?"

*Host brings four preselected leaders up on stage to participate.*

*(To volunteers)* "Have you all done the wall-sit before? You know what I'm talking about? Alright there is the wall right there . . ."

*Volunteers start toward the wall.*

"Oh! Wait one second. I almost forgot. This is not your typical wall sit. I'm going to need you to put these on."

*Host hands each volunteer coveralls.*

“Alright, come on over to the wall and find a spot. We’ll start with the typical wall sit. Back against the wall, then slide down until your legs reach a 90-degree angle. And go!”

*Host lets them sit there for a little bit.*

“Not too bad, eh? Oh, I forgot ANOTHER thing! How forgetful of me today.”

*Host brings out chocolate pudding pies and puts one directly under each volunteer.*

“Let’s call this motivation for perseverance. Alright, hands off legs! Everybody hands above heads!”

*Host lets them sit uncomfortably like that for a little bit.*

“I see we have some true perseverance here. Alright, let’s try this, one leg completely out straight in front of you!”

*At this point, most leaders should drop and fall into the pies. Provide commentary as they do and then declare a winner.*

“(After the game) Well done! Now, everyone, let’s stand and worship together!”

## **Announcements**

*Use this as an example of what to say. Make it your own and help the kids feel welcomed. Then take a moment to share any/all announcements.*

**HOST:** “I’m so excited to be here with all of you today and get a little crazy! If it’s your first time here, I want to welcome you and I would love to have a chance to meet you and get a high-five! Your group leaders are here almost every week... they’re pretty amazing. Here at Mission, we believe that this is a place for you and you belong here no matter who you are or what you believe. At the core of who we are as a church, we believe that **JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE!**”

“I have just a few announcements for you all today...”

*Share any/all announcements.*

“One of the things we do each week to help us focus on God is to sing... some of you will know the words to the songs, so we want you to shout and sing them out really loud. If you don’t know the words... they’ll be on the screen for you. Feel free to clap, jump, sing and shout along with us! The best part about this is the message of the song and how good God is! Let’s all stand up and sing together!”

*Worship Leaders enter. Host exits.*

## **Worship**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “Thank you, [Name of Host]. Let’s get up and get loud as we sing and dance for who God is and what he’s done for us!”

### **Every Beat**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “That was amazing! (*Take a moment to say something about the next song*). So let’s give everything we have and worship God together!

### **Through It All**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** *PRAY*

*Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.*

### **CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide**

## **COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT**

### **Introduction**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Good to see you all. May is already off to a great start! And speaking of May, my guess is many of you are already counting down the days until summer break. Be honest, who is counting?”

*Pause for responses.*

“A few of you. I knew it! I think we all look forward to summer break because, well, school can be tough! There are a lot of things that happen during the school year that require us to persevere, right? Maybe you’re studying for a test and you’re only halfway through the study guide . . . and you can hear the video games calling from the other room. Or maybe you started out really well on that science project but are so tired of papier-mâché volcanos that you’re tempted to call it quits before you’re really finished. Anyone know what I mean?”

### **TENSION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “But those are one thing, right? If you study for the test, you should get a decent grade. If you push through and finish your science fair project, you might win—or at least get a participation ribbon! But there are things that happen throughout our lives when we wonder if perseverance matters at all. Like even if we give our best effort, there really isn’t much to show for it. Maybe you persevere through a month of working on your running skills but still can’t break a seven-minute mile. Or you work really hard at math, but there are somethings you still wonder if you’ll ever understand. In those moments, do you ever wonder why it’s worth it to keep going? Wouldn’t it be better to just call it quits and stop the misery?”

### **TRUTH**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “I’m guessing that is a question we all might ask ourselves at some point. And when we have questions like those, the first place we should look is the Bible. Let’s start there today in the book of Acts.”

“Acts is the fifth book in the New Testament. You might know that the first four books of the New Testaments are the Gospels. They include the stories of how Jesus came, lived a perfect life, died, and rose again. They also tell us about the people Jesus chose as His disciples and the mission Jesus gave them to change the world. Well, a doctor by the name of Luke—the same Luke who wrote the Book of Luke—wrote Acts to tell people what happened with these followers after Jesus went back to heaven. You see Jesus gave them the incredible task of carrying His message to the ends of the earth. Everybody would know about Jesus because of Jesus’ followers!”

“One of those followers was a man named Paul. When Jesus got a hold of his life, Paul accepted the incredible task of carrying the message of Jesus all over the Roman Empire. And when I say all over, I mean all over! Check out this map showing some of Paul’s travels!”

**CG: Map of Paul’s second missionary journey**

“On one of his journeys, Paul was traveling with a friend and fellow follower of Jesus named Silas. One night, Paul had a vision that he should go to a region called Macedonia (*Point on map*). Believing this vision was from God, Paul left the next day for Macedonia.”

You know, before we go any further, I could use a little help. Can I have someone volunteer to be our Silas?”

*Communicator chooses volunteer.*

“Also, I’m going to ask [*Host’s name*] to come out and be Paul.”

*Host enters.*

“Alright, Paul and Silas, you both have a pretty long journey ahead of you. Here, I packed for you.”

*Communicator hands each a suitcase.*

“Now in the region of Macedonia, there was a very important city called Philippi. Philippi was a major trade city where people from all over the world would come to the marketplace. After his vision, Paul and Silas decided to head there and share the message of Jesus. Immediately they saw people start following Jesus, including a woman named Lydia who offered them a place to stay.”

