

LYDIA—A BELIEVER AND A QUIET HERO

BIG IDEA

Heroes come in different forms. Lydia's openness to God made a way for the Gospel to be preached in a new land.

PREP *(Kids can help!)*

Get 30 split peas/beans/macaroni or any small object

Find a newspaper, tape and scissors

Find a garment for each person that is either purple or has some purple in it

Tip: Have the kids help with this!

Cut out red heart shapes from pieces of paper and fold in half – enough for one each. Write inside a different sentence on each one – *I want to welcome others; I want to pray more; I want to care for those who lead us; I want to help my family know Jesus more; I want to use my money for Jesus; I want to keep listening to God...*
Add a piece of tape to hold each heart folded together

Put everything into the Faith Box before you start

INTRO

The early church is full of heroes.

Sometimes we think that to be a hero you have to be shipwrecked or imprisoned or have a really dramatic change of heart like Paul.

But heroes come in other forms too.

Lydia was a quiet hero. She was a businesswoman who was not only committed to praying and offering hospitality but was also the first known convert to Christianity in the whole of Europe!

She was the beginning of something new and amazing in a place where nobody knew about Jesus.



*My belt holds my pants up
but the loops hold my belt up.
So which one is the real hero?
Mitch Hedberg*

Give everyone seven split peas or beans. Everyone take any amount of their peas and put them in their hand, then with a closed fist, say to the person next to them, "Odds or evens?" If the person guesses right, they get all the beans from your hand. Then ask the person next to them to guess, "odds or evens?" Keep going until one person wins by gathering the most split peas.

This person now uses their 'peas' as currency and becomes the leader of the next activity.

In the time of the early church, purple was the colour to wear if you wanted to show you were really rich.

Take out the newspaper, tape and scissors and see if together you can make a beautiful outfit for someone in the family (it could be a parent).

Put on some music and have them model the outfit!

Now give everyone a purple clothes item to wear or drape over themselves, as you read.

Today we are going to learn about a woman who sold purple fabric. She loved to pray to God and when she heard about Jesus she trusted him and set out to live for him.

READ

☞ Paul and Silas went aboard a boat at Troas, and sailed straight across to Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis, and finally reached Philippi, a Roman colony just inside the Macedonian border, and stayed there several days.

On the Sabbath, they went a little way outside the city to a river bank where they understood some people met for prayer: and taught the scriptures to some women who came.

One of them was Lydia, a saleswoman from Thyatira, a merchant of purple cloth. She was already a worshipper of God and, as she listened to them, the Lord opened her heart and she accepted all that Paul was saying. She was baptised, along with all her household, and asked them to be her guests. "If you agree that I am faithful to the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my home." And she urged them until they did. ☞

Acts 16:11-15; Adapted from TLB

EXPLORE

We don't know much about Lydia, except that she was a business woman who sold very expensive and beautiful purple cloth. Purple was a symbol of royalty and of Roman citizenship so she would have made friends with rich and powerful people in her city of Philippi as she sold her fabric to them.

She used her money to help support the early church.

A really important thing we do know about Lydia is that Jesus opened her heart so when Paul shared the good news, she wanted to change and follow Jesus.

Lydia worshipped God but she hadn't heard about Jesus. People can go to church but that doesn't necessarily make them a Christian. We only become part of God's family when we do what Lydia did and open our hearts to Jesus. When Lydia did this she got baptised as an outward sign of giving her heart to Jesus. Then she shared with all the rest of her household about Jesus and they became Christians too.

Then straight away Lydia wanted to start helping Christians. She welcomed Paul and Silas into her home. She fed them and looked after them and she gave her money to support the early church.

Take out the folded red paper hearts and hand one to everyone. Before they open them ask –

QUESTIONS

What do you think it means that Jesus opened Lydia's heart?

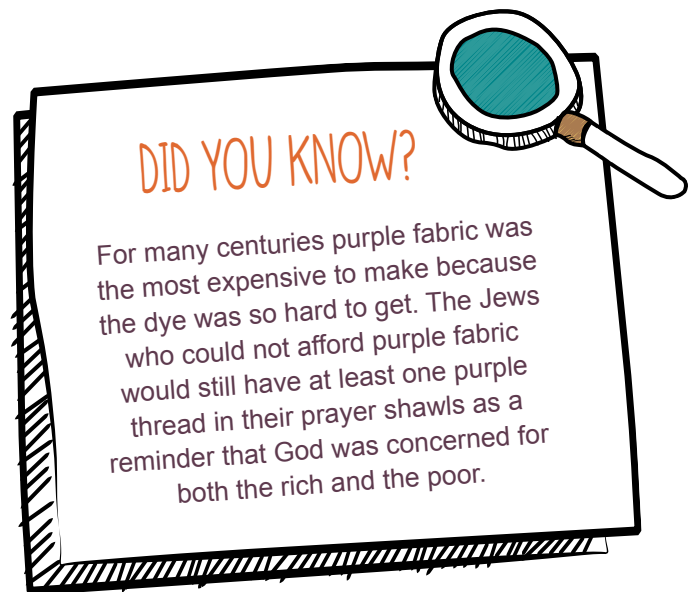
What difference did it make to Lydia?

Then take turns opening your heart and reading what it says inside.

QUESTIONS

Do you think Jesus wants to do the same for us?

When all the hearts have been read and placed open on the table, let everyone pick one that they would especially like Jesus to do in their hearts.



PRAY

If the weather allows, perhaps you could go outside for your prayer time.

Remember how Lydia gathered with others to pray each week in this kind of environment. Take some time to pray for things that are on your heart. Does being outside change the way you pray?

LIVE

Think about the heart you chose and decide on one thing that you could do to live it out this week.

How about planning a sleepover with someone from church? Lydia welcomed Paul and his friends into her home to stay.

Or you could make a special meal to share with someone.

FAITH BOARD



OTHER IDEAS

1 Have a try at dyeing fabric or using fabric pens to decorate a pillow case. You can use flowers to dye fabric by placing fresh colourful flowers on the fabric. Cover with wax paper and roll with a rolling pin. When you remove the paper you are left with dyed fabric. This shows one of the early methods of dyeing, although Lydia's purple fabric probably used dye from shellfish.

2 Maybe you will get the opportunity to offer hospitality to someone visiting – make the most of it and show your welcome!

3 Cut out a heart from purple fabric and keep it in your pocket this week as a reminder of Lydia who was a hero because she let Jesus open her heart.