



## STATION OBJECTIVES

Children will

- \* become familiar with the stories of Priscilla, Lydia, and Dorcas;
- \* understand that women had an important role in the spreading of the gospel;
- \* understand that these women used their skills and resources in service to God;
- \* discover that these women can be role models for everyone;
- \* discover that it was revolutionary for women to have a significant role in the life of faith;
- \* come to know other women as spiritual leaders.

### Resources

pages 3-7

### Supplies

simple jars and  
pottery  
woven baskets  
woven mats or  
rugs  
optional:  
kente cloth  
spider

## STATION SETUP

Decorate your classroom to reflect what a home in Bible times might have looked like. Place simple jars and pottery around the room. Find woven baskets to include in the room. Bring woven mats or rugs for the children to sit on. Set up a table that is low enough for students to



## Three Women of Faith

sit around on the floor in biblical fashion, on pillows rather than on chairs. If a low table is not available, collapse the legs of a regular-height table and lay it on the floor. Cover the table with a purple table cloth.

Set the table with a variety of purple snacks, such as a basket of purple grapes and plums, a pitcher of grape beverage, a basket of pita bread cut into small pieces to be spread with grape or plum jelly, cookies with purple frosting, and so forth.

From *NEW INVITATION: Grades 5-6*, Teacher Spring 2000 © 2000 Cokesbury

Photocopy the Main Idea, Objectives, Bible Background for Leaders, Shepherd Tips, and Check Your Facts for each leader and shepherd. (See pages 3-7.)

## WANT TO DO MORE?

Locate kente cloth or another fabric native to Africa to display in the classroom. Locate a pet spider to visit the classroom for this unit. (Make arrangements for its care while it is visiting.)

### Note

Resources and websites are constantly changing. Check [www.powerxpress.com](http://www.powerxpress.com) for updates that may help you in planning.

## SAFETY CHECK

- The church should be a place of security—a place where children can count on things and people being reliable.
- Shepherds should know the whereabouts of every child in the shepherd's group, and they should know where to reach a parent in case of an emergency.
- Make sure the children have plenty of space to move. Remove any obstacles.

## Resources

Bibles

## BIBLE STORY (5-10 minutes)

We are  
ambassadors  
for Christ.  
(2 Corinthians 5:20)

### Prepare

Invite a woman to portray Lydia. Provide a Bible-times costume. Make sure part of the costume is purple.

### With the Children

Have Lydia greet the children as they come in the door.

**Lydia:** You may be wondering about all this purple. I do go a bit overboard. But purple is my life. I'm a seller of purple cloth. Purple dye comes from very expensive shellfish, so only the wealthy can afford to dress in purple. I want to share it with you today. I understand that you are all believers, which makes

you even more welcome in my home. Did you know that the apostle Paul himself baptized me and my servants and children? Listening to him talk about Jesus was almost like having Jesus himself here! Paul and his companion Silas stayed with me while they were in Philippi. They ate at this very table. I'm so glad you're here! It's wonderful to be able to remember Paul's visit. Most Jewish men would never have joined a group of women for prayer at the riverside. But Paul didn't seem to be bothered by the lack of men in our group. In his eyes, we were just as important, just as Christian, as the men. Jews, Greeks, slaves, free, men, women, young, old—to Paul we were simply Christians! You, too! Eat! Enjoy!

Encourage the children to enjoy the snacks.

**Lydia:** You are learning about other women besides me. One of those women is Dorcas. Dorcas was a disciple of Jesus. She worked making clothing for others. Another woman is Priscilla. Priscilla worked with her husband and with Paul to make tents and tell others about Jesus.

### Ask younger children:

How are Dorcas and Lydia alike? *(They all worked with cloth. They both served others and followed Jesus.)*

How can we be like Dorcas, Priscilla, and Lydia? *(We can share our special talents to help others and share God's love.)*

### Ask older children:

Do you want people to remember you thousands of years from now? Why, or why not?

What would you want people to remember about you?

What can you do today so that people will remember how you were faithful to God, like Priscilla, Dorcas, and Lydia?

## ACTIVITY OPTIONS

(45–50 minutes)

Choose from the suggested activities as your time and the children's interest allow.



## For Younger Children

### Supplies

soft, purple cloth

# Lydia

Place a purple cloth on the floor. Have the children sit around the cloth and then follow the instructions in the story.

