

The Good News is for everyone.

Text: Acts 16:14-15, 40

Materials:

- ⊗ Purple balloons
- ⊗ Purple food colouring (or mix blue and red)
- ⊗ Coffee filters
- ⊗ A few bowls for the food colouring
- ⊗ Newspaper to work on
- ⊗ Copies of the pictures of fish, cut out, with a paper clip attached to each one
- ⊗ Magnets attached to rope to use as fishing rods
- ⊗ A shell or a piece of purple ribbon to add to the sensory bottle
- ⊗ Print or copy the questions and cut them out so the children can ask Lydia the questions. Number the questions carefully.
- ⊗ Print enough for the activity that you want to use: one for each child.
- ⊗ Be creative and bring enough purple ribbons, glitter, etc. for the children to be able to decorate their activities.
- ⊗ Old magazines
- ⊗ Copies of "Spot the differences"
- ⊗ Copies of the picture to colour in
- ⊗ Copies of the picture with the text to make bookmarks

WELCOME

- ❖ Let the children divide up into small groups, or (if there aren't too many) let them stay in one large group, and then hit a balloon to each other gently. Each time a child hits a balloon, he should mention one good thing about Jesus, e.g.: He is good to me, He loves me, He died on the cross, and so on. The children could even stand in rows facing each other, and try to zig-zag the balloon down the rows.
- ❖ Let the children colour paper or even pieces of cloth with food colouring. Coffee filters work well. (If you want the children to use some in their activities, you will need to bring some dried coloured pieces along.) The filter needs to be dipped quite a few times, for quite a while, into the food colouring for the best results. Use this to help the children understand that it takes some time to colour the paper and that it has to be handled with care. In the same way, it was not easy in the New Testament times to colour clothes.
- ❖ Beforehand, make a "river" in the room by drawing the outlines on the floor with blue wool, string, or even masking tape. Place some fish inside with paperclip mouths. Then, let the children each get a turn to try and catch a fish. While the children sit next to the river, each with their own fish, ask the following questions:
 - α Everyone with a red fish: Stand up and find a friend you haven't greeted yet and give them a high five.
 - α Everyone with a pink fish: Stand up and tell everyone about one thing you enjoyed this past week.
 - α Everyone with a purple fish: Tell everyone one nice thing about Jesus.
 - α Everyone with a blue fish:

Today, we are going to hear about a woman who was next to a river on the Sabbath day. She also got something there, but it wasn't a fish!

Today we pretend that she is visiting us to tell us what happened.

WORSHIP

Theme song:

The children sit with eyes closed and listen to the song "Trust in the Lord". (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPZJtZzQBB0>). The song can be played a few times and the children can sing along as soon as they catch the tune.

Settle down ritual:

Pass the sensory bottle around while the children say Psalms 23:1-3: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake."

WORD

Short summary of the term:

These past weeks/months we have been hearing stories of weird and wonderful women in the Bible. We heard of some sisters with weird names (Mahlah, Noa, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah) and we heard about two women who were prophetesses (Deborah and Huldah). Then we heard about a poor old widow whose 2 small coins were worth more to Jesus than lots of money from rich people! We heard about a woman who gave a strange gift to Jesus by cleaning his feet. Last week we heard about a wonderful woman, Tabitha, to whom something weird happened... Can you remember? (Jesus brought her back from the dead!)

Today we will meet our last "Wonderful Woman".

Presenter:

Long, long ago it was not easy to dye fabric into different colours in order to make colourful clothes! Today it is easy, but long ago it was very expensive and only the richest people could buy material and clothes that were colourful.

Purple cloth was very expensive. The reason it was so costly was that it was difficult to make. Purple dye had to be gathered drop by drop from the veins of certain shellfish. The juice was white while it was in the veins of the fish, but when it was exposed to the sun, the liquid changed into bright purple and red colours. It took thousands of seashells to make just a small amount of purple cloth. It took a lot of work to catch enough shellfish to dye even one garment.

