



## God Speaks

**Bible Passage: Acts 16:6–15**

(Lydia and Philippi)

### REMEMBER VERSE

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

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### EXPLORE// 10 min.

## Activity: Listen to Me

### SUPPLIES

- Blindfolds (at least 2)
- Safe objects found around your house to use to create an obstacle course (suggestions: small pillows, cardboard boxes, stuffed animals, etc.)

### SET UP

Use the objects to create an obstacle course in the room. You might set up boxes to walk around, create tape lines on the floor to follow, or set out pillows to step on. Be sure nothing in the course would harm the kids if they bumped into it while blindfolded.

### RELATE

**When Paul and his friends set out to tell people the good news about Jesus, God spoke to them and gave them special directions about where to go. Sometimes this meant they had to turn around and go in a different direction! But as they followed God's Spirit, they went in the right direction.**

Encourage the children to pair up and work together to get through the obstacle course. Within each pair, one child will be blindfolded, and the other child will guide her through the course. The blindfolded child will need to listen closely to her partner's instructions! board games. **Why was it important to listen carefully to what your partner was saying? What would have happened if you hadn't listened to your partner?**

### DISCOVER// 30 min.

## Traditions and Remember Verse

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

**So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**

Isaiah 41:10



## Connect

### Question

What was the most important thing you heard this week?

## The Big God Story

### Ponder Point: God Speaks

Bible Passage: Acts 16:6–15

Supplies:

Bible

Map of Paul's Journey to Philippi

### RELATE

Have you ever answered the phone to hear your mom or dad on the other end? They probably didn't have to tell you who they were because you already knew their voices. God desires for us to have this kind of relationship with Him—a relationship in which we recognize His voice. God speaks, and He wants us to listen as He guides and directs us! Let's ask God to speak to us during our time together. *Lead kids in Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.*

In today's part of The Big God Story, the Holy Spirit led a man named Paul, who was traveling with some other followers of Jesus. Paul and the other men were traveling just to tell people the good news about Jesus. They started here at Syrian Antioch (point out on map) and travelled north and west, stopping in every town where there was a church.

As Paul and his friends traveled, they paid close attention to the Holy Spirit so they could go exactly where God wanted them to go. **God speaks!** Point to children and prompt them to say, "We're listening, Lord!"

In our story today, Paul wanted to go north and east into Asia. (Point out on map.) Let's see what the Bible says happened. Read aloud Acts 16:6b. **God the Holy Spirit spoke to them. God let them know it was not the right time to go east into Asia.**

Next they tried to go west to the area around Mysia. Point out Mysia on the map. Invite kids to follow along as you read Acts 16:7c. **The "Spirit of Jesus would not allow them" to go west toward Mysia. God let them know it was not the right time to go west toward Mysia.**

So let's see. Paul and his friends have come from the south. God has told them not to go east and not to go west. **Where can they go?** Allow responses. **Yes, they can go north. So that is what they did. They went north to the town of Troas (TRO-ahs) and stopped there to spend the night. That night, God spoke to Paul in a dream.** Read Acts 16:8–9 as kids follow along.

Invite the children to follow along as you read Acts 16:10. **Wow! Because of the dream God sent, Paul knew God wanted them to go to Macedonia.** (Point out on map.) **This is important. Does the Bible say God's Spirit used words to tell Paul to go to Macedonia?** Invite responses. **No! The Bible says the Holy Spirit gave Paul a dream.**

Did you know God still speaks to us through dreams? So how do we know if a dream is from God and not just a dream? Hold up Bible. **We make sure the dream tells us to do something the Bible would tell us to do. The Bible would never tell us to lie or cheat or be mean. And a dream that is really from God won't do any of those things either.**



After that dream, Paul and his friends knew where God wanted them to go. So they sailed from Troas to Macedonia and went to the city of Philippi. (Point out Paul's route on map.) Today this city is in the country of Greece. Philippi was a very important city at that time. It was the main city in its region. Parts of its important buildings are still standing and tourists go to visit.

