God wants us to share the good news about Jesus.

Bible Verse
“Believe in the Lord Jesus” (Acts 16:31a).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Children will ■ discover that they can share the good news with anyone,
■ practice sharing with others, and
■ pray for people who don't know the good news about Jesus.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis
■ Lydia meets Paul.
Acts 16:11-15

When the Apostle Paul came to the outskirts of Philippi, he and his team found an informal meeting of God-fearing women and told the women there about Jesus. Paul didn't hesitate to give them his time and attention. He wanted to reach everyone he could with God's message of grace.

Lydia, the leader of this little group, was a dealer in purple cloth. Purple dye was extremely costly, and anyone able to deal in it had to be wealthy. For a woman to be successful and wealthy on her own was unusual in that culture. This woman was the first person in Europe who Paul led to faith in Christ.

Why were all the members of Lydia's household baptized? Though Luke doesn't go into details, her children and any servants in her household likely followed her example and believed in Jesus, too.

In inviting Paul and his missionary team to stay at her house, Lydia offered generous hospitality. Perhaps as time went on, her generosity served as an example to the entire church that developed at Philippi.

Prayer
• Read John 4:39.
• How are you influencing people in your own circle of influence with the good news of Jesus Christ?
• Pray: Lord, help me today to share my faith with the children I teach and with others by…
**Lesson 11**

**Before the Lesson**
- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use. Refer to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies columns to determine what you'll need.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned…” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

**This Lesson at a Glance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Children Will Do</th>
<th>Classroom Supplies</th>
<th>Learning Lab Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome Time</strong></td>
<td>Welcome!—Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.</td>
<td>“Butterfly Name Tags” (p. 26), markers, tape or safety pins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s Get Started</strong></td>
<td>Option 1: Drip ‘n’ Dye—Use blue and red food coloring to make purple “cloths.”</td>
<td>Coffee filters, drinking straws, muffin tins, water, blue and red food coloring, newsprint or butcher paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Option 2: Bop the Good News—Bop balloons back and forth while they tell good news about Jesus.</td>
<td>Balloons, paper plates, masking tape, paint stirrers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Option 3: Purple People—Make snacks to share later in class.</td>
<td>Purple seedless grapes, pretzel sticks, paper plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pick Up Our Toys—Sing a song as they pick up toys, and gather for Bible Story Time.</td>
<td>CD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bible Story Time</strong></td>
<td>Setting the Stage—Go “fishing,” and discover that Lydia “caught” the good news of Jesus at the river.</td>
<td>Large paper clips, yarn, craft magnet, masking tape, yardstick, colored paper, scissors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bible Song and Prayer Time—Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.</td>
<td>Bible, construction paper, scissors, CD player, basket or box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hear and Tell the Bible Story—Follow the Learning Mat to Philippi, and hear how Lydia listened to Paul in Acts 16:11-15.</td>
<td>Bible, CD player, purple cloths from Option 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do the Bible Story—Play a game in which they focus on sharing the good news with children everywhere in the world.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing</strong></td>
<td>Waiting for Bumper—Explain that Pockets can tell people about Jesus whether or not they come to church.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purple People Prayer—Pray for people who don’t know Jesus.</td>
<td>Purple cloths from Option 1, snacks from Option 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.*
Welcome Time

Welcome!

**SUPPLIES:** “Butterfly Name Tags” handout (p. 26), markers, tape or safety pins
- Bend down to make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Today I Learned…” activities. Use questions such as “Who did you share the good news about Jesus with this week?” and “What did you tell other people about Jesus?”
- Say: **Today we are going to learn that God wants us to share the good news about Jesus.**
- Hand out the butterfly name tags children made in the first lesson, and help them attach the name tags. If some of the name tags were damaged or if some of the children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable patterns.
- Direct the children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.

Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What’s some good news about Jesus that you can tell?” or “When can you tell people about Jesus?”

