Preschool–Grade 6

Peter Raises Dorcas

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Serve others with kind deeds, like Dorcas did. God hears our prayers.
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, 5 paper strips, a marker, tape, a few small towels or shirts to fold, more paper strips and crayons for a paper chain, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 5 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Acts 9:36 and Acts 9:40.

1. Opening game: Fold and Stack (5 minutes)

Mix up the towels and shirts in a pile. Kids take turns folding one and laying it neatly on a stack. Cheer for each one! Ask: *Who in your family takes care of your clothes? How does that help you?* Say: "Today we will meet a woman who was full of kind deeds and made coats and clothes."

2. Bible story: Peter Raises Dorcas (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Acts 9, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

In a town by the sea called **Joppa** lived a woman who followed Jesus. Her name was **Tabitha**. In another language her name was **Dorcas** (Acts 9:36). Dorcas was full of **good works**, kind things she did for others, and **almsdeeds**, which means gifts to people who were poor (9:36). She made coats and clothes (9:39).

One day Dorcas got sick, and she died (9:37). Her friends were very sad. They laid her in an **upper chamber**, a room upstairs (9:37).

Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, was in a town nearby called Lydda. The believers sent two men to Peter. They asked him to come right away (9:38). Peter got up and went with them (9:39).

When Peter came, they took him up to the upper chamber. All the **widows** were there. Widows are women whose husbands have died. They were crying, and they showed Peter the coats and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was with them (9:39).

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The story continues: Peter sent everyone out of the room. Then he kneeled down, and he **prayed** (9:40). **Read Acts 9:40 from your Bible:** "But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise." Say: "**Arise** means get up!"

Dorcas opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up (9:40). Peter gave her his hand and lifted her up. Then he called the believers and the widows back in, and he showed them that Dorcas was **alive** (9:41)! Everyone in Joppa heard about it, and **many believed in the Lord** (9:42). Only God can give life. Peter prayed, and God answered.

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What two names did the woman in our story have? *(Tabitha and Dorcas, Acts 9:36)*
2. What did Dorcas make for people? *(Coats and garments, clothes, 9:39)*
3. What did Peter do before he said, "Tabitha, arise"? *(He kneeled down and prayed, 9:40)*
4. What happened when Peter said, "Tabitha, arise"? *(She opened her eyes and sat up, 9:40)*
5. What happened when people in Joppa heard about it? *(Many believed in the Lord, 9:42)*

4. Memory verse: Coat Strips (5 minutes)

Tape the 5 strips up in order: *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.* Explain the old words: a **disciple** is someone who follows Jesus, **by interpretation** means "in another language," **good works** are kind things we do, and **almsdeeds** are gifts to the poor. Read the verse together. Then take one strip away and read it again. Keep taking strips away, one each time, until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Dorcas served others, and Peter prayed, and God brought her back to life. Many people believed in the Lord! God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
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: do one kind thing for someone every day, like Dorcas did.

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6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Dorcas word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/dorcas-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/dorcas-craft), or **Good Works Chain:** each child draws or writes one kind thing they can do this week on a paper strip (help set the table, share a toy, make a card for someone who is sick). Link the strips into one long paper chain and hang it in the room. Say: "Dorcas was full of good works. Look how full of good works our class can be!"

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You hear our prayers, and that You give life. Help us serve others with kind deeds, like Dorcas did. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks about dying, or about someone they miss: answer simply and gently. Dorcas really died, and God really brought her back (Acts 9:37, 9:40–41). Only God can give life. God does not always bring people back, but He is with us when we are sad, and Jesus rose again and is alive forever (1 Corinthians 15:4). If a child is grieving, tell their parents so they can help.

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