

# Cornelius and His Family Believe in Jesus

Overview



## Materials You'll Need

- cardboard
- markers
- yarn
- scissors



## Scriptures

Acts 10:1-8, 17-48

## Bible Truth Objective(s)

God commanded us to preach the good news to all people

## Behavioral Objective(s)

To pray for those who tell others about Jesus

## Memory Verse

"We are witnesses of all things which He did."  
(Acts 10:39)



## Bible Knowledge

### Spreading the Gospel

The account of Peter and Cornelius marks a key turning point in the history of the early church. Before this encounter the gospel had been preached only to Jews, converts to Judaism, and Samaritans (who followed the law of Moses). Acts chapter 10 describes how God used Peter to allow all people the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as the Savior.

As Peter was speaking to Cornelius, he stressed that through Jesus Christ, people from any nation or tribe are accepted by God (Acts 10:34-36). As he spoke, the Holy Spirit fell upon those who were gathered. It was so powerful that Peter was convinced that gentiles should not be denied baptism or a place in the church.

### Cornelius

Cornelius was a gentile of Italian descent. Being a centurion, he would have been in charge of about a hundred men, who would have been a

part of a cohort of about 600 men. The Bible describes Cornelius as "a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2). Before meeting Peter, the centurion's faith would have been much like that of the Ethiopian eunuch.

### Peter's Vision

As Peter was getting ready to eat lunch, he fell into a trance. He was commanded to kill and eat various kinds of animals, such as reptiles and birds. Many of these animals were considered unclean. The Jews were taught to never touch or eat anything unclean. That is why Peter resisted at first. God had to correct Peter three times. It is possible that even at that point, Peter only understood the vision to concern physical food. But later, during his encounter with Cornelius, he would have realized the greater implications of God's message.



## Understanding Your Students

Most kindergartners will not know what a missionary is, or what he does. Emphasize that the job of missionaries is to tell people about Jesus. Let them know that our pastors take on this role in the church. Share the places they have visited (photos will make the sharing more real to them).

Often, even for adult members, this job seems removed from their everyday lives. It is something that only pastors do, so it isn't a big concern for most of us. But in fact, there are several things we can all do. We can pray for our missionaries and offer tithe to support their work. That's why we should begin to include our students in this important holy work. Tell them that they can have a part in this great task, too. Let them know that they can do something right now to help the missionaries. They can pray and give offerings to

assist in this ministry. Encourage them to remember the pastors in their prayers. You will need to tell them the exact words to say. They could say something like, "Lord Jesus, please keep the pastors (name a local pastor they know) safe when they are traveling and telling people about You." Although it is a simple thought, if they can consistently remember this important work in their prayers, they will have done more than they can imagine. Also, as they give tithe each week, do not just collect and count the money. Take time out to discuss how their offerings are used. They might be used for supplies in the class. They could also be used to purchase food we eat in the dining hall. And the money could be used to support our pastors who travel. The church needs money to purchase plane tickets, as well as food, for them to eat when they are away. When they can see how they are helping God's ministry, the students will be motivated to do their part, which in turn will help their faith grow.



## Vocabulary

### **Centurion**

a commander of a hundred soldiers

### **Angel**

a messenger of God

### **Holy Spirit**

the Spirit of God; He promised to send Him to live inside of us



## Before You Teach

Cornelius and Peter were two very different people. Cornelius was wealthy, a gentile, and a military man. Peter, on the other hand, was a Jewish fisherman turned preacher. But God's plan included both of them. Cornelius needed Peter and the gospel to know he could be saved. Peter needed Cornelius and his experience of salvation to know that gentiles were included in God's plan.

We know we are called to preach. But we have all been like Peter at one time or another, before his encounter with Cornelius. We have made judgment calls about whom we should preach to and whom we should just avoid altogether. However, today's passage teaches us that we really don't know what God's plan is, and whom He will save. Our job is to sow the seeds. God will open the hearts of those who are willing to listen.

This understanding also applies as we teach our students. Often, we give up on someone or something because it just seems impossible. And this may be true with our human efforts. But there is nothing God cannot do. Peter never thought that gentiles would be a part of God's plan of salvation. God showed him that His plans are different than man's plans. Today, no matter what our minds tell us, God is telling us that we don't truly know His plans. In order to understand His will, we need to pray for guidance and revelation from above. Then what was once impossible can become possible. What was once unattainable will become attainable. Instead of throwing in the towel, we should pray more to God for strength. God's will is always accomplished. If we want to be a part of His plan, we need to be sensitive and obedient to His will. Let us continue to pray for all of our fellow teachers and students so that we can be encouraged.



