

# Survey

## Community Stories

### INTRODUCTION

- *What is today's Bible story?* You may want to ask the children to take turns telling a portion of the story. Or you may choose to ask questions and let the children respond.
- *Have you ever seen a house being built?* Allow time for the children to respond.

### COMMUNITY STORY

#### **Many Hands, Many Jobs**

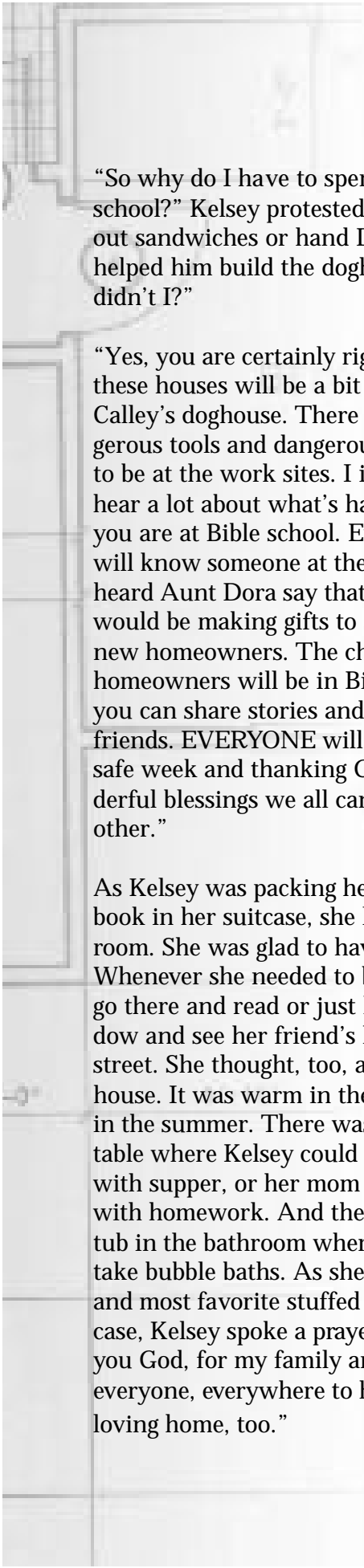
Everyone was busy at Kelsey's house one Saturday afternoon in June. Anyone visiting her home might have wondered if Kelsey's family was moving. Suitcases were scattered all over every room and boxes of tools were laid out in the garage. Her mom was busy checking with the neighbors about picking up their mail. Her dad was busy checking the oil in the car and the air in the tires. Even Kelsey was busy packing her suitcase for a week in the city with her Aunt Dora and Uncle Chad.

The Young family wasn't moving, but they were getting ready for a new adventure. In the morning, Kelsey would be leaving with her mom, Amanda, and her dad, Shea, for the big city. They would drive about eight hours from their small town to the home of her aunt and uncle. This trip was going to be different. Instead of a vacation full of visiting the zoo and the amusement park, Kelsey would be spending most of her day at Bible school in her aunt's church while her mom, dad, aunt, and uncle went to work building houses. Both families were going to be part of something very big: the Jimmy Carter Work Project for Habitat for Humanity. People from all around the world would be gathering in the city to help build houses for families who need safe and decent homes they can call their own.

"Tell me again just what you and Dad will be doing next week," Kelsey asked her mom as they were folding clothes together. "I didn't think you knew much about building a house," she added.

"Well, your dad certainly knows about building houses. And there are many more jobs to be done than just hammering nails. Six thousand people are coming to the city to build 100 houses in just one week. All those people need places to sleep and food to eat. They also need lots of water because it gets really hot up on the roof. That's why I'm going to help Uncle Chad. He's in charge of local arrangements, and he needs lots of extra hands and legs and arms! Your dad and Aunt Dora will be joining all the other volunteers to hammer nails, climb ladders, saw boards, and dip paint brushes."

Kelsey still could not picture the scene. She had a hard time imagining 6,000 of anything, especially people. "How can even all those people build 100 houses in just one week? It took six months to build our one new house." Her mom explained, "It takes lots of volunteers who are willing to share their time and their talents. Lots of planning and lots of faith, too. Even though so many of us are strangers, I know we will work well together. You see, all of the workers believe one very important thing: Everyone deserves a safe and clean house to live in. As Christians, we believe that God wants us to share what we have to help others who need help. That's how we share God's love and show God how grateful we are for God's love to us."



“So why do I have to spend all day at Bible school?” Kelsey protested. “I can help give out sandwiches or hand Daddy nails. I helped him build the doghouse for Calley, didn’t I?”

“Yes, you are certainly right about that. But these houses will be a bit bigger than Calley’s doghouse. There are too many dangerous tools and dangerous jobs for children to be at the work sites. I imagine you will hear a lot about what’s happening while you are at Bible school. Every child there will know someone at the Work Project. I heard Aunt Dora say that the children would be making gifts to share with the new homeowners. The children of the homeowners will be in Bible school, too, so you can share stories and make new, special friends. EVERYONE will be praying for a safe week and thanking God for the wonderful blessings we all can share with each other.”

As Kelsey was packing her favorite hat and book in her suitcase, she looked around her room. She was glad to have her own room. Whenever she needed to be alone, she could go there and read or just look out the window and see her friend’s house across the street. She thought, too, about her family’s house. It was warm in the winter and cool in the summer. There was a big kitchen table where Kelsey could help her mom with supper, or her mom could help her with homework. And there was a BIG bathtub in the bathroom where Kelsey liked to take bubble baths. As she packed her last and most favorite stuffed animal in her suitcase, Kelsey spoke a prayer to God. “Thank you God, for my family and my house. Help everyone, everywhere to have a safe and loving home, too.”

## **INSPECTION**

### **Surf the Web and Learn More about Habitat**

If you have access to a computer with capabilities to connect to the Internet, older children will enjoy exploring the Habitat for Humanity web site (<http://www.habitat.org>) throughout the week. Even if you do not have access to the equipment to actually “surf” with the children, you can do your own research prior to the session and bring your information to share with the group.

For this first day, spend some time learning about the history of Habitat for Humanity. Check out the article “The History of Habitat” (<http://www.habitat.org/how/historytext.html>). You may also wish to share with the children the story of Koinonia Farm and Clarence Jordan, the inspiration for Habitat. You can read about this organization at <http://www.koinoniapartners.org>.

While you are on the web, research how many Jimmy Carter Work Projects there have been, the location of the closest site to your town, and which to date was the largest. Perhaps someone in your congregation has participated in a JCWP. Invite that person to share stories of a remarkable week.

### **Read a Habitat Storybook**

Introduce the children to the basics of Habitat with the story *Raising the Roof*. Use the following questions to guide your discussion after you share the story:

- What do you like best about your family?
- What do you enjoy doing with your family?
- Have you ever had to share your mom or dad with a project that was important to them? How did it make you feel?
- Why do you think some people need new houses?
- Why do you think some people are willing to work without pay to build new houses?
- What do you like to do with others? What do you like to do alone?
- What jobs besides building a house do we need to do with others? How can those jobs help us to share God’s good gifts with people in need?

### **Do Something Creative**

Provide materials for the children to build models of their own houses. Younger children can draw pictures of their houses or rooms in their houses that are especially significant for them. If you are working with very young children, you may assist them with pictures cut from magazines. Encourage conversation about feelings and experiences. Invite the children to share stories about times with their families.

Use building blocks to represent a home with younger or broadly graded groups. Older children may wish to use Legos™, Lincoln Logs™, or other more elaborate building materials. For all options, talk with the children about the importance of having a safe and comfortable house in which to live.