

Lesson 8 / July 20, 2008

# Saving People, One Grain of Rice at a Time?

for use as

STEP 1

**Lesson 8**  
**Focus:**

Jesus changes lives.

**Lesson 8**  
**Bible Basis:**

Acts 16:25-34

This lesson explores both big and small changes Jesus is able to make in our lives when we believe in Him.

**E**arlier this month, authorities in Colombia, South America, rescued 15 hostages that had been held in the jungle for six years. These 15 people had been kidnapped by rebel forces that were fighting against the Colombian government. The hostages were treated brutally throughout their imprisonment. The most famous hostage of the group was Ingrid Betancourt. At the time of her kidnapping, she was campaigning to be the president of Colombia. Three of the hostages were Americans who were working in Colombia.

The hostages were rescued by members of the Colombian army, but they were only able to do so after one of the kidnappers decided to cooperate with those planning the rescue. This man convinced the head kidnapper that the hostages needed to be moved to another location in the jungle. Helicopters came to take the prisoners to the new location. Then once the hostages and their kidnappers were on board and the helicopter took off, the kidnappers were overwhelmed by army soldiers and tied up. It was only then that the hostages realized that they had been saved and were actually on their way to freedom.

After she was released, Ingrid Betancourt said, "Please join me in thanking God. I prayed so much . . . First, thanks to God. Second, all those who supported me with your prayers, who thought about me, who had me in your hearts even for a moment."

Discuss:

- **What do you think the hostages felt at the moment they first realized they had been saved?**
- **Ingrid Betancourt clearly had faith in God to help her get through her years in captivity. Do you think she was able to keep her faith strong for the entire six years, or do you think she would have had times of doubt and despair? Explain your answer.**
- **What things do you think you would do to keep your faith strong if you were in her place?**

Lesson 8  
Memory  
Verse

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saved.

—Acts 16:31

- **Why do you think the one kidnapper (we don't know his name) decided to cooperate with the people planning the rescue?**
- **Would it surprise you to know that this kidnapper has not been arrested and may receive a reward? What do you think about that?**

Today's Bible story is every bit as thrilling as the daring rescue of Ingrid Betancourt and the other hostages in Colombia. Let's find out what happens to Paul and Silas when they are in jail for preaching about Jesus. You'll see how Paul and Silas aren't the only ones who are saved. Let's see what happens to the jailer.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Upper Elementary Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

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For more information on the rescue of Ingrid Betancourt and the other hostages, see

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7486896.stm> and the related links at that site.

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# Saving People, One Grain of Rice at a Time?

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STEP 4

Lesson 8

Focus:

Jesus changes lives.

Lesson 8

Bible Basis:

Acts 16:25-34

## Supplies needed:

- if available, computer with Internet connection. If unavailable, you might want to print some information from [www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com)
- individual bags of rice with 20 grains in each bag – one for each student

**D**iscuss:

**Have any of you played the game at [freerice.com](http://freerice.com)? (If so, have that student describe the site. You can also tell them the following: FreeRice was started by an ordinary guy, a computer programmer from Indiana. He wanted to create a site that was fun but not a waste of time. He also wanted to educate people about the issues of poverty and hunger. So he created a website that quizzes visitors on vocabulary. For every question that is answered correctly, 20 grains of rice are donated to the World Food Program, an agency of the United Nations. The rice is donated by companies that advertise on the website.**

- In countries where the World Food Program gives away rice, they give enough rice for two meals a day. The rice is meant to go with other ingredients to give people enough nutrition for their day. How many grains of rice would you guess the World Food Program usually gives per day per person? (400 grams of rice x 48 grains in a gram = 192,000 grains.)**
- How much difference do you think 20 grains of rice can make?**
- FreeRice has been around for less than 10 months. How much rice do you think has been contributed as a result of people visiting the site? (Answer: through July 12, almost 39 billion grains)**
- How many people do you think this rice was able to feed? (According to the site, in the first five months, more than one million people were fed.)**
- What do you think about FreeRice and similar websites?**

FreeRice changes people's lives in a way that seems slow, only 20 grains of rice at a time. Yet those grains have added up to a huge change for hungry people in the world. Jesus sometimes works in big ways to save people. These people might experience a dramatic change in their lives when they let Jesus into their lives. It might be something almost as dramatic as the rescue of

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Ingrid Betancourt and the other hostages in Colombia. But most of the time Jesus works on us in less obvious ways that only add up to bigger changes over time, just like 20 grains of rice eventually turns into billions and billions of grains. Maybe you have been praying for help so that you won't fight so much with your sister or brother, and today you'll be able to resist getting into a fight. It doesn't suddenly mean you'll never want to fight with them again. Instead, Jesus can help us again and again, as long as we believe in Him.

Discuss:

- **What ways would you like Jesus to help you bring about changes in your life?** (*Students may share or not, as they feel appropriate.*)
- **What small steps can you take this week to help others with a problem?**

I have a bag of rice for each of you. The bags each have 20 grains of rice. (Alternatively, hand out empty bags, and let your students each count out the 20 grains themselves, thinking about how small steps can add up to big things.) **Keep this rice in a place where you will see it every day this week. Let it remind you that Jesus can help us both in big ways and small ways. Use it to remind yourself that Jesus changes lives, just because we obediently believe in Him. Let the rice also remind you that you don't always have to spend a lot of money or be a powerful or famous person to help others. Sometimes we are able to be a big help by the small things that we do.**

Close in prayer.

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For information on the FreeRice website, see

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/01/AR2007110102111.html>

<http://www.freerice.com/index.php>

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