There was a woman named Lydia in Philippi. It was weird and wonderful that she was a woman because in those days women were not usually allowed to have money, or sell or buy. Lydia was a seller of these expensive purple cloths. Something strange and wonderful happened to her.

Today we are pretending that Lydia is coming to visit us. I want to give you a chance to ask her a few questions. (Choose 8 children if possible. Give each child a question, or more than one if you have fewer than 8 children. Number the questions clearly, so the children know exactly in which order to ask them.)

(Lydia walks in and the presenter asks the children to welcome her. She is wearing purple clothes or just a purple scarf around her head.)

Presenter: Lydia, I am (insert your/presenter's name). The group would like to find out more about you. They will ask you some questions while you are visiting us today. I hear you are a very capable and special woman. There are many girls and young women who admire you.

Lydia: Thank you! Please, ask any question.

Question 1: Can you tell us where you come from and what do you do?

Lydia: My name is Lydia and I grew up in the village of Thyatira. But later I moved to Philippi. (Philippi is in Greece today). I am a business woman. I make, buy and sell expensive purple material, as you can see.

Question 2: But if it is so expensive, who will buy it then?

Lydia: Only people like the king's family and the Roman senators who must wear purple around the hems of their clothes. Can you remember just before Jesus was crucified, they hung a purple cloth over him and mocked him that he

was pretending to be a king? They did not understand that He really was the King of the whole earth.

Question 3: Wow, then all the people you work with must be rich and important people!

Lydia: Yes, that is true, but you must remember that everything does not happen on its own. I had to work very hard to get the business going. Fortunately, I had a chance to learn. But things were not always easy. I never gave up when things did not work out. I take care of everyone who works for me and they do the best work they can. This means that the work we do for other people is the very best in Thyatira. And then of course I trust in God to help me.

Question 4: Since when have you known God, and where did you hear of Him?

Lydia: I have always known God and prayed to Him, but I never knew of His Son Jesus Christ. Then there came a special day. That day changed my life.

Question 5: Will you tell us what happened?

Lydia: It's a long story, but it's a good story. Some friends and I went to the river outside the city on a Sabbath day to pray, as we did every Sabbath. While we were busy, four men arrived. When I heard the one man was Paul, I was very nervous. Everyone knew that Paul had killed everybody who believed in a man called Jesus. With him were his friends Silas, Timothy and Luke. I first watched them very carefully, because they were strange people and men would not usually sit with a group of women and talk to them. But then I saw the love and peace in Paul's eyes. They began to tell us about the good news of Jesus.

Question 6: But what was the good news?

Lydia: The good news which he told us was that God loved the world so much that He sent His son Jesus Christ to earth to die for our sins. It was the first time I realized how much God loved me and I wanted to know more and more. Then Paul told me that Jesus did not stay dead. After 3 days He rose again, alive, and He is now with God. They told us that all who believes in Jesus will be with Him forever!

Question 7: And did you believe him just like that?

Lydia: At first I wondered if the story was true, but the more he told me, the more I realized that Jesus really was the Saviour as the prophets predicted. I could not stop listening when they told us about God's love. Immediately Jesus became the most important person in my life. My whole family and I were baptized.

Question 8: What happened after that?

Lydia: You know, I still had *so* many questions I wanted to ask them. I invited the men to stay over in my house for the night so I could ask them everything I wanted to know.

Presenter: Yes, Lydia is known for being very hospitable and helping other people. In Acts 16:40 we read that Paul and Silas were thrown into jail shortly afterwards and when they got out of prison, they went straight to her home where they met other believers. What did you do that so many other believers came together at your house, Lydia?

Lydia: I could not stop talking about all the things I had heard and experienced! Everywhere I went and everyone I met had to hear the good news from me!

Presenter: Lydia, thank you for telling us so much. I can see that you are someone who is simply overwhelmed with God's love. You are someone who could easily think that you are better than other people because of your success and wealth, but I see you are still a humble person who would like to help others and always puts Jesus in the centre of your life. Goodbye.

