

Peter Teaches Cornelius

Acts 10:1-48



New Testament 4
Part 2: Lessons from the Apostle Peter

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 4 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34b).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality'" (Acts 10:34).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Cornelius, the Gentile"](#)
- ["The Twelve Apostles"](#)
- ["Jesus Loves Me"](#)
- ["Jesus Loves the Little Children"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [N.T. Disciples & Peter](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "N.T. 4 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- "Summary of the Bible" from ["Kids Prep"](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt figures
- Large white dish towel filled with toy or felt animals (Clean: locust, cricket, grasshopper, cow, ox, sheep, goat, deer. Unclean: pig, camel, rabbit, eel, eagle, buzzard, vulture, raven, ostrich, owl, sea gull, gecko, mouse, lizard, snake. More information: Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14)
- Bouquet of different colored, shaped flowers or pictures of different kinds of plants in their own environments
- Pictures or plastic replicas of different kinds of butterflies or frogs
- World map

- [Map of New Testament World](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Have students look in a mirror and tell what they see. Notice how each student is different

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

God loves everyone—no matter who they are, what they look like, or where they live—and wants everyone to know that Jesus died for them. He wants me to love everyone, too.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

After Jesus died, God helped the early Christians understand that the Gospel is for **everyone**—not just the Jews. Today we will learn how God let the Christians know it was time to teach **everyone** about Jesus.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last Sunday’s lesson.

During the time of the Old Testament and the life of Jesus, the Jews were God’s chosen people. As a result, they came to think of anyone who wasn’t a Jew as less of a person. But Jesus’ death on the cross helped God’s faithful followers to see that the Gospel was for everyone, Jew and non-Jew. God had to let the new Christians know that they needed to teach **everyone**, not just Jews, because they still thought that the Gospel was for Jews only. In today’s lesson, we will learn how God did this.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Peter went to the city of Joppa, because a very special woman named Dorcas had died there. After raising her from the dead, Peter stayed “many days” with a man named Simon who was a **tanner**. About 30 miles from Joppa, in the city of **Caesarea**, lived a very good man named Cornelius. Cornelius was a Roman soldier in command of 100 soldiers; he was called a **centurion**. He was not a Jew, nor was he a Christian, but he was very religious and believed in God. He was also well-known for his kindness and generosity.

HISTORICAL NOTE: A **tanner** was a leatherworker. Leather was used for tents, bottles, belts, helmets, shields, slings, and sandals. A tanner had to first skin the dead animal, “then remove the hairs from the hide, make it supple for use, and sometimes dye it as well. The hairs were removed by a combination of scraping, soaking, and the application of lime. The hides were then soaked in water containing oak galls and sumac leaves, rubbed with dog manure, and hammered. The smell of the work was so bad that the tanner had to work outside the town in the direction of the prevailing wind, and it was so bad personally that it could become grounds for divorce” (*The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, by Ralph Gower, Moody Press, Chicago, p. 160). Because tradesmen with the same crafts often lived near one another in Roman cities, and because tanners lived near water and their job was so smelly, it probably was not too hard for Cornelius’ servants to find Simon’s house.





HISTORICAL NOTE: Caesarea (also called Caesarea by the Sea/Caesarea Maritima) was built by Herod the Great on land given to him by Caesar Augustus; Herod subsequently named the city in Caesar's honor. Sixty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem, and a few miles south of Mount Carmel, it became the most important seaport of Palestine in N.T. times. After Herod's death, the city was controlled by his son Archelaus for two years; he was subsequently replaced by a series of Roman procurators, including Pontius Pilate. The city also became the home of the governors of Judea and the main headquarters of the Roman legions. (This city is not to be confused with Caesarea Philippi, another important city in Palestine.)

A **centurion's** troops would have been part of a regiment, or cohort, of 600 men. There were 10 cohorts of 600 in each legion (6,000 men). A centurion's rank would have been something like a sergeant in the U.S. Army. Some scholars think Cornelius probably worked his way up through the ranks, rather than having bought his position or receiving an appointment because of his social status. [Note that a centurion may have only been in command of 80 soldiers rather than 100.]



