



Peter Visits Cornelius

Lesson Aim: To know salvation through faith in Jesus is available to anyone.

THE WORSHIP

Who God Is: The Spirit Who Changes Us

THE WORD

What He Has Done: God proved to Peter that He saves Gentiles as well as Jews.

Scripture Focus: Acts 10:3-16, 19-20, 28, 34-35, 43-48 **Key Verse:** Acts 10:43

Christ Connection: Psalm 51:1-2; Joel 2:32

THE WAY

The Big Question: What type of people have you separated yourself from?

UNIT 2 FOCUS VERSE

"The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? ...I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." Psalm 27:1, 13-14

Unit 2: The Promise of Change			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim*
6	God Changes Saul's Heart, Acts 9:1-19	The Holy Spirit filled Saul and changed his heart.	To know God can change our hearts.
7	Saul Escapes from Damascus, Acts 9:19b-25	God made Saul a bold witness for His kingdom.	To speak boldly to others about Jesus.
8	Peter and Tabitha (Dorcas), Acts 9:36-42; 1 John 3:18	God restored Tabitha's life.	To see the impact of kindness.
9	Peter Visits Cornelius, Acts 10:3-16, 19-20, 28, 34-35, 43-48	God proved to Peter that He saves Gentiles as well as Jews.	To know salvation through faith in Jesus is available to anyone.
10	Peter Escapes from Prison, Acts 12:1-17	God sent His angel to rescue Peter from prison.	To join together in prayer and watch for God to answer.
11	Barnabas Encourages the Church, Acts 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 14:19-28	God led Barnabas to encourage the church and its leaders.	To show the importance of encouraging one another.

LEADER'S ENCOURAGEMENT This week, read Revelation 7:9-17. Please join us in praying, "Thank You, Lord, for not having favorites. Forgive us for underestimating Your power to cleanse us. Help the students understand Your forgiveness for all who believe in You. Amen."

Lesson Aims are based on reflecting God's character as we participate in His actions to, for, and in the world.

Take Home Elements: The Journal Entry, Action Card, and Family Discussion Card may be sent home to encourage students to reflect on the lesson. The Journal Entry is an in-depth personal study. The Action Card is a visual reminder of the Bible story, God's action, and how we can join into that action. The Family Discussion Card gives parents and guardians a way to engage their students in what they are learning.

Leader's Tip: For larger gatherings, teach THE WELCOME, THE WORSHIP, and THE WORD in a large group setting and divide into small groups for discussion with THE WAY.



Getting started

THE WELCOME

Suggestion: Choose a game that focuses on ideas such as a sheet, animals, faith, salvation, or inclusion.

ACTIVITY OPTION 1: PASS THE BEANS

Purpose: For students to get to know each other and to discover ways each person is unique.

Supplies: Dried beans, coins, or other small items

Directions:

1. Divide the group into equal-sized teams of 4-5 players.
2. Instruct groups to sit in a circle.
3. Give each person 15 dried beans.
4. Group members are to take turns sharing abilities, talents, or experiences they have which they think are unique (e.g. traveling to a particular country, ability to wiggle their ears, skilled at archery, or able to recite a particular scripture). Remind students that whatever they say, it must be true.
5. After someone shares a unique activity or ability, each group member who hasn't done that activity or doesn't have that ability must give that person one bean.
6. Group members take turns sharing their unique experience and abilities until each person has shared five times.
7. Ask each group to figure out which member has the most beans. Have that person share some of the unique activities and abilities mentioned in their group.
8. Discuss the following questions:
 - How easy was it to find unique experiences and abilities?
 - If you could choose one of the abilities or activities you heard, which one would you choose?
 - How can our unique experiences make our group stronger?
 - How can our shared experiences make our group stronger?

ACTIVITY OPTION 2: COMMON GROUND

Purpose: For students to get to know each other and to find things they have in common.

Supplies: Paper, pencils

Directions:

1. Divide the group into equal-sized teams of 3-6 players.
2. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil.
3. Give teams 3 minutes to list everything they can think of that all their team members have in common (e.g. Same grade, same school, have traveled to another country, like the same kind of music, same brand of sneakers). The only rule is they cannot list anything that all people have in common such as a mother, two eyes, eats food, etc. Let them know you will be the final judge on whether an item is allowed.
4. When the 3 minutes are over, have teams share their lists. You may choose to reward the team with the longest list or offer a reward for unique items.
5. Discuss the following questions:
 - How easy was it to discover something in common with your group?
 - How can similarities draw us closer together?
 - How can our differences draw us closer together?



