

## **BUILD UP, DON'T TEAR DOWN**

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**Character Traits to Emphasize:** Building, or living in a constructive manner

**Definition of Building :** To make choices and to behave in ways that make something better

**Opposites :** Tearing down, Destructive behavior

**Destruction :** Damage that cause something to stop existing or hurts.

**Bible Text :** Acts Chapter 9 verses 36 through 42

**Bible Verse to Memorize :** John 10 : 10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

**Aim :** At the conclusion of this lesson the students will understand that some behavior and some choices build up and help, while others tear down and destroy. As a result, the child will begin to act and make choices in a constructive way that helps and builds up their own lives and those of others.

**Song :** The Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock

**Introduction :** The teacher find build blocks and lets a few students build up something beautiful. Another student comes up and destroys it. Then a third person builds it back. Who was destructive, tearing things down? Did that help anyone? How did you feel when he tore things down? Who was constructive, building things up? How did you feel when they built the tower? Today we will learn of a woman in the Bible who built things up.

**Outline of Main Events, with Active Participation Suggestions:**

**1. Tabitha (Dorcas) lived at Joppa. She followed Jesus & did good works that built up other people.**

**1A. Read: Acts 9:36**

**1B. Ask Questions Like These:**

- Where did Tabitha live? (At Joppa)
- What was her nickname? (Dorcas)
- What word is used to show that she believed in Jesus & followed Him? (disciple)

- How did Dorcas spend her time? (Doing good works and helping those in need)
- In Joppa were many poor people. Did Dorcas build people up or tear them down?

**1C. Act It Out:**

Appoint one child to act the part of Tabitha. The others will act the part of poor people in the town of Joppa. They will tell Tabitha of their misery, and she will help them.

**1D. Sing and Dance:**

Tabitha followed Jesus  
And she built people up.

Many poor people live in Joppa  
And she built those people up!

**2. She got sick & died. They prepared her for burial & laid her in the upper room.**

**2A. Read: Acts 9:37**

**2B. Ask Questions Like These:**

- What happened to Tabitha? (She got sick and died.)
- What did they do after she died? (They washed her and laid her out in an upper room. This was the normal way to prepare someone for burial.)

**2C. Act It Out:**

The child acting the part of Tabitha will pretend to be sick and to die. Afterwards, two other girls will pretend to wash her and lay her out in an upstairs room.

**2D. Sing and Dance:**

This good  
woman Tabitha  
Spent her time building people up  
But then she got sick and died.

**3. They sent 2 men to nearby Lydda to ask Peter to come right away.**

**3A. Read: Acts 9:38**

**3B. Ask Questions Like These:**

- Who had the other disciples heard was nearby? (The Apostle Peter)
- Peter was at what nearby city? (Lydda)
- Who did they send to Peter? (Two men)
- What was the men's message to Peter? (Come right away.)

**3C. Act It Out:**

Choose two children to act the part of the church leaders. They will choose two boys to act the part of the two men who went to Peter, giving them the message to beg Peter to come right away. The two travel a distance and find Peter, begging him not to wait but to come with them right away.

**4. Peter came & found all the widows weeping and showing clothing she had sewed for them when they were in need.**

**4A. Read: Acts 9:39**

**4B. Ask Questions Like These:**

- Did Peter do what they asked? (Yes, he went with them right away.)
- Where did they take Peter right away? (To the upper chamber where Tabitha's dead body was laid out.)
- Who was there? (All the widows of the city.)
- What were they doing? (Crying and showing Peter all the clothing she had made for them in their need.)

**4C. Act It Out:**

Peter and Tabitha continue in their roles. Choose several girls to act the part of the widows for whom Tabitha had been sewing.

**4D. Sing and Dance:**

The widows all loved Tabitha so  
She helped them in their need.  
With her own hands she had worked hard  
Had worked to build them up.

**5. Peter sent everyone out, kneeled, prayed, and commanded her to get up. She opened her eyes and got up.**

**5A. Read: Acts 9:40**

**5B. Ask Questions Like These:**

- What did Peter do? (First he sent everyone out of the room. Then he kneeled, prayed, and commanded her to get up.)
- What happened then? (Tabitha came to life. She opened her eyes and got up.)

**5C. Act It Out:**

Begin with the widows in the room. Peter sends them out. Then two children act out what happened—Peter and Tabitha.

**5D. Sing and Dance:**

Peter kneeled and prayed to God.  
And Tabitha opened her eyes.  
And Tabitha got up!

**6. Peter took her had & helped her get up, then presented her to the believers.**

**6A. Read: Acts 9:41**

**6B. Ask Questions Like These:**

- What did Peter do when Tabitha got up? (Gave her his hand.)
- Whom did Peter call? (The believers and the widows.)
- What did Peter do then? (Presented her alive.)

**6C. Act It Out:**

Let the same group of children finish acting out the story.

**6D. Sing and Dance:**

Tabitha built up those in need,  
And God raised her from the dead!

**7. Everybody heard about it all over time & many believed in Jesus.**

**7A. Read: Acts 9:42**

**7B. Ask Questions Like These:**

- Where did it become known? (All throughout Joppa)
- How do you think the word spread? (People talked about it.)
- What happened as a result of this? (Many believed in the Lord.)

**7C. Act It Out:**

All the children get very excited and tell one another about what happened.

**7D. Sing and Dance:**

Everyone talked about it  
Everyone heard  
And many believed in Jesus!

