

Lesson

9

Helping Others

Today is Mother's Day. Some students may not have a mother who is present in their lives. Adapt the lesson as needed to fit the various family situations in your class.

BIBLE BASIS

Dorcas does good works to help other Christians (Acts 9:36-43).

BIBLE TRUTH

God gives His people different gifts to use for helping others.

MEMORY VERSE

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.
1 Peter 4:10

LESSON AIM

That your students will use their God-given gifts to help others.

1

LIFE NEED (5-10 MINUTES)

Play a matching game to find ways people can help each other.



Materials: *Elementary Kid Crafts* Project for Lesson 9, paper clips or small envelopes

2

BIBLE LEARNING (15-20 MINUTES)

Bible Words: Prepare for the Bible story by discussing the words *Dorcas*, *clothes*, and *die*.

■ Materials: *My Bible Book* p. 43, Bible Overview Chart Teaching Aid, Bibles

Bible Story: Listen to a story about a woman who used her gifts to help others.

■ Materials: Bibles

Bible Review: Retell the story by choosing between pictures that are true and false and acting out simple scenes.

■ Materials: *My Bible Book* p. 44, pencils

Memory Work: Learn 1 Peter 4:10.

■ Materials: Bibles

3

BIBLE APPLICATION (5-10 MINUTES)

Identify ways people can use their gifts to help others.

■ Materials: *My Bible Book* p. 45, pencils, "My Church Family" Teaching Aid

4

LIFE RESPONSE (5-10 MINUTES)

Plan ways to help someone during the week.

■ Materials: *My Bible Book* p. 46, pencils, *Friends* for Lesson 9



This symbol means extra preparation or supplies are needed.

Understanding the Bible

This Week's Bible Story: Joppa (modern-day Jaffa) lies on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem. Peter was in Lydda, about 10 miles from Joppa on the road to Jerusalem.

Dorcas is the Greek form of the Aramaic name *Tabitha*, meaning “gazelle, a type of deer.” Dorcas was a disciple of Jesus and a person who put her faith into action. She cared for many people in practical ways. When Dorcas died, the whole Christian community felt the loss. The widows were probably wearing the clothes made by Dorcas when they appeared before Peter.

The church in Joppa sent for Peter, perhaps because they heard that he had just been a part of a healing in Lydda. They may have been hoping that the miraculous power of Jesus Christ could help Dorcas.

When Peter arrived, he had all the widows and mourners leave. Then he knelt beside the bed and prayed. Peter was fully aware that it was not his power that would raise Dorcas, but Jesus' power. Turning to the body, Peter spoke in Aramaic—the language

most spoken by Jewish people in Jesus' day—saying, “Tabitha, get up” (Acts 9:40). Dorcas responded immediately. She opened her eyes and looked at Peter. Then he presented her alive to her friends who were waiting.

Word of such a miraculous event quickly spread through Joppa, and many others joined the followers of Jesus as a result.

Peter stayed for some time in Joppa, perhaps to aid in discipling the new believers. He stayed in the home of a tanner named Simon, an unlikely choice since tanning was considered an “unclean” trade. This suggests that Peter was already becoming less rigorous in his following of ceremonial traditions (preparing us for Acts 10 and 11).

Dorcas is a wonderful example of what it means to be a disciple. She never forgot that her love for God needed to be translated into love and service to others.

Understanding Your Students

Elementary-age children want to be the first and the best at whatever they do. They volunteer quickly to help, and tire just as quickly. They can be pretty hard on themselves when they don't live up to their own expectations. And talk about great expectations! They honestly think they could paint the whole house or take care of a pony with no help and no problems.

Children need help to recognize their individual abilities and to use them constructively. Their self-esteem is being molded by the judgments that others—especially parents and teachers—make about their capabilities.

Classroom Tips

Try these suggestions for using your students' abilities in class.

- Any information children reveal about themselves can be useful in identifying their abilities. When discussing the activities of Bible characters or modern-day people, ask personal questions. (Would doing that be easy or hard for you? Which person is most like you?)
- Children like it when they can do the work on their own without needing help from you. The results may not be up to adult quality standards; however, if the child is doing his best, try not to intervene or improve on his efforts.
- To help your students feel more secure in using their abilities, give praise liberally.
- With advance planning on your part, children can be of great assistance. Classroom tasks should require just a few words of instruction and take no longer than five minutes.

