Lesson Six Overview

Tabitha

Theme—Choosing God

Scripture
Acts 9:36–42

Memory Verse
Colossians 1:10—*"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"*

Lesson Outline

Introducing the Story
Today's true lesson is about a special woman who was a lot like us—she noticed others' needs. But, she was also a lot like Jesus—she did what she could to meet those needs. She was a servant.

Telling the Story
1. **Tabitha Did Good Deeds** *(Acts 9:36)*
   —Flashcard 6.1
2. **Tabitha's Death** *(Acts 9:37)*
3. **Peter Mourns Widows at Joppa** *(Acts 9:38–39)*
   —Flashcard 6.2
4. **Peter Raises Tabitha from the Dead** *(Acts 9:40–41)*
   —Flashcard 6.3
5. **People Are Saved** *(Acts 9:42)*

Applying the Story
We all see people with needs, just like Tabitha did. Let's be like Tabitha who prayed for the needs, and then she did what she could to meet those needs.

Suggested Classroom Schedule

Before Class	Complete attendance record. Provide students with coloring pages/activity pages.
Opening	Welcome
Prayer	Prayer requests and praise reports from the children
Song Time	
Memory Verse	Colossians 1:10
Song Time	
Object Lesson	See the Need
Bible Lesson	Tabitha
Application/Invitation	Help saved students apply lesson. Invite unsaved students to receive Christ.
Snack	Button Cookies with Licorice Thread
Review Game/ Questions	
Craft	Acts of Kindness
Closing	Give announcements and pray. Distribute take-home papers.

LESSON SIX

6 Tabitha

Theme: Choosing God

TEACHER'S CHECKLIST

- ❑ Read Acts 9:36–42.
- ❑ Study Lesson Six.
- ❑ Flash cards 6.1—6.3.
- ❑ Prepare snack—Button Cookies with Licorice Thread.
- ❑ Gather for "Use an Object"—cloth bag with pieces of material.
- ❑ Gather for object lesson— paper and props for assistants acting as "people in need."
- ❑ Gather for review game—two bags of clothes.
- ❑ Gather for teaching the memory verse—Memory Verse Flashcards and memory verse shirt templates from the Ministry Resource download, twine, and clothespins.
- ❑ Gather for craft—scraps of material, Acts of Kindness cards from the Ministry Resource download, Chinese take out food boxes, scissors, craft glue.
- ❑ Print for teaching the memory verse—Memory Verse Flashcards and memory verse shirt templates from the Ministry Resource download.
- ❑ Print and duplicate Coloring Pages or Activity Pages on the Ministry Resource download (one per student).
- ❑ Print and duplicate Take-Home Paper on the Ministry Resource download (one per student).

SNACK SUGGESTION

Button Cookies with Licorice Thread

Bake or purchase round sugar cookies and using a straw, poke four holes in the cookies to make them look like buttons. Distribute the cookies along with a piece of Twizzlers Pull N Twist licorice ropes. Allow the students to peel the licorice ropes and thread their button cookies with the licorice. As they do this, remind them of Tabitha's service to others by sewing clothes for them.

SCRIPTURES

Acts 9:36–42

36 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.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

MEMORY VERSE

Colossians 1:10

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Story

TEACHER'S TIP

As class members suggest examples, jot them down. They will come in handy during the application part of this lesson.

As we go about our days, we sometimes notice needs that other people have. What are some needs you notice in others' lives? (Allow students to give examples.)

We may notice someone on the playground who doesn't have a warm jacket when the weather gets cold. Or we may notice a student in the cafeteria who doesn't have a lunch, or whose lunch has hardly anything in it to eat. Or we may notice someone at church who doesn't have a Bible. Or we may notice someone carrying things that look much too heavy or bulky for one person to carry by themselves. We may notice that our mother has had a hard day and could use help with the supper dishes. (Also affirm the suggestions students have already mentioned.)

TEACHER'S TIP

You may wish to ask students to cite some needs Jesus met in the gospels. These would include:

- healing a blind man
- healing lepers
- turning water into wine
- sharing spiritual truths etc.