Lydia: It's always fun to talk to people about Jesus. Goodbye!

Presenter: Isn't it strange that this successful business woman was willing to make Christians her friends? And that she opened her house to make everyone feel welcome?

Children now get a chance to think about the story:

1. I wonder what you think of Lydia.
2. I wonder which part of this story is the best part for you.
3. I wonder how you can make people feel welcome/special.
4. I wonder if you know somebody who is like Lydia.

WORKING AND PLAYING TIME

- ◆ Make copies of the picture of Lydia dying cloth: the children can use the purple paper or material which they got at the beginning of the lesson to tear and paste onto the washing line on the picture. They can colour in the rest of the picture.
- ◆ Make copies of "Spot the differences".
- ◆ Make copies of the bookmark (on cardstock/card/cardboard). Let the children colour in the picture. Punch a hole at the bottom and attach a piece of purple ribbon or wool through the hole.

BENEDICTION:

Bless the children like Paul would likely have blessed Lydia and her family:

May the Lord go before you to show you the right path;

May the Lord be behind you to protect you;

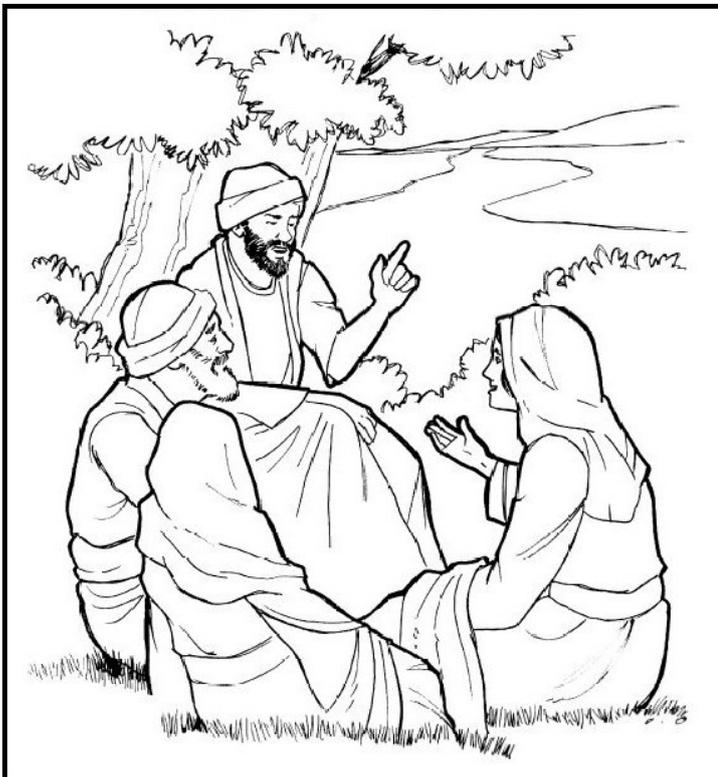
May the Lord be beside you to comfort and embrace you;

May the Lord be below you to catch you when you fall;

May the Lord be above you to bless you;

May the Lord be in you to guide you with His Holy Spirit. Amen.

Question 1	<i>Can you tell us where you come from and what do you do?</i>
Question 2	<i>But if it is so expensive, who will buy it then?</i>
Question 3	<i>Wow, then all the people you work with must be rich and important people!</i>
Question 4	<i>From when do you know God and where did you hear of him?</i>
Question 5	<i>Will you tell us what happened?</i>
Question 6	<i>But what was the good news?</i>
Question 7	<i>And did you believe him just like that?</i>
Question 8	<i>What happened after that?</i>



Acts 16:14: "One of those who heard us was Lydia from Thyatira, who was a dealer in purple cloth. She was a woman who worshiped God, and the Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what

Lydia dyes purple cloth to sell



Spot the differences between the two pictures:

