



Paul Meets Lydia

(based on Acts 16:9-15)

In the city of Philippi (fih-LIHP-ai) lived a businesswoman named Lydia. Lydia bought and sold expensive purple cloth. Lydia and her friends loved God very much. Every Sabbath they would gather by the river outside the city gate to pray.

One day Paul, Timothy, and Silas came to the river. They were followers of Jesus. They had traveled to many different places to teach people about Jesus. God had led them to Philippi. The three men had been searching for a place to worship.

Lydia and her friends invited the men to sit down and talk with them. They talked and talked all afternoon. Paul, Timothy, and Silas told Lydia and the other women all about Jesus. It was a very long story.

Lydia had never met Jesus, but she really liked Paul's stories. Lydia knew that she wanted to become a follower of Jesus right away.

"I want to follow Jesus and live in God's way," Lydia said to Paul. "I want to be a follower of Jesus and share God's love with everyone. Will you baptize me?"

Paul agreed, so Lydia went to fetch everyone who lived in her home. Everyone was baptized in the river that afternoon. It was the start of a brand new way of life.

Lydia opened her heart to the good news about Jesus. After her baptism, Lydia opened her home to Paul and his friends and invited them to stay for as long as they wanted. They spent many days telling people about Jesus. Many people came to listen and learn about following in God's ways. In addition, Paul, Timothy, and Silas spent a lot of time encouraging them.

After a while, it was time for the men to leave. Paul, Silas, and Timothy needed to move onto the next city. After they left, Lydia and her friends kept on telling others about Jesus. Eventually Lydia became the leader of a brand new house church. Many people came to Lydia's home to learn about Jesus. Everyone was welcomed and the church grew and grew.



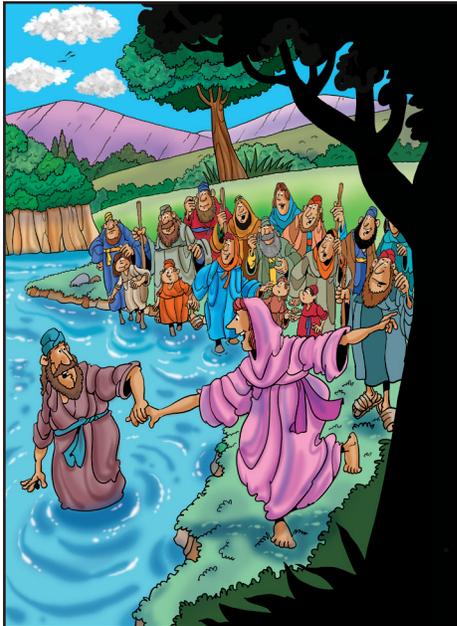
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Grab a blanket and go outside, if possible, near a fountain or flowing water. Invite people to look at God's beautiful world, including at the people who may be in the area. Praise God and pray.
- Lydia made new friends at the river. Invite your children to name their friends and tell how they know them. Invite your children to think about people they do not know and where they could meet them. Listen to their wonderings about people. Thank God for old and new friends. Ask God to help your children make new friends and to be faithful friends.



Responding to God's Grace

- Outline the days of this week on a printed calendar in purple marker or crayon. Give your children star stickers. At the end of each day, invite your children to put a star sticker on the day if they played with a friend or spoke to someone new. Some days may have stickers; other days may not. Encourage your children to watch for and respond to God's Spirit bringing people into their lives, old and new friends.
- God called Lydia to invite people to her home and to tell them about God. Help your family listen for and discern God's call to mission. Place a large sheet of paper and crayons on the table or floor. Invite people to stop anytime during the week and draw a picture of someone or something that they feel needs God's love and help.
- Wear something purple this week and remember Lydia, a woman who became a follower of Jesus and responded with gratitude and hospitality. Practice hospitality this week by trying some of the following actions: greeting others, asking about their day (and listening to their response), sharing something, inviting someone to your home, preparing food for someone, and so forth.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Each time people go away from each other and come back together, do a happy dance!
- Pray this prayer this week:

*Dear God, show us people to love and to serve.
Amen.*