**Option 1: Drip ’n’ Dye**

**SUPPLIES:** coffee filters, drinking straws, muffin tins, water, blue and red food coloring, newsprint or butcher paper

Cover a table with at least three layers of newsprint or butcher paper. Fill muffin tins half full of water, and then add five drops of red or blue food coloring to each cup. You’ll need to make an even number of red and blue cups. Set out the muffin tins, coffee filters, and drinking straws cut in half. Show children how to place a drinking straw in the colored water, cover the top of the straw with a thumb, and then hold the straw over the coffee filter, release the thumb, and drip red and blue water to turn a coffee filter into a purple “cloth.” Tell children that today they’ll hear about a woman who sold purple cloth. Explain that in Bible times, only wealthy people wore richly dyed purple clothes. When children have dyed enough cloths for each child in class to have one, set the cloths aside to dry.

**BIBLE POINT**

It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

**teacher tips**

If you don’t choose this option, bring in purple napkins to use instead.
Lesson 11

WARNING:
CHOKING HAZARD—
To avoid potential choking hazards, pick up pieces of any broken balloons and dispose of them immediately. Balloons may contain latex.

BIBLE POINT

Option 2: Bop the Good News

SUPPLIES: balloons, paper plates, masking tape, paint stirrers

Before class, make “rackets” by taping paint stirrers or rulers to the back of paper plates. Blow up several balloons, and tie them off. Allow children to find partners and use the rackets to bop balloons back and forth. As each child hits a balloon, have him or her tell one good thing about Jesus, such as “Jesus loves everyone,” “Jesus is awesome,” or “Jesus can do anything.” Remind children that God wants us to share the good news about Jesus.

Option 3: Purple People

SUPPLIES: purple seedless grapes, pretzel sticks, paper plate

Set out pretzel sticks, a paper plate, and a bowl of clean purple seedless grapes. Show children how to stick a grape on the end of a pretzel stick to make a “purple person.” As children make purple people, explain that today they’ll hear about a woman who sold purple cloth. Tell children that the woman believed the good news about Jesus. Set the plate of purple people aside until the Closing.

When everyone has arrived and you’re ready to move on to the Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they’re doing and get ready to clean up.

Pick Up Our Toys

SUPPLIES: CD player

Lead children in singing “Pick Up Our Toys” (track 2) with the CD to the tune of “Skip to My Lou.” Encourage the children to sing along as they help clean up the room.

If you want to include the names of all the children in your class, sing the song without the CD and repeat the naming section. If you choose to use the CD, vary the names you use each week.

Sing

We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys.
And put them all away.

There’s [name] picking up toys.
There’s [name] picking up toys.
There’s [name] picking up toys,
Putting them all away.

(Repeat.)

Make sure to return Learning Lab items back to the box when you’re done using them so they can be used in future lessons!
Bible Story Time

Setting the Stage

**SUPPLIES:** paper clips, yarn, craft magnet, masking tape, yardstick, colored paper, scissors

Before class, cut a fish shape from colored paper for each child in your class. You'll need an even number of blue, orange, and yellow fish, plus one purple fish. You can do this quickly by stacking three or four sheets of paper and cutting them at the same time. Attach a large paper clip to each fish. Then tie a 3-foot length of yarn to the end of a yardstick or dowel to make a fishing pole. Tie a craft magnet to the end of the yarn.

Mark a “shoreline” by placing a wavy line of masking tape across the floor. Scatter the fish in the “water.”

Tell the children you’ll clap your hands to get their attention. Explain that when you clap your hands, children are to stop what they’re doing, raise their hands, and focus on you. Encourage children to respond quickly so you’ll have time for all the fun activities you’ve planned.

Have children gather near the shoreline. Say: **Our Bible story today takes place near a river.**

Ask:  • What are some things people do at a river? (Swim; fish; ride in a boat.)

Point to the shoreline and say: **We’re going to fish in this river today. When it’s your turn, throw out your line and see what you catch.** Hold up your fish so everyone can see it, pass the fishing line to the next person, and sit down near the “water.” When everyone has fished, put the pole out of sight.

Pause. If you caught a blue fish, stand up and say, “Fished my wish!” Pause. If you caught an orange fish, jump up and say, “Fished my wish!” Pause. If you caught a yellow fish, pretend to swim around the room, and then sit down.

Pause. If you caught a purple fish, you get to share the good news with everyone! Give the child with the purple fish the “Good News” stamp and ink pad. Allow him or her to stamp each child’s hand then return the ink pad and stamp to you.