God is pleased when we focus our eyes and our thoughts on the needs of others, rather than thinking only of ourselves. He tells us in His Word that Jesus did exactly that—He lived to serve others, rather than Himself. And God instructs us to do the same.

Philippians 2:4-5

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

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When Jesus noticed needs other people had, He not only thought about those needs, but He did whatever it took to actually meet those needs. He served others.

It's easy for us to feel sorry for a person, and even to think of kind ways to meet their needs. But it's also easy for us to get busy with something else and then just forget about the kind plans we had to help that person.

We don't plan to forget about them. We just get so busy with other activities.

Today's true story from the Bible is about a special woman who was a lot like us—she noticed others' needs. She was also a lot like Jesus—she did what she could to meet those needs. She was a servant.

This woman was called by two names. Her Greek name was Dorcas, and her Hebrew name was Tabitha.

TEACHER'S NOTE

Tabitha is a Hebrew name, meaning *gazelle* (or, something we would be more familiar with would be *deer*.) Our text also gives us the Greek translation of her name—*Dorcas*.

Name meanings in Scripture are often significant. In Tabitha's case, it is obvious that she was (as we would think of a deer) a gentle, pleasant person.

The Story

1. Tabitha Did Good Deeds (Acts 9:36)

Now, it doesn't just happen out of nowhere that a person becomes a servant. It is a choice a person makes. Imagine Tabitha sitting in church one day and silently thanking God for His kindness to her. "Thank You, Father, for giving Your Son to die on the cross to pay for my sins. Thank You for giving me this wonderful church—for our pastor who teaches us Your Word, and for friends who love You, and who also love me. Thank you for taking care of all my needs, Lord. You are so good to me!"

At the end of the service, Tabitha talked with people she knew, and she also introduced herself to visitors who had come to church.

"I'm Tabitha," she said to a visitor, "and I'm so glad to meet you." The visitor introduced herself, and as they talked, Tabitha discovered that the woman was a widow. Her husband had died a year earlier, and she was having trouble making enough money to provide food and clothing for her three children and herself.

"I'm so sorry," Tabitha's eyes filled with tears as she thought about the needs of this poor family. "May God bless you."

As Tabitha walked home, she thought about the woman she had met. "It's no wonder her dress was ragged. Her poor family doesn't have enough money to meet all their needs. Her children's clothes were mostly too small for them. They don't have enough money to get new clothes when they grow out of the ones they are wearing. Oh, it's too bad they don't have a husband and father to take care of them!"

All the rest of the day, Tabitha thought about the poor widow and her children. Tears came to her eyes again, and she had a big lump in her throat as

ACT IT OUT

Consider calling on students to demonstrate the following possible scenarios with Tabitha and those she served.

she thought about their needs. Her heart was heavy as she realized they didn't have pretty, comfortable clothes to keep them warm.

As she lay in bed that night, Tabitha prayed for the widow's family. "Dear Lord, please remind this family of Your love for them. Please provide clothing for them that is warm—without holes or rips."

When Tabitha awoke in the morning, her first thoughts were of the widow. "I'm not going to just keep on feeling sorry for this family," Tabitha said to herself. "I'm going to do something about it—and I'm going to do it before I forget and get busy doing something else."

USE AN OBJECT

Bring a cloth bag full of material that you can use to demonstrate as you teach this portion of the lesson.

She reached into a big cloth bag and pulled out a few large pieces of brightly colored fabric she had woven. "This will be plenty to sew an outfit for each member of the family."

As Tabitha cut the fabric, she sang songs of thanksgiving to the Lord. As she sewed the cut out fabric together into pieces of clothing, she prayed for each member of the widow's family. Her heart was filled with joy as she thought about the happiness her gifts would bring to the widow and her children.

Flash Card 6.1

The widow couldn't believe her eyes the next Sunday, as Tabitha opened her cloth bag and pulled out the beautiful outfits she had made. "I don't know how to thank you for these wonderful, beautiful gifts," the widow cried, as she hugged her new dress to herself. "It has cost you a great deal of time and money to make these garments for us. You're such a servant. I wish I could do something to repay you."

