

Rhythms of Grace Worship • June Year 3

Theme: Lydia-An Early Christian

Scripture: Acts 16:11-15

Date: _____

Location: _____

Volunteer Roles:

Facilitator _____

Storyteller _____

Celebrant _____

Center Leader _____

Guide _____

Items needed for this Session

Gathering: large brown cross made out of craft paper hung on wall with a large purple heart in the middle, one large decorated purple fish with Lydia's name, large purple fish with participant's name on one plus a few blank, markers, crayons, jewels, sequins, feathers (any decorative supplies), and glue.

Storytelling: Jesus doll, Bible, Storytelling page, felt board and felt pieces; women (one with a purple robe and headpiece for Lydia), a felt Paul figure, river, a city and palm trees, map of Philippi in Macedonia (see Resources for suggestions) .

Response Activities:

Christians Open their Hearts- large paper with heart shape in center, pictures of people opening their heart to others (helping, listening, caring for, hugging, etc)., purple heart just larger than drawn heart on the paper, glue.

Purple Cloth Sort- Several types of textured purple material (fur, smooth, silky...), name cards for each texture.

Finding Christians- Jenga© game any size (large one works very well but regular will do), early Christian fish shaped stickers. If you can't find, you can make them out of return labels.

Following Jesus- Felt board and pieces from storytelling plus extra people, a few pieces like the Christian fish sign, a village, table and chairs for meal, etc.

Regathering: "Dear Christians, Come Over", see lesson plan for instructions, *Jesu, Jesu*, elements for the Eucharistic table (see Eucharist-Book 1)

Eucharist: altar table, *Jesu, Jesu*, and elements (pita bread/rice crackers, juice, chalice, paten, purificator, corporal, altar cloth), Eucharistic Prayer (see Book 1 p. 100), *Gather our Hearts* song lyrics (see book 1 p. 99)

Dismissal: *Jesus Loves Me* song lyrics (see Book 1 p. 99 and CD Yr. 2 additional resources)

Lesson Plan • Lydia-An Early Christian• June Yr. 3

Gathering: Participants find their name on a fish symbol and decorate the fish. When done have the fish added to the cross with Lydia's fish. Explain that the fish is an early Christian's sign to others that they believed in Christ. (this is repeated in story also)

Storytelling: Use Heart Cross from Gathering, Jesus doll, Bible, Storytelling page, a few women felt figures (one with a purple robe and headpiece for Lydia), a felt Paul figure, river, a city and palm trees, map of Phillipi in Macedonia (see Resources).

Response Activities:

Christians open their hearts- Each person will take a large piece of heavy paper with a large heart drawn on it. They will look through the pictures and glue one that they think shows a Christian opening their hearts to others within the heart outline. Trace the outer edge of the drawn heart with glue then taking 2 sides of a purple heart and attach with the glue. Participants can open up heart to see the example of a Christian showing God's love.

Purple Cloth Sort- The printed description cards are placed near the squares of different types of purple material. Match the description cards to the different fabrics.

Finding Christians— Using a giant (or regular size) Jenga®, participants will find the blocks with purple fish on them while playing the game and try to remove those blocks first.

Following Jesus- Taking the story pieces and felt board participants can tell the story of the early Christians who followed Jesus; meeting each other and giving each other the fish sign, sharing a meal together, etc.

Regathering: "Dear Christians Come Over"-Play a game of Red Rover with participants but instead use the words, "Dear Christians, Dear Christians with socks on come over" renaming articles of clothing, hair color, etc. till all are over. As participants come over they make the sign of the fish. - Singing *Jesu, Jesu*, participants pick up an element for placement at the altar, and as the clergy sets the table all create a circle around the altar.

Eucharist: Sing: *Gather our Hearts*

Gather our hearts, oh God
Gather our thoughts, oh God
Bring us together around you

Celebration of the Eucharist

Dismissal: All sing and sign *Jesus Loves Me*

Celebrant provides the blessing:

Celebrant: "Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord"

Participant: "Thanks be to God!"

Storytelling • Lydia-An Early Christian• June Yr. 3

Place the Bible and Jesus doll by the Storyteller with the felt board and felt pieces, and the map of the Philippi in Macedonia.

Our story today is from the Bible, (*show the Bible*) our book that tells the stories of God and God's people, of Jesus (*show Jesus doll*), God's son, and of how much God loves us (*place hands over heart*).

Today's story comes from the part of our Bible that tells about Jesus's life, the lives of the disciples, and the beginning of the early church. It is called the New Testament. After Jesus rose from the dead on Easter he spent time with his special followers, his disciples. But after 40 days Jesus told his friends it was time for him to go and be with his father, God. He told the disciples that they were to continue his work here in the world. And, he told them to teach others about how God wanted them to live and to love not only each other but also every living thing.

Later others, like Paul, who we heard about last year, having been filled with the love of God went out into the world to share the story of God and Jesus. Paul was called by God to travel throughout the Mediterranean area sharing the Good News of Christ.

Paul went to Philippi in Macedonia (*show he map with Philippi*). When there, he went outside the gate by a river where he expected to find a place of prayer (*place city, river, and Paul on the road to the river, on the felt board*). He found a group of woman there (*place woman near the river's edge and stones and palm tree by them*). He sat down with them and began to tell them about Jesus. One of the women was named Lydia (*point out Lydia*) who described herself as "a worshipper of God". She was a businesswoman who bought and sold beautiful purple cloth. She was head of a household of her own. Lydia's heart was opened as she listened to Paul. She and her household were baptized into the Christian faith. She said to Paul, please come and stay at my home as my guest whenever you need to. Paul accepted Lydia's invitation and stayed with her on two occasions. Lydia is considered one of the first new Christians.

For Lydia and others becoming followers of Jesus meant breaking away from their parents, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors. It also became dangerous and many had to hide being a Christian. They used the sign of a fish (*make the sign of the fish on the felt board*) like we used on our poster to tell others they also believed in Jesus as the Son of God. Even though it was dangerous and hard to be a believer in Jesus, Christians, grew in number and the stories of his life and teachings and God's love for them, spread throughout the world.

Amen!

(After an appropriate pause, the Storyteller goes on to explain the activities of the day)