

Lydia Shares Her Home

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- two shades of purple construction paper
- glue
- scissors



Scriptures

Acts 16:10-15

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God is powerful and can perform miracles

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify ways to repay God's love and grace

Memory Verse

"Come to my house and stay." (Acts 16:15)



Bible Knowledge

Philippi

The city of Philippi is located in northeastern Greece (Macedonia). The city was already an ancient one by the time Paul arrived there around 49 AD (Acts 16:11-40). In 168 BC, Philippi became part of the Roman Empire when the latter defeated the Persians at the battle of Pydna. However, it was still an important land route across Asia.

Paul first visited Philippi on his second missionary journey. On the Sabbath, he went to a prayer meeting on the river bank. When he spoke, Lydia and the others who had gathered there opened their hearts to the Lord (Acts 16:13-15). It was Paul's custom to visit the synagogue when he first entered a city. The fact that he did not, but went to preach at the river bank, shows that Philippi did not have one. Later on, the first church was established there and he wrote a letter to them to encourage the believers (Php 1:1).

Lydia

Paul is told in a vision to go to Macedonia. Lydia welcomes him once he is there and asks him to baptize the people in her household. This is traditionally viewed as Christianity's first successful foothold in Europe. It's Lydia's hospitality, respectability, and openness to the good news that makes this possible.

Lydia was originally from Thyatira, a province of Asia Minor, but was a resident in Philippi when the apostle Paul traveled there. Although she is mentioned only briefly in the Scriptures, she holds a prominent place in Bible history. She is the first recorded Christian in Europe converted by Paul, and her home became the place where the subsequent first church in Europe gathered to worship.

Lydia was a wealthy woman. The purple dye that Lydia sold was extracted from a shellfish and was a very expensive commodity.



Understanding Your Students

Your four- and five-year-olds may not have the natural tendency to share. But once they have made an effort to share and see that their actions make everyone happy, they will quickly learn that sharing is a good thing to do.

In order to build a classroom with an atmosphere of sharing, you can provide the students with opportunities to share. Initiate group projects for the students. Talk about the importance of sharing items such as scissors, crayons, and other supplies before the activity begins. Discuss how they would feel if they shared and how they might feel if others did not share with them.

During the group projects, provide a tub of sup-

plies where the students will need to share. During the activities, point out specific students whom you have observed sharing. Discuss what you heard, and what you saw to help the students model the correct behaviors. You could also acknowledge the good deeds with a written message for your students to bring home and cherish. Young children enjoy praise. You could consider implementing a "Good News Note" program. Whenever you catch a student doing something worth praising, write down their action with a permanent marker on a long piece of masking tape. Then tape the "Good News" across their body, over their shirt. For example, you could write, "Shannon shared her crayons," or "Brian listened quietly." The students will be proud to show off their good behavior to everyone in the church.



Vocabulary

Vision

to have a special dream from God

Missionary

someone who travels to different places to preach

Dye

a way to color or stain materials



Before You Teach

The early Christians shared what they had and in doing so, they enjoyed blessings that God bestowed upon them. Why did it seem so easy for them to just share what they had? Why were they able to sell their belongings, even their precious lands, and pour their offerings into the church? Most likely, they felt the love of God and followed through with their actions. In today's society, it is tempting, especially if we have material wealth, to cut ourselves off from one another and take care of our own interests. After all, we are taught to look out for ourselves first. Even if we do share, it is not always what we have, but what we have left over.

Lydia, being one with much wealth, did not hold back from helping others with what she had. She realized that her wealth was actually a great blessing from God. Therefore, she fervently helped

with the church work by opening her home to host holy workers and worship services.

Lydia's example encourages us to think about our own role of service in Christ. Being a part of God's spiritual family, it is our responsibility to help one another in every way possible. It could be financial assistance if we are able, or it could be as simple as offering a ride to someone who doesn't drive. Every act of kindness and generosity reflects our faith in Christ.

It is our hope that one day our Lord will say to us, "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to Me... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, My brethren, you did it to Me" (Mt 25:35, 36, 40).