After Paul and his friends had been in Philippi for a few days, it was the Sabbath day. Have volunteer read Acts 16:13. Instead of finding a group of Jewish men, they found a group of women who had met to worship God. Paul and his friends told the women about Jesus. God spoke to those women through what Paul said.

Have a volunteer read Acts 16:14. Purple cloth was very valuable. To make purple cloth in that day, people caught a specific kind of sea snail, called "murex" and crushed their shells to get a purple dye for cloth. It took a lot of murex shells to make just a little dye, so purple cloth was very expensive. Lydia sold this expensive purple cloth.

We just read that as Lydia listened to Paul speak about Jesus, God opened her heart to respond to Paul's message, and she came to trust in Jesus as her Savior. Let's look at the map again. Where was Lydia's town located? Invite responses. Thyatira is south of Mysia. It was right in the area where God had told Paul and his friends not to share the good news about Jesus. But God made sure Lydia was in Philippi so she could hear about Jesus, and the Holy Spirit opened her heart to believe in Him. God knew exactly where to send both Paul and Lydia. Invite the children to follow along as you read Acts 16:15.

After Paul left Philippi to follow the Holy Spirit to other places, Lydia and the people of her household and other new believers formed the church in Philippi. And we know from Paul's letters to the Philippian church—which we can read in the book of Philippians in the New Testament—that this church was loving, caring, giving, and joyful. They often sent gifts to Paul and encouraged him in his ministry.

Throughout this part of The Big God Story, we can see how God actively led Paul and his friends to certain places and certain people. They simply needed to be willing to listen to Him. God speaks in many different ways! God spoke to Paul hundreds of years ago, and He speaks to us today. After we accept Jesus as our Savior, we can listen for His voice and trust Him to lead us. Just as God did great things through Paul, He can do great things through us! Share a personal story of a time God spoke to you and led you to do something.

## Discussion & Activities

Review the story with your children. Use the image on the next page to review the story in creative and unique ways that you know your child will enjoy. Use a Bible to read this story straight from God's Word as you review it. Encourage your reading-age children to practice using their own Bibles!



## WHEN I READ THE BIBLE, I CAN...



**RESPOND// 15 min.**

**Reflect: God Speaks**

Encourage kids to open their Bibles and read the suggested passages on page 5.



## Questions

- **Why didn't Paul and his friends go to Asia?** Acts 16:6–7 *(The Holy Spirit prevented them from going there)*
- **How did God speak to Paul?** Acts 16:9–10 *(in a vision or dream)*
- **What was the city of Philippi like?** Acts 16:12 *(a major city, a Roman colony)*
- **When Paul went to the river to pray, what did he find there?** Acts 16:13 *(Some women who were gathering there)*
- **How did Paul share the good news with Lydia?** Acts 16:13–14 *(He began telling her about Jesus)*
- **What are some ways we can hear God speak to us?** Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 19:20; Acts 16:9–10; Romans 13:1; 1 Corinthians 12:4,8; James 1:5 *(When we read the Bible; Through our pastors; He might direct us through a thought in our own minds, or he might speak to us through what others are saying to us; Through a vision or dream)*
- **How does God speak to us through the Holy Spirit?** John 14:25–26; 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9–13; 12:4,18; Ephesians 3:3–5 *(He guides/directs us; tells us about the future through His Word; The Holy Spirit speaks to our spirits revealing His truth; through the gifts He gives us. He revealed Himself the prophets and apostles)*
- **Has God spoken to you before? If so, tell us about it.**

## BLESS// 5 min.

### RELATE

Invite the children to gather in a circle around you and cup their hands behind their ears as you read today's blessing from Isaiah 30:21:

**Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."**

Then bless the group with these words:

**May you be filled with the Holy Spirit. May you hear God when He speaks to you, and may you respond in obedience. May you walk in His ways this week.**

