

GOOD NEWS FOR A ROMAN

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE SEND WORLD GOSPEL PEACE FAVORITE

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Acts 10

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students understand that God does not have favorite people, but he loves everyone equally, in every corner of the world, and he wants them to know the gospel of Jesus Christ

MEMORY VERSE

“Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I’m sending you’” (John 20:21, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Children are not always exposed to people of different cultures, but when they go to school, that begins to change. In some areas, it is more noticeable than in others. By the time the children reach first and second grade, they begin to notice differences in race, the way people dress, and differences in the behavior of those who are from Christian homes and those who are not. They also notice the differences of languages, attitudes and traditions. In addition to all that, at this age they begin to receive instruction on tolerance of the secular and to equality, as part of modern culture.

Christian children need to realize that God wants everyone to know the Good News of Jesus Christ. They need to hear that God loves all people, no matter where they live, who their parents are, what race or nationality they belong to, or whether they come from Christian homes or not. The Lord loves all people and does not have favorites. He wants everyone to receive Jesus as their Savior. Once the children internalize this truth, they will learn about the importance of reaching others to tell them about Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

This passage tells us about a decisive moment for the church. On it rested the future of Christianity. The actions of Cornelius and Peter contributed to the fact that we Gentiles, who are not descendants of Jews, could trust in the name of Christ. God came to Peter's life with a revelation that was the beginning of the changes for the Church. He used a devout gentleman to help Peter make an immediate decision. The men sent by Cornelius were at the door, the disciple had to recognize what God had told him in the vision and had to act quickly.

For the Jews, animosity against Gentiles went far beyond prejudices. It had to do with old laws that stipulated that the people chosen by God should be careful not to be absorbed by other neighboring cultures. The interpretation of those laws varied according to the person who taught them. Peter was fighting with both: the Jewish prohibitions and the new Christian Church.

But, God caught his attention and guided him in a new direction. We owe a lot to Peter for his willingness to listen and obey the voice of the Lord. How difficult it would be for us today if God had not changed the direction of the church! What would happen today if we tried to change the traditions of our faith that are already established? And, if you wanted to move in another direction? Some, without a doubt, would fail. Others would form committees to deal with those issues. And, others would respond quickly, as Peter had to do.

Peter had to change his love and commitment for so many traditions and parameters that Jewish law stipulated. He's an excellent example of acceptance and obedience to the Lord. His deep Jewish roots could have caused a lot of problems for Jesus Christ's plan of salvation. But, he was willing to change and accept the great truth of God's love for a sinful world. He had to understand that the sacrifice of Christ was for all humanity through the centuries and not just for a handful of people.

God's plan went far beyond time and space. His plan affected the life of every human being. Today it is our responsibility to teach children the dimensions of God's love for them and for all others. Today the little ones must understand that God loves everyone equally and that Christ died for each one in particular.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Dramatization

This is an easy lesson to prepare as a drama. Get costumes (towels and sheets) for the children who will represent Peter and the people at Cornelius' house. For Cornelius' costume, you can make a vest with brown paper, and you can cover a piece of wood with aluminum foil to make a sword. If they wish and there is time, children can learn parts of the dialogue between Peter and Cornelius. A third participant can read a short story, previously prepared by you, about the vision that Peter had and what he should or should not eat. Maybe the children just want to act out the story as you tell it.

TEACH THE LESSON

Peter gives the Good News

Cornelius was a good and important man in the community. He was a centurion (a commander) of the Roman army. He believed in the one true God. He helped others and was a man of prayer. Cornelius was not Jewish, but Gentile.

One afternoon while Cornelius prayed, he had a vision. Cornelius opened and closed his eyes: He saw an angel! "Cornelius," the angel said. "Yes sir?" he replied, trembling with fear. "God is pleased with you," the angel announced. "God wants you to know more about him." "Yes," Cornelius nodded, excited. Actually, Cornelius wanted to know more about God. "Send one of your men to the city of Joppa," the angel ordered. "There you will find Peter. He will tell you what you want to know."

The angel disappeared. Cornelius immediately sent two servants and a soldier to Joppa. The next day, around noon, they had arrived at the outskirts of the city.

At the same time, Peter was on the roof of a friend's house. His stomach growled. "I'm hungry," Peter thought. But lunch was not ready yet. While Peter waited, he began to pray. Suddenly, Peter had a vision. He saw the sky open and something like a large sheet descended. It was lowered to earth by its four corners. In it there were all the four-legged land animals, reptiles and birds of the sky. Then he heard a voice from heaven saying, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat."