Bible Story

Greet each of your students as they walk into the classroom. As you greet them, give each of them a small, folded piece of paper that says "share" on it (or you may wish to draw some pictures to represent sharing; please prepare these materials ahead of time). Have the students sit down, and ask them what the paper says. Encourage them to tell you what it means to share with others. (Allow time for the students to respond.)

Sharing is when you are willing to take what you have and invite other people to enjoy it with you. For example, you can share your favorite toy with your friends, share a good book with someone, or share your tasty snack with others. How do you think you will feel when you share your things with other people? (Let them respond.) It makes me feel really happy when I share with others. I think you will feel good when you share your things, too. Our Bible story today is about a woman named Lydia who was loving and willing to share what she had with others.

Paul Has a Dream

In our last few lessons, we learned about the early church. Many people came to believe in Jesus, and were baptized. The church was growing. The apostles and other workers continued to travel to more places so that more people could hear about Jesus. One of the workers was called Paul. We learned in our last lesson that he was a missionary. That means he traveled to different places to preach. One place he visited was Lystra. That's where he met Timothy. Later on, he invited Timothy to travel and work with him.

As Paul, Timothy, and another worker traveled to different places, God was with them. He opened the hearts of many people and they came to believe. But there were times when God told them not to travel to certain places because it was not safe. Paul, Timothy, and the other worker listened to God's Spirit and only went where God wanted them to go.

One night, when Paul was in a city called Troas, he dreamed that a man from Macedonia appeared to him.

The man stood there and begged him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

After Paul saw this vision, he knew that it must

be a message from God. It was a special dream from God. Paul told the other workers and they agreed that it was God's calling. The Lord wanted them to go to Macedonia.

Paul Travels to Macedonia

They got ready and left for Macedonia (you may wish to show a map to help the students have a visual picture of how far it was from Troas to Philippi in Macedonia). It was a long trip, and they had to travel by ship. After many days of traveling, they finally arrived at Philippi, which was the largest city in Macedonia. There were different kinds of people in this city. Some of them believed in gods that were not true. But there were also some who worshiped the true God.

Paul and the workers stayed in Philippi for several days. Then they heard that a group of people met by the river to worship on the Sabbath day. So they went outside the city gate to the meeting place. They found the people by the river bank. These people worshiped God, but they did not know about Jesus yet. So Paul sat down and began to tell them the good news about Jesus and how He died to save them. Among them was a woman named Lydia.

Lydia Hears the Words of God

Lydia sold purple cloth. Purple cloth was very expensive because it was very difficult to make. The dye for the cloth came from a shellfish. It took a lot of work to catch enough shellfish to dye even one piece of clothing. Everyone in the city knew that Lydia was very good at making this purple cloth. She had her own house and was probably rich.

As Paul preached, the Lord opened Lydia's heart to accept Jesus as her Savior. She was touched by Paul's teachings. She and the members of her household were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Lydia Invites Paul to Stay in Her House

Lydia thanked God that Paul and the workers told her about Jesus. She wanted to offer her home as a place for Paul and his friends to stay.

She invited them by saying, "Come and stay at my house."

They followed Lydia, and stayed at her house while they were doing God's work in Philippi. After that day at the river bank, many more people came

to believe and were baptized. The new brothers and sisters in the city began to have regular worship services at Lydia's home later on. Lydia showed her love by sharing a lot of things with the members. They were just like a big family.

We Can Share

Lydia learned that Jesus loved her. She wanted to show Jesus how much she loved Him by sharing her home. She let the believers use her house like a church. Because she had more money, it was probably bigger. She also showed her love by inviting God's workers like Paul to stay with her. Lydia was kind and liked to share things.

What kinds of things can you share? (Write down the students' ideas on the board. Give each of them a piece of construction paper that is pre-cut into a house shape. Please also have crayons available for them.)

We learned from today's story that we should

love each other and share what we have, because God has loved us first. The best place to practice loving others would be in our homes and in the church. Each of you has a house (point to the pre-cut construction paper) that represents your home or the church. Take a few minutes to think about how you can show your love to your family members or to the church members. What are some of the things you can share with them? We already have several sharing ideas listed on the board. When you know what you can share, you may begin drawing it on the paper. First, you need to draw the people you are going to share with. Then draw the things that you will share. (After this quick craft activity, you can invite the students to share their drawings. You can also hold them accountable by asking them to actually put their drawings into action in the coming week.)