## Bible Story

In our last lesson, we learned about a woman called Dorcas. She was a kind and generous person. She helped people by making clothes for them to wear. She especially made them for people who could not afford to buy their own because they did not have money. She did this because she believed in Jesus and she wanted to please Him by loving others. But one day, she became sick and died. Her friends and all the people she helped came to see her. They were sad. They wished she was still alive. So they asked two people to go and find Peter. They knew he was in a nearby city. When the men found Peter, he went to Joppa with them. Then he asked the people to leave the room where Dorcas laid. He prayed to God and then told her to get up. Do you remember what happened? Dorcas opened her eyes and got up. Her friends were amazed and happy she was alive again. They praised God for His power and grace. And more people came to believe in Jesus because of this wonderful miracle.

Today, we are going to learn about more people who heard about Jesus and got baptized.

### **An Angel Appears to Cornelius**

There was a man called Cornelius. Cornelius was an Italian soldier. Actually, he was a centurion. (Allow the students to repeat the word after you.) A centurion is in charge of a lot of soldiers. He probably gave the soldiers orders so that they would know what to do. The Bible tells us that the Cornelius was a very good man, and his family loved God. He gave money to the poor and prayed to God all the time. He lived in a place called Caesarea.

One day, Cornelius was in his house and praying to God. Suddenly an angel appeared to him.

The angel called his name, "Cornelius "

Cornelius was afraid. He didn't know what to do. He had never seen an angel before.

He said, "What is it, Lord?"

The angel said, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come before God. Go and find a person called Peter. He is in Joppa, and staying with a person called Simon, who lives by the sea. He will tell you what to do."

God had a very special message for Cornelius.

He told Cornelius that He had heard his prayers and knew that he has been giving money to the poor. He wanted Cornelius to find Peter. Why do you think God wanted Cornelius to find Peter? (Allow students to express their thoughts.) He wanted Cornelius to know about Jesus, so that he could be baptized. Up to now, he only knew about God but he didn't know anything about Jesus and the cross.

Cornelius didn't really understand everything but he obeyed God's command. He called two servants and another soldier to go and find Peter. These three men went on a journey to Joppa (you may wish to show where the places are on a map). They knew they had a long way to go. They probably would not get there until the next day.

### **Peter Sees a Vision**

Around noon the next day, Peter was praying in Simon's house. During those days, houses had flat roofs, which were sometimes used as resting places. Peter was praying there as he waited for lunch.

All of a sudden, Peter saw a vision. He saw the sky open, and a large sheet came down to earth. (Ask the students to imagine their bed sheet, or a table cloth.) The four corners were tied up. Then the sheet was opened. Do you know what was in this sheet? There were all sorts of animals inside: four-legged animals, reptiles, and birds.

A voice said to Peter, "Get up, Peter. Kill some of these animals and eat them "

Peter did not want to eat the animals because he was not allowed to eat some of the animals he saw in the sheet. He was taught that they were unclean animals.

So Peter said, "Not so, Lord. I cannot eat what is unclean "

The voice said, "Do not call anything unclean that God has made clean."

The voice was telling Peter to eat the animals. It didn't matter what Peter learned before. God was telling him that all the animals, reptiles, and birds were clean.

This happened three times. Then the sheet went back into the sky. What do you think Peter was thinking? He was probably walking back and forth wondering what all this meant.

After this happened, the three men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house and stopped at the

gate.

They were very polite and they called out, "Is there someone here named Peter?"

Peter was still on the roof thinking about what he just saw when God said to him, "There are three men looking for you. Go with them because I have sent them to find you."

Then Peter went downstairs and he said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a just man and he fears God. An angel told him to find you so that he could hear what you have to say."

When Peter heard this, he invited the men into the house to stay that evening. The next morning, Peter went with them to Cornelius' house.

### **Peter Goes to Cornelius' House**

When Peter and the three men finally got to Cornelius' house, he was waiting for them. He had called his relatives and friends to come and listen. They were all waiting for Peter at the house. Cornelius was very happy to see Peter.