Pre-session Activities

Choose from the following activities for early arrivers.

- As each student arrives, have him or her mark the Attendance Chart.

Materials: Attendance Chart, stickers or markers

- Set out the “Mother’s Day Card” projects from *Elementary Kid Crafts* for students to make, if they were not used in Lesson 8.

Materials: *Elementary Kid Crafts* Project for Mother’s Day, glue sticks, pencils



Kid Crafts
“Mother’s Day Card”

- Students could color the appropriate animals on the inside back cover of *My Bible Book*, indicating what they did during the week.

Materials: *My Bible Book*, crayons or markers

- Let students add more people to the mural “Our Church Family.” (See Pre-session Activities, Lesson 7, for complete directions.)

Materials: Mural started in Lesson 7, pencils, markers

- For Worship Time: Sing “Do It” or another song from the DisKit CD found in your Creative Teaching Aids packet.

Materials: DisKit CD, CD player



1

Life Need 5–10 minutes

Objective: That your students will think of ways they can be helpful to others.



Kid Crafts
Lesson 9

This activity will prepare your students for the Bible story about Dorcas helping others.

We’re going to play a game that shows some ways people your age can help others.

Distribute the *Elementary Kid Crafts* Project for Lesson 9, “Helping Hands Game.” As students punch out the cards, point out that each “a” card shows

someone with a problem. The matching “b” card shows one way another person could help with the problem. Let volunteers explain the problem and the help shown on one or two sets so that you’re sure children understand how the matches are determined.

Once all the cards are punched out, divide the class into groups of two or three students. Mix up one set of cards for each group. (To keep each child’s card set intact, you could provide large paper clips or small envelopes to hold sets not being used. These can be marked with the owner’s name and put aside.) Each group places all of its cards on the playing surface so that the “Helping Hands” picture is showing.

The starting player turns two cards over. If they match, the player keeps them and turns over two more cards. If they don’t match, the player turns them facedown again and the next player takes a turn. When all the cards have been matched, the player with the most pairs wins.

Each time your students match a pair of cards, encourage them to tell how the child helped solve the problem. After the groups have had time to play the game, gather the class back together to talk about the following questions.

- **What kinds of problems have you had, similar to the ones in the game?**

- **What kinds of help would you be best at giving?**

Today’s Bible story tells us about a woman who was very good at giving people help. Listen closely to see if you can find out what kind of help she gave.

2

Bible Learning 15–20 minutes

Objective: That your students will tell how Dorcas used her gifts to help other people.



My Bible Book, page 43

The woman we're going to learn about today is named Dorcas. Let's learn more about her. Distribute *My Bible Book* and have students turn to page 43. Let a volunteer read the sentences about *Dorcas*. Ask two students to each read the speech balloons.

■ **What is Dorcas doing in this picture?** (*Sewing.*)

Her gift or ability is sewing. Read the sentences about *clothes* and take a few moments to discuss ways Bible-time clothes were different from our clothes. You might also let students suggest how getting clothes in Bible times was different from getting clothes today. (Having to weave the cloth instead of buying it, sewing the clothes themselves instead of buying them at a store, sewing by hand instead of using a sewing machine, and so on.)

Finish the page by reading about and discussing the word *die*. You could point out that when people who love Jesus die, they go to live with Him forever. However, Jesus still feels concern for us because He knows that it makes us sad to live without the person we love.

■ **Funerals help us express our feelings when someone dies. Why do people cry at a funeral?**

(*Because they are sad, they will miss the person who has died.*)

■ **What other things do people do for funerals?**

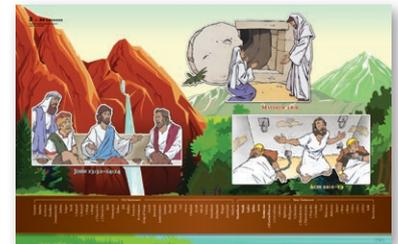
(*Send flowers to the family, send cards, remember good things about the person who has died.*)

This week's Bible story may lead students to express some questions and concerns about death. You'll find some helpful suggestions for dealing with this issue in the "Understanding Your Students" and "Classroom

Tips" sections of Lesson 3. See page 37.