The Spirit who changes us

THE WORSHIP

Note to Leader: The instructions below are suggestions only. Adapt this time of worship to suit your environment, resources, and cultural expression. Encourage students to broaden their view of corporate worship by including a variety of expressions such as group prayer, group praise, silent meditation, singing, listening to music, reading scripture, collecting an offering, drama, dance, visual arts, and/or a physical exploration of nature or neighborhoods.

Ideas for Optional Visuals: _____

Today, we worship the Spirit who changes us. He changes our hearts to believe in Jesus who washes away our sins so we are forgiven. Then, God sees us as His children with pure, clean hearts that are ready to love Him. Let's worship Jesus today by thanking Him for washing away the sins of all who believe in Him. Because of that, we are changed and forgiven!

Read the Unit 2 Focus Verse: Psalm 27:1, 13-14.



Sing worship songs and guide students to focus on the Holy Spirit who changes us.



Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-18.



Invite students to offer sentences of praise to God by completing the following sentence:
"Lord, we worship You for _____."



Saul speaks boldly

THE WORD Presentation

Note to Leader: Adapt this segment to your setting (Sunday School class, youth group, multi-age gathering, youth camp, retreat, etc.). In some settings, you may choose to have a student read the scripture aloud, and then have the leader, in his or her own words, briefly communicate the Teaching Points, the Christ Connection, and the Big Question. In other settings, a teacher, pastor, or other experienced speaker may present a lecture or extended message that includes those same elements.

Ideas for Optional Visuals:

You may choose to include an object lesson, video clip, drama, dance, song, or work of art to illustrate the teaching points.

Option 1: _____

Option 2: _____



TEACHING POINTS

Consider current culture and influences impacting your students, and adjust the teaching accordingly.

Read the suggested scripture and communicate each of the points noted.

Last time, we learned God used Peter to raise Tabitha back to life. When the people in Joppa heard about this, many of them believed in Jesus. Today's story is about Peter's visit to the home of Cornelius. In this story, God is clearly on the move, initiating communication, leading, and giving visions to Cornelius and Peter. Both of their visions contained specific instructions for what God wanted them to do.

The leader or a student reads Acts 10:3-8.

- This story is full of surprises! The first surprise is that an angel would appear not only to a Gentile, but to a centurion in the Roman Army. The Roman Empire was oppressing the Jews so the Romans would have been hated by the Jews. Not only that but Cornelius was a Gentile and Gentiles and Jews did not associate with each other.
- However, we read here that Cornelius was devout, feared the Lord, gave generously, and prayed regularly. Because of this, he had the respect of the Jewish people (v. 22).
- Cornelius could have refused to reach out to Peter, a Jew, but instead he immediately obeyed. His response to the vision and obedience showed he had a real relationship with God.

The leader or a student reads Acts 10:9-16.

- Just before the men arrived, God gave Peter this surprising vision.
- The animals lowered down in the sheet were animals that Jewish law declared were unclean and forbidden to eat. Knowing God had given these laws to the Jews, Peter was surprised to hear a voice from heaven telling him to hunt and eat the animals.

The leader or a student reads Acts 10:19-20.

- It was significant that the Spirit told Peter to go with Cornelius' men because it was against Jewish law for them to associate with Gentiles.
- Peter could have refused to go with Cornelius' men and kept himself separate from these Gentiles, but he obeyed God's instructions and traveled with them to Cornelius' home.

THE WORD Presentation *continued*

The leader or a student reads Acts 10:28.

- Peter was a law abiding Jew and Cornelius was a Gentile. But, God had shown Peter he was not to call any man impure or unclean.
- Cornelius shared his vision with Peter and showed his faith in God through his obedience (v. 30-33).

The leader or a student reads Acts 10:34-35, 43-48.