**Concluding the Bible Story:**

Some in Joppa town might have made fun of the widows. Some might have said mean, hurtful things to them like, "Why did your husband die? What did you do to him?" People like that are

destructive, always tearing things down. But not Tabitha. Her life was constructive, building people up.

Tabitha was a good example of a believer who used her gift of sewing to build up those around her who were in need. As a result, many received help, many loved her, and God even raised her from the dead so she could keep on doing her good works for many more years. What a blessing to live a life of building up! Anybody can tear things down. I want to build things up. Don't you?

### **The Bible Story as you might tell it to the children:**

Hello children. Do you know who a widow is? A widow is a woman whose husband is dead and has not married again then her children will have no father. In fact I don't know how such a family could survive, because in the Bible days, it was the men or fathers who won bread for the families. Therefore if Daddy is no more, it means food will also be no more clothing will be no more. Anything that keeps the family going will cease and the lives of the fatherless children will be destroyed, just because Daddy has also ceased or lives no more on this earth. The Bible didn't state much about this woman we call Dorcas in the Bible. I was asking myself whether she was a widow, spinster or someone staying with the mother and father just like we also are. But the Bible said this woman realized the state in which families which have no fathers were. She considered how the woman who wasn't working could survive with their children without all these necessary minor needs. She realized the lives of the poor and the fatherless will be destroyed.

Dorcas, the Bible says, had great pity over these families. She looked at their lives being destroyed because the death of their fathers has caused them not to have much to live on. She therefore thought of how to help to build up the lives of the widows, children and also the poor. When she saw that you have married but have not enough to help your children to be built up, she would help you so that you will be able to take good care of your children or better still to build up the lives of your children.

Dorcas was all alone. She could have spent all her time feeling sorry for herself. She could have been angry at others because they had families and she didn't. She could have done mean, hateful things to others who had families. She could have said, "If I can't have a family, why should anyone else have one either? If she couldn't have a loving husband to take care of her, why should anyone else have one?" She could have lived in a destructive way, tearing others down. But no. Dorcas loved Jesus. She knew that her Savior wanted her to build up, not to tear down. So instead of being mean to those who had families, Dorcas did all she could to help them. She worked with her hands, sewing nice pieces of clothing for the widows and other poor people of the town. Oh, she made so many dresses and blouses and skirts and shorts! She was always doing something to build up the poor people of the town.

Now Peter was a disciple of Jesus, a man of God. One day he visited Dorcas' town on his usual assignment that Jesus left for him. Then Peter was sent for, with a message that Dorcas the good woman was dead. (Pause) Because of her deeds, all those she had ever helped, came around weeping and pleading to God Almighty that her life be restored back. Oh, how they loved her! When Jesus' disciple ( PETER ) reached where the funeral was he saw how the widows were holding some of the things she made for them, when she was still alive like dresses, shoes, blouses, trousers, and were crying, saying she gave us, she made them for me. Some children cried. Now on hearing this Peter could not help himself to wait, he went straight to where she had been laid and drove every one out and went on his knees and prayed. I believe, little children that Peter told God Almighty something like this, "Father, how can you take someone who is helping these people who have no fathers, and need great help? Father, listen to the cry of the widows and the fatherless and restore back her life." What an exciting conversation must have gone on between Peter and God!

Afterwards, the Bible says Peter spoke to the dead body of Dorcas whose other name was Tabitha. He said, "Tabitha get up!" Immediately Tabitha opened her eyes Peter helped her up and presented her alive to the people. Everyone became happy because she was coming back to continue to help build the lives of the poor and fatherless.

You see, Dorcas or Tabitha spent all her time building up the lives of others. She did it out of concern for them and out of love for Jesus. She didn't know that in doing so, she was building up her own life as well. She made so many friends. She gave them joy and she had joy in her own heart because of her giving. In the end, God even raised her back to life because of the way she spent her life building others up.

### **Invitation**

Now you saw the beautiful building we used the block to make here. When the other sister or brother destroyed it, another person acted like Dorcas or Tabitha and built it back up. Our verse for today says the thief or the devil comes to destroy but JESUS come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Listen children God made us or better still built us perfectly but one way or the other, the devil came in and destroyed us in a way in which way I may say it began in he garden of Eden when he change himself into God's creature and lied to another person God created. In fact the devil started immediately after God's creation, wanting to destroy the beautiful things that God has made. do not forget our verse for today says in John 10 : 10 that "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly."

God was not happy at all with the devil's acts of tearing us down. So he sent his only begotten Son to come to be our Savior. When we receive Jesus, He begins to rebuild our broken lives again.

So if you are here and you have not accepted God's only begotten Son who came and was tortured by sinners, just to save you from the dirty plans of the enemy, please accept Him today. This can be done if only you will believe that He really died not for any other thing but for you, so that the devil can not destroy you forever. If you believe and confess or open your mouth and talk to Jesus although you can't see him with your physical eyes, he will quickly come and help you out of the devil's destruction. 1 John 1: 7b. Ask Him to save you and He will surely do it. (Help children through prayer to accept the Lord.)

### **Application**

If you have received Jesus, you can decide or get determined to help build up your own life and the lives of others around you, just like Tabitha or Dorcas. Let's look at some skits and see if you can decide whether the person was building up or tearing down. (Present three or four skits showing constructive and destructive behavior. In the case of destructive behavior, let a student act out a constructive alternative.) Ask the children to do something this week to build up the life of someone else.