Ask:  • Which fish do you think was the best one to catch? Why? (The blue one because I like giving high fives; the yellow one because swimming in air is silly; the purple one because spreading the good news is fun!)

• **Who are we talking about when we share the good news?** (Jesus!)

Say: **Our Bible verse for today is from Acts 16:31a. Let’s take a quick look at it:** ►“Believe in the Lord Jesus.” The good news we’re talking about is Jesus! In our Bible story, a woman named Lydia caught something even better than a fish at the river…and she wasn’t even fishing! When Lydia went to the river to pray, she met some people who shared with her about Jesus, and she caught the good news! Today we’ll learn what happened to Lydia and everyone who lived in her house. We’ll discover that ►**God wants us to share the good news about Jesus.**

Have children set their fish aside until it’s time to go home.
**Bible Song and Prayer Time**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, construction paper, scissors, basket or box, CD player

Before class, make surprise cards for this activity by cutting construction paper into 2x6-inch slips. Prepare a surprise card for each child, plus a few extras for visitors. Fold the cards in half, and then stamp the “Good News” stamp inside one of the surprise cards. Bookmark *Acts 16:11-15* in the Bible you’ll be using.

Have children sit in a circle. Say: **Now it’s time to choose a Bible person to bring me the Bible marked with today’s Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, I’ll pass out the surprise cards. Don’t look inside your surprise card until the song is over.**

Lead the children in singing “Read God’s Book” (track 3) with the CD to the tune of “The Muffin Man.” As you sing, pass out the folded surprise cards.

Now it’s time to read God’s book,
Now it’s time to read God’s book.
Let’s hear a Bible story.

Now it’s time to read God’s book,
Now it’s time to read God’s book.
Let’s hear a Bible story.

(Repeat.)

After the song, say: **You may look inside your surprise cards. The person who has the newspaper stamped inside his or her card will be our Bible person for today.**

Identify the Bible person, and then have the rest of the children clap for him or her. Ask the Bible person to bring you the Bible. Help the Bible person open the Bible to the marked place and show children where your story comes from. Then have the Bible person sit down.

Say: **[Name] was our special Bible person today. Each week we’ll have only one special Bible person, but each one of you is a special part of our class! Today we’re all learning that God wants us to share the good news about Jesus.**

Let’s say a special prayer now and ask God to help us obey him. I’ll pass around this basket. When the basket comes to you, put your surprise card in it and say, “God, help us tell people the good news about Jesus.”

Pass around the basket or box. When you’ve collected everyone’s surprise card, set the basket aside and pick up the Bible. Lead children in this prayer: **Dear God, thank you for the Bible and all the stories in it. Teach us today that you want us to share the good news about Jesus. In Jesus’ name, amen.**
Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player, purple cloths from Option 1

Have children sit in a circle. Hold up the Bible and say:

**Our story this week comes from the book of Acts in the Bible. It’s a story about a man we’ve been learning about.** Hold up the Bible Big Book: Saul’s Surprise, and point to the picture on the cover. **Who can tell me something about the man in this picture?** Call on children to tell you about Saul and how he came to follow God. Put the Bible Big Book away, and then continue: **That’s right. After Saul decided to follow God, he traveled to many different cities telling the people there about Jesus. Saul also used a different name. His new friends called him Paul. Paul wanted everyone to know that he had changed and was now a follower of Jesus.** Unfold the Learning Mat: Good News! Paul’s Missionary Journeys, and hold it up so children can see it. **This Learning Mat is like a map that shows us where Paul went when he told people about Jesus. Since it helps us learn about Paul, we can call it our Learning Map!** Point out several of the places that Paul went to on his journeys.

Show kids where Philippi is located. Then say: **Paul went to the city of Philippi. Let’s pretend we’re traveling in a boat to Philippi.** Have children pretend to row to a different corner of the room. Carry the Learning Mat with you, and then have children sit down around the opened Learning Mat. **Our Learning Mat shows us a picture of something that happened in Philippi. We’ll listen to the story on the CD.** If children made the purple cloths from Option 1, distribute them now. If you didn’t choose Option 1, give each child a purple napkin. **When you hear the name Jesus, wave your purple cloth in the air to remind us that Lydia heard the good news about Jesus.** Play “Lydia Believes” (track 19) on the CD.