- Peter shared that vision showed him God had no favorites. He accepts anyone who believes in Him. This was a truth that would have been contrary to Jewish law.
- The believers who had come from Joppa with Peter were surprised to hear that anyone who believes in Jesus, even Gentiles, would receive forgiveness of sins through His name. They were surprised to see the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on all who heard this good news.
- After receiving the Holy Spirit, those who heard Peter and believed in Jesus were baptized. Baptism is a special ceremony where believers are dipped in or sprinkled with water to show Jesus has washed away their sins. It is an outward sign that shows someone belongs to Him.
- Even today some believers assume God has favorites. But, this story shows us that anyone, regardless of who they are or what they have done, will receive forgiveness and eternal life if they believe in Jesus. The salvation message is for everyone.
- Just as it was hard for the Jews to imagine Jesus washing away the sins of the Gentiles, it may be hard for us to imagine God washing away the sins of certain people, especially those who have hurt us, hurt others, or those who repeatedly choose to sin against God.
- But, there is hope for everyone. When we believe in Jesus, He washes our sins away and our hearts are clean and pure in God's eyes.
- Even though Peter had grown up in a culture where Jews and Gentiles did not mix, he was willing to let go of his own prejudices to follow God's instructions and to share the love of Jesus with everyone.



Connecting the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Us

CHRIST CONNECTION

In the whole story of God, what's the connection between this New Testament story and the Old Testament?

- 600 years before Peter told the good news to Cornelius, the prophet Joel announced the same truth—everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The leader or a student reads aloud Joel 2:32.



THE BIG QUESTION

Introduce and elaborate on this question. Students will answer it in their discussion group.

What type of people have you separated yourself from?



THE WAY Discussion



GETTING STARTED Display and review the Discussion Group Covenant below:

**We will include everyone here, treating one another with respect and kindness.
We will encourage everyone here to express their thoughts and opposing views.**

Every student shares his or her best experience or greatest challenge of the past week.



READ IT AGAIN

Read Acts 10:3-16, 19-20, 28, 34-35, 43-48 silently or aloud.

Describe the vision God gave Cornelius.

Describe the vision God gave Peter.

How did God prepare Peter, Cornelius, the Jews, and the Gentiles for the message Peter shared with them?



THE BIG QUESTION Invite students to share their answers.

What type of people have you separated yourself from?



TAKE ACTION Lead students in a discussion using the questions below.

What areas of division between groups of people do you think are the strongest in our culture? Why?

Why do you think we exclude or separate ourselves from certain types of people?

What can you do to include those who you, your family, or friends have excluded?

Why is it good news for you that God has no favorites?

Ask each student to complete this sentence: **God calls us to include everyone when we share the good news about Jesus SO THAT others might _____.**



PRAY Share prayer requests and answered prayers.

Have students pray with partners, or have the whole group pray together.



FINAL FIVE MINUTES When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

Give each student Action Card #9 and Journal Entry #9. **Take home today's Action Card as a reminder of how we can join in what God is doing. Use the Journal Entry as your personal devotional study. Complete your Journal Entries at home and keep them together in a notebook or in your Bible.** Optional: Provide parent or guardian with Family Discussion Card #9.

PROPHETS & PROMISES

JOURNAL ENTRY #9

Peter Visits Cornelius

Acts 10:3-16, 19-20, 28, 34-35, 43-48

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

- **Pray!!!** Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He wants you to learn from this passage.
- **Read Acts 10:3-48.**
- In Peter's vision, what did all the animals he saw have in common (v. 14)?
- How did the voice reply to Peter's question (v. 15)?
- What Jewish law was Peter breaking by going to Cornelius' house?
- What did Peter's vision tell him about God's view of people (v. 34-35)?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- What was God doing in Peter to prepare him to share the gospel?
- What is God's promise to those who seek Him?
- What do you think is the clearest lesson from this story?

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Have you separated yourself from a certain type or group of people? Write down who. If so, ask God to open your eyes and your heart to see them as equal to you.
- What can you do to include others who you, your family, or friends have excluded?
- What is one way to reach out and share God with someone who is very different from yourself?

Action Card #9/P&P

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

ACTS 10:3-16, 19-20, 28, 34-35, 43-48

GOD SHOWED PETER HE HAS *NO FAVORITES*.

WE ARE CALLED TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS WITH EVERYONE.

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Family Discussion #9/P&P

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WHAT DOES THIS STORY TELL US ABOUT INCLUDING ALL PEOPLE? IS THERE ANYONE YOU NEED TO BEGIN INCLUDING?

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