**Say:** Today our Bible story is about a woman named Lydia. Lydia sold purple cloth. She learned about Jesus.

Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* sold purple cloth. Touch the purple cloth. Feel how soft it is? *(Have the children touch the purple cloth.)* Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* liked the color purple. It was a special color. Only people who were rich could afford to buy purple cloth. Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* was a rich and important person in the city of Philippi.

Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* loved God. She prayed to God every day. Fold your hands as if you are saying a prayer. *(Have the children fold their hands in prayer.)* Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* knew some other women who also loved God. They had no place to go to in the city to pray to God, so Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* and her friends met outside the city beside the river.

One day Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* and her friends were sitting beside the river when a man named Paul came over to them. He told them all about Jesus. Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* listened very carefully. Show me how you listen carefully. *(Cup your hand around one ear.)*

Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* was happy to learn about Jesus. Show me how you look when you are happy. *(Have the children make a happy face.)* Paul baptized Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* in the river, and she became a follower of Jesus. Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* wanted her whole family to learn about Jesus. She invited Paul to stay at her house. Paul told Lydia's *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* family about Jesus. Everyone at Lydia's *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* house became a follower of Jesus.

Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* still sold purple cloth. Touch the purple cloth again. *(Have the children touch the purple cloth.)* But now Lydia *(Have the children pretend to fluff their hair.)* also helped others learn about Jesus.

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# For Younger Children

## Learning With Lydia

Have the children repeat the following list of things we can learn about Jesus. Hold up a finger for each item.

1. Christmas is Jesus' birthday.
2. Jesus was God's son.
3. Jesus loved the children.
4. Jesus loves me and everyone.
5. Jesus is my friend.

**Say:** Lydia learned about Jesus. Let's pretend to be Lydia and think about what we have learned about Jesus.

Ask a volunteer to stand up in front of the other children. Wrap the purple cloth over the child's head or shoulders.

**Say:** Lydia, Lydia, dressed in purple, what have you learned about Jesus?

Have the child say something about Jesus. Give suggestions from the list, if necessary. Continue until every child has a turn to be Lydia. Expect that the children may say the same thing each time.

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# For Older Children

## Lydia

### Prepare

Photocopy the story "Lydia" (page 80) for each child.

Provide fifteen unlit candles (purple if possible).

### With the Children

Invite the older children to read the story aloud. Have an adult light one candle at the end of each paragraph, until all fifteen are lit.

Play "Women of the Bible" (**Three Women of Faith CD**). Blow out the candles.

- Ask:** Who was Lydia? *(She was a cloth merchant)*  
 Why was she at the river that day? *(She and some friends gathered at the river to worship.)*  
 Who did she meet? *(Paul)*  
 What did he tell her? *(He told her about Jesus.)*  
 What happened next? *(She invited Paul to baptize her and her whole household.)*  
 How is this spreading the good news of Jesus? *(Paul heard the news and told Lydia, who told others.)*

Supplies  
purple cloth

### Resources

\* **Three Women of Faith CD**  
page 80

### Supplies

CD player  
15 candles  
lighter



## Resources

*Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson

## Supplies

construction paper  
glue  
colored pencils  
colored butcher paper

## For Older Children

# Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt

You will need:

one 8-by 8-inch square of white construction paper for each child.

one-inch and three-inch squares of a variety of colored papers

**Say:** Women in our Bible stories used different kinds of fabric to make a living. Throughout time women have used the art of quilting to tell the stories of their faith, their family, and their creativity. As you listen to this story, look for ways Clara used her gifts to tell her story.

Read *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*.

**Ask:** How did Clara use what she had learned about quilting to help her family and friends?  
What symbols did Clara use in her quilt to help the people make their way to freedom?

### To make a paper quilt

Ask the children to think of a significant event in their own lives or the life of the church. Each child should think of a separate event.

Instruct them to use the small pieces of colored paper to create a picture or symbol of their event. (For example: a bowl or pitcher for baptism, a rainbow for the Noah story, a lakeside scene for a camping experience) Do this without gluing anything.

Once the picture has been created, glue the pieces to the white paper.

After all the pieces have been glued down, invite the children to tell the story of their quilt pieces.

**Ask:** Quilts are larger expressions of small pieces or events. They are similar to a puzzle. How might we put these small quilt blocks together to create a Faith Quilt?

Have the children try different combinations of layout until they are pleased with the product. Once they are satisfied with the order, glue the 8- by 8-inch quilt squares onto the larger colored butcher paper to create a paper Faith Quilt. Display the quilt in the Storytelling Station or in a hallway.



## For All Ages

**Dorcas**

Resources

page 79

Show the children how to find the Book of Acts.