He said, "An angel told me that you would have something special to tell me and my family. What is this special message?"

Peter said, "I have come to tell you about Jesus. I want you to know that Jesus loves each of you. It's true that you and I are different in many ways. But God has shown me that everyone who fears Him is accepted by Him. Jesus died and has

come back to life. He is in heaven and He loves you and wants all of you to be saved. If you believe in Him, your sins will be forgiven."

As Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening. They began speaking in tongues and praising God. Peter was so happy. Everyone there was baptized in the name of Jesus. Cornelius and his family were saved. Peter stayed with them for a few more days. He probably told them more about Jesus and the wonderful things He did while He was on earth.

### **Let's Pray for Everyone to Be Saved**

Do you remember when Peter saw the sheet with the animals, reptiles, and birds in it? At first, he didn't understand why God wanted him to kill and eat them because he wasn't supposed to eat unclean animals. But when Peter saw Cornelius, he understood what God was trying to tell him. He knew that God wants to save everyone. It doesn't matter where they are from, or what they are like, just like all the different animals. If they believe, and become baptized, then God will save them. Just like the animals, reptiles, and birds, God was showing Peter it didn't matter if they were called clean or unclean before. God had made them all clean. Today, God wants all of us to be saved. He wants all of us to be called clean, too. Let's remember to pray for those who don't know Jesus yet. They could be our family members, our friends, or our neighbors. We can pray that God will open their hearts, so that they may come to church and learn about Him.



### **Check For Understanding**

1. **Who was Cornelius?** (He was a centurion, a captain of many soldiers.)
2. **What did he do to show he loved God?** (He prayed to Him and gave money to the poor.)
3. **What did the angel tell Cornelius?** (To find Peter because God had something special to tell him.)
4. **What did Peter see when he was on the**

**rooftop?** (A sheet coming down from the sky; it had animals that were unclean in it.)

5. **What did God want Peter to do with the animals?** (Kill and eat them.)
6. **How many times did this happen?** (Three.)
7. **What did this mean?** (God was telling Peter to tell all people, even gentiles, about Jesus.)
8. **What special message did Peter tell Cornelius?** (He told Cornelius that Jesus loves everyone and He wants them to believe in Him.)

**9. What happened as Peter was speaking?**

*(The Holy Spirit came down upon the people in Cornelius' house.)*



**Life Application Story**

**Praying for God's Workers**

One Sabbath, Julie entered the elementary class with her head low and her shoulders hunched. She was not in a very good mood. In fact, she was quite sad. She slowly dragged her feet into the room, put her bag down on the floor, and sat in her usual chair. Today's teacher was Mrs. Hayes.

Julie didn't seem to notice that everyone else was excited to be there today because there were buckets of paint set up around the room— they were going to be painting. Mrs. Hayes looked around and all the students were sitting in their seats with big smiles on their faces. Everyone, except Julie.

Mrs. Hayes began the class and told the students that they would be painting a picture of their favorite Bible story that they learned this quarter.

"Now everybody, remember to share all the different colors and paintbrushes, and please don't move around too fast, in case you spill something," Mrs. Hayes said.

"Should we put on our smocks?" asked Benjamin.

"Yes, thank you for reminding me, Ben. Please get a smock and then return to your seats and begin your art project," Mrs. Hayes explained.

Everyone got up excitedly and went to put on their art smocks. Everybody, except Julie.

Mrs. Hayes walked over and sat down next to Julie.

"Julie, sweetheart, what seems to be the matter? You look very sad," Mrs. Hayes said.

Julie looked up and her eyes were full of tears.

"My dad went to Africa this morning, and I miss him already. He's never been so far away, and for so long too," Julie said, as she held back her tears.

Mrs. Hayes replied, "Oh, that's right. Your dad went with Pastor Hayes. I know he has been planning it for a long time. The last time I talked to him, he was really excited about going and helping the

**10. What can we do to help people who don't**

**know Jesus yet? (Pray for them, pray for the pastors and missionaries, etc.)**

churches in Africa."

"I know. He told me that last night, but I really miss him. He's going to be gone for almost three weeks," Julie said.

"I know how you feel," said Mrs. Hayes. "When Pastor Hayes first went away on these missionary trips, I was sad and I missed him a lot too. But it is an important job. A missionary travels and tells other people about Jesus. So I learned that the best way for me to help him is by praying for him. I pray that he will have a safe trip and that a lot of people can come to know Jesus and be baptized. It always makes me feel better."

