

Lydia Becomes a Christian



Scripture Reference: [Acts 16:10-15](#)

Suggested Theme: Emphasise that baptism is the natural response to hearing the good news of Jesus. Baptism or immersion in water identifies a person with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Memory Verse: “And now, what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.” [Acts 22:16, ICB](#)

Story Overview:

After sailing to Macedonia, Paul arrived in the city of Philippi. When he found a group of women gathered beside a river praying, he told them about Jesus. One of the women was Lydia, a businesswoman who sold expensive purple fabric. When Lydia heard about Jesus, she was baptised. Then, everyone in her household was baptised, too. Lydia was so happy that she insisted that Paul and his friends stay at her house.

Background Study:

[Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts](#)

The story of Lydia takes place within the context of Paul’s missionary trips. This first foray into Macedonia (Europe) took place within what is commonly known as his 2nd Missionary Journey. While in Troas, Paul had been directed here by the Holy Spirit in what is known as the [Macedonian Vision](#).



“We left Troas in a ship, and we sailed straight to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to Neapolis. Then we went by land to Philippi, the leading city in that part of Macedonia. It is also a Roman colony. We stayed there for several days.” Acts 16:11-12, ICB

[Troas](#) was the chief port city on the northwest coast of Asia Minor. The few ruins left of this once large and thriving city are located on the western coast of Turkey in the modern-day Canakkale Province. After leaving the port of [Troas](#), it would be common for a ship to stop and anchor off the Island of [Samothrace](#) for the night. Paul and his group landed in [Neapolis](#), which was Philippi's port, before heading to [Philippi](#).

Philippi was a Macedonian frontier town, Roman colony and military outpost. A section of the 1,120 kilometres (696 miles) Roman road system called the [Via Egnacia](#) passed through Philippi. This meant the city was on a direct trade and military route that connected what is now modern-day Albania, the Republic of Macedonia, Greece, and European Turkey (information taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Egnatia).

Going To The People (Acts 16:13-16):

Philippi must have seemed very different from the cities they had visited in Asia Minor. No one was there to greet them, and there was no Jewish synagogue for them to connect with.

When there was no formal synagogue in a city, people would often use the setting of a nearby river to gather together. This was treated as a place of prayer. This was the case in Philippi. A group of women indicates that no Jewish men lived in the city. Paul's informal approach of sitting down and speaking with a group of women reveals the barriers he was willing to cross to share the Gospel with others.

"There was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. Her job was selling purple cloth. She worshiped the true God. The Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying. She and all the people in her house were baptized. Then Lydia invited us to her home. She said, 'If you think I am truly a believer in the Lord, then come stay in my house.' And she persuaded us to stay with her." Acts 16:14-15, ICB

These two verses reveal a lot about the woman, Lydia:

- Lydia was a woman of business: Lydia was from the wealthy city of [Thyatira](#) in Asia Minor and a purple cloth dealer. Thyatira was well known for its trade guilds, and the dye trade was one of the most important. Lydia was probably living in Philippi to take advantage of the trade route. There is no mention of a husband, so Lydia seems to support herself and her household with her business. Her house must have been big enough for Paul and his companions to stay there later.
- Lydia was a woman of faith: Lydia was from a city whose trade guilds later opposed Christianity, and she was living in a military outpost where there seemed to be no formal worship of God. Yet Lydia was a "worshipper of God" who gathered with other women to pray.

Information concerning Thyatira was taken from <http://bibleatlas.org/thyatira.htm>.

- She was a woman of influence. Lydia's household was baptised along with her, insinuating their respect for her. She was persuasive with Paul and convinced him to stay at her house.

When she heard Paul share the good news about King Jesus, Lydia's response was to be baptised. Although there are a variety of practices today, the original Greek word for baptism means to be immersed. Later, Paul wrote in his letter to the church in Rome that in the physical act of baptism, a person identifies with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus by dying to self, being immersed (buried) in water and coming up again to live for Jesus.

