

Preparation

- Several weeks before you plan to teach this lesson, order copies of the Habitat for Humanity Share the Blessings Calendar (Item #3079; available in packs of 50 for \$2.50) and the Habitat House Banks (Item #1600; 15 cents each) to use in this session and to send home with the children. Call Order Entry at (800) HABITAT, Ext. 2552, to place an order. Send a letter home to parents before the lesson and explain how to use the calendars/banks.
- Bring in rocks and sand and a pitcher of water that you can set up in a dish pan or sink.
- On a poster board or large sheet of paper, create a simple outline of a house. Draw in bricks. Color in all but five bricks. Create five bricks to be added into the blank spots.
- Ask a home improvement store to donate nail aprons to your church. Explain that children will decorate the aprons for a Habitat for Humanity project.
- For the opening activity, gather large blankets or sheets, some pillows, stuffed animals, books, a flashlight, and, if possible, a squirt bottle (not gun) full of water and a towel.

1 Create a cozy spot

As some of the first children arrive, let them help you arrange a cozy area where everyone can fit underneath a blanket. Drape the blanket (or sheet) over tall chairs or anything that will hold it up like a tent. Use extra blankets or sheets to create your cozy spot. Let the children decide where to put the furnishings. Read a book or two as you wait for everyone to arrive.

Talk with the children about what makes this spot cozy. What do they like about it? Guide the conversation to talk about the houses in which the children live. How does a house provide some of the same feelings? Are there special places in the children's homes where they feel cozy and safe and secure?

Begin a conversation about what it would be like if your house were not so cozy. Start spraying the children's arms with mist from the water bottle. They will likely think this is great, but keep spraying and talking about what it would be like if you got soaking wet every time it rained. (Do more talking than spraying.) Ask the children to think what it would be like if the water got all over your bed and your stuffed animals and your books and your papers and your crayons and everything. Let them pretend to shiver as they think about cold rain pouring in from a leaky roof. After a moment, pass the towel around, if necessary, to wipe up excess water.

Explain that today you are going to talk about what people at your church can do to help others who do not have a safe, cozy house in which to sleep tonight.

Pray a prayer of thanks for your homes and pray that God will show the people in your church how they can help other people have a comfortable home of their own.

2 Hear about Geovanne and Crystal

Have the children remain in your cozy spot as you tell the stories of Geovanne and Crystal. If you have a globe, point out the locations referred to in the stories. Kindergartners won't have a strong understanding of geography, but they are beginning to have a sense of location.

Geovanne

Geovanne is 6 years old. He lived in a house in El Salvador that was not safe. The walls were thin, and Geovanne was never quite sure that the house was not going to fall down. Geovanne loves his family and loves to play soccer, but he did not like living in that house.

Then the earthquake came. The ground shook for what seemed like forever. Geovanne was so scared. Walls fell down. Dishes broke. Geovanne's stuff was tossed all over the place. But at least his family was alive. His father put some sticks together to create a shelter. It felt kind of like this cozy spot we are sitting in. It was fun for a little while, but it was not a house. Geovanne's father loved his family so much. He looked and looked for a way to help his family get a better house.

Some people from churches in the United States, Nicaragua and Northern Ireland came to Geovanne's neighborhood. They wanted to work with people from local churches to help Geovanne's family. Together they worked with Habitat for Humanity and Geovanne's family to

build a house made of bricks—a house that felt safe. Geovanne had lots of fun with the workers who helped build his house, and he was so happy to have a new place to live.

Crystal

In the mobile home where Crystal used to live in Missouri, she shared a bedroom with her mom. Her two brothers lived in the other bedroom. The front door was barely hanging on its hinges, and the windows were covered with plastic. It was cold in the winter and hot in summer. Even though they were crowded, Crystal and her family loved each other very much. Crystal's mom worked hard and took care of the family. She always had lots of hugs. Crystal loved to play with Barbies, and she has always loved to read.

People in some churches near in the area where Crystal lived found out about all the problems with their mobile home. They decided to help. They worked with Habitat for Humanity to raise the money to buy wood and nails and other building materials. Then they actually hammered the nails and painted the walls to build Crystal's family a house where they could be warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Crystal's mom helped too. Together they built a new house. Crystal was really excited that she would have her own room where she could put her books on a bookshelf.

Story questions

When you have finished telling the stories, ask questions such as these:

- In what ways are you like Geovanne and Crystal?
- How is the place you live different from the first places Geovanne and Crystal lived?
- How is your family like Geovanne's family and Crystal's family?
- How do you think Geovanne and his family felt when they moved in their new house? How do you think Crystal and her family felt?
- When have you felt like that?

Note: Some children in your group may live in less-than-ideal housing conditions. Handle this conversation with care.

3 Sing

Step out from your cozy space. Have the boys and girls stand up and sing "The Wise Man Built His House Upon a Rock" with great feeling. Sing it through two or three times. (If you do not know the song, ask some parents and grandparents in the congregation. They can probably teach you—or lead the children in singing. If no one knows this song, lead the children in singing a song you know about God's strength.)

4 Hear the Bible story

Bring in rocks and sand and a pitcher of water that you can set up in a dish pan or sink. Set a cardboard house (like a house bank) on a pile of sand. Pour the water forcefully so that the house falls down. Then set the house on a rock and pour water on the rock being careful not to knock the house over. (Practice this before class.)

Show the children where this story is found in the Bible and read aloud Matthew 7:24-27.

Talk about building on a rock

Ask the boys and girls to think about Geovanne's house. Ask them to think of something the builders used that was like a rock. Accept the children's answers. Guide them to the idea that a brick is like a rock.

Then explain that the Bible passage is about a different kind of rock. The song and the Bible verses are talking about a house that is built on the love of Jesus. Ask the boys and girls to tell how they experience the love of Jesus in their homes. You may have to help them get started with ideas like these: Parents hug me. Grandparents smile at me. We do kind things for one another.

5 Build a House

Bring out the outline of a house that you have made. Point out that most of the bricks are on the wall, but that you need to add some bricks—ones that show how Jesus' love can make a strong home.

Begin by asking children to think of ways they show Jesus' love—things like the ideas they talked about earlier in discussing the rock. As they name things like sharing, smiling, hugging, caring and helping, write one response on each of the bricks you have created. Suggest that prayer is another important way we show God's love. Add the word "prayer" to one of the blocks.

Then set up a construction team for coloring the bricks, adding glue and putting them on the wall. Try to