"Oh, no—I don't want anything in return," Tabitha answered. "My mother taught me how to sew, and God has provided for me. It brings me joy to share what God and others have given me."

"Wow! I'm glad I didn't just feel sorry for the widow's family," Tabitha thought as she journeyed back to her home. "I'm glad I did something about their needs."

Tabitha kept on noticing the needs of others. "Oh, there's a widow who doesn't have a coat!" And she went home and made her the most beautiful coat the widow had ever seen.

"That boy doesn't have a father, and his shirt is much too small. I'm sure his mother doesn't have enough money to provide a new shirt for him." And she went home and made him a new, bright shirt that he was proud to wear.

"My friend hasn't had a new dress in years," Tabitha said out loud to herself, as she thought about another widow. "I'm going to make her four beautiful dresses, and she can wear a different one each Sunday of the month.

The weeks, months, and years went by; and Tabitha continued watching for the needs of others—especially the widows and their families. And she kept serving them and meeting their needs.

Tabitha found something that she could do well, and used it to serve God.

Everyone loved Tabitha, and her life was happy and full, because she was full of good works!

Acts 9:36b

36 ...this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

Colossians 1:10

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

TEACHER'S NOTE

almsdeeds—acts of charity; charitable gifts.

Time passed, and Tabitha kept serving. Every day she noticed someone's need, and she made something or did something helpful for them. Sometimes she brought them food, and always she shared God's love with them. She was so happy!

Acts 20:35

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

2. Tabitha's Death (Acts 9:37)

But one day, Tabitha became very sick, and she soon died. Her body was prepared for her burial, and she was laid in an upstairs room before the funeral.

"Somehow, I feel like we should go to Peter (Do you remember Peter? We learned about him last week. He was a preacher who had been one of Jesus' twelve disciples.) and ask him to come," one of the disciples (followers of Jesus Christ) suggested. Everyone agreed, and two men went to the nearby town of Lydda, where Peter had been preaching, to ask him to come to Joppa, where Tabitha's body lay.

3. Peter Mourns with Widows at Joppa (Acts 9:38–39)

When Peter climbed the stairs to the upstairs room, he was met by all the widows of the church. The widows had lost a dear friend. She had not only made them coats and garments, but she had listened to the burdens of their hearts and shared words of comfort and love with them.

Flash Card 6.2

James 1:27

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

One by one the widows came to Peter. They wanted to tell him how loving and giving Tabitha had been, and how much they missed her; but they were weeping because of their grief, and the words just wouldn't come out. So, they just showed Peter the beautiful clothing Tabitha had made for them.

Peter looked at the grieving widows, and he looked at the clothing they wore and the coats they held out to him in their arms; and he understood the whole story of Tabitha's life, without a word being spoken to him.

"This was a woman who served others," Peter thought. "She didn't just feel sorry for others in need—she met their needs.

"This room is full of poor widows who don't have enough money to provide for their families, but here they stand in beautiful clothes such as would be worn by women with husbands who have good jobs. And I can see by their sorrow that Tabitha not only made them clothes, but she encouraged their hearts. Tabitha had devoted her life to serving others."

Proverbs 31:31

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

5. Peter Raises Tabitha from the Dead (Acts 9:40–41)

"I need to talk to the Lord," Peter said to himself, and he motioned for all the people in the room to go back downstairs.

When he was alone in the room, Peter knelt down and prayed to God. "Lord, what is your plan? Is Tabitha's work on this earth finished?"

Peter heard the Lord in his heart, and he knew what to do. He turned toward Tabitha's body and said, "Tabitha, arise."

Flash Card 6.3

Tabitha immediately opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. Peter reached his hand out to her. "Welcome back to life, Tabitha!" She took Peter's hand, and she stood up.

Peter called the widows and church family to come back upstairs, and they couldn't believe their eyes. Tabitha was alive!

6. People Are Saved (Acts 9:42)

"Can you believe it? Tabitha died, but God sent Peter to bring her back to life," all the widows told their family and friends. "And now she's back, doing what she always did—helping the poor and needy. God is so good!"