**Say:** The Bible story tells us about a woman named Tabitha, whose Greek name was Dorcas. Tabitha was a follower of Jesus. We don't know if she ever met Jesus, but we do know she heard the stories and believed. Because she believed, she turned her faith into doing good.

Teach the children the moves that go with the story poem "Dorcas Dance" (page 79). They will use this movement between the story stanzas.

Hold right thumb in hitchhike position. Put left hand on the hips. As you move the thumb to the right, step two steps to the right in rhythm to the words.

**Good works! Good works!** (*Thumb to the right, step two steps to the right in rhythm to the words.*)

**It's all about good works!** (*Reverse the moves above.*)

**It doesn't count if you don't turn.** (*Put hands on the hips and swivel hips to the right and then to the left. Repeat.*)

**Your faith into good works.** (*Pat left shoulder with right hand; leaving right hand on left shoulder, pat right shoulder with left hand; lean forward and pat knee with right hand; while leaving right hand on left knee, pat right knee with left hand; stand upright; put right hand on back side of right hip; put left hand on back side of left hip.*)

Practice reading the story poem until you can read it in the rhythm.

**CLOSING** (5 minutes)

**Ask:** How did these women use their gifts?

Which one did you admire the most? Why?

What gift could you use this week to do something special for someone?

Close with a prayer thanking God for giving each person special gifts.



# Dorcas Dance

by LeeDell Stickler

There was a gal named Dorcas  
She lived in Joppa-town,  
And nothin' bad that came around  
Would get ole Dorcas down.

To the seaport town of Joppa  
Some people came one day  
They told about a special man  
Who taught them of The Way.

*Response*

Now Dorcas listened carefully  
To all the things she heard.  
They told about the Son of God,  
And she hung on every word.

So Dorcas made a promise  
To help in ways she could.  
She'd use her skill at sewing  
Trusting God and doing good.

*Response*

In and out her needle went  
As Dorcas pulled the thread.  
She helped the poor with every  
stitch;  
"Do for others," Jesus said.

But one day unexpectedly  
Our friend got sick and died.

All those that she had helped  
before  
Came to her house and cried.

*Response*

But one friend sent a message  
Telling Peter to come quick.  
He hurried to the little town.  
He hadn't known that she was sick.

When Peter got to Joppa,  
He rushed to Dorcas' side.  
He prayed to God to heal her.  
Then she opened up her eyes.

*Response*

Then Peter, he reached down to  
her,  
And Dorcas took his hand.  
Soon the story of the pow'r of God  
Was told throughout the land.

If you want to follow Jesus,  
And Christians know they should,  
Then take advice from Dorcas,  
"Trust God and then do good."

*Response*

From "Dorcas" by LeeDell Stickler in *Just Add Kids: The Jailhouse  
Rocked*. © 2000 Abingdon Press.



# Lydia

by LeeDell Stickler

My name is Lydia. I lived in the city of Philippi—a long, long time ago. And there I met a man named Paul. This man Paul changed my life forever. Let me tell you the story.

I am a merchant. I sell cloth. Not just any cloth, but purple cloth. Purple cloth is very expensive. Only the most important people can afford to buy my cloth. For that reason, I am a very important person too.

As they do to all important people, everyone looks up to me. I must be very careful what I do.

Philippi is a Roman city, ruled by Roman law. People there worship the Roman gods.

But I believe in the one true God. There are other people in Philippi who believe as I do. We don't want to get arrested, so we worship in a very private place so that the Roman officials cannot find us and arrest us. We are going to worship God no matter what the law says.

On every Sabbath these women and I gather to worship on the bank of a river. We have been doing this for a very long time. But one Sabbath something strange happened.

A man named Paul came to our town. He told us who he was. He also said he had a very special message for us.

Paul began to tell the story of Jesus. He told us how God had

sent Jesus into the world to teach people more about God.

He told us how Jesus had healed the sick and even raised the dead.

He told us how Jesus had been arrested and put to death on a cross. He also told us how, on the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead.

Paul told us how he had once been sent to Damascus to arrest the followers of Jesus. He told us how Jesus had appeared to him on the road and had changed his life forever.

The more Paul talked about this man Jesus, the more I knew that I believed too.

“God has opened my heart to what you have said,” I said to Paul. “I want to be a follower of Jesus, too. Will you baptize me and my whole family?”

I brought my family to the river that day. There Paul baptized us. Afterwards I invited Paul to stay at my house while he preached the good news of Philippi.

The story of Jesus was truly on the move.

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# Notes

STORYTELLING