When the track ends, turn off the CD player and ask:

- **What made Lydia so excited?** (The good news about Jesus; hearing that she could live in heaven with Jesus.)

- **What did Lydia do to show her happiness?** (Got baptized; had Paul and his friends stay at her house; started a church.)

Say: **Because Paul told Lydia the good news about Jesus, Lydia and her family started the first church in Philippi. Then a lot more people came to know and follow Jesus! God wants us to share the good news about Jesus, too.**

Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: none

Have children stand together in a circle. Say: **God wants us to share the good news about Jesus.** In our great big world, there are many men, women, and children just like you who don’t know about Jesus. It’s important that they hear the good news, too! What places in our great big world can you think of where we can tell others about Jesus? Let the children take turns...
naming a place. Make suggestions as needed until everyone has named a place. Ask children to remember the place they named as you play the following game.

Toss the **bubble ball** into the circle and show children how it hops from one side of the circle to the other, and then say: *Let’s take turns gently tossing the bubble ball into the circle and watch it skip from person to person and place to place like this. When the ball skips over to you, say the name of your place and think about the children who live there. Then shout out, “Jesus loves you.” Give an example, such as, “Africa! Jesus loves you,” and then say: *When the bubble ball comes to you, I will stamp your hand with the “Good News” stamp, and we will see how long it takes before the good news is shared with everyone in our circle.*

After everyone’s hand has been stamped, ask: • **Who needs to hear about Jesus?** (My friend next door; my grandma; everyone in the world needs to hear the good news.)  
• **Why is it important for everyone to hear about God’s Son?** (God wants everyone to believe in him; he wants people to know he loves them.)  
• **Whom can you tell about Jesus?** Let the children name a person they know.

Say: ► God wants us to share the good news about Jesus all across the world. Wherever we go, there are people who don’t know Jesus loves them and that he died for their sins. Let’s be like the Apostle Paul and his friends and tell everyone we know that God loves them.  

Ask children to pray for the person they thought of who needs to hear about Jesus, and then say: I wonder if our friend Pockets knows that God wants us to share the good news about Jesus. Let’s toss the bubble ball one more time before we put it away. When it stops bouncing, we’ll call Pockets by saying, “Pockets, Jesus loves you!”

**Closing**

**Waiting for Bumper**

**SUPPLIES:** none

Bring out Pockets the Kangaroo, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Pockets away and out of sight.

**Pockets:** (Excitedly) Did he come? Is Bumper here today?  
**Teacher:** (Looking around the class) Bumper? No, I don’t think I’ve met anyone named Bumper. Who’s Bumper?  
**Pockets:** Bumper is one of my friends from kangaroo school. I don’t think he knows much of anything about Jesus, so I keep inviting him to Sunday school.  
**Teacher:** That’s a super idea, Pockets!  
**Pockets:** (Sadly) Yeah, but he never comes. If he never comes, how’s he ever going to hear the good news about Jesus?
Teacher: I think our Bible story today might give you some ideas. Do you remember about the man we talked about the last few weeks, the man named Saul?

Pockets: Yep. He was the man who was blind, but he got healed and then started telling everybody about Jesus.

Teacher: That’s right, Pockets, that’s the man. Well, Saul also used a different name. Children, can you tell Pockets what Saul’s new name was? *(Have children tell Pockets that Saul’s new name was Paul.)*

Pockets: Did Paul tell anybody about Jesus?

Teacher: Yes, he did! He told many people about Jesus. And today we learned about one of those people Paul talked to. Who’d like to tell Pockets about Lydia? *(Have children tell Pockets that Lydia went to the river to worship and heard Paul tell the good news about Jesus. Be sure they explain that Lydia became a Christian.)*

Pockets: See, that’s why I want to bring Bumper here! So he can hear about Jesus, just like Lydia.

Teacher: But Pockets, Lydia didn’t go to Paul. Paul went to Lydia. He found her and her friends at the river and told them about Jesus right there! Then Lydia went and told her family the good news.

Pockets: So what’s that got to do with Bumper?

Teacher: Well, Pockets, you’ve come here to learn everything you can about Jesus, right?

Pockets: Yeah, yeah…

Teacher: Well, you can go back to Bumper and share the good news, just as Lydia went back and shared with the people at her house.