Check For Understanding

1. **Who had a dream one night that told him to go to Macedonia?** (Paul.)
2. **Who was especially touched by Paul's teachings at the river bank?** (A woman called Lydia.)
3. **What did Lydia do for a living?** (Lydia sold purple cloth.)
4. **Who got baptized after hearing Paul's**

preaching? (Lydia and her entire household got baptized.)

5. **What did Lydia ask Paul and his friends when God opened her heart?** (She invited Paul and his friends to stay at her house.)
6. **What else did Lydia do for the new believers in Philippi?** (She let them use her house as a meeting place to worship God.)
7. **What did we learn from Lydia?** (Allow students to share. She taught us to share and show kindness.)



Life Application Story

Learning to Share

Juan was excited. He was going on a church field trip to the zoo. His church teachers and some of the parents had planned this outing for the students, to show them God's wonderful creations. Juan had been waiting for this day to come. His older brother, Ricky, was coming too. He was going to help the younger children. Mr. and Mrs. Lopez couldn't go

because they had to go a friend's wedding that same afternoon. Mrs. Lopez reminded Ricky to be a good big brother and take care of Juan. Ricky reassured his mom that he would take good care of Juan. Before they headed out, Mrs. Lopez made sure that she packed enough food and snacks for the boys.

As they rode in the van, Juan couldn't help but ask a lot of questions.

"Do you think they will have lions and giraffes?" he asked.

"I am sure they will," Ricky replied.

"What about hippos? I really want to see them," Juan said.

"Juan, I am sure you will see all the animals you want to," Ricky said, hoping to get Juan to stop asking so many questions.

Soon, they arrived at the zoo. After explaining the rules, Juan, Ricky, and the others were off. Juan had a lot of fun looking at all the different animals. All the children were amazed by how smart and mighty God is. Only God could create all these beautiful animals.

After visiting several sections of the zoo, it was time for them to have lunch. Ricky and Juan followed their group to a lunch area. They were hungry after all the walking. They both opened up their lunch bags, and started eating the delicious sandwiches that their mom had prepared for them. Juan was so hungry that he finished his sandwich in no time. He also ate his bag of chips, a banana, and a piece of fruit gummy. When his lunch box was empty, he still felt hungry. He looked over at Ricky and saw that his brother hadn't even gotten to his fruit or chips yet. He kept staring at Ricky's food. He didn't know why he felt so hungry.

Ricky, who was sitting right next to Juan, didn't even notice his brother staring at his food. He was talking to one of the teachers sitting across from him. As he put the last bite of bread into his mouth, he reached over to the bag of chips, which he had saved for last. As he opened the bag, he looked over at his brother.

"Are you okay, Juan? Why are you looking at me like that?"

"I'm still hungry, Ricky," Juan replied.

"But I thought you already ate all your food. You shouldn't be hungry anymore, Juan," Ricky said.

"But I am still hungry," said Juan.

Ricky looked at his bag of chips. He didn't really want to share them with anyone. It was his favorite

flavor. He wanted to enjoy every chip by himself. Then he remembered what his mom had asked him to do before they left the house. He was supposed to take care of Juan. After thinking about it for a moment, Ricky decided that it was only right for him to share his food with his little brother. So he reached into the bag and handed a bunch of chips to Juan. Juan's eyes lit up.

"Are you really going to share your chips with me?" Juan asked, as he put the chips on a napkin.

"Yes, Juan, you can eat them. I'll share them with you because you are my brother," Ricky said with a big smile on his face.

Even though Ricky really wanted to eat the chips all by himself, he knew that it would make God happy when he took care of his brother. And he knew it made Juan happy. He saw how his brother enjoyed each chip.