“This is when things get a little bit . . . well . . . strange. One day while Paul and Silas were headed to a place to pray, they were followed by a servant girl. Now this wasn’t just any girl . . . we are told that she was controlled by a spirit that didn’t come from God. Today we might say she was possessed. And she began following Paul and Silas around shouting, “*These men serve the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved.*” (*Acts 16:17b, NIRV*)”

*Communicator mimics following Paul and Silas around, chanting this over and over in a megaphone.*

“Pretty annoying, huh? Well, more than just annoying, this is not really good for their mission. Now you might be saying, ‘What she is saying is true, though!’ You’re right. They *are* servants of God. And they *are* telling people how to be saved. But having a possessed girl as your spokesperson hurts the message a bit. It would be like having somebody outside a vegetarian restaurant trying to get people to come in and eat, all the while they are eating a burger. It is a bit confusing.”

“Anyhow, Paul finally turns around and commands the spirit to come out of the girl. She is freed! Great for the girl . . . but bad for the businessmen. See, there were some men who were making money off of the abilities she had because of the evil spirit, and Paul just ruined business. They dragged Paul and Silas (*grabbing volunteers*) and brought them before the judge, where the judge sentenced them to be thrown in prison. Before that, though, they were beaten with rods.”

“(To volunteers) Don’t worry, we’ll skip that part.”

*Communicator wraps both of them in gauze to symbolize the beating. Volunteers are seated and put in handcuffs/stocks.*

“Here it is so you can hear it for yourself. *(Read directly from Acts 16:23-24 NIV)* **‘They were whipped without mercy. Then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put Paul and Silas deep inside the prison. He fastened their feet so they couldn’t get away.’ Acts 16:23-24**

“Now, let’s stop for a second and recap. Why are Paul and Silas in Philippi in the first place?”

*Pause for responses.*

“Right, they are there to share the message of Jesus! They are there for God and His mission. Do you think they might feel a little frustrated . . . maybe, I don’t know . . . a little cheated? You might think they’d say something like, ‘God we’re here doing YOUR work, and now look at us?’ But they didn’t. That’s what makes the next part so strange. Check this out.”

“*(Read directly from Acts 16:25 NIV)* **‘About midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They were also singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening to them.’ Acts 16:25**

“Does that seem strange to anyone else? Here they are in prison having just been beaten . . . and they’re praying. And not only are they praying, but they’re . . . singing!”

*Communicator looks to volunteers to see if they will sing.*

“And what is the other key detail that the author includes? *(Pause for responses)* The other prisoners are LISTENING TO THEM.”

“And then all of the sudden . . . it happened.”

**SFX: Earthquake**  
**Lights: Blink on and off**

*During the sound cue, both volunteers should come out of their cuffs/stocks but stay where they are.*

“*(Read directly from Acts 16:26 NIV)* **‘Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom. All at once the prison doors flew open. Everyone’s chains came loose.’ Acts 16:26**

“When this happened, the jailer panicked, because he assumed the prisoners had all escaped. And he knew that he would most likely be executed because of it. But just as he was about to take his own life, Paul yelled out, *(Read directly from Acts 16:28 NIV)* **‘“Don’t harm yourself!” Paul shouted. “We are all here!”’ Acts 16:28**

*Communicator looks at Host until he or she repeats it.*

“*(Read directly from Acts 16:29-30 NIV)* **‘The jailer called out for some lights. He rushed in, shaking with fear. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out. He asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”’ Acts 16:29-30**

“What a powerful question. And what happens next is amazing. *(Read directly from Acts 16:31-34 NIRV)* **“They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and everyone living in your house will be saved.” They spoke the word of the Lord to him. They also spoke to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night, the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Right away he and everyone who lived with him were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house. He set a meal in front of them. He and everyone who lived with him were filled with joy. They had become believers in God.” Acts 16:31-34**

“Give our volunteers a hand!”

*Volunteers exit.*

## **APPLICATION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Now the next day the judge lets Paul and Silas go. They’re free, but if you ask them if they wish this had never happened, I bet they would tell you something pretty shocking. I bet they would say they were glad it happened. Glad to be beaten? Glad to be imprisoned? No. But think about why they were there. They were there to spread the message of Jesus. Did they do that? Absolutely . . . maybe even to people they normally wouldn’t have been able to reach. See, it said the entire prison was listening to Paul and Silas, watching them worship God even after being beaten. I’m sure that made an impression. And then when the earthquake happened, did you see whom the jailer went to? Paul and Silas. And they had the opportunity to introduce the jailer and his entire household, including his family and servants, to Jesus.”

“Let’s back up for a second and imagine Paul and Silas. They have just been beaten and thrown into prison. Now imagine them in their prison cell complaining and whining about how unfair it is or how this mission from Jesus is just too hard and they don’t want to do it anymore. Would that have changed things? It sure would have. But because they were willing to keep going, even when it got really difficult, there was a huge payoff in the end: many people put their faith in Jesus.”

“I’m guessing from time to time you all find yourselves in spots where you’re wondering if it is worth it. It doesn’t have to be big things like prisons and earthquakes. Maybe you have put in long hours of practice for that dance recital and you are starting to wonder if it is worth it. Or maybe you have been practicing really hard but you are still not getting the playing time you were hoping for. Or maybe you have been sticking around in a friendship that has gotten really difficult. Or it might be what we started with . . . hanging in there until summer break and not checking out early. There are a lot of opportunities for us to show perseverance . . . to hang in there and keep going.”

## **LANDING**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “As we head to Small Group today, ask yourself this question:”

*CG: Key Question Slide*

**“Why is it worth it to keep going?”** First, think about some of the times when you find it difficult to hang in there. Then start to identify why it might be worth it to keep going in that situation. But don’t worry if you can’t think of something off the top of your head. You’ll talk all about it together during Small Group. But before we head out, let’s pray and thank God that He can give us the strength to keep going, even when life gets hard.”

*Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.*

*SFX: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.*

*Optional Video (Media Package): Theme*