

## Bible background

Acts 9:36-43

## Aim of lesson

To show that we, like Dorcas, should use our gifts to help others.

## Preparation required

You will need colouring materials, scraps of material, scissors and glue for the activity; and also some pieces of stiff paper or thin card.

## Suggested outline of lesson

1. Find out what the children have done this week to help others and discuss who needs our help; the sick, old and lonely, for example. Tell how Jesus helped others and see if they can remember any incidents. Explain that we should try to follow in Jesus' footsteps. Make a footprint for each child by drawing round their foot on a piece of paper or card, then cutting it out. On each footprint write down, or help the children to write down, the things they can do to help others. You could stick the footprints on a large piece of paper with the heading 'we are trying to follow in Jesus' footsteps' or they could take them home.
2. Introduce Dorcas, a disciple who was trying to follow in Jesus' footsteps. Tell how she was always helping others and ask the class for suggestions as to how she helped. Explain the sad state of widows with no help from the government and tell how she made clothes for them. Tell the children how she fell ill and died and the sadness of all who knew her. Ensure that they understand the finality of death; perhaps they have lost relatives or pets and would like to talk of the sadness they felt.
3. Peter was staying nearby in Lydda. Stress the urgency of the message he received from Joppa 'please come at once' and his prompt reaction. Describe the scene when Peter arrived, crying women clutching garments made by Dorcas all gathered round her body. Tell how the women were asked to leave and how, in the peace that followed, Peter knelt and prayed. Emphasise his great faith that God would help him and his confident request for her to get up. Help the children imagine the joy and gratitude he must have felt when she opened her eyes and sat up.
4. Discuss the feelings of her friends when they saw Dorcas restored to life; probably surprise, possibly fear but certainly great joy. Ask the children how this incident would have affected their feelings about God, and describe how many people believed as a result of this miracle. If there is time, the whole story can be acted simply and effectively.
5. Teach the poem 'Think of the People'.
6. Complete the activity sheet, On the left hand side draw sad faces on Dorcas' friends and cut out scraps of material and stick them on to represent clothes they are holding. Ask the children what has made the women on the right hand side happy, then draw Dorcas standing in the doorway.

## Alternative activities

1. Cut out large clothes shapes from thick paper or card. Help the children decorate them by colouring, printing or sticking on scraps of paper or fabric.
2. Have a box of dressing up clothes so the children can take turns at pretending to make the clothes and giving them to other members of the group to wear.
3. Help the children to make something, a card or simple gift, to give to someone who is elderly or ill, or to a parent or friend.

## Relevance to the children's lives

Dorcas helped others: why? How do we serve God by helping others? Look again at the footprints and discuss how the children can help their friends, relatives or neighbours during the coming week.

## Prayer

Thank God for raising Dorcas from the dead and ask him to help us to be more like Dorcas.

## Verse

'Do not forget to do good and to share with others.' Hebrews 13:16.

## **Rhyme**

### **Think of the people**

Think of the people who feel ill or sad,  
Think of the children with no mum or dad,  
Think of the lonely, the deaf and the blind,  
And think of me, Lord. Teach me to be kind.