"Now I believe in God," many of the people answered. "I believe in the God Tabitha trusted and served. I believe His Word!"

APPLYING THE STORY

We all see people with needs, just like Tabitha did. And we all feel sorry for those needs. We often think of ways we could help the people with the needs. But sadly, we often forget.

Sometimes the needs we see are physical needs, like a need for a new coat, shoes, or even a meal. They may need someone to lend them a hand with a chore they have to do—raking leaves, shoveling snow, washing dishes.

Sometimes the needs we see are needs of the heart. Someone may be friendless, and we think of asking them to play a game with us. They may be lonely, in a nursing home, and we think of visiting them or writing them a note. They may be going through something hard in their family, and we think of just letting them share their heart.

Sometimes the needs we see are spiritual needs. They may not know Jesus as their Saviour, and we think of giving them a tract or sharing the gospel with them. They may be struggling with some sin, and we think of encouraging them and helping them with God's Word.

What did Tabitha do when she saw needs? (Allow students to answer.) She prayed for the needs, and then she did what she could to meet those needs—and she did it before she forgot!

That's what we need to do, as well.

- "Dear Lord, it's getting cold out, and Chelsea's coat is too small for her. Please provide a warm coat for her."
  "Mom, may I give Chelsea my extra coat? She doesn't have one that fits, and I think mine would be just right for her."
- "Lord, Mom looks so tired. She has worked so hard all day, and she made this good meal for us. Please help her to be able to rest."
  "Mom, you go take a nice warm bath and read a book for a while. I'll do these dishes."

TEACHER'S TIP

Use illustrations and remedies to which your class would relate.

This is when you would use the examples class members gave at the beginning of the lesson:

"What could you do when you notice a particular need they suggested?"

- "Oh, Lord, I feel so sorry for poor Mrs. Johnson in the nursing home. Her family lives far away, and hardly anyone goes to visit her. Please encourage her heart."
  "Mom, will you take me to visit Mrs. Johnson tomorrow after school?"
- "Lord, Adyn always seems so alone. No one asks him to play with them at recess, and no one ever picks him to be on their team. Please help him to have friends."
  "Hey, Adyn, do you want to play four-square with us at recess?"
- "Lord, Steven just keeps struggling with that same sin over and over, and it's causing all kinds of problems in his life. Please help him to get victory over it."
  "Thanks for sharing your problem with me, Steven—that's really tough to go through. I went through something like that last year, and it was related to this certain sin I struggled with. Let me show you some things from the Bible that God used in my life."
- "Lord, I don't believe Jessica knows you as her Saviour. Please work in her heart and draw her to You."
  "Jessica, I want to share with you the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me—the most wonderful thing in the whole world…"

Those things don't matter, God will use anyone who will let him.

God didn't tell us in the Bible what Tabitha looked like—maybe she was beautiful, and maybe she wasn't. He didn't tell us what kind of house she lived in—maybe it was fancy, and maybe it wasn't. He didn't tell us her age—maybe she was old, and maybe she was quite young.

Proverbs 31:30

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

God did tell us that Tabitha did something every one of us can do. It doesn't matter if we are rich or poor, beautiful or plain. We can all do good works.

2 Corinthians 8:11-12

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

REVIEW GAME/QUESTIONS

Materials Needed
Two bags of oversized or adult sized shirts, sweaters, and coats. (All types can be incorporated, such as pullovers or button ups, as these will add various levels of difficulty to the relay race.)

Set up
Divide your class into two teams and arrange in lines (one line for each team) to participate in a relay. Place one bag of clothes for each team at the front of the room, several yards directly in front of the students' lines.

Playing the Game
Ask a review question to the first students in line on each team. Once the question has been given, the students can race to the bags of clothing, reach in and select a garment, put it completely on (fastening snaps, securing buttons, etc.), run back to their respective lines, and then answer the question.