Now let's find out what all these words have to do with Dorcas. The story of Dorcas is written in the part of the Bible that tells about the early church.

Ask a child to find the Book of Acts on the Bible Overview Chart. Talk about how Acts is like a "history book." It tells how the Christian faith spread to people all over the



Bible Overview Chart Teaching Aid

world. Ask the students to turn in their Bibles to the Book of Acts. By now the children should know that Acts is located in the New Testament. Have children put a bookmark in chapter 9 to refer to later.

The Bible basis for this Bible story is found in Acts 9:36-43. An easy-to-tell version of the story follows, but you may want to read the story from the Bible or tell it in your own words.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus' helpers went from town to town, preaching about Jesus. "Be sorry for the wrong things you do," they said. "Trust Jesus, and you can be in God's family. Let Jesus know how much you love Him."

A woman named Dorcas lived in the town of Joppa. "I love Jesus very much," said Dorcas. "I wonder what I can do to show my love for Him."

Dorcas began to do many things. She took care of sick people. She visited sad and lonely people. All day long she was busy helping others.

One day Dorcas thought of something else she could do. "Many people need clothes to wear," she said. "I'll sew some clothes for them." So Dorcas made many coats and dresses to give to poor people.

Everyone loved Dorcas because she was always doing things for them. "Thank you, Dorcas, for being so kind," they said.

One day Dorcas began to feel sick. She got sicker

and sicker. Her friends tried to help, but before long, Dorcas died.

Her friends were very sad. "What will we do without Dorcas?" they said to each other.

"Peter is in a town nearby," someone said. "God helps him do wonderful things. Let's send for him."

So two men went to find Peter. When they found him, they told him the sad news.

"Please hurry and come with us," they said.

Peter got ready at once and went with the men to Dorcas's house. Some friends of Dorcas took Peter upstairs to the room where Dorcas was.

"Oh, Peter!" the people cried. "Whatever will we do without Dorcas? She was always helping someone."

"See this nice coat Dorcas made for my son?" said a poor woman.

"See the nice dress she made for me?" said another woman.

"I will talk to God about Dorcas," said Peter. He sent everyone out of the room. Then he knelt down beside the bed and prayed.

Read Acts 9:41-42 aloud together as a class stopping after the word "feet." Have the children tell, in their own words, what happened.

Then Peter called in her friends. He said, "God has answered my prayer and brought Dorcas back to life." Everyone was happy!

"Thank you for coming, Peter," they said. "We will thank God, too, for making Dorcas live again."

Read Acts 9:42 aloud with the students.

Dorcas looked at her friends and smiled. Now she could keep on helping people.

BIBLE REVIEW

- **Tell me something you learned about Dorcas from today's story.** (*Give children an opportunity to say at least one thing they learned.*)
- **If you had lived in Bible times, would you have liked it if Dorcas was your neighbor?** (*Let children respond.*)
- **What kind of neighbor do you think she would have been?** (*Kind, friendly, generous, always ready to help.*)
- **Why do you think Dorcas gave the clothes she**

made to poor people instead of selling them for lots of money? (*She loved God and wanted to share His love with others; she wanted to help the poor people who didn't have money to buy clothes; she used her gift of sewing to help others.*)

Ask students to turn to page 44 in *My Bible Book*. Volunteers could take turns reading the words under each picture. If the words are true, students are to mark a "T" in the box by the words. If the words aren't true, ask students cross out the sentences, and change them to make the sentence true.

To further review the key facts of the Bible story of Dorcas, help the children make "slides" of the story. Begin by having a few children pose for the first picture, after it has been corrected, on page 44. Those children freeze in that position as you read the corrected text beneath that picture. Then have another child pose like Dorcas in the second picture and freeze as you reread that text. Do the same for the other four pictures to make a "slide show" of the Bible story.

If you have a small class of children, you can pose and have the children freeze for each different scene. Then have the same children reposition themselves to act out the next scene. Divide up a large class so each child has a part in a "slide."



My Bible Book, page 44

MEMORY WORK

Have students look up their memory verse (1 Peter 4:10) in their Bibles. Read the memory verse aloud and ask students what they think the word *gift* means in this verse. If necessary, take a few moments to explain that the word *gift* means an ability or talent, not a present. Then read the verse aloud together.