Baptism features predominantly throughout the conversion stories of Acts. Since this story is shorter than other conversion stories, use the extra time to discuss baptism and its importance in our Christian journey. Other Scriptures about baptism and how our response connects to Christ's Death, Burial and Resurrection:

- *“Did you forget that all of us became part of Christ when we were baptized? We shared his death in our baptism. So when we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. We were buried with him so that we could live a new life, just as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father.” [Romans 6:3-4, ICB](#)*
- *“Peter said to them, “Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” [Acts 2:38, ICB](#)*
- *“Then those people who accepted what Peter said were baptized. About 3,000 people were added to the number of believers that day.” [Acts 2:41, ICB](#)*
- *“Christ himself died for you. And that one death paid for your sins. He was not guilty, but he died for those who are guilty. He did this to bring you all to God. His body was killed, but he was made alive in the spirit. And in the spirit he went and preached to the spirits in prison. These were the spirits who refused to obey God long ago in the time of Noah. God was waiting patiently for them while Noah was building the boat. Only a few people—eight in all—were saved by water. That water is like baptism that now saves you—not the washing of dirt from the body, but the promise made to God from a good heart. And this is because Jesus Christ was raised from death. Now Jesus has gone into heaven and is at God’s right side. He rules over angels, authorities, and powers.” [1 Peter 3:18-22, ICB](#)*

After Lydia was baptised, Paul and Silas continued teaching people about Jesus in Philippi. Read about the [Jailer Who Became a Christian](#) to learn about another person in the city who was baptised in response to the Gospel message.

As time went by, a church was established in Philippi. Paul would later write a letter to them, and the letter, [the Book of Philippians](#), can be read in the New Testament.

Way to Introduce the Story:

How many of you know someone who has been baptised? What happened? (Share your own experience) In today’s story, we will learn about a woman named Lydia who was baptised.

The Story:

Paul and his friends Silas, Timothy and Luke were missionaries. Missionaries travel wherever God wants them to go to tell people about Jesus.

Paul and Silas had travelled all the way from Antioch. Now, they and their friends were on their way to Macedonia. Macedonia was in Europe, so this was the very first time that people in Europe heard the good news about King Jesus.

The first place that Paul and the other missionaries stopped was in the city of Philippi. The Roman government was in charge, and there were many Roman soldiers in Philippi.

Usually, Paul and the others would have gone to a synagogue on the Sabbath day. A synagogue is a place where Jews gather together to worship and learn about God. But there was no synagogue in Philippi.

So, on the Sabbath day, the men went down to the river to find a place of prayer. There was already a group of women at the river. They were praying.

One of the women was Lydia. She was a businesswoman whose job was selling purple cloth. She had her own house and workers. Lydia was a worshipper of God, but she did not know about Jesus.

So Paul began to talk to Lydia and tell her about Jesus. Jesus was God’s Son, and He had died on the cross for her sins. Lydia learned that after Jesus died, He was buried, and then He rose again on the third day.

After that, He ascended to the throne of God to rule as the world's true King.

When Lydia heard about Jesus, she believed in Him. She told Paul that she wanted to become a follower of King Jesus. She wanted to be baptised.

Jesus was buried and then came alive again. Being dipped under the water and coming up again is like being buried and coming alive again.

Lydia and all of the people in her household were baptised that day. When they were dipped under the water it was like they were being buried with Jesus. When they came up again, they rose up like Jesus.

Lydia wanted to spend more time with Paul and his friends, so she asked them to stay at her house so she could give them food and take care of them.

What a happy day for Lydia and all the people with her. Now, they were part of the Christian family.

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download the slideshow](#) or [click here for the printable illustrations.](#)

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Or use the video below.

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story, while reflection questions encourage them to internalize its meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

Review:

1. What area of the world did Lydia live in? (Macedonia)
2. What was Lydia's job? (She sold purple cloth)
3. Where did Paul and his companions meet Lydia? (By the river where she and some women were praying)
4. What happened to Lydia's heart when Paul started sharing about Jesus? (God opened her heart to listen eagerly to what Paul said)
5. What did Lydia and the people in her house do when they heard about Jesus? (They were baptised)
6. What is baptism? (A Greek word that means to dip or immerse in water. Baptism identifies us with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus)
7. What did Lydia persuade Paul and his companions to do after she and her household were baptised? (To come and stay at her home)
8. What does this story show you about God?
9. What does this story show you about people?