The first student to answer the question correctly and completely be clothed in the new article of clothing receives a point for their team. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

1. In what way was Tabitha like Jesus?
   Answer: She did what she could to meet others' needs.
2. What was Tabitha's name in Greek?
   Answer: Dorcas
3. What did Tabitha do to make sure she didn't forget to meet a need she had noticed?
   Answer: She did something to help right away.
4. What does the word almsdeeds mean?
   Answer: Acts of charity
5. Where was Tabitha's body laid after she died?
   Answer: In an upstairs room
6. What was the name of the preacher the disciples asked to come to Joppa after Tabitha died?
   Answer: Peter
7. Who met Peter in the upper room?
   Answer: The widows of the church

8. How did Peter know Tabitha had lived the life of a servant?
   Answer: The widows grieved so much because of her death, and they showed him the garments she had made.

9. What was something Tabitha did that every one of us can do, no matter how much money we have or what we look like?
   Answer: Good works

10. What good work are you going to do today?
    Answer: Answers will vary.

Teaching the Memory Verse

Colossians 1:10

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Materials Needed

Memory Verse Flashcards from the Ministry Resource download
Memory verse shirt templates
Twine
Clothespins

Set Up

Print the Memory Verse Flashcards and the shirt template containing the words of the verse. Cut out the shirts.
Affix twine or small rope across the board and using clothes pins, arrange the shirts on the twine.

Teaching the Verse

Instruct the students to read the verse together as a class several times. Once they have become familiar with the verse, allow students to remove one shirt each time they repeat the verse. Continue reciting the verse until no t-shirts remain on the clothesline.

OBJECT LESSON—See the Need

Materials Needed

Several pieces of paper rolled into a funnel shape with a dime-sized hole at the end. These will serve as special scopes used to navigate an obstacle course.

Props for those who represent "people in need".

Lesson

Before class, arrange for your helpers to participate in this object lesson. They will represent people who are in need. You can create scenarios best suited to your class, but some examples could include the following:

- One assistant can be a mom struggling with an unruly baby.
- Another assistant can represent a boy who has just dropped his backpack, spilling all the contents on to the floor.
- Another assistant can be dressed as an elderly grandparent who is struggling to cross a street.
- Your final assistant can be a lonely child who has no friends at recess.

Your assistants (or students in your class, if you don't have enough helpers) will be strategically arranged at the front of the classroom to form an obstacle course.

Ask for two or three student volunteers to participate in this object lesson. They will step out of the room with a helper as the obstacle course is set up and will each be given two funnel shaped "glasses" that they will hold up to their eyes.

As they re-enter the classroom, instruct the students to walk through the obstacle course, using only their tunnel vision. Give them a focal point to walk toward, located at the end of the course.

Application

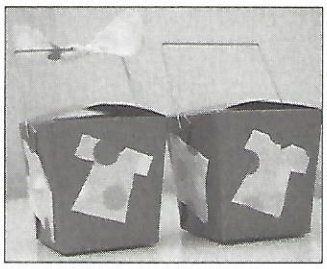
After the students have reached their focal point, allow them to remove their tunnel vision "glasses" and see what they passed as they walked through the course. Show them each person who needed help along their way, who they could not see because they were so focused on getting to their destination.

If time allows, invite the class to share ways they could serve and help those who were needy on the obstacle course.

Encourage the students to remove their own tunnel vision and to go through the upcoming week with eyes open and alert to help those in need.

CRAFT—Acts of Kindness

Supplies



Scraps of material (Cut into 2 inch squares—1/2 yard provides enough material for 30 students.)
Acts of Kindness cards from Ministry Resource download
Small Chinese take out food boxes
Scissors
Craft glue

Instructions

1. Print out the Bible verses for each student and cut into small cards.
2. Give each student a pair of scissors, a 2-inch square of material, acts of kindness cards, and a Chinese take out box.
3. Instruct the students to glue the material to the outside of the box.
4. Insert the acts of kindness cards into the box.

Application

Encourage the students to pull out a different act of kindness each day this week and do them: serving the Lord by serving others.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find the following items on the Ministry Resource download:

- Coloring Page (for younger children)
- Activity Page (for older children)
- Student Take-Home Paper
- PowerPoint Presentation