As Juan munched on the chips, he suddenly realized how much his brother loved him. He knew it would have been hard for him to give up his chips. Maybe he might have given one or two, but not a whole handful

"What a great brother I have," Juan thought to himself. "The next time we go out, I am going to make sure I share my chips with him "

Questions to Think About

1. **What did Mrs. Lopez remind Ricky to do before they left home?** (Mrs. Lopez wanted Ricky to be a good brother and take care of Juan.)
2. **If you were Ricky, would you share your chips?** (Students' answers may vary.)
3. **What is hard for you to share? How can you learn to share your things?** (Students' answers may vary.)
4. **What kinds of things can you share with others?** (Students' answers may vary.)



Activity 1

Lydia Loves Jesus

Complete the sentences by circling the right answers.

1. Lydia sold bread.

2. Lydia became very sick.
3. Lydia shared her home.
4. Lydia loved the church.



Activity 2

Repaying God's Love

Brainstorm with the students ways they can repay God's love (e.g. loving God, helping parents, going to church, etc). Once the ideas are written or drawn on the board, have the students sit in a circle. Have a small stuffed toy ready. Explain that the toy will be passed around the circle, so that each student will have a chance to share. The person who is holding the toy will say one thing they can do to repay God's love. Make sure each student has a chance to say something out loud to verbalize their thoughts. Then challenge the students to follow through with concrete actions in the coming weeks.

To make the game more challenging, music can be played as the students pass the toy around. When the music stops, whoever is holding the toy must be the one to share their act.



Activity 3

Purple Weave

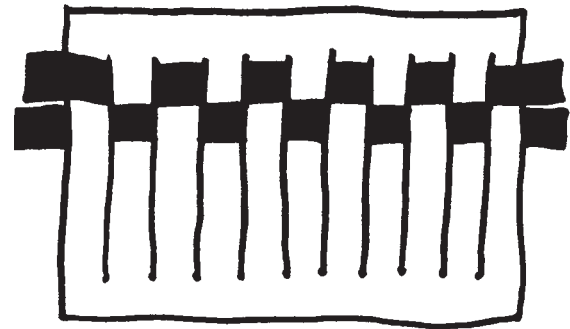
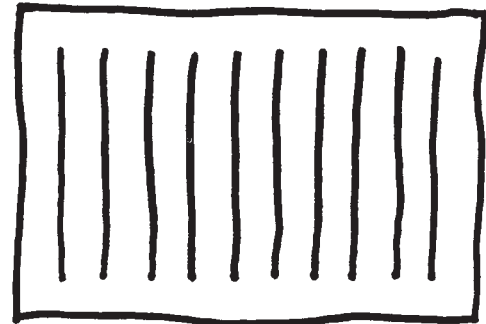
Materials:

1. two shades of purple construction paper
2. glue
3. scissors

Directions:

1. Precut one color of the purple construction paper, one per student. Cut slits across paper, approximately one inch apart, leaving a one-inch border all the way around the edge (see diagram).
2. Cut the other shade of purple construction paper (for contrast) into one-inch strips. Set these pieces on the table.
3. Show the students how to weave the strips over and under.
4. Help them weave their paper. Then trim the ends and have the students glue them down.
5. As the students are engaged in this activity, remind them how Lydia sold purple cloth. Lydia probably had to weave the cloth before she could sell it. Even though she made a lot of money selling this purple cloth, she loved God

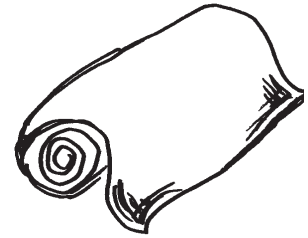
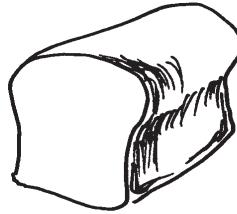
very much. When the students see their purple weave, remind them to think about Lydia and how much she loved God.



Lydia Loves Jesus

Complete the sentences by circling the right answers.

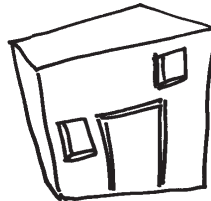
1. Lydia sold



2. Lydia became very



3. Lydia shared her



4. Lydia loved

