

LESSON 5

PETER AND CORNELIUS

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Is for Everyone Who Believes

SCRIPTURE: Acts 10

GOD'S BIG STORY: An angel instructs a Roman military official named Cornelius to meet Jesus' disciple, Peter. Meanwhile, God shows Peter through a vision that God's Holy Spirit is for everyone—Jews and non-Jews—preparing Peter to meet Cornelius.

WORD OF WONDER: The Holy Spirit gives us power. —from Acts 1:8

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army and a gentile, or a non-Jew. Although he feared and prayed to God, Jews were suspicious and afraid of associating with him because of his allegiance to Rome. Rome was occupying and exacting taxes from all the surrounding lands.

WHAT?

God showed Peter a vision of animals that the Torah (Jewish teaching and law) forbade Jews from eating. Food laws of the Torah ([Leviticus 11](#)) made it awkward for Jews and Gentiles to share a meal, but through the symbolism of food, God wanted to show that gentiles can be children of God.

WHERE?

The rooms inside most homes were small, lacking many windows, and filled with cooking smoke. For this reason, Peter probably made it a habit to pray on the rooftop while he was visiting a tanner named Simon. He was residing in Joppa, a seaport today called Jaffa.

WHEN?

Acts tells how the Christian movement began with Jews in Jerusalem and then spread to include people of all nations. Peter later shares this very experience ([Acts 15:7](#)), and as a result, the Jesus-followers in Jerusalem agree that gentiles, not just Jews, can be saved by Jesus.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

God chose to save the world through Abraham's children, and this happened through Jesus. God didn't intend for just one nation or ethnicity to be His children. Rather, God wants everyone who believes in Jesus to join His family—forever!

Activity: Favorite Things

Welcome to church! In God's big story today, we'll learn that God doesn't have favorites, and God gives the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes in Jesus and trusts Him. We're all different, and we have different things we like and don't like. But we're all loved by God. Let's talk about our favorite things.

For older toddlers, call out a category and have them shout out their favorite thing in that category:

- Color
- Animal
- Food
- Show/Movie
- Toy
- Restaurant
- Book

For younger toddlers, call out a variety of things from each category and tell them to clap if they like it.

- Color: pink, blue, yellow
- Animal: dog, cat, fish
- Food: candy, bread, carrots
- Show/Movie (choose a few movies the kids in your ministry enjoy)
- Toy: stuffed animal, dolls, tricycle (or choose various toys the kids in your ministry enjoy)
- Restaurant (choose a variety of restaurants in your area)
- Book (hold up three different books from your room)

We all have different things we like and don't like. God made us all different! He cares about each one of us. God doesn't have favorites!

Activity: Food Pretend Play

We're going to talk about a man from the Bible named Peter. God gave him a vision, like a dream, and Peter saw foods that he did not eat. Other people did eat those foods, though, and that's OK. We'll learn what Peter learned—that God loves all people.

Let's take a look at some foods we eat.

Hold up a variety of toy foods and ask whether the kids can name the food. Ask questions about the color, how it tastes, and whether the kids have eaten it. After going through several different foods, allow the kids to pretend play with the toy foods. Encourage them to pretend to cook, mix, and share some with a friend.

God used the vision to teach Peter that God loves all people. We'll learn more about it in our story today. We'll learn that God loves all people and sends the Holy Spirit to everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Our Wonder Truth today is: **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

THE HOLY SPIRIT—Move arms up and in a circle in front of your body, palms facing out.

IS FOR EVERYONE—Use an open hand to point to everyone in the room.

WHO BELIEVES—Make prayer hands.

Prayer and Blessing

Pray with the kids and thank God for giving the Holy Spirit.

God, we thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to everyone who believes. You give us Your Spirit so we can tell others about Your goodness and love. You will never leave us. You are always with us. Thank You, God! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May your hearts be tender toward the God who loves you. May you sense His love for you each and every day. The Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes. May you believe and receive His precious Holy Spirit!

Activity: Peter's Vision

When God gave Peter a vision, Peter saw a sheet coming from the sky. It was filled with different animals. Peter learned that God loves all people and gives the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes. It doesn't matter what foods the people eat or where they're from. God wants to be close with all people. Let's play with a bedsheet and some animals to help us remember God's big story today.

Set out a bedsheet or blanket and a variety of stuffed animals. Encourage the kids to hold onto the sheet with the stuffed animals on it and raise it up and lower it down. Then see if they can bounce the animals into the air and catch them again on the bedsheet. Ask questions and give directions. Here are some examples:

- Where is the frog?
- Can you find the pig? Put it on the blanket.
- The bird is under the blanket! Can you put it on top?
- Who can find the animal that says "moo"?

We can remember that God loves us all and gives the Holy Spirit to everyone who trusts in Jesus.