

November 11, 2018

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Peter & Cornelius*

Lesson Objective:

Today we have a very unusual story about a Gentile believer named Cornelius. We do not have much background on Cornelius but can surmise that his conversion probably came at the hands of the scattered, persecuted Church. This lesson is crucial because it identifies for Peter, the early Church, and us too, that God shows no partiality to one nation or one kind of people. God sees all people as His image bearers and are created to worship Him! The Good News is meant for all to hear, receive and believe!

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God has promised to always be with His people. He is with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is growing, but also experiencing persecution. Because of the persecution, followers of Jesus scatter.
- The scattered Church takes the Good News and tells others about Jesus.
- Cornelius, a Gentile, is a believer of God who gives to the poor and prays to God.
- Cornelius receives a vision to go and get Peter; Peter has something important to say.
- Peter also receives a vision. The meaning of his vision is that God does not show partiality. He sees all people as the same – created in God's image and meant to worship the one, true God.
- Peter comes to Cornelius' house and preaches the Good News to him and his whole family.
- As Peter preaches, the Holy Spirit descends and fills everyone in the house. God's presence is with the Gentiles too.
- Jewish followers of Jesus were amazed. It was now evident that God would be with His people – Jew and Gentile – those that believe and follow Jesus Christ.
- Cornelius and everyone in his house were baptized.

Scripture: Acts 10:1-48

Story: Vos Child's Story Bible, Page 347-348; Gospel Story Bible, 258-259

Scripture Memory for November:

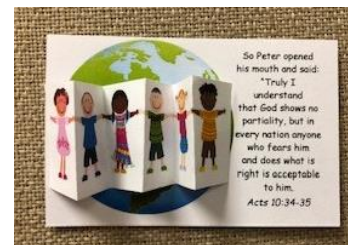
And He (Jesus) commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He (Jesus) is the One appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. *Acts 10:42 (ESV)*

Opening Activity:

Craft: Children Around the World

Supplies: Cardstock with globe, children, magnet, glue

Instructions: 1. Fold children paper back and forth (like paper dolls).
2. Glue children paper on to globe.
3. Attach magnet to back of cardstock.



Story

Transition

Boys and girls, who here has had a dream before? [Allow time for answers] Maybe a good dream or a bad one. In our story today we have two men who have two different dreams. Let's find out about these dreams and what they mean...

The Church Is Growing

The Church was growing. The Bible tells us every day more and more people believed the Good News! They believed that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from our sins and He rose from the dead! More and more people believed in Jesus – the Church was growing! But as the Church grew, there were people that wanted to hurt and even kill followers of Jesus. Followers of Jesus had to run, hide and live in different places and cities. As they scattered they took the Good News with them and told others. The Bible tells us the Good News spread to many other people like Cornelius.

Cornelius

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius. Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army. The Roman's ruled the known world. Cornelius was not a Jew. This meant he did not know about all the laws and rules in the Old Testament. He may not have known all the stories in the Old Testament either. But the Bible does tell us that Cornelius and everyone who lived in his house worshipped God. Cornelius was a generous man; he gave his money to the poor and prayed to God often.

One afternoon, about three o'clock, Cornelius clearly saw a vision. A vision is sort of like a dream, but you are not asleep. You are awake and you see everything in the vision. In the vision an angel of God came to him and said, "Cornelius! God has heard your prayers. He has seen what you give to the poor. And God remembers you. Send some men now to Joppa to bring you a man named Peter. He is staying in a house beside the sea." Then the angel who spoke to Cornelius left. Cornelius called two of his servants and a soldier. He explained everything to these three men and sent them to Joppa.

The next day, as they came near Joppa, Peter was going up to the roof to pray. It was about noon or lunchtime. Peter was hungry and wanted to eat. But while the food was being prepared for lunch, Peter had a vision too. In his vision he saw heaven opened and something coming down. It looked like a big sheet being lowered to earth by its four corners. In it were all kinds of unclean animals. Then a voice said to Peter, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat."

But Peter said, "No, Lord! I have never eaten food that is unholy or unclean." Israelites were not allowed to eat animals like pigs or reptiles. It was strictly forbidden in the laws in the Old Testament. But God was telling Peter something different.

But the voice said to him again, "God has made these things clean. Don't call them 'unholy'!" This happened three times. Then the sheet was taken back to heaven.

While Peter was wondering what this vision meant, the men Cornelius sent had found the house where Peter was staying. They were standing at the gate. They asked, "Is Simon Peter staying here?"

Peter was still thinking about the vision. But the Spirit said to him, "Listen! Three men are looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Go with them and don't ask questions. I have sent them to you."

Peter went downstairs and listened to their story about Cornelius' vision. The next day Peter traveled with the three men to Cornelius' house. When Peter arrived, Cornelius fell at Peter's feet and worshipped him. Peter helped him up, saying, "Stand up! I too am only a man." Peter saw all of Cornelius' family and friends in the house and told

everyone that it was against the Jewish law for him to visit a home of people from another nation. In the Old Testament people from other nations were called “unclean” or “unholy” because they did not obey God’s rules in the Old Testament. But then Peter said to everyone gathered, “God has shown me that I should not call any person ‘unholy’ or ‘unclean.’” Peter then understood God’s vision for him. In God’s eyes every person is the same. God accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what country a person comes from.

Cornelius told his vision to Peter and why Cornelius’ whole family was gathered together. Peter then told the whole story of Jesus. Peter told everyone that the Good News came to the people of Israel first. Peter preached about John the Baptist and spoke about Jesus performing miracles wherever he went. Then Peter spoke about Jesus being nailed to the cross, dying, and then his resurrection! The Bible tells us Peter said these words, “God raised Jesus to life and caused him to be seen. But he was not seen by all the people. Only the witnesses that God had already chosen saw him, and we are those witnesses. We ate and drank with him after he was raised from death. He told us to preach to the people and to tell them that he is the one whom God chose to be the judge of the living and the dead. Everyone who believes in Jesus will be forgiven. God will forgive his sins through Jesus. All the prophets say this is true.”

While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who were listening. The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been given even to the non-Jewish people, to Cornelius and his family. These Jewish believers heard them speaking in different languages and praising God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we did!” So Peter ordered that Cornelius and everyone in his house be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ!

Questions for Review with Younger Children

Have children answer “yes” or “no.”

- Is the Church growing – adding more and more people? (Yes)
- Was Cornelius in the Roman army? (Yes)
- Was Cornelius a cook in the army? (No; an officer)
- Did Cornelius believe in God? (Yes)
- Did Cornelius give to the poor and pray to God? (Yes)
- Did God tell Cornelius to send for Peter? (Yes)
- Did Peter tell Cornelius and his whole family the Good News? (Yes)
- Did Cornelius and his family fall asleep when Peter preached? (No; they were filled with the Holy Spirit)
- Did Cornelius and his family go to lunch after Peter preached? (No; they were baptized by Peter)

Questions for Review with Older Children

- Name some of the people in our story today.
- What did God’s vision for Peter mean? (God sees all people the same; God created people to worship Him).
- Who did Peter speak about to Cornelius and his whole family? (Jesus – his life, death and resurrection)
- What did it mean that the Holy Spirit filled Cornelius and his family? (God is with those that believe in him, not just a few people).
- What is the Good News?