Preschool–Grade 6

Peter Raises Dorcas

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: A life full of good works points people to God, and God answers prayer in the name of Jesus.
Bible passage: Acts 9:32–43. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." *Matthew 5:16 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Acts 9:32–43, Acts 3:12 and Matthew 5:16. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Free Kindness List (5–10 minutes)

Give students two minutes to list, alone or in pairs, as many ways as they can to help someone that cost no money. Then read the lists out loud. Cross off any that appear on more than one list; the pair with the most left wins. Ask: *Which of these do you actually do? Which ones would someone notice and remember?* Say: "Today we will read about a woman whose good works were so real that people could show them to Peter."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Acts 9:32–43. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **all quarters** (9:32): all the places; **saints** (9:32, 9:41): believers, God's people
- **kept his bed** (9:33): stayed in bed; **sick of the palsy** (9:33): unable to move
- **maketh thee whole** (9:34): makes you well; **turned to the Lord** (9:35): began to follow the Lord
- **by interpretation** (9:36): in another language; **almsdeeds** (9:36): gifts to the poor
- **upper chamber** (9:37): an upstairs room; **nigh** (9:38): near; **delay** (9:38): wait
- **widows** (9:39): women whose husbands had died
- **put them all forth** (9:40): sent them all out of the room; **presented her alive** (9:41): showed them she was living
- **tarried** (9:43): stayed; **tanner** (9:43): a man who made leather

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3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Peter told Aeneas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole" (9:34), and in Acts 3:12 he told a crowd it was not "by our own power or holiness." Why does it matter whose name and power heals?
2. When Dorcas died, the widows showed Peter the coats and garments she had made (9:39). What would people be able to hold up from your life?
3. Peter "put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed" (9:40). Why might he have wanted to pray alone first?
4. "Many believed in the Lord" (9:42). How did God use one woman's kindness and one man's prayer to reach a whole town?
5. Matthew 5:16 says people "see your good works, and glorify your Father." What is the difference between good works that make people praise you and good works that make them praise God?
6. Widows had no husbands to help them, and they had coats Dorcas made (9:39). Who is easy to overlook at your school, church or neighborhood?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Acts 9:36 and Matthew 5:16: a **disciple** is a follower of Jesus; **by interpretation** means in another language; **almsdeeds** are gifts to the poor; **so shine before men** means shine in front of people; **glorify** means give praise and honor to.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Acts 9:36 this week; keep working on Matthew 5:16 next week too.

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Peter healed in the name of Jesus Christ, and God gave Dorcas life again. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

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6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. If people held up the "coats and garments" of my life, what would they show? What do I want them to show?
2. Who is one overlooked person I could serve this week, and how?
3. Write a short prayer asking God to fill your life with good works that point people to Him.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: do one kind thing for someone who can't pay you back, and don't tell anyone you did it.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You hear prayer and that all power belongs to You. Fill our lives with good works, and let our light shine so that people glorify You. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks about death or about someone they lost: answer honestly and gently. Dorcas really died and was really raised (Acts 9:37, 9:40–41), and the Bible doesn't tell us why God raises some and not others. Jesus rose again and lives forever (1 Corinthians 15:4), and He is with us when we grieve. If a student is grieving, let their parents know.

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