



Use Week of:

## Unit 31 • Session 1

# Peter and Cornelius

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Acts 10

### STORY POINT:

The gospel is for all people.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 Chronicles 16:31

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
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**TEACH THE STORY**  
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**APPLY THE STORY**  
(25–30 MINUTES)  
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## LEADER Bible Study

The apostle Peter preached and taught boldly after Pentecost. Jesus had commanded His followers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Acts 10 shows us how God made clear to Peter that the gospel is for everyone—not only the Jews but also the Gentiles.

The story begins in Caesarea (cess uh REE uh), the capital city in the Roman province of Judea. Cornelius, a Roman centurion, lived in Caesarea. Like many of the people in Caesarea, Cornelius was a Gentile; however, he did not worship the Roman gods. Cornelius worshiped the one true God, and one day, God spoke to Cornelius in a vision. In the vision, an angel told Cornelius to send for Peter.

Now Peter was in Joppa (JAHP uh), about 30 miles south of Caesarea. As Cornelius' men approached the city, Peter had a vision too. He was on a rooftop when God showed him a sheet of animals and commanded him to eat. The problem was that some of the animals were considered “unclean” by Jewish food laws. Three times, God said to Peter, “What God has made clean, do not call impure.”

Peter visited Cornelius and others who had gathered with him. Peter understood that God did not want a Jewish man to call anyone unclean just because he was a foreigner. (See Acts 10:28-29.) Peter preached the gospel to the Gentiles there, and they believed. The Holy Spirit filled them, and they were baptized.

The gospel is good news for everyone. As you teach kids, emphasize that God showed Peter that just as there is no “clean” and “unclean” food, there are no “clean” and “unclean” people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all!

# The BIBLE Story

## Peter and Cornelius

*Acts 10*

Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army who lived in Caesarea (SESS uh REE uh). He and everyone in his house worshiped God. Cornelius helped other people, and he always prayed to God. **One afternoon, Cornelius saw an angel of God in a vision**

**which frightened him.**

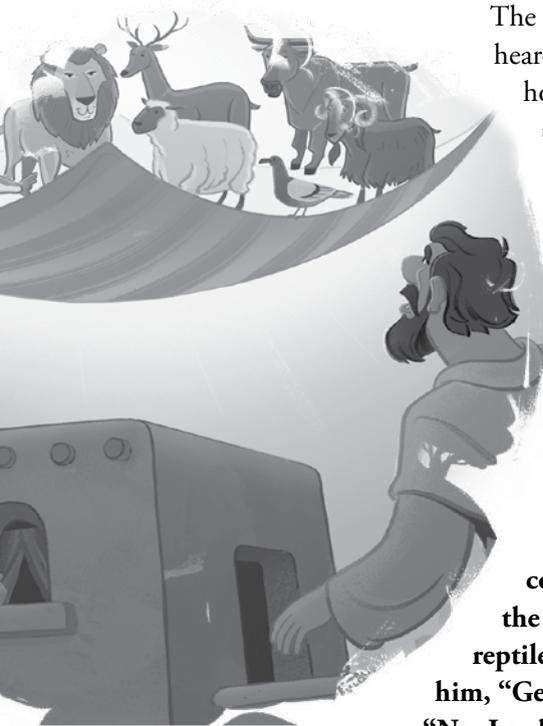
The angel said to him, “God has heard your prayers, and He has seen how you help others.” Then **the angel told Cornelius to send for a man named Peter, who was in the city of Joppa. So Cornelius sent two of his servants and one soldier to Joppa.**

**The next day, as the servants and the soldier were nearing the city, Peter went up on the roof of the house to pray. Peter saw a vision of something like a large sheet coming down from heaven. In the sheet were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds. A voice said to him, “Get up, Peter; kill and eat!”**

**“No, Lord!” Peter said. “I have never eaten anything that is unclean or not used for**

**food.”**

**Again, a voice said to him, “God has made these clean. Do not call them unclean.”** This happened three times, and then the whole



thing was taken up into heaven. Peter tried to understand what the vision meant.

**Then Cornelius' men arrived at the gate.** They explained that Cornelius had seen a vision, and an angel instructed him to send for Peter. So **the next day, Peter went with the men to Caesarea.**

**When Peter got to Cornelius' house, he explained to Cornelius that God does not consider some people to be better than others. God had sent good news to the Israelites: Jesus is Lord of all. Peter said, "Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven."**

**As Peter said this, the Holy Spirit came down on those who heard the message—not just the Jews, but the Gentiles, or non-Jews, too. The Jewish believers were amazed.**

Cornelius, his friends, and his relatives were baptized in the name of Jesus, and Peter stayed with them for a few days.