Julie was quiet for a moment.

"Do you really think it will make me feel better if I prayed?" asked Julie.

"I am sure it would. You know what? The whole class can pray about this after our art project. We can tell God how much we love them and that we are sorry that we have to be away from them. But we ask God to watch over them as they do His work."

Julie asked, "Will God really watch over them?"

"Oh, yes. He loves His children very much."

Julie let out a little smile.

"Thanks Mrs. Hayes. I don't feel as sad anymore."

"You know what else, Julie?" Mrs. Hayes said. "I am sure your dad would love to see a drawing of something you've learned from the Bible when he comes back. Why don't you share one of your favorite stories with him and make a drawing to go with it?"

Julie nodded.

"I know he would love that I'll get started on it now "

**Questions to Think About**

- 1. Why was Julie sad?** (Her dad went away on a missionary trip.)
- 2. What can we do to help our pastors and missionaries?** (We can pray for them, offer tithes to support their trips, etc.)





## Activity 1

### **Cornelius and His Family Believe**

Look at the pictures. Which one happened first? Put them in the right order.

1. Peter sees a vision of unclean animals.
2. Peter goes with the three men to Caesarea to see Cornelius.
3. Peter preaches to Cornelius and his family.
4. Cornelius and his family are baptized.



## Activity 2

### **Praying for God's Workers**

We can pray for those who tell others about Jesus. What kinds of people can preach about Jesus? What are they saying about Jesus? Can you do that?

1. A pastor talks about God at church.
2. We can talk to our neighbor.
3. A choir can sing hymns.
4. A pastor or a church member can travel to other places and tell to others about Jesus..



## Activity 3

### **Praying Hands**

#### Materials:

1. cardboard
2. yarn
3. markers or crayons
4. scissors

#### Directions:

1. Give each student a piece of cardboard (large enough to fit their two hands).
2. Place their hands flat on the board, then trace around them with a marker.
3. Cut out the hand prints.
4. Poke a hole near the top of each hand print and tie a long piece of yarn to the two holes (the yarn should be long enough to drape around the neck and shoulders).
5. Ask students to decorate and personalize their

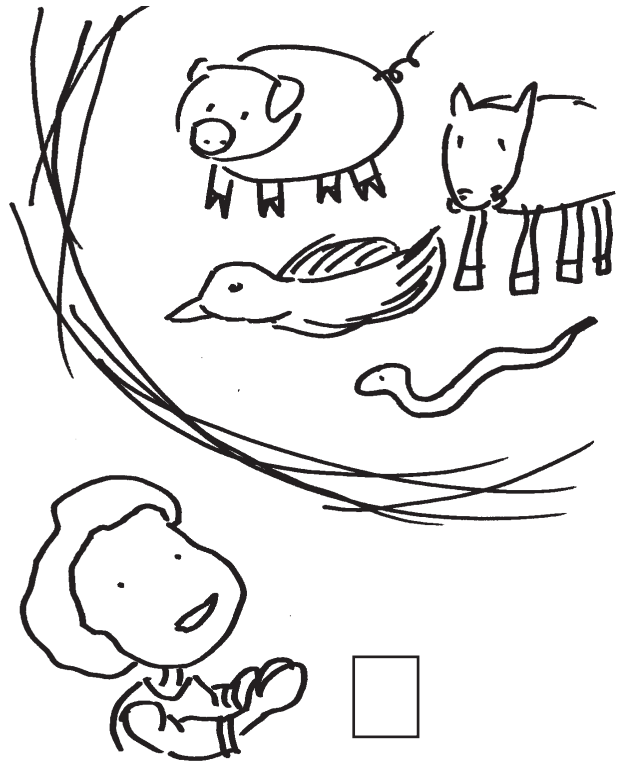
hands.

6. Encourage the students to hang their hands at home. When they see their hands, they can be reminded to pray for the workers who tell others about Jesus.

Activity 9:1

### Cornelius and His Family Believe

Look at the pictures. Which one happened first? Put them in the right order.



Activity 9.2

### Praying For God's Workers

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1. A pastor talks about God at church.



2. We can talk to our neighbor.



3. A choir can sing hymns.

4. A pastor or church member can travel to other places to tell others about Jesus.