Preschool–Grade 6

Lydia

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: The Lord opens hearts. When God opens our heart to His Word, we listen carefully and obey right away.
Bible passage: Acts 16:9–15 (and 16:40). Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." *Acts 16:14 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a small box with a lid with a paper inside that says "God loves you," paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Put the paper in the box and close the lid.

1. Opening game: What's in the Box? (5–10 minutes)

Hold up the closed box. Kids get three guesses each at what is inside, but they may not touch it. Then ask: *How can we find out for sure?* Open the box and read the paper. Say: "Some things stay shut until someone opens them. Today we will meet a woman who loved God, and the Lord opened her heart to hear about Jesus."

2. Bible story: The Lord Opened Her Heart (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Acts 16. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

God calls Paul. Paul was traveling to preach about Jesus. **Look up Acts 16:9.** In a vision in the night, a man of Macedonia asked Paul, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Paul and those with him were sure the Lord had called them "to preach the gospel unto them" (16:10). Acts 16 says "we," so the writer was with Paul too.

The trip. They sailed from Troas straight to an island called Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis (16:11). **Look up Acts 16:12.** From there they went to Philippi, the chief (most important) city of that part of Macedonia and a **colony**, a city of Roman people living far from Rome. They stayed there "certain days," some days.

By the river. Look up Acts 16:13. On the sabbath they went out of the city by a river side, "where prayer was wont to be made." **Wont** means usual: it was the usual place people met to pray. They sat down and spoke to the women who **resorted thither**, which means came there.

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Lydia. Look up Acts 16:14. One woman was named Lydia. She was "a seller of purple," which was her work, and she came from the city of Thyatira. She already "worshipped God." She heard Paul, and **the Lord opened her heart**, so that she **attended unto**, which means listened carefully to, the things Paul spoke.

Lydia is baptized. Look up Acts 16:15. Lydia was baptized, and her **household**, the people of her house. Then she **besought** them (begged them): "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." That means, "If you see that I truly believe the Lord, come and stay with me." "She **constrained** us" means she urged them so much that they came.

Lydia's house. Paul and Silas were later beaten and put in prison in Philippi (16:22–24). **Look up Acts 16:40.** When they came out, they went to the house of Lydia, saw the **brethren** (the believers), comforted them, and left.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Lydia already worshipped God, but she still needed to hear about Jesus. Why is it important to keep listening to God's Word, even when we already love God?
2. The Lord opened Lydia's heart (16:14). What can shut a heart so it doesn't listen? What can we do to keep our hearts open?
3. When the Lord opened Lydia's heart, she was baptized (16:14–15). Why is it good not to wait to obey God?
4. Lydia opened her house to Paul and his helpers (16:15, 16:40). How can your family welcome people?
5. Lydia met God's people at a place of prayer (16:13). Why is it good to be where people pray?

Recall questions

1. What city did Paul come to? *(Philippi, Acts 16:12)*
2. What did Lydia sell? *(Purple, 16:14)*
3. Who opened Lydia's heart? *(The Lord, 16:14)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **a seller of purple** means her work was selling purple, and **attended unto** means listened carefully. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The Lord opened Lydia's heart, and she obeyed. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: listen carefully when God's Word is read or preached, and do what it says right away. Then find one way to welcome someone.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Acts 16:9: What did the man of Macedonia say? *("Come over into Macedonia, and help us")*
2. Acts 16:11: Where did they sail from? *(Troas)*
3. Acts 16:12: What city was the chief city of that part of Macedonia? *(Philippi)*
4. Acts 16:13: On what day did they go to the river side? *(The sabbath)*
5. Acts 16:14: What city did Lydia come from? *(Thyatira)*
6. Acts 16:14: Who opened Lydia's heart? *(The Lord)*
7. Acts 16:15: Where did Lydia ask them to stay? *(In her house)*
8. Acts 16:40: Where did Paul and Silas go when they came out of prison? *(The house of Lydia)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Your Word. Open our hearts to listen carefully and obey You right away, like Lydia. Help us welcome others the way she did. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks who was in Lydia's household, or why Paul was in prison: the Bible says "her household" (Acts 16:15) and does not tell us who they were, so we don't guess. The prison story is in Acts 16:16–40 (Paul and Silas).

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