*Christ Connection: God showed Peter that just as there is no "clean" and "unclean" food in Christ, there are no "clean" and "unclean" people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Incorporate art:** While you tell the story, ask a volunteer to illustrate the story. Or draw pictures ahead of time to display as you tell the story.
- **Use props:** Display a large sheet with stuffed animals to represent "clean" and "unclean" animals. Include all kinds of animals, birds, and reptiles.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Peter and Cornelius

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Acts 10

**STORY POINT:** The gospel is for all people.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Chronicles 16:31

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to explain what their favorite animals are, and why.

**SAY** • It's OK to have favorite animals or animals you don't like; however, the Bible teaches that all people are made in God's image, so it's sinful to say some groups are better than others. Today we will learn more about how Jesus taught the early church to accept all people.

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Clean or Unclean" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "Clean or Unclean" activity page. Instruct kids to circle the animals that would have been clean and cross out those that would have been unclean.

**SAY** • The Old Testament law set some animals apart as clean while the rest were unclean. Today we will learn about a time God commanded Peter to eat unclean animals because He had made them clean. What else do you think God can make clean?

## Session starter (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** For everyone

Invite all the kids to stand. Request that certain kids sit based on traits of the clothing they are wearing, months they were born in, and so forth until all the kids are seated. Play again as time allows.

**SAY** • In that game, before you could sit, I had to announce a trait that matched you. The gospel isn't like that. There are not certain traits that earn you God's love. The gospel is for everyone. Today we will learn about a time God gave Peter a vision to help him understand that **the gospel is for all people**.

**OPTION 2:** Where is it from?

Display various stuffed animal toys and ask the kids to group them based on various traits, such as where the animal lives, what color it is, whether the animal is a mammal, or what the animal eats (plants, meat, or both).

· various stuffed  
animal toys

**SAY** • People really like to group things to help us understand them better. We even do that with ourselves sometimes, grouping based on what language we speak, where we live, or other factors. Sadly, we often sin by thinking certain groups of people are better or worse than others. Today we will learn that God loves all people, and Jesus died and rose again to save people of all groups.

## Transition to teach the story

# TEACH the Story



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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

**Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas:** Decorate the room to look like a large meeting room. Arrange a few tables in a semi-circle. Place placards with the names of various nations on the tables and hang each nation's flag behind that spot. You may choose to display the theme background slide.

## Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire

*[Leader enters wearing business casual attire.]*

**LEADER** • Hey everyone! I'm so glad you all are here. This is our Model United Nations. The real United Nations, or UN, is an organization of countries from all over the world who work together to solve problems. For example, the UN might send military troops somewhere to help stop violence. The UN also sends money or food to places that may not have enough to take care of all the people living there.

Basically, the UN is a picture of teamwork between lots of very different people. This Model UN is a way for kids to practice some of those same ideals. But

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

there's an organization that is a much better picture of teamwork between different people groups and nations. Do you know what organization I'm talking about? The church!

The church is made up of all believers who love Jesus. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the church works together as one body to love people and guide people to trust and obey Jesus.

### **Big picture question (1 minute)**

**LEADER** • As we learn more about the church, I want you to consider this big picture question and answer:

*What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* The whole Bible tells the story of God's rescue plan, and the church is made up of all the people who have heard the good news, believe it is true, and trust in Jesus to save them.

### **Giant timeline (1 minute)**

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. - Giant Timeline

**LEADER** • After Jesus rose from the grave and returned to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to live in His disciples and give them power. They used that power to preach the truth to people from all over the world. The church grew, but for the most part it was Jewish people who believed and became part of the church. This week, we will learn what God did to help the early church understand that His plan is to rescue sinners from every nation, tribe, and people group.

- Bibles
- “Peter and Cornelius” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 10. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Peter and Cornelius.”

**LEADER** • The Old Testament laws had strict rules about which animals could and could not be eaten. The vision God gave Peter was about more than food though. God was showing Peter that **the gospel is for all people**. God’s plan all along has been to glorify His name in all the earth.

The blessings that God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were always supposed to be carried through them to the rest of the world: a blessing used to bless others. Jesus, the fulfillment of that promised blessing, had come, lived a perfect life, died the death we deserve, and rose again to defeat death. The time had come for Peter and the other apostles to carry the gospel beyond just the Jewish people, to people of all nations.

The Bible teaches that all people are born in sin, and so we all need a Savior. That is why the gospel is so beautiful. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners***—not just some sinners, but all sinners who have faith in Jesus.

## Christ connection

**LEADER** • God showed Peter that just as there is no “clean” and “unclean” food, there are no “clean” and “unclean” people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

## Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 31, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about someone they struggle to get along with. Guide them to discuss how they feel when they think about God’s love for sinners.

