Preschool–Grade 6

# Peter and Cornelius

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

**Main point:** God is no respecter of persons. He loves every person the same, and His gift of the Holy Ghost is for every one.
**Bible passage:** Acts 10. Read it before class.
**Memory verse:** "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:" *Acts 10:34 (KJV)*
**You need:** a Bible, a bedsheet or large towel, a few stuffed animals or toy animals, 6 paper strips, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
**Before class:** write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Acts 10:34 and Acts 10:44.

## 1. Opening game: Everybody Come (5 minutes)

Stand at one end of the room. Call out, "If you are wearing blue, come to me!" Those kids walk over. Then: "If you have a brother, come!" "If you like apples, come!" Send everyone back each time. Some kids will be left out each round. Then say, "If God made you, come!" and everyone comes. Ask: *How did it feel to be left out? How did it feel when everyone could come?* Say: "Today we will learn that God's gift is for every one."

## 2. Bible story: God Sends Peter to Cornelius (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Acts 10, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

In a city called Caesarea lived a man named **Cornelius**. He was a **centurion**, an army captain (Acts 10:1). Cornelius loved God, and so did all his family. He gave much to poor people, and he prayed to God all the time (10:2). But Cornelius was not a Jew. He was from another nation.

One afternoon Cornelius saw an angel of God in a vision. The angel said, "Cornelius, thy prayer is heard" (10:31). **Thy** means your. The angel told him to send men to the town of Joppa and call for Peter, and Peter would tell him what he ought to do (10:3–6, 10:31–32). So Cornelius sent two servants and a soldier to Joppa (10:7–8).

The next day, about noon, Peter went up on the housetop, the roof of the house where he was staying, to pray (10:9). Peter got very hungry (10:10). Then God showed him a vision. Peter saw heaven opened, and something came down like a **great sheet**, held at the four corners. In it were all kinds of animals, wild beasts, creeping things and birds (10:11–12). A voice said, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat." But Peter said no. God's law told the Jews not to eat some of those animals, and Peter had never eaten them (10:13–14). The voice said, **"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common"** (10:15). That happened three times, and then the sheet went back up into heaven (10:16).


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*The story continues:* While Peter thought about the vision, three men stood at the gate and called for him. They were the men Cornelius sent! The Spirit told Peter, "Go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them" (10:17–20). So Peter went with them, and some brothers from Joppa went too (10:23).

When they came to Caesarea, Cornelius had called his family and close friends together (10:24). Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet, but Peter lifted him up and said, "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (10:25–26). Then Peter told them, "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (10:28). Now Peter understood what the sheet meant! God was teaching him about **people**. **Read Acts 10:34 from your Bible:** "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:" Say: "That means God does not love one kind of person more than another."

Peter told them about Jesus: how Jesus went about doing good and healing people, how He died and how God raised Him up on the third day (10:38–40). While Peter was still talking, **the Holy Ghost fell on all of them** who heard the word (10:44)! They spoke with tongues and praised God (10:46). The friends who came with Peter were amazed, because God gave the Holy Ghost to people of other nations too (10:45). Then Peter commanded them to be **baptized in the name of the Lord** (10:48).

## 3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Who did the angel tell Cornelius to send for? *(Peter, Acts 10:5)*
2. What came down from heaven in Peter's vision? *(Something like a great sheet full of animals, 10:11–12)*
3. How many men came to the gate to get Peter? *(Three, 10:19)*
4. What happened while Peter was still talking? *(The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word, 10:44)*
5. What did Peter tell them to do next? *(To be baptized in the name of the Lord, 10:48)*


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## 4. Memory verse: Everybody Says It (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 strips up in order: *Then Peter opened his mouth, / and said, Of a truth / I perceive that God / is no respecter / of persons: / Acts 10:34.* Explain the old words: **of a truth** means truly; **perceive** means I see it, I understand it; a **respecter of persons** is someone who treats one kind of person better than another. God is not like that. Read the verse together. Then take one strip away and read it again. Keep taking strips away until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

## 5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God loves every person the same. He loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! Cornelius loved God and prayed, but he still needed to hear what to do (Acts 10:6). The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like Cornelius and his family did (Acts 10:46; Acts 2:4). This gift is for every one!"
*Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.*
**This week:** be kind to someone who is left out. Sit with them, play with them, or ask them to come to church.

## 6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Peter and Cornelius word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/cornelius-word-search), the Peter and Cornelius craft (vbshq.com/crafts/cornelius-craft), or **Sheet Down, Sheet Up:** four kids hold the corners of the sheet with the toy animals in it; lower it and lift it, three times (Acts 10:16). Each time it comes down, the class says, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common!"

## 7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You love every person the same. Help us be kind to everyone, and never treat anyone as less than others. Thank You that Your gift of the Holy Ghost is for every one. In Jesus' name, amen."

**If a child asks why Cornelius bowed to Peter:** Cornelius fell at Peter's feet, but Peter lifted him up and said, "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25–26). Only God is to be worshipped: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:10).


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