



TRINIDAD | April 5

SAPPHIRE GOES TO JAIL

This young girl in Trinidad is not afraid of jail.

Sapphire lives on the island of Trinidad in the Caribbean [*locate Trinidad on a map*]. She's 11 years old, but already she has spent a lot of time in jail! Sapphire isn't a criminal; she goes to jail to share God's love with prisoners there.

FAST FACTS

- The island of Trinidad lies just a few miles from the coast of South America.

About half of the people who live in Trinidad are of African descent; the other half are of East Indian descent.

- About 52,600 Adventists live in Trinidad. That means there is one Adventist for every 24 people. Adventists are the largest Protestant denomination on the island.

Family Affair

"My family has been going to prisons to tell people about God since before I was born," Sapphire says. "The prisons here allow children to visit the prisons with their parents, and I've been coming for as long as I can remember." Sapphire started taking part in the programs when she was 5 years old. Sapphire isn't the only child going to the prison. Some 20 young people from age 7 to teenagers regularly visit the prisons.

And what does Sapphire do when she goes to prison? "We put on programs for the inmates," she says. "And we children learn parts of a sermon and present it. Some of us sing special songs, and we tell the prisoners what God is doing in our lives. We want them to know that God can do the same things for them."

Sapphire started her ministry by singing and reciting Bible texts. Then she started telling

mission stories. When she was just 6 or 7, she started learning parts of sermons to present.

“I love going to the prison!” Sapphire says. “I love telling the prisoners about God. They really listen when we children speak.”

Sapphire and other members of the prison ministries team put on programs at several prisons for men, women, and teenagers.

Prison Ministries Church

Many people have learned to love God because of the prison ministries program in Trinidad. And when prisoners leave the prison, they find a welcome church home in the Prison Ministries Church. Most of the members of this church are former prisoners or family members of prisoners. The leaders of the church are former prisoners, and even the pastor is a former prisoner!

Sapphire and her family visit the Prison Ministries Church once every three months to put on a special program. “These people are special to me, like aunts and uncles,” Sapphire says.

The prison ministries youth do more than just visit the prisons. They use their own money to provide things prisoners need, such as soap, toothpaste, and clothes. They also collect clothing for the prisoners.

Open-Air Ministry

Sapphire and her friends also take part in a street ministry. Two or three times a month they hold open-air programs in town. The adults arrange a place to hold the meeting, on a street corner or in a community area. The

young people come and sing and preach and tell the people what God has done for them. Then the former prisoners tell how God has changed their lives. Many people—sometimes 200 or more—stop and listen. People are touched by the meetings, and some give money to help with the prison ministries.

When she was younger, Sapphire sang or recited Bible texts. Now she preaches sermons that she has memorized.

“Once the owners of some gambling and music clubs invited us to hold an open-air program in front of their clubs,” said Sapphire. “They cleaned up the area, turned off their loud music, and even came out and listened to us preach. These are the kind of people we need to reach, so we are happy that they want us to come.

The young people hold meetings once or twice a month all around the island of Trinidad. And when they went to the nearby island of Tobago [toh-BAY-goh], they held three open-air meetings in one weekend.

“Some of the children who help put on the open-air programs are children of prison inmates,” Sapphire says. “We want to help these children know that we love them and want them to be part of our group. We are glad that we can help them know that God loves them.”

“I love doing prison ministries and open-air programs,” Sapphire says. “I want to keep doing it till Jesus tells me to stop.”

Boys and girls, Sapphire and her friends are real missionaries for Jesus. What can you do this week to be a missionary for Jesus? *[Ask class members to suggest ways they can be missionaries this week.]* 🌍

Begin teaching the song on page 30.