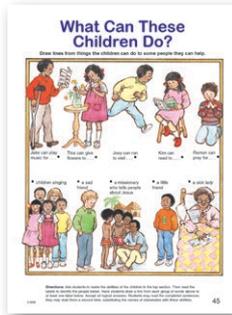
3

Bible Application 5–10 minutes

Objective: That your students will match gifts children have with people they can help.

We've seen how Dorcas used her gifts to help others. Now let's see if we can find ways for some children to use their gifts or abilities to help others.

Have students turn to page 45 in *My Bible Book*.



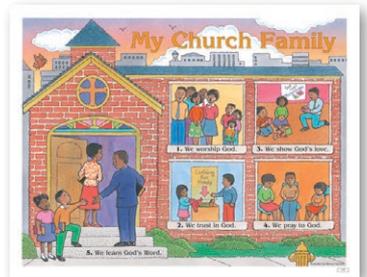
My Bible Book, page 45

■ **Can you name the gifts of the children in the top section?** (*Jake plays an instrument, Tina is making a nice flower arrangement, Joey likes to run, Kim reads well, and Ramon enjoys praying.*)

Each of these children on the top row can help at least one of the people or groups in the bottom row. Let's find out how. You or a volunteer could read the labels to identify the people in the bottom row. Then let students draw a line connecting a dot in the top row with a dot in the bottom row. All logical answers should be accepted. (If you prefer, the class could work together to identify possible match-ups.)

When they are finished, students could take turns reading their completed sentences aloud. They may read them a second time, substituting the names of classmates with these gifts.

Very good! Now let's try finding some of the gifts of the people in "My Church Family." Hold up the "My Church Family" Teaching Aid.



"My Church Family Teaching Aid"

■ **What gifts or abilities are these people using to help others?** (*Singing, sharing clothes, making a picture, praying, and teaching.*)



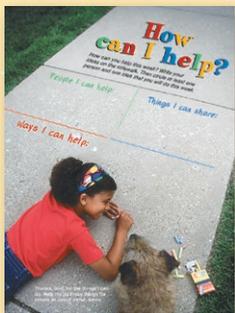
4

Life Response 5-10 minutes

Objective: That your students will plan ways they can use their gifts to help others this week.

■ **How do we know God wants us to use our gifts or abilities to help other people?** (*Accept all reasonable answers. If no one mentions it, point out that one way we know God wants us to help others is because the Bible says so. Read aloud the Bible verse, 1 Peter 4:10.*)

It pleases God and helps others when we follow the example of Dorcas and other believers. Let's think of some ways we can use our God-given gifts to help others during the week.



My Bible Book, page 46

Have the children turn to page 46 in *My Bible Book*. Take a few minutes to brainstorm with the class as they talk about people to serve, things they can share, and ways they can help. After you are sure the children have gotten the idea, have students write the ideas they

like best in an appropriate spot on the page. You may want to encourage children to move to a private spot in the room where they can really spend some time thinking about the way that will work best for them to serve others. Be available if a child needs some help or encouragement in writing down their ideas.

■ **Who are people you could help this week?** (*Give the children a few minutes to name as many people as they can think of. They might name: parents, brothers or sisters, friends, grandparents, neighbors, etc.*)

■ **What are things you can share this week?** (*Toys, books, clothes, food, home, bedroom, yard. Accept all reasonable answers.*)

■ **What are ways you can help others this week?** (*Some of their ideas for this could include:*

help a friend with homework, teach a friend a game, do a chore for a brother or sister, serve in a way I don't usually do, work with my family to share with those in need, etc. Encourage the children to be specific.)

After the students name people they know, have them circle one person they have listed on their paper and circle one idea they would like to put into action soon. Most second and third graders are quite proficient at sharing and helping when they see the value of it. When they consider that they are doing this as a servant or messenger for God, they may be highly motivated.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Close with a brief prayer time. You could let students thank God for their gifts they can use to help others. Or you might read together the prayer at the bottom of page 46 in *My Bible Book*.

Be sure to send home pages 43-46 of *My Bible Book*, and the Kid Crafts "Helping Hands Game" and Mother's Day card if they made one.