Peter was horrified! Many, many years before, God had told his people not to eat some of the animals like these because they were unclean. "No, Lord, I cannot!" Peter answered. "I have never eaten things that are not pure and clean." The voice spoke again, "Do not say that things are impure if God has already made them clean." Peter had the vision twice more and heard God repeating the same thing.

At that very moment, the men that Cornelius had sent arrived and knocked on the door of the house. "Is Peter here? they asked. Peter was amazed at the vision. "What does that vision mean?" he asked himself. The Holy Spirit spoke to him and said, "There are three men who seek you; go with them." Peter came down from the roof. "Hi, I'm Peter," he said to the men.

"The Roman commander Cornelius needs to see you now, please," the newcomers said. Peter began to understand the vision. All his life he had kept away from Gentiles, in the same way that he had avoided eating certain animals. Now God was telling him that the message of salvation was for all people, even Gentiles.

"I'll go with you," Peter said, "but first, spend the night here." This was a big step for Peter. The Jews did not invite Gentiles to their homes. The next day, he went with his three "new friends," and several of the Joppa believers went with them.

Upon arriving at Cornelius' house, they saw many other people gathered there. Cornelius told Peter about the vision. "We are ready to listen to everything the Lord entrusted to you to tell us," said Cornelius.

Peter looked around and smiled. "This is why I had the vision!" he thought. And, he said, "I understand that God does not favor some people over others, but that in every nation he loves those who fear him and live righteously." And, Peter spoke to Cornelius and the others in his house about Jesus and his love. "Jesus is Lord of everything," Peter explained. "He died on the cross, but on the third day he rose from the dead and now lives."

Upon hearing all that, Cornelius and those who were with him believed in Jesus. And suddenly, the Holy Spirit came upon them. "This is wonderful!" thought the Jews who believed. "The Holy Spirit has come upon the Gentiles too."

Peter was excited! "These people can be baptized," he said, "because they believe in Jesus and received the Holy Spirit just like us." Peter baptized the new believers and stayed with Cornelius for a few days. Everyone was full of joy. Now Cornelius and his people believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior. Peter and the Jewish Christians learned something new: that God loves all people. The Good News of salvation is for everyone in every corner of the world.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Puzzle: Good News for a Roman

Give the children Student Activity Sheet #242-A and #242-B. Guide them to cut out and assemble the puzzle according to the instructions. For each child, you will need cardboard or poster board of 21 cm. x 28 cm to paste the puzzles onto. While they are working, you can ask them questions about the Bible story learned in this session.

Important words

"Christian": This is the person who received Jesus as his/ her personal savior. Christians love and obey the Lord.

"Not saved": It is a person who does not have Jesus in his/ her heart.

"Salvation/saved": It is what God gave us so that we have a good relationship with him. The Lord forgives the sins of people who feel bad for having disobeyed God. People who are forgiven of their sins are called "saved."

Write all these important words on 15 cm x 15 cm cards and hide them in the room. The children who find them will put them on the poster of "important words".

Remember the missionaries

Say: "Peter was a good missionary. He went to Cornelius' house and preached the Good News of salvation. Did Cornelius, his family and everyone in his house become Christians?" (Yes).

Bring to the session the names of missionaries you know about. Write their names on 10 cm x 10 cm cards. You can write their full names and the names of their children, and where they serve as missionaries. Make a mural or poster with all the cards. (Maybe you can get their photos from the Global Missions website <https://nazarene.org/missionary-profiles>)

Each day your group meets, the children can pray for the missionaries. Urge them to make decorated cards, write notes to the missionaries, place them in envelopes or take photos of them and send them to the missionary family by mail or email. Allow the children to use their creativity for these projects. Remind the children that the missionaries left their extended families and friends to obey the Lord's call, and that they miss their loved ones and countries of origin. The missionaries are obedient to the Lord. They listen to God's call and the church sends them.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

If you wish, you can use the same activity from the previous session (31) to study the memory verse. But also change it to be

consistent with the lesson studied today. You can write the verse on cards, with the silhouette of various animals. Then use the same mode of learning the memory verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Finish with a prayer. The children can pray for the missionaries and you for the children in your group.

Encourage

This is a good time to encourage the children to be like Peter. Obedient missionaries, ready to take the message of the Good News of salvation to their family and friends who do not know the Lord.

Invite

Be sure to encourage the children to attend the next session by telling them something interesting about it. Remind them that friends are also welcome.