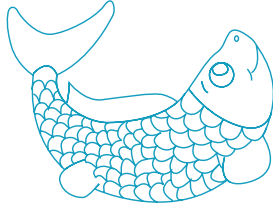




ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT



Gracie and the Green Sea Turtle

It was a bright sunny day within the Red Sea coral reef. Gracie and her friends Angie Angelfish and Belinda Butterflyfish were having a girls-only play date. They had started a game of Follow the Leader. Each girl took a turn being the leader. Angie led by swimming upside down. Belinda led by singing a bubble song while she swam. Gracie led by swimming around in circles that got bigger and bigger as she swam.

While they were playing their game, Old Codfish watched from beside a fan coral with a grin on his face. He remembered his own days of play from his childhood, and watching the girls brought back these good memories.

When the girls tired of their game, they came over to Old Codfish and asked what they should do next.

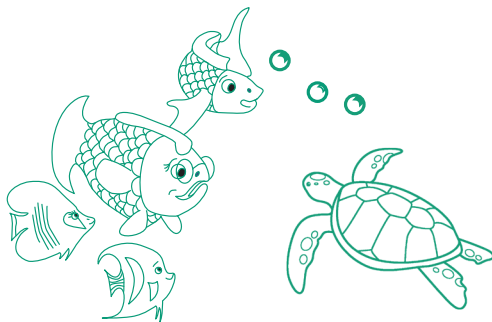
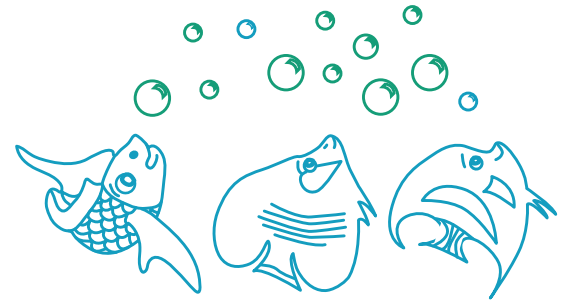
Old Codfish replied, “I would love to introduce you to our latest visitor. Her name is Tabitha, and she is a green sea turtle.”

“A green sea turtle!” exclaimed Gracie. “I’ve never met a sea turtle before.”

“Well, you don’t see them very often this close to the shore, but Tabitha has come back to lay her eggs on the same beach where she was born years ago,” answered Old Codfish.

“We would love to meet this almost mother sea turtle,” chorused all three of the girl fish.

The four of them journeyed closer to the shore and saw in front of them Tabitha, the green sea turtle, resting up after her long journey.



“Greetings, little fishes!” remarked Tabitha. “Old Codfish, it is good to see you again. I’m afraid you are a little early, if you came to bless my eggs.”

“Tabitha, I brought these very bright girl fish to meet you, because of your work with the Lydia Club. I hope you will share your wisdom with them and help them to become true leaders,” Old Codfish replied before swimming away.

“Hmm, I do have some time before the tide is right to lay my eggs. Tell me, little ones, do you know who Lydia was in the God of the Seas stories?” Tabitha asked.

“No, we have never heard of her,” replied Gracie, speaking on behalf of all of them.

“Lydia was one of the first people in her region to begin following the Son of the God of the Seas. She was a businesswoman and sold fine purple cloth and inspired the Lydia Club,” Tabitha told the girls.

“So, what is the Lydia Club?” asked Belinda. “Is it sort of like a fan club for Lydia?”

“Not exactly,” replied Tabitha. “It is an organization throughout the seas that helps smart young fish like yourselves to start businesses that serve others.”

“What kind of businesses?” asked Angie, thinking of all her algae plants.

“Any kind where you can use your gifts for helping others,” answered Tabitha.

“I’ve always wanted to sell my algae plants,” continued Angie. “I have so many, too many for myself and my friends.”

“It sounds like you are a gardener, so selling your plants would be a good business to start,” said Tabitha.

“Perhaps you could sell your plants to sea creatures who live in places where there are not many growing things. We learned a while back that these are called food deserts,” suggested Gracie.

“Yes!” Angie said enthusiastically. “That way my plants will serve many others who really need them.”

“That sounds like a good business plan, Angie, that will benefit many others,” agreed Tabitha. “What business would you like to start, Belinda? It looks like you have an idea.”

