

## The Earth Shakes

### You will need

Whatever you have at hand for the children to hit/bang and make a noise, e.g. drums, saucepans, sticks, or pat knees or the floor with hands.

Before you start the story, practise some of the noises the children will make to accompany the narration.

Stop Sign – agree a sign which means stop e.g. hand up with flat palm facing children. Tell the children when they see the sign they must stop right away.

Earthquake – fast, continuous drumbeat starting quiet and then getting louder and louder. [Give the children a chance to practice using their drums to make the noise of the earthquake, and practice the stop signal too!]

Prison door – one single big bang [try to do it altogether]

Creepy crawlies in the prison – very gentle fast tapping on drum or knees

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Paul and Silas were innocent but had been arrested and thrown into prison without a trial. The cell door shut with a might bang! **[one big bang]**

The prison was cold, dark, damp prison. It stank in there and I bet there were spiders and rats crawling about the place **[tap your finger on the top of the drum like things crawling]**.

How would you feel if you were in that cold, dark, damp, smelly prison and you hadn't done anything wrong? Angry? Sorry for yourself? Scared?

Well, Paul and Silas weren't scared, they weren't arguing with one another, they weren't angry. Why? Because they trusted God and they knew that God was with them. So they sang loud songs of praise to God. They sang so loudly that the prisoners in the other cells of the prison heard them loud and clear and the jailer heard them too. **[Sing a song with rhythm e.g. God is good]**

As they sat there, with their feet in stocks, unable to move anywhere, something incredible happened. It began with a gentle rumble and then everything around them began to shake, the floor beneath them trembled and the doors of the prison shook. Can you guess what it was? It began softly.... **[Direct the children to begin playing instruments quietly and gradually get louder and louder making sure they know when to stop]**

And then gradually it got a little bit louder, and the prison shook a little bit more. And still it got a little louder and the prison shook a little more. And then the earthquake got really loud and shook and shook and shook until finally... it stopped! **[1-2-3- Stop simultaneously for dramatic effect]**

Paul and Silas looked around them through the dust. The prison walls had cracked and shifted, and the door of the cells had been flung open with a mighty bang! **[One big bang]** What's more, their feet had been freed from the stocks they were trapped in.

The jailer woke up and seeing that all the doors of the prison were lying wide open, he assumed all of the prisoners had escaped. He knew this was the end for him because the law said if prisoners escaped, the jailer would die in their place. He reached for his sword and was about to kill himself...

'STOP!' **[One big bang]** shouted Paul. 'All of the prisoners are still here. None of us have escaped.' Paul was right. None of the prisoners had escaped. How very strange? Why had none of the prisoners escaped? Hearing that everyone was still there and realising that there was something special about Paul and Silas, the jailer asked them... 'What can I do to be saved?' Paul and Silas told him, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved.'

The jailer jumped to his feet and invited Paul and Silas to his home to meet his family. There all his household believed and were baptised. He then gave them a meal and took them back to the prison and because Paul and Silas believed that God would work it all out, they went.

The very next morning the jailer was given the order to release Paul and Silas. They were free to go. And so they went and met with their friends. They told them all about what had happened, and they all praised God together. **[Sing a song and play your drums to praise God]**