Preschool–Grade 6

Peter Raises Dorcas

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

Main point: Serve others with kind deeds. God hears prayer, and when He works, people believe in the Lord.
Bible passage: Acts 9:36–43. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." *Acts 9:36 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Act It Out (5–10 minutes)

Whisper a kind deed to one child, who acts it out without talking while the class guesses: carrying groceries, folding laundry, sharing lunch, raking leaves for a neighbor, reading to a little brother, making a card for someone who is sick. Ask: *Which of these could you do this week? Which would cost you nothing but time?* Say: "Today we will meet a woman whose whole life was full of kind deeds."

2. Bible story: Peter Raises Dorcas (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Acts 9. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Just before this story. Peter was visiting the believers in a town called Lydda. A man named Aeneas had been in bed for eight years, sick with the **palsy**, which means he could not move. **Look up Acts 9:34.** Peter said, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Peter knew the power was not his own. It was the power of Jesus. Many people turned to the Lord (9:32–35).

Dorcas. Look up Acts 9:36. A **disciple** is a follower of Jesus. **By interpretation** means in another language: Tabitha and Dorcas are the same name in two languages. **Almsdeeds** are gifts to the poor.

Sick, and died. In those days Dorcas got sick and died. Her friends washed her and laid her in an **upper chamber**, an upstairs room (9:37). Lydda was **nigh**, which means near, to Joppa, so the disciples sent two men to Peter, asking him not to **delay**, not to wait (9:38).

The widows. Look up Acts 9:39. Widows are women whose husbands have died. They stood by Peter weeping and showed him the coats and garments Dorcas made "while she was with them."

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"Tabitha, arise." Look up Acts 9:40. Put them all forth means he sent them all out of the room. Peter kneeled and prayed first. Then he said, "Tabitha, arise," and she opened her eyes and sat up. **Look up Acts 9:41. Presented her alive** means he showed them she was living.

Many believed. Look up Acts 9:42. God's work brought people to the Lord. Peter **tarried**, which means stayed, many days in Joppa with Simon, a **tanner**, a man who made leather (9:43).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. The widows showed Peter the coats Dorcas had made (9:39). What would people be able to show about the kind things you do?
2. Peter kneeled down and prayed before he said, "Tabitha, arise" (9:40). Why do you think he prayed first?
3. Peter told Aeneas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole" (9:34). Whose power raised Dorcas? Why does that matter?
4. Many believed in the Lord because of what happened (9:42). How can kindness help people see what God is like?
5. The widows showed Peter coats Dorcas had made (9:39). Who around you needs help this week?

Recall questions

1. In which town did Dorcas live? *(Joppa, Acts 9:36)*
2. How many men did the disciples send to Peter? *(Two, 9:38)*
3. What did Dorcas do when she saw Peter? *(She sat up, 9:40)*

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

Explain the old words: a **disciple** is a follower of Jesus, **by interpretation** means in another language, **good works** are kind deeds, and **almsdeeds** are gifts to the poor. 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.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Peter prayed, God raised Dorcas, and many believed in the Lord. 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: find one person who needs help and do something kind for them, without being asked.

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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 9:33: How long had Aeneas kept his bed? *(Eight years)*
2. Acts 9:36: What was Dorcas full of? *(Good works and almsdeeds)*
3. Acts 9:37: Where did they lay Dorcas? *(In an upper chamber)*
4. Acts 9:38: Which town was near Joppa? *(Lydda)*
5. Acts 9:39: What did the widows show Peter? *(The coats and garments which Dorcas made)*
6. Acts 9:40: What did Peter do before he spoke to Tabitha? *(He kneeled down and prayed)*
7. Acts 9:41: How did Peter help her up? *(He gave her his hand and lifted her up)*
8. Acts 9:43: Who did Peter stay with in Joppa? *(Simon a tanner)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You hear prayer and that You give life. Fill our lives with good works, like Dorcas, so people see You and believe. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why God doesn't raise everyone who dies: answer simply and gently. The Bible doesn't tell us all of God's reasons. Jesus rose again and lives forever (1 Corinthians 15:4), and He is with us when we are sad. If a child is grieving, tell their parents so they can help.

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