Reflection:

1. What do you think it looked or felt like to sit by the river in Philippi?
2. Why do you think people met by this river to pray?
3. Where do you like to be when you pray? Where would you like to trying praying at?
4. Why do you think God opened Lydia's heart to hear Paul's words?
5. Sometimes, God opens someone's heart to believe in Him. Do you know someone that this happened to? Who do you wish this would happen to?
6. Who can you pray for and ask God to open their heart to believing in Him?
7. Why do you think Lydia and her household wanted to be baptised?
8. Have you ever seen someone be baptised?
9. What question do you have for Jesus about baptism?
10. What is something you wonder about in this story?
11. Is there a question this story made you think of? What is your question?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

- [Deep and Wide Song](#)
- [Happy all the Time \(Inright, outright\) Song](#)
- [I am a C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N \(Song\)](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:



- Collect and bring pictures taken at people's baptisms
- Invite a guest to talk about their baptism
- Use the church songbook to look up and sing songs about baptism
- Experiment with various natural purple dyes using an unbleached or white cotton cloth.
- Like blackberries at http://www.ehow.com/how_5139698_make-purple-dye.html
- Or crush blueberries or beetroot/beets with stones and dye scraps of cloth.
- Dip a cloth in purple tempera paint.
- To review, you or the children can draw a large outline of Paul on a whiteboard or piece of paper (even drawing with a stick in the sand works fine if you are outside). Then, after you have taught the lesson, ask the children to think about what they have just learned from the Bible. Have them write descriptive words and/or draw pictures inside and around the outlined illustration of Paul. When you see what the children are writing or drawing, you may be surprised or encouraged by what insights they have picked up from the story. This is also a good opportunity to correct or add to anything you might not have covered as well as you could have when you were teaching.



If you prefer, you can [download and print the illustration of Paul provided here](#) and then have the children write and draw on it for the review.

- Alternatively, if you are teaching a series of lessons about Paul, you might draw an outline of his body on a large poster or paper and then add descriptive words about him each time you study a new lesson.
- [Click here for the 16 lessons about the Life of Paul grouped together as a set.](#)



Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:



‘Baptising Lydia’ Craft: Have children draw a picture of Lydia on a thick piece of paper. Glue or tape a craft stick to the back with only a small portion of the stick remaining behind the picture and most protruding from the bottom.

Poke a hole in the bottom of a plastic or paper cup. Stick the craft stick through the hole so that the picture of Lydia can slide in and out of the cup. The children can pull the stick down to ‘baptise’ Lydia in the water.

Refer to the [Naaman](#) craft on the right as an example.

- Make a relief map of Paul’s Journeys featuring the place in today’s story. If you are studying Paul’s journeys over a few lessons then you could add more details to the map each time you learn about another stop on the journey. Instructions on how to make a relief map at <https://www.weirdunsocializedhomeschoolers.com/step-by-step-to-making-salt-dough-map/>



- Print bookmarks, trading cards or timelines ([printable pages](#)).
- Visit the [Teaching Ideas](#) page for additional activities and crafts.

Other Online Resources:

- [Craft: Craft sticks people to dunk in a paper river. The original craft was for the baptism of Jesus, but it can be easily adapted for Lydia \(kathyhutto.wordpress.com\)](#)
- [Craft: A pop-up book about salvation \(biblesongsandmore.wordpress.com\)](#)
- [Printable Bookmarks. Enter your own personal text and then print them \(activitiesforkids.com\)](#)
- [Review: Create a "passport" that covers Paul's life. Good visual ideas and activities. It could be split up to go with several lessons or taught all together as a review of previous lessons concerning Paul found \(kidsbibledebjackson.blogspot.co.nz\)](#)
- [Map of Paul's 2nd journey \(deeperstudy.com\)](#)
- [Photographs of the site of historical Philippi \(bibleplaces.com\)](#)
- [Read more about Philippi \(en.wikipedia.org\)](#)

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