

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!

Curiosity

Play Stations

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations. **Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas what we'll be learning about today?**

Play Station: Sorting Food

Set up: Set out a variety of small containers or bowls and toy food.

Play: Encourage the kids to sort the food into the containers using different categories. They can sort by food type (vegetables, breads, desserts, etc.), size, or color. They can also sort according to how much they like each food or sort according to the meal it's served during.

Play Station: Animals

Set up: Set out a blanket or bedsheet along with a variety of toy animals.

Play: Invite the kids to play with the animals however they want. Encourage them to use their imaginations and find ways to use the blanket with the animals (hide them underneath, wrap them up, put them all lined up on top, etc.).

Play Station: Peter and Cornelius Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids could also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of their favorite food or favorite animal.

Faith

Craft: Handprint Pictures

Give each kid a sheet of construction paper.

What made Peter and Cornelius different? Allow the kids to respond. **Peter was a Jew and Cornelius wasn't.** **What made them the same?** Allow the kids to respond. **God loved them and wanted to be close with them, so He sent the Holy Spirit to live in them.** **What makes us different and the same?** Allow the kids to respond.



Encourage each kid to make a handprint on the construction paper, using either washable paint on their hands, ink from ink pads, or trace around their hands with markers.

Our handprints are all different, just like we're all different! Your handprint probably looks different from the other handprints, and they may have been traced differently too! But even though we're different, we can remember that God loves all of us and gives the Holy Spirit to all of us when we trust in Jesus. Use wet wipes to clean the kids' hands and encourage the kids to decorate their papers with coloring utensils to show what makes them unique and special. **Take your pictures home to remind you that God loves us all and sends the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes.**

Game: Animals on a Sheet

We're going to play a game that reminds us of Peter's vision. Who remembers what Peter saw in his vision? Allow the kids to respond. **Peter saw a huge white sheet being lowered from heaven. The sheet was filled with animals that the Jewish people didn't eat. We're going to play a game where we'll raise and lower a sheet filled with animals. But the sheet in the vision wasn't really about animals, was it? It was about how God loves and wants to be in a relationship with everyone.**

Gather the kids to stand in a circle. Have each of them hold the edge of the bedsheet or blanket. Toss a few stuffed animals onto the bedsheet. Tell the kids to move the sheet together up and down slowly as if it were being lowered from heaven and then taken back up into the sky.

You can tell the kids to say the Wonder Truth as they move the sheet up and down: The Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes. **We can remember what Peter learned: that God doesn't have favorites or only love some people. God loves us all and sends us the Holy Spirit.**

Identity

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish the activity, pray with them 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 out 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!