



Making Space for All God's Children

What's It All About?

L'Nea found the junior classroom and stepped inside. Three girls glanced up, but quickly resumed their giggling huddle. Two boys chased each other around a table, oblivious to the newcomer. A man and a woman put finishing touches on a bulletin board without looking up. L'Nea quickly chose a chair closest to the door. She looked down, fidgeting with the Bible in her lap. She

stared at the pages blankly while pretending to read. She hated coming to new places. She missed her old school, church, and most of all her friends. *So much for visiting this new church*, she thought. She felt like a nobody.

Suddenly the door flung open and two girls bounded into the room, right in front of L'Nea. "We're here. Now we can start," laughed the girl in the blue sweater. She plopped down in the chair to the right of L'Nea.

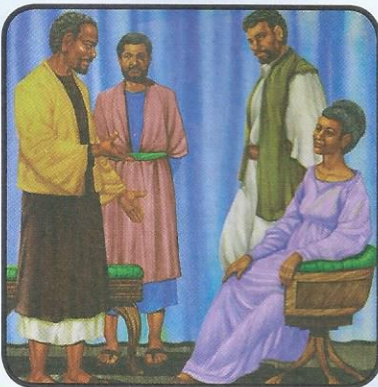
"Yeah! Dad said we always run late when he works the night shift!" added the second. The girl in the red sweater, squeezed into a chair on L'Nea's left.

"Hi, we're the Brooks twins. I'm Angie and this is my sister, Amy. We're glad you're here," said the girl in blue. "Hey, everyone, come meet L'Nea!" The Juniors gathered round the table as Angie and Amy began introductions. "This is Crafty Cara, Fashionable Francine, Persnickety Patty, Leaping Larry, and Silly Sam." Everyone laughed at the twins' antics. In no time, L'Nea felt right at home and had met everyone. These girls had character!

Mr. and Mrs. Sharp introduced themselves.

"Juniors, you'll never believe what our lesson is about today. Hospitality! We were so busy we didn't practice much hospitality when L'Nea arrived. Please forgive us. Perhaps this is a good way to begin. If hospitality means kindness to make strangers feel welcome and more like our guests, what went wrong this morning? What will we do next time? And, who saved the day for all of us?" asked Mr. Sharp.

Do you think the children and teachers meant to be rude? Why or why not? Can you recall times you regretted not welcoming others into your circle of friends? In what ways were the twins hospitable?



Learning From God

Paul traveled to Philippi on his second missionary journey. On the Sabbath, he met some worshipers. Lydia had her own business. She sold purple cloth. Only rich people could afford such a luxury. When Paul met Lydia and her friends, they were worshipping God as the Jews did. Paul told the people about Jesus. Lydia's life was changed that day. Lydia wanted to show her gratitude.

Acts 16:11–15, 40; 1 Corinthians 1:26–30, NIV—

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. **12** From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. **13** On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. **14** One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. **15** When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

[Paul told about Jesus, but the Lord caused Lydia to understand and believe. As a true believer in Jesus, one of Lydia's first decisions was to invite the missionaries to her house. Hospitality is a Christian quality.]

40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

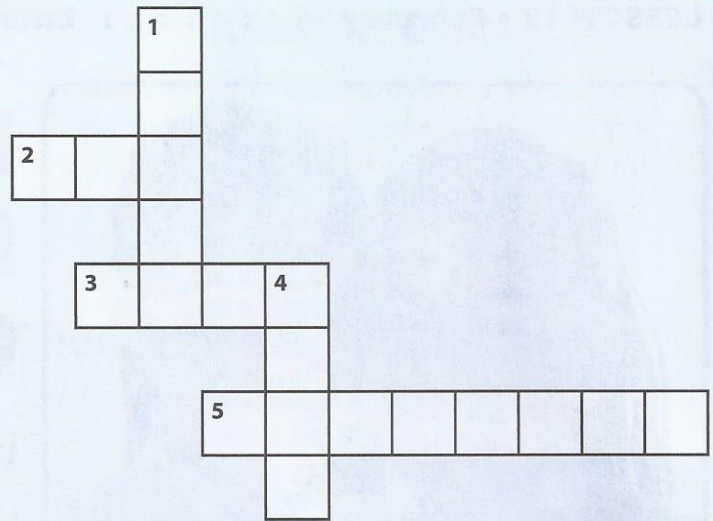
[Even after Paul was put into prison, Lydia and the believers welcomed him back.]

1 Corinthians 1:26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. **28** God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, **29** so that no one may boast before him. **30** It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

[God calls all people to salvation: rich and poor; wise and foolish; powerful and powerless. No one can boast about themselves and their accomplishments. Salvation is through God alone.]

What I Have Learned

Use the clues to recall who you read about in the Scripture. Retell the story of Lydia to a partner.



Across

- 2. Makes known wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification
- 3. Missionary who told of Jesus

- 5. People joining Lydia at her home

Down

- 1. Seller of purple cloth
- 4. Opened Lydia's heart to understand

Keep In Mind

"When [Lydia] and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us"

(Acts 16:15, NIV).

Choosing What's Best

Think about your friends and family. Are there people you choose to exclude? Why? What situations make you proud of yourself or your friends and family, but cause you to be prejudiced against others? Ask God to show you where you sin in relationships. Ask God to forgive you and help you be more hospitable.

Doing My Part

For the next five days you are to intentionally show kindness to someone in your school, family, or community. Be kind to someone others avoid. Speak to a loner. Show hospitality without being asked. Have a servant's heart. See other people as more important than yourself. Be ready to share at least one experience next week.