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article "[The Bible and a Little Detail](#)" by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for further evidence of the reliability of the Bible in its details.

2. One day, at about 3:00 in the afternoon, an angel appeared to Cornelius in a special dream and told him that he should send for Peter in the city of Joppa to find out what else he should do to please God. [It is interesting to note that Cornelius was keeping the **Jewish** hour of prayer.] Without any hesitation, Cornelius sent two servants and a soldier whom he trusted to Joppa to find Peter and bring him back. Cornelius was not only willing to please God, he was eager to do so without question.
3. The next day, at about noon, Peter was praying on the flat rooftop of Simon's house. He was hungry and waiting for food to be prepared. Meanwhile, he "fell into a **trance**" and had a **vision**. The vision was unlike anything he had ever seen before: three times, a large sheet was let down from heaven full of animals that were "**unclean**" under the Old Law. A voice from heaven told Peter to "kill and eat." He refused, saying that he had never eaten anything unclean. "What God has cleansed you must not call unclean," the voice from heaven said.

Trance: "a half-conscious state, seemingly between sleeping and waking" (Webster's)

Vision: a dream through which God revealed something that could not otherwise be known.

Unclean: The Old Law required that Jews not eat or touch certain animals or things, or people with certain diseases (like leprosy). These laws were designed to protect the Jews' health, as well as add emphasis to the fact that they were a chosen people and were to keep themselves holy—separate from the rest of the world. There are no such restrictions under the New Law (Colossians 2:16-17).



4. While Peter was trying to understand this strange vision, the messengers from Cornelius arrived at Simon's house. When Peter heard that a Roman soldier named Cornelius had sent for him, he understood the vision and went with them right away, taking six other Christians with him. Four days after the angel spoke to Cornelius, Peter arrived at his house. Cornelius had been anxiously waiting for Peter to return. A large group of people had gathered at Cornelius' house, including **“his relatives and close friends.”**

NOTE:

Jews did not normally talk to Gentiles, do business with them, or go into their houses. Jewish law had been done away with at the cross (Colossians 2:14). So disciples of Jesus were no subject to it, but many tried to hold on to the Old Law and its traditions. Peter apparently felt he would need witnesses, since he was going to a Gentile's house.

“His relatives and close friends” probably included servants, freed-persons, and fellow soldiers since Roman military personnel were not allowed to marry (*Bible Background Commentary, New Testament*, by Craig Keener, InterVarsity Press, p. 350).

5. Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet (probably more out of respect than intended worship), but Peter would not allow that. “Stand up; I myself am also a man,” he said. Cornelius told Peter what the angel had said, and Peter related his own vision. Being there, with non-Jews who were eager to hear about Jesus, he understood what his vision meant. “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”

RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the articles **“Darwin, Evolution, and Racism”** by Eric Lyons and Kyle Butt and **“5 Reasons Racism is Ridiculous”** by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for further discussion of that question.

6. Peter told Cornelius and the others about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and what they needed to do to be saved. God gave these Gentiles miraculous gifts straight from heaven (rather than through Peter's hands), like He did to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, as a sign to Jewish Christians that they were to accept Gentiles as their brothers and sisters in Christ. Cornelius, his friends, and family were all baptized into Christ; they became Christians, as others did in earlier chapters of Acts.

RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article **“If Cornelius Had the Holy Spirit, Doesn't That Mean He Was Saved?”** and **“Dying Before Baptism?”** by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for responses to quibbles about baptism pertaining to Cornelius' conversion.

7. Cornelius and all those who were baptized with him were very happy to finally know the Truth that they had been searching for. It was also a very happy time for Peter, too. Peter preached the first Gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost to Jews, and 3,000 were baptized into Christ. A few years later (3-5 years), God gave him the opportunity to preach to non-Jews (Gentiles). He was learning that every soul is important to God, and everyone needs to know about Jesus.