Pockets: You mean Bumper doesn’t have to hear it from you?

Teacher: No! Bumper can hear the good news from anyone who knows Jesus. Someone like you, Pockets.

Pockets: All right! If Bumper won’t come here, then I’ll go to Bumper. I bet he’ll be happy to hear the good news about Jesus! Bye, everyone! See you next week!

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**Purple People Prayer**

**SUPPLIES:** purple cloths from Option 1, snacks from Option 3

Have children form a circle. Lay the purple cloths from Option 1 on the floor in the middle of the circle.

Ask: • Why is purple an important color for us in today’s lesson? *(Lydia sold purple cloth; only rich people got to have purple cloth.)*

• What do these purple cloths remind you of? *(Lydia; that we should tell everybody the good news about Jesus; people who tell me about Jesus.)*
Say: We learned today that it doesn’t matter whether people are rich or poor—everybody can hear the good news about Jesus. Since Lydia sold purple cloth, we can remember to tell people about Jesus when we see the color purple. While I pass out these purple people snacks, think of a “purple person” in your life—someone you can tell about Jesus. Distribute the snacks made in Option 3. Jesus is a forever friend to everyone who believes in him. God wants us to share the good news about Jesus. Everyone has purple people in their lives they can share the good news with. Have the children hold their snacks while you pray:

God, help me to see
Who my purple people might be.
Help me, Lord, to share
Good news about Jesus everywhere!
Lord, help me do
Just what you have asked me to.
In Jesus’ name, amen.

After children eat their snacks, instruct them to take their purple cloths home as reminders to look for “purple people” every day.

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Today I Learned…” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week’s topic.
**Lively Learning: Toss and Tell**

Go outside or find a large open space for this game. Choose one child to be Paul, and have the rest of the children form a circle around him or her. Give Paul a purple cloth, and explain that when Paul tosses the cloth in the air, everyone may start taking giant steps away. When the cloth touches the ground, Paul will shout, “Good news, good news,” and the others must freeze where they are. Then Paul may take three hops to the nearest person, touch him or her with the cloth, and tell some good news about Jesus. Then that person becomes the next Paul. As children play, remind them that we’re like Paul when we tell others the good news about Jesus.

**Make to Take: Open Your Heart**

Set out safety scissors and half sheets of purple construction paper. Show children how to fold their paper accordion-style into fourths and then cut half of a heart shape. Have children open the folded paper to reveal one whole heart and two halves. Demonstrate how to fold the halves toward the middle, so they make “doors.” Explain that the paper hearts can remind us that Lydia opened her heart to the good news about Jesus.

**Treat to Eat: Grape Goodies**

Bring in grape jelly and refrigerated sugar cookie dough. Give each child two tablespoons of dough, and have him or her roll it into a ball on a sheet of wax paper. Then show children how to press their thumbs into the dough to make a thumbprint. Place the treats about 1 inch apart on a greased cookie sheet, and bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. While the cookies are warm, help children drop a spoonful of grape jelly into the thumbprints. Children can share their cookies with others and carry the message, “Good news! Jesus loves you!”

**Story Picture: Lydia Believes**

Give each child a photocopy of the “Today I Learned…” handout. Set out crayons, glue sticks, and scraps of purple construction paper. Show children how to tear small pieces of purple paper and glue them to Lydia’s basket. As children color their pictures, remind them that God wants us to share the good news about Jesus, just like Paul did.
Verse to Learn

“Believe in the Lord Jesus” (Acts 16:31a).

Ask Me...

- Who did Lydia tell about Jesus?
- Who is one person you can share the good news about Jesus with this week?
- How can our family encourage those who tell others about God?

Family Fun

- On index cards, write the names or draw pictures of people your family would like to tell about Jesus. Attach a large paper clip to each card, and lay the cards face down in the middle of a room. Tie a craft magnet to a 2- or 3-foot length of yarn, and then let each family member take turns “casting” into the “river.” During the week, have family members pray for the people they “caught.”

Today I Learned...

Today your child learned that God wants us to share the good news about Jesus. Children learned that Paul told Lydia about Jesus and Lydia believed. They talked about looking for “purple people”—those who are waiting to hear the good news about Jesus.

Lydia Believes (Acts 16:11-15)