



Use Week of:

Unit 31 • Session 1

Peter and Cornelius

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Acts 10

STORY POINT:

The good news about Jesus is for everyone.

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
(15–20 MINUTES)
PAGE 10



TEACH THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 12



EXPERIENCE THE STORY
(20–25 MINUTES)
PAGE 14



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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 preschoolers, 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 people there believed. Cornelius, his family, and his friends were baptized; and Peter stayed with them for a few days.

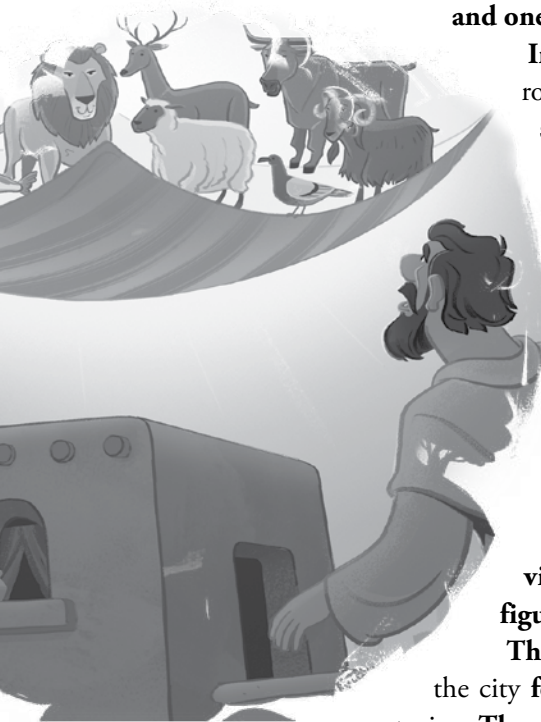
The BIBLE Story

Peter and Cornelius

Acts 10

Cornelius was a Roman soldier. He **loved God**, helped other people, and prayed to God. **One day, God sent an angel to Cornelius.** The angel said, “Cornelius, God heard you when you prayed.”

The angel told Cornelius to send some men into the city to find Peter. So Cornelius sent two servants and one soldier into the city.



In the city, Peter went up on the roof of a house to pray. Then **Peter saw a vision.** A vision is like a dream, but Peter was awake. **He saw a big sheet coming down from heaven. In the sheet were all kinds of animals, snakes and lizards, and birds.** A voice said, “Get up, Peter. Eat!”

But Peter didn’t want to. He thought the animals were unclean. **A voice said, “God has made these clean.” Peter saw the vision three times, and he tried to figure out what it meant.**

Then the men Cornelius sent into the city found the house where Peter was staying. They told Peter to come to Cornelius’ house. So the next day, **Peter went with the men.**

When Peter saw Cornelius, he told him that the good news about Jesus is for all people, not just Jews. “Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven,” Peter said.

The people there believed. Cornelius, his family, and his friends were baptized; and Peter stayed with them for a few days.

Christ Connection: God showed Peter that the good news about Jesus is for everyone. God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter who they are or what they do. Jesus is the Lord of all.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Move with the story:** Emphasize the different locations in the story by moving around the room as you tell it. Begin in one corner as you introduce Cornelius, move to an opposite corner as the men go looking for Peter, and return to the first corner when they all return to Cornelius' house.
- **Use props:** Enlist another adult leader to use a chair or stepladder to lower a sheet with stuffed or plastic animals from up high down to the ground as you tell the Bible story.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Peter and Cornelius

BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 10

STORY POINT: The good news about Jesus is for everyone.

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

- "The Gospel Is for Everyone" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "What Would You Eat?" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to circle the foods they like to eat and draw an *X* over the foods they do not like to eat.

SAY • Did you know that Jewish people have laws about certain foods they cannot eat. In our Bible story today, God told Peter to eat meat from animals that were against Jewish law to eat! I wonder why God said that? Listen to find out what God was trying to teach Peter.

**LOW
PREP**

Imagine

Guide children to lay down on the floor and close their eyes. Tell them to think about their favorite place: what it looks like, what they hear, and so forth. Then invite preschoolers to open their eyes. Allow a few children to describe what they thought of. Repeat as desired, inviting children to imagine more scenarios and then tell about it.

SAY • Those are some great places you imagined! Do you know what a vision is? A vision is like a dream, except it doesn't come from your own imagination. Today we will learn about a vision that God showed Peter to teach him something important.

Interpret weather

Set out picture books about clouds and weather for preschoolers to browse. Read a book as a child shows interest. Consider checking out books from your local library before the session if you do not have many on hand. Consider going outside or looking through a window to observe the weather. Discuss what the weather is like now and what that might mean for the weather later.

SAY • Did you know that studying the weather now can help you guess what the weather will be like later? You just have to interpret what you see, which means finding out what it means. Visions need to be interpreted too. When God gave Peter a vision of animals on a sheet, he knew it meant something more than just what he saw then.

· picture books about clouds and weather

Tip: Read Luke 12:54-56 to emphasize that even Jesus taught how interpreting the weather is similar to interpreting God's messages.

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite children to travel in pairs or groups of three as they move to Bible study.

· countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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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 Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Acts 10 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Today's Bible story is in the Book of Acts in the New Testament part of the Bible. We know this story is true because it is in God's Word!