8. It does not make any difference to God what color our skin is; after all, He made us the way we are. God does not care what kind of houses we live in, how much money we have, what countries we are from, or what languages we speak. He loves us all the same. He sees what we are like on the inside and isn't concerned with what we look like outside (1 Samuel 16:7). He wants us to think about others in the same way (2 Corinthians 5:16-17). We can't be pleasing to God if we make fun of, or try to stay away from, other people because they look or talk differently than we do.
9. Think about all the variety in God's world. There are so many kinds of frogs in the world: small ones, big ones, green ones, red ones. Some live in your yard, and some live in rain forests. They eat different things because they live in different places. They make different sounds. Which frog does God love best? That's a ridiculous question, isn't it? God loves them all the same. He loves all people the same, too. But we are much more special to God than any other living creature on Earth, because each one of us has a soul (a part of us that will live on after our bodies die).

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- [“Peter Teaches Cornelius Coloring Sheet”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Give each child stickers portraying children of different ethnicities to go with the “Jesus Loves the Little Children” song. Let them put the stickers on popsicle sticks or on globe shapes. Punch a hole in the globe shapes; put lengths of string or yarn through the holes to make necklaces.
- Show the children pictures of different kinds of plants in their native environment (roses in a garden, cacti in the desert, tropical flowers in the rain forest, etc.). Talk about the beauty and uniqueness of each plant. Each one looks different (color, shape), grows in a different environment, but each one was created by God and is special to Him.
- Have a box or basket of things from nature that are different colors. Ask the children, “Who made this? Who gave it its color?” Make the point that each object, though different, is special to and was made by God.
- Have students look in a mirror and tell what they see. Notice how each student is different.
- Play the “Journey to Find Cornelius” review game. On a poster board, in the top right corner, draw a house with Cornelius standing in front waiting. Have a cutout of Peter and other men traveling. Make a road on the poster board that leads to Cornelius' house, and ask each child a question from the story. As each one answers correctly have the child move Peter a little closer until everyone has a turn and Peter is finally there.
- Have the children color pictures of people from different countries, cut them out, and glue them onto a piece of construction paper with the memory verse already written on it. (Or write something like “God's Word is for everyone!”)

1st-2nd Graders:

- Write events of this story (not in order) on chalkboard, marker board, or transparency, and let the kids take turns writing a number beside each point to indicate the order in which each event took place. **Or** write events on index cards, shuffle the cards, and let the kids put the cards in sequential order.
- Write the words of the memory verse for this lesson and Lesson 1 on index cards. Shuffle the cards for each verse separately, and let the kids put the words in the correct order.

- “[Peter Teaches Cornelius Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Write events of this story (not in order) on chalkboard, marker board, or transparency, and let the kids take turns writing a number beside each point to indicate the order in which each event took place. **Or** write events on index cards, shuffle the cards, and let the kids put the cards in sequential order.
- Write the words of the memory verse for this lesson and Lesson 1 on index cards. Shuffle the cards for each verse separately, and let the kids put the words in the correct order.
- “[Peter Teaches Cornelius Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - *Butterfly Mornings* by Bonnie Sosé (Character Builders for Kids)
 - *The Crayon Box That Talked* by Shane DeRolf (Random House)
 - *The Day the Sheep Showed Up* by David McPhail (Scholastic)
 - *We’re Different, We’re the Same* by Bobbie Jane Kates (Random House)
 - *Mommy, Why Are People Different Colors?* coloring book by Barbara Knoll (Destiny Image Publishers)

SONGS:

“CORNELIUS, THE GENTILE” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook
(Tune: “Love Lifted Me”)

Let us sing about a man, very devout was he;
He loved God with all his heart, praying continuously.
Peter told this good Gentile that Jesus was God’s own Son.
Then Cornelius knew that God loved every one.

CHORUS:

God loves the Jew, and He loves you;
God loves the Gentile, too, God loves the Jew.
God loves the Jew, and He loves you;
God loves the Gentile, too, God loves the Jew.

“THE TWELVE APOSTLES” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*
(Tune: “Jesus Loves me”)

VERSE 1:

Jesus called them one by one,
Peter, Andrew, James, and John,
Next came Philip, Thomas, too,
Matthew and Bartholomew.

CHORUS:

Yes, Jesus called them.
Yes, Jesus called them.

Yes, Jesus called them.
And they all followed Him.

VERSE 2:

James the one they called the Less,
Simon, also Thaddeus.
Twelfth apostle Judas made.
Jesus was by him betrayed.

(CHORUS)

VERSE 3:

Matthias then took Judas' place,
To preach to men of every race.
Paul three preaching trips did make.
He went to Rome for Jesus' sake.

(CHORUS)

“JESUS LOVES ME” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Anna B. Warner

Jesus loves me this I know.
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong.
They are weak but He is strong.

CHORUS:

Yes Jesus loves me.
Yes Jesus loves me.
Yes Jesus loves me.
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus love me when I'm good.
When I do the things I should.
Jesus loves me when I'm bad,
Though it make Him very sad.

(CHORUS)

“JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Traditional

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world,
Red and yellow, black and white,
They're all precious in His sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus died for all the children...
Jesus rose for all the children....

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



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Acts 10:1-48



New Testament 4
Part 2: Lessons from the Apostle Peter

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34b).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality'" (Acts 10:34).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF SUNDAY'S LESSON FOR WORDS):

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- Pictures or plastic replicas of different kinds of butterflies or frogs
- World map



- [Map of New Testament World](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- **Have students look in a mirror and tell what they see. Notice how each student is different**

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

God loves everyone—no matter who they are, what they look like, or where they live—and wants everyone to know that Jesus died for them. He wants me to love everyone, too.

INTRODUCTION:

- [N.T. 4 Bible Fact Flashcards](#) (provided under “N.T. 4 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Briefly review Sunday morning’s lesson (see [N.T. 4 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. Continue talking about how we are each different, but God loves each one of us. We are each important to God, and we should never treat someone unkindly because of the color of his skin, how he talks, what he wears, etc.

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

3. Give each child three or four different crayons and a piece of paper. Ask them to draw anything they would like with the colors they are given. After a few minutes, put all the pictures together, like quilt pieces, on the wall or bulletin board. Each square is pretty, but the whole “quilt” is even prettier when the pieces are put together. Every person is special and important to God. We’re all different, but we’re all the same to God, because each of us has a soul (a part of us that will live on after we die).



NOTE: We are not referring to acceptance of those in sin or who hold false doctrines/beliefs (1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; Galatians 1:8-9).

OLDER CHILDREN:

4. One square of a quilt is pretty, but the whole quilt is even prettier and serves an important purpose. One square of a quilt can’t keep you warm, but all the squares put together into a quilt can. We need to focus on what we can do for and with one another—not on the things that divide us and keep us from being pleasing to God (like name calling, jumping to conclusions about others just because of their skin color or accent, etc.).
5. **Or** talk about the lifecycle of a butterfly or a frog: A caterpillar can’t decide one day to stop growing and changing into the butterfly that God intended it to be. A tadpole can’t decide one day to stop growing and changing into the frog that God intended it to be. Unfortunately, people **can** decide to stop growing. When we want to watch TV for many hours, but don’t want to go to Bible class and worship service, we aren’t growing. When we decide it’s more important to go to a ball game than to go to worship service, we aren’t growing. When we call other people names or make fun of them and don’t treat others like we want to be treated, we aren’t growing. And when we aren’t growing spiritually, we’re getting farther and farther away from God.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- See Sunday morning’s lesson.
- For an activity, bring a large white sheet with several stuffed “unclean” animals, and let the children role-play Peter’s vision. There can be four children holding the corners of the sheet, someone portraying Peter, and someone portraying the Lord talking to Peter. If time permits, let the children take turns with the roles.

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