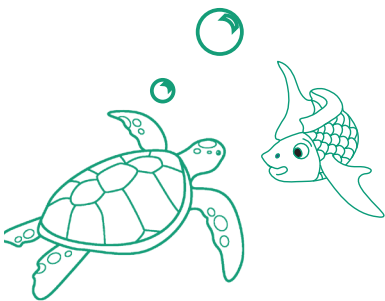
“I love music,” said Belinda. “I’ve even composed a few songs. Maybe I could sell my songs to others who love music, too.”

“Ooh!” said Gracie. “What if you composed some new songs for different feelings, like happy songs, sad songs, songs when you’re afraid or angry? That way, depending on how the sea creature is feeling, you would have a song just for them.”

“That’s a great idea!” said Belinda. “I already have an idea for a happy song from our day so far.”

“This reminds me of songs that were addressed to the God of the Seas,” Tabitha said thoughtfully. “Those songs are called psalms and they have all different moods to them. They remind me that I can bring all the ways that I feel at different times to the God of the Seas. Gracie, what business are you considering?”

Gracie paused for a long time and then said slowly, “I don’t think I have anything that I can sell. I made a treasure box once with shells and shiny things, but I don’t think I could make enough of these to start a business. Besides, I don’t see how the boxes would serve other sea creatures. Angie’s plants give people who don’t have fresh food something good to eat. Belinda’s songs help to show others that they are not alone in how they are feeling, but I don’t have anything like that to share.”



“Well,” replied Tabitha, “from what I have seen so far, you have a gift of serving others by giving good advice. You helped Angie find a market for her plants to creatures that really needed them. You helped Belinda to expand her thinking to composing songs for sea creatures who felt many different emotions.”

“That’s true,” said Gracie thoughtfully, “but is that really a business — helping others?”

“Do you know any stories about my namesake, Tabitha?” asked the sea turtle.

Gracie shook her head. Tabitha continued, “She was another woman who followed

the Son of the God of the Seas. The people loved her because she was known for her good works and the way she served others.”

“So, I am like you, Tabitha?” Gracie asked shyly. “You have helped each of us become a better leader today.”

“I hope so,” replied Tabitha. “It is time for me now to lay my eggs, so I will need to leave you.”

“Can we come with you?” chorused the girls.

“You can escort me to the edge of the water, but I will need to crawl the rest of the way onto the beach where I was born in order to lay my eggs.”

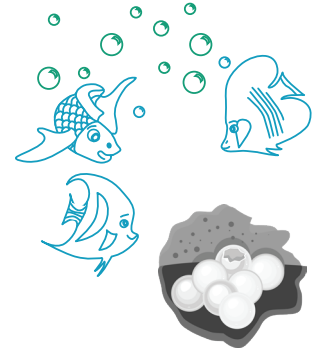
The girls followed Tabitha and watched as she made her difficult trek to lay her eggs on the beach and then return to the water.

“Will the eggs be all right?” asked Gracie.

“I pray that the God of the Seas will watch over them,” replied Tabitha.

“We’ll watch and pray, too,” said Gracie, and her friends nodded.

Then Belinda led them in a happy song to the God of the Seas for their new friendship and ideas for leading others. Afterward they feasted on Angie’s most tasty algae and shared stories of their other adventures.



For younger children:

- Learn more about Lydia from the Bible. You can find her story in Acts 16:11–15. She and her family were the first people to follow Jesus on the European continent. Lydia sold purple cloth because it was used and worn by important people. What color do you like to wear? Why?
- Play Follow the Leader with each person taking a turn doing a motion or action that is unique to them. Make sure that each person has a turn. After the game, talk about women you know whom you see as leaders or have heard of that are serving others.
- Gracie, Angie and Belinda all found something that they could share or do for others from what they had. What is something you can share? One thing you can share is collecting coins and bills in your fish bank for One Great Hour of Sharing. This will help others around the world in many different ways.

For older children:

- Learn more about Tabitha’s story from the Bible. She was also called Dorcas in the Greek language. You can find her amazing story in Acts 9:36–42. Why do you think that people loved Tabitha so much?
- Like Tabitha, a woman named Smitha Krishnan from India loved to sew and make clothing for others. Explore her story at specialofferings.pcusa.org/resource/restoring-dignity-to-indias-most-oppressed and see how One Great Hour of Sharing was able to help her and her business when she needed a hand.
- As you think about your own gifts and talents, how can you use them to serve others? One way you can help many people is to contribute money you have collected to One Great Hour of Sharing. This Offering helps people all over the world through the work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program or Self Development of People — all helping others to thrive.