• “Unit 31, Session 1”  
Questions from Kids  
video



## Missions moment (3 minutes)

Ask kids to tell you some things they might know about the state of Pennsylvania or the city of Pittsburgh. Prompt them to raise their hand to tell you a sports team they might know or a historical fact they’ve learned in school.

• “Wiltons at Work”  
missions video

**LEADER • The gospel is for all people.** That’s why missionaries serve around the world. They want to bring the good news of Jesus to everyone. Let’s find out more about missionaries who are starting churches in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Play the missions video.

## Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 Chronicles 16:31. Then sing the key passage song.

• Key Passage Poster  
• “Rejoice, Be Glad  
(1 Chronicles 16:31)”  
song

**LEADER • God is the one true God.** He is Lord of all creation, which means He is God over all nations. His plan to rescue the world from sin is reason to praise Him.

## Sing (4 minutes)

**LEADER • The gospel is for all people.** We can help all people become part of God’s family by sharing the gospel with everyone we meet.

• “Go Tell the World”  
song

Sing together “Go Tell the World.”

### **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

**LEADER** • Lord, thank You that You are Lord of all. Help us to honor You and give You the glory You deserve. All people are made in Your image, and we pray for Your love to fill us and help us love everyone around us. Give us courage to tell the world of Your love and mercy. Amen.

### **Dismiss to apply the story**

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

# APPLY the Story



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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- dry erase board or large sheet of paper
- dry erase marker or pen

Work with the kids in your group to develop simple pictures or symbols to replace key words in the key passage. Draw the symbols on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper. Then, cover the key passage poster and encourage the kids to say the key passage using only the symbols to help them if they get stuck.

Suggested symbols: heavens, a cloud with shine lines; rejoice, two hands raised in praise; nations, a flag; Lord, a cross; reigns, a crown.

**SAY** • The key passage comes from the Old Testament, specifically from a song King David sang to praise God after He helped His people recover the ark of the covenant. Now that Jesus has risen from the dead, people from all nations can be saved to worship the God of all nations.

## Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them find Acts 10. Remind the kids that Acts is in the History division of the New Testament. Ask them who wrote Acts. (*Luke*) You may also choose to direct kids to find Leviticus 11.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. What did God tell Cornelius in his vision? (*to send for Peter, Acts 10:5*)
2. What did God show to Peter through a vision? (*a sheet in which many animals, including unclean animals, were sitting; Acts 10:11-12*)
3. What did Peter's vision mean? (*that God wanted the gospel to be preached to Gentiles; Acts 10:28,34-36*)
4. Why does God love all people? *Guide kids to remember that all people are made in God's image. Help them see that our value and dignity do not come from our actions, our appearance, or the talents we have. Our value is based on God's love for us and the fact that He has created each of us.*
5. Why does God want us to love all people? *Guide kids to see that our love reflects His love. If we behave toward others as if we hate them or do not care about them, we communicate untrue things about God. Help them see that the Bible teaches us that we cannot love God without also loving people. Our love for people is evidence of our love for God.*
6. How can we show with our actions that we love God and love people? *Guide kids to think practically about ways they can care for others. Suggest ways they can show kindness to their classmates and help them see that seeking out ways to show love to people who are different from them is a great way to show that God does not show favoritism.*

**SAY • The gospel is for all people.** When we are transformed by God's love, we will see that all people are important to God and will show love to people—even those who are different from us or unkind to us.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

## LOW PREP

- index cards
- pencils

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

- bedsheet

### Activity choice (10 minutes)



#### OPTION 1: Time for teamwork

Show kids how to fold the index cards in half into a “tent” so the card will stand up on a table. Encourage kids to write on one side of the tents the names of people who they might choose to go on a missions project with them (*church planters, pastors, Bible teachers, kids, teenagers, coaches, mentors, friends, business owners*). Invite them to draw on the other side a simple picture that represents the person they wrote on the first side, such as a Bible for a pastor or a whistle for a coach. Arrange all the cards on a table to look like a team line up.

If kids struggle with who to write, remind them of people mentioned in the missions video or who they remember from past missions activities.

**SAY** • Church planter Rob Wilton is part of a team of people working together to reach the people of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with the gospel. We brainstormed people for our own teams that we could invite to do the same with us. This week, think of ways you can help bring the gospel to all people—those who live in your hometown, or those who live on the other side of the world!

#### OPTION 2: The inclusion sheet

Spread a large bedsheet on the floor and invite all the kids to sit around its edges. Select a kid to start the activity by saying one thing about herself. Next, the kid to her right will say something about himself. Play continues in this way until each kid has shared a fact about herself.

**SAY** • We are all different in many ways. Even though we are all different, God loves us all and wants each of

us to love Jesus and trust in Him for salvation. Just as the sheet in Peter's vision had all kinds of animals, God invites all kinds of people into His family through faith in Jesus.

### **Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.