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Peter and Cornelius" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • Before Jesus came, God's people had a lot of rules to follow. Jews were not supposed to eat the animals in Peter's vision. But God made them clean. Just like God made the animals clean for Peter to eat, God can forgive anyone's sin and bring him or her into His family. God showed Peter that **the good news about Jesus is for everyone**. God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter who they are or what they do. Jesus is the Lord of all.

Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 Chronicles 16:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Create motions for preschoolers to use as they say the key passage. Use the key passage song video for inspiration.

SAY • When the Bible says *the nations*, it means everyone everywhere! Our key passage says the whole world should praise God as their king! Even though 1 Chronicles is in the Old Testament—before Jesus came—the writer knew that God rules over all people, not just the Jews. That’s why God wanted Peter to tell the gospel to Cornelius, a Roman soldier.

Sing the key passage song, “The Lord Reigns,” and the theme song, “The Gospel Is for Everyone.”

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “The Lord Reigns (1 Chronicles 16:31)” song
- “The Gospel Is for Everyone” song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question is, *What is the gospel?* ***The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.*** All people are sinners, so **the good news about Jesus is for everyone!** God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter who they are or what they do.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

SAY • Let’s learn about a team of church planters who are sharing the gospel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. That’s a city here in the United States. Play the video. Pray for Rob Wilton and his team.

- “Wiltons at Work” video

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE 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.

LOW PREP

Actions:

- jump
- spin
- clap
- tap your toes
- pat your head
- sit
- hop on one foot
- touch your toes
- wiggle
- dance
- reach for the sky

Count commands

Explain that you will call out an action, but children should only do the action if you repeat the command three times. For example, if you say, “jump, jump,” then children should not jump. If you say, “spin, spin, spin,” then children should spin. Mix up the actions you command and how many times you repeat it, challenging children to listen closely. Use the actions in the margin or create your own.

SAY • Good job listening and obeying the commands I repeated three times! Do your parents ever tell you something three times? You know they are saying something important if they repeat it three times. God showed Peter a vision three times to teach him something very important. God showed Peter that **the good news about Jesus is for everyone**. God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter who they are or what they do. Jesus is the Lord of all.

Find Peter

- plastic person figure

Hide a plastic person figure somewhere in the room while children are not looking. Choose two preschoolers to be servants and one preschooler to be a soldier. Send them with specific instructions to find the figure. Children should

walk together to retrieve the figure and bring it back to you, carried by the soldier (to avoid arguments about who holds the figure). Repeat as time allows, selecting different preschoolers for each role.

SAY • God sent an angel to Cornelius and told him to send some men into the city to find Peter. The angel explained exactly where to find him. The men found Peter right where the angel said! Peter went with them and told Cornelius, his family, and his friends about Jesus, and they believed. Peter learned that **the good news about Jesus is for everyone**. God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter who they are or what they do. Jesus is the Lord of all.

Pray for people groups

Sit in a circle on the floor. Roll an inflatable globe to a preschooler. Read the name of the place where one of her thumbs landed. Lead children in prayer for the people of that place to know Jesus as Lord. Continue rolling the globe and praying for people groups around the world.

· inflatable globe

Option: Research unreached people groups to pray for.

SAY • God showed Peter that **the good news about Jesus is for everyone**, not just Jews in Jerusalem. God wants believers to tell the gospel to everyone around the world! *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* Jesus is the Lord of all.

Play out the story

Set out blocks, plastic animals figures, plastic people figures, a piece of cloth. Invite preschoolers to use the blocks to build Cornelius' house and the house where Peter was

· blocks
· plastic animal figures
· plastic people figures
· piece of cloth

praying. Encourage children to use the figures and the cloth to play out the Bible story. Retell portions of the Bible story as preschoolers play.

SAY • God showed Peter that **the good news about Jesus is for everyone**. God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter who they are or what they do. Jesus is the Lord of all.



Pretend to be a mission team

Lead preschoolers to pretend to be on a mission team going to different places to tell people about Jesus. Name different places and invite preschoolers to pretend to be one of the people on the trip. Talk about what you would need and what would happen on each trip. Act out the different scenarios. Use the following scenarios or create your own.

- Hiking in Tibet to tell people about Jesus
- Prayer walking in Western Europe
- Providing medical care in Central America
- Giving food to people who are hungry in a city
- Leading a Backyard Bible Club in a neighborhood

SAY • A mission team might have pastors, teachers, business people, doctors, dads, moms, kids, teenagers, coaches, helpers, or friends. They all do different things to help people know about Jesus. Rob Wilton, the missionary we are learning about, is part of a team of people who work together to share the gospel in Pittsburgh. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.***

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve animal crackers for snack. Talk about how God gave Peter a vision of animals and told him to eat. God showed Peter that **the good news about Jesus is for everyone**. God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter who they are or what they do. Jesus is the Lord of all.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. To whom did God send an angel? (*Cornelius*)
2. What did the angel tell Cornelius to do? (*send some men into the city to find Peter*)
3. What happened when Peter told Cornelius, his family, and friends about Jesus? (*They believed.*)
4. Why did God give Peter a vision? (*to show him the good news about Jesus is for all people.*)
5. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- animal crackers (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "The Lord Reigns (1 Chronicles 16:31)" song
- "The Gospel Is for Everyone" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers