

### LESSON 5

## PETER AND CORNELIUS

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** The Holy Spirit Is for Everyone Who Believes

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 10

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** An angel instructs a Roman military official named Cornelius to meet Jesus' disciple, Peter. Meanwhile, God shows Peter through a vision that God's Holy Spirit is for everyone—Jews and non-Jews—preparing Peter to meet Cornelius.

**WORD OF WONDER:** The Holy Spirit gives us power. —from Acts 1:8

- Arrival Activity -Play Stations:
  - Sorting Food
  - Animals
  - Peter and Cornelius Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Do You Like This or Not?
- Word of Wonder: From Acts 1:8
- Craft: Handprint Pictures
  - Read the Story!
- Circle Time: Who Has It?  
*--older group dismiss to LG if necessary*
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story: Peter and Cornelius
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing
- Responding in Worship: Yarn Maze Prayer





## LESSON 5 FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** The Holy Spirit Is for Everyone Who Believes

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 10

**WORD OF WONDER:** From Acts 1:8

Most clubs are only for those who qualify.

Good luck swimming in a members-only pool or deciding you're on the city council without being elected. You'll get to the door—and no further.

But the kingdom of God is open to anyone who trusts Jesus because Jesus invites everyone in. That includes you ... me ... and each child who'll hear this lesson.

Read Acts 10:1–5, 9–17, 34–35. See if these passages feel familiar.

Maybe you've run headlong into racism, agism, or some other form of discrimination that made it clear you're on the outside, that you're neither wanted, nor accepted. Perhaps you know what it is to be excluded.

Your kids know the feeling well. They're used to not being tall enough to ride the rollercoaster or not being old enough to sit at the grown-ups' table. Their lives are boxed in because they're not quite ready to do what the bigger kids can do.

But they're not too young to believe in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit. They're not too short, too weak, or too unschooled to trust God.

It's your privilege to make sure they know the Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes ... even children. Perhaps especially children.

- How do you feel about inviting the kids in your ministry to trust God? Why?
- How would you share your faith story with a child?
- What will you do if a child chooses to follow Jesus because of your leading?

—Mikal Keefer

Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army and a gentile, or a non-Jew. Although he feared and prayed to God, Jews were suspicious and afraid of associating with him because of his allegiance to Rome. Rome was occupying and exacting taxes from all the surrounding lands.

**WHAT?**

God showed Peter a vision of animals that the Torah (Jewish teaching and law) forbade Jews from eating. Food laws of the Torah (Leviticus 11) made it awkward for Jews and gentiles to share a meal, but through the symbolism of food, God wanted to show that gentiles can be children of God.

**WHERE?**

The rooms inside most homes were small, lacking many windows, and filled with cooking smoke. For this reason, Peter probably made it a habit to pray on the rooftop while he was visiting a tanner named Simon. He was residing in Joppa, a seaport today called Jaffa.

**WHEN?**

Acts tells how the Christian movement began with Jews in Jerusalem and then spread to include people of all nations. Peter later shares this very experience (Acts 15:7), and as a result, the Jesus-followers in Jerusalem agree that gentiles, not just Jews, can be saved by Jesus.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:**

God chose to save the world through Abraham's children, and this happened through Jesus. God didn't intend for just one nation or ethnicity to be His children. Rather, God wants everyone who believes in Jesus to join His family—forever!



LESSON 5 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** The Holy Spirit Is for Everyone Who Believes  
**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 10  
**WORD OF WONDER:** From Acts 1:8

Play Stations

**SUPPLIES:** various small containers or bowls, toy food, blanket or bedsheet, toy or stuffed animals, coloring utensils

**RESOURCES:** Peter and Cornelius Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

**Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas what we'll be learning about today?**

**Play Station: Sorting Food**

**Set up:** Set out a variety of small containers or bowls and toy food.

**Play:** Encourage the kids to sort the food into the containers using different categories. They can sort by food type (vegetables, breads, desserts, etc.), size, or color. They can also sort according to how much they like each food or sort according to the meal it's served during.

**Play Station: Animals**

**Set up:** Set out a blanket or bedsheet along with a variety of toy animals.

**Play:** Invite the kids to play with the animals however they want. Encourage them to use their imaginations and find ways to use the blanket with the animals (hide them underneath, wrap them up, put them all lined up on top, etc.).

**Play Station: Peter and Cornelius Coloring Sheet**

**Set up:** Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out coloring utensils.

**Play:** Let the kids color. The kids could also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of their favorite food or favorite animal.

**We all eat food every day, but I wonder whether we all like the same foods. Do you think we do?**

Allow the kids to respond. **Let's play a game to see. I'm going to say a food, and you'll decide whether you like it or not. If you like it, you can go to this side of the room** (point to one side of the room). **If you don't like this kind of food, you can go to this side of the room** (point to the other side of the room).

## Curiosity Activity: Do You Like This or Not?

We all eat food every day, but I wonder whether we all like the same foods. Do you think we do?

Allow the kids to respond. **Let's play a game to see. I'm going to say a food, and you'll decide whether you like it or not. If you like it, you can go to this side of the room** (point to one side of the room). **If you don't like this kind of food, you can go to this side of the room** (point to the other side of the room).

**Let's give it a try! I'll say a food, and you go to the side of the room that shows whether you like it or not. If you've never tried one of the foods I say, decide whether you think you'd like it or not, then go to that side of the room.**

Say the following foods and encourage the kids to go to one side of the room each time:

- Apples
- Salad
- Chicken
- Ice cream
- Broccoli
- Corn on the cob
- Mac and cheese
- Cucumbers
- Yogurt
- Cereal
- Hamburger
- Banana
- Pancakes
- Cookies

**We didn't agree on everything, did we? That's because each person is different, including what kinds of food we like to eat.**

In today's part of God's big story, we'll learn about a man named Peter who learns that people are different, but God made everyone. And because God made all people, He wants a relationship with all of us, no matter what kinds of foods we eat. Today's Wonder Truth is **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.**

## Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

### WORD OF WONDER

The Holy Spirit gives us power.

—from Acts 1:8

**Our Word of Wonder for the Power of the Spirit series is from Acts 1:8. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.**

Review the Word of Wonder with the group. **Now we're going to say the verse all together but while we're acting like different animals. In the story we heard today, there were certain types of**

animals that Jewish people ate and didn't eat. God wanted Peter to know that even non-Jewish people could receive the Holy Spirit. God loves everyone and wants to be in a relationship with all people. I'm going to call out an animal, and you'll say the verse while pretending to be that animal.



Call out several animals and encourage the kids to act like that animal while saying the verse:

- Rabbit
- Bird
- Cheetah
- Monkey
- Lion

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **THE HOLY SPIRIT**—Move arms up and in a circle in front of your body, palms facing out.
- **GIVES US**—Point to yourself.
- **POWER.**—Flex your arm muscles.
- **FROM ACTS 1:8**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What kind of power do you think people receive when the Holy Spirit is in them?** (power to tell others about Jesus, power to be strong and brave, power to obey God and not sin)
- **What have you done so far today? How have you needed power so far today?**

## Craft: Handprint Pictures // Read the story

**SUPPLIES:** construction paper (1 sheet per kid); washable paint, ink pads, or markers; coloring utensils; wet wipes

Give each kid a sheet of construction paper.

**Today's story comes from the Bible and is about two men named Peter and Cornelius. Peter was Jewish, and Cornelius was not. They were very different, but they both loved God.**

Give each child a paper and begin helping them make handprints.

**Peter was praying when God gave him a vision. God was teaching Peter something very important. God wanted Peter to know that He loves all people.**

**Say this with me: God loves everyone. God loves everyone**

**Cornelius also loved God, and God told him to send for Peter. When Peter came to his house, he understood what God was teaching him.**



**Peter told Cornelius and his family all about Jesus. They listened and believed.**

**Say this with me: Jesus is for everyone.** *Jesus is for everyone*

**Then something amazing happened. The Holy Spirit came to them too**

**Say this with me: The Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes.** *The Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes*

**Look at your handprint. Your handprint is special and different, just like you.**

**What makes us different?** Allow a few responses

**What makes us the same?** Allow a few responses

**Even though we are all different, God loves every one of us. And when we believe in Jesus, He Our handprints are all different, just like we're all different! Your handprint probably looks different from the other handprints, and they may have been traced differently too! But even though we're different, we can remember that God loves all of us and gives the Holy Spirit to all of us when we trust in Jesus.**

**Say this with me: God loves me.** *God loves me*

**Take your picture home to remember that God loves everyone and the Holy Spirit is for everyone.**

## Circle Time: Who Has It?

**SUPPLIES:** scissors (prep only)

**RESOURCES:** **Animal Cards (1 card per kid)**

Ahead of time, print enough copies of the Animals Cards for each kid to have one card and cut apart the cards.

Gather the kids to sit in a circle, with the animal cards in the middle of the circle.

**In God's big story today, Peter had a vision about animals. But it wasn't just about animals. God wanted Peter to know that He wants everyone to be in a relationship with Him. God doesn't play favorites. Anyone who loves God and does what God asks is invited to be a part of God's family! He doesn't turn away people because of what they look like or where they are from.**

**Anyone who believes in Jesus will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Let's use**

**animals to help us answer questions about the story. You can all pick an animal card.** Invite each kid to choose a card. It's OK if some kids get the same card.

Ask who has a card by describing one of the animals from a card. For example: Who has an animal that can fly? Or who has the animal that says, "ribbit"? Who has an animal that lives on a farm? Who has an animal you can ride? Whoever has a card with an animal you described can answer a question. It's OK if more than one kid answers each question. Continue describing different animals until all the discussion questions have been answered.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Who had the vision about the animals on the sheet?** (Peter)
- **What did the angel from God tell Cornelius to do?** (bring Peter to his home)
- **What did the vision from God teach Cornelius about God?** (God doesn't have favorites; God wants to have a relationship with everyone.)
- **Who does God want to be in a relationship with Him?** (all people)
- **Why do you think God wants a relationship with everyone and not just some of us?** (God loves everyone; God made everyone.)
- **Who is someone who needs to know about God's love?**
- **Who will receive the Holy Spirit?** (everyone who believes in Jesus and trusts and follows Him)
- **How should you treat others who are different from you?**

**I'm grateful God loves us all so much and wants to give the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes! Let's thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit and ask God to help us share that good news with others. Let's pray.**

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for giving us the Holy Spirit. God hears all our prayers.

## Declaring God's Wonder

Show the Early Childhood Declaration Slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

**Thank You, God, that You made me!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

**Jesus loves me so much.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

**His love for me is big.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

**The Holy Spirit leads me,** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

**And I can follow You.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

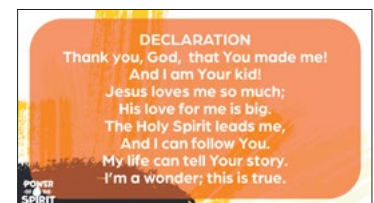
March in place like you're following the leader.

**My life can tell Your story.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

**I'm a wonder; this is true.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



## Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for this time we have together to worship You and hear from You. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit, who You give to all people who believe. Help us see others the way You see them, as people loved by You. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

## Worship

**Today we'll learn about how the Holy Spirit is for all who trust in Jesus. Let's sing and thank God for the Holy Spirit!**

Play songs *Take You at Your Word*, *Happy Day* and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

**RESOURCES:** [Bible Story Picture \(1/SG\)](#)

### Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

**I open my Bible, and what do I see?** (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

**God's big story, waiting for me!** (*Point to yourself.*)

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of Acts in the New Testament of the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found in the Bible.

Read the Experience It Script on the following page.

# GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

**SUPPLIES:** scissors (prep only), red and brown construction paper (1 sheet of each), white napkin, animal crackers (optional)

**RESOURCES:** [Angel Sheet \(1/SG\)](#)

Before the kids arrive, print the Angel Sheet and cut out the picture. Cut out a heart from the red construction paper and a cross shape from brown construction paper. Set out a white napkin. You can also use animal crackers as props (be aware of food allergies if the kids eat any).



**Leader Tip:** Kids love acting out stories! If time allows, let the kids use the props and shapes to tell the story on their own or offer it as an optional activity during the closing game/dismissal time.

**We're going to use paper shapes to help tell the story today. Jesus died, came back to life, and then went to heaven.** Hold up the cross shape (or invite a kid to hold it up). **Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His followers, just like He promised. The Holy Spirit is God's powerful, wise, and loving presence. Jesus' first followers were Jews. They were related to God's special people and followed the laws and teachings God gave His people. Jews usually didn't hang out with non-Jewish people, known as Gentiles. Jews even believed that Gentiles needed to become Jewish to be close with God. When the disciples started sharing the message of Jesus, they only told people who were Jews.**

**God wants a relationship with everyone.** Hold up the angel picture (or invite a kid to hold it up). **So one day, God sent an angel with a message to a soldier named Cornelius. Cornelius was not Jewish, but he loved God and wanted to follow Him. The angel told Cornelius that God was glad because of him.** Hold up the angel picture again. **The angel told Cornelius to send men to bring Jesus' disciple Peter to his home. Cornelius obeyed and sent two of his servants and another soldier to find Peter.**

**While the men were on their way to get Peter, Peter went up onto the roof of the house to pray. Peter had a vision that looked like a really big sheet coming down from the sky.** Hold up the napkin (with animal crackers on it, if available) and raise it up high, then lower it down to the ground. **The sheet was filled with all kinds of animals that Jews were not allowed to eat because they were not clean. But a voice in the vision said that everything God made is clean. The voice told Peter not to call anything unclean that God made.** Move the napkin up high, then hide it where the kids can't see it. **Then the sheet was taken back up to heaven.**

**Peter didn't understand the vision. But the Holy Spirit said to Peter, "Three men are looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Don't let anything keep you from going with them. I have sent them"** (Acts 10:19–20). **Peter went downstairs. He saw the men Cornelius sent.**

**Peter and the men went to Cornelius' home. When Peter asked why Cornelius asked for him, Cornelius told Peter about the vision of the angel. Cornelius then asked Peter to tell him whatever God wanted Peter to say. Peter then understood the vision he saw on the roof. It was not just**

about animals. God wanted Peter to know that He wants everyone to be in a relationship with Him, even people who aren't Jews. Hold up the heart shape (or invite a kid to hold it up). Peter told Cornelius, "I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same ... He accepts people from every nation" (Acts 10:34–35). So Peter shared the story of Jesus with Cornelius and all the people who were there. While Peter was talking, the Holy Spirit filled everyone in the house. God gave the gift of His Spirit—who is God—to people who weren't Jewish! Hold up the heart shape again.

God doesn't play favorites. Hold up the heart shape. Anyone who loves God and does what God asks is invited to be a part of God's family! He doesn't turn away people because of what they look like or where they are from. Hold up the cross shape. Anyone who believes in Jesus and trusts and follows Him will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes.

## Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

God chose to save the world from sin and death through a special family, and His family was called the Israelites, or Hebrew people. Jesus was born from that family . But God didn't just offer salvation to the Israelites. God invites everyone into His family. We can be a part of God's family when we trust in Jesus and can be children of God.

## Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish the activity, pray with them and thank God for giving the Holy Spirit.

**God, we thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to everyone who believes. You give us Your Spirit so we can tell others about Your goodness and love. You will never leave us. You are always with us. Thank You, God! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** May your hearts be tender toward the God who loves you. May you sense His love for you each and every day. The Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes. May you believe and receive His precious Holy Spirit!

## Responding in Worship: Yarn Maze Prayer

**SUPPLIES:** ball of yarn

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** songs from the [Power of the Spirit Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

For background music, play songs from the [Power of the Spirit Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#). Gather the kids to sit in a circle and hold up a ball of yarn.

**We're talking today about how the Holy Spirit is for all people who believe in Jesus. We can thank God for the Holy Spirit and everything the Holy Spirit does for us. We're all connected to one another, even though we're all different, because there's one thing that connects us: God loves us all and wants to have a relationship with us. Peter and Cornelius learned this in today's part of God's big story.**

**When I toss the ball of yarn to someone, that person can say one thing he's thankful for that the Holy Spirit has done for him (or thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit), then toss the ball of yarn to someone else, while still holding onto a string of yarn.** Demonstrate how to hold the yarn in one place and toss the ball of yarn to someone else. If the kids have trouble thinking of something specific, they can simply say, "Thank You" to God for sending the Holy Spirit.

Invite the kids to toss the ball of yarn to someone across the circle, not someone right next to them. Encourage them to say what they're thankful for and toss the yarn. Eventually, you'll make a maze of yarn inside the circle.

**This yarn maze may look messy, but it connects us all because we're all connected through our praises! We're part of the family of God through the Holy Spirit when we trust in Jesus. We can thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit and for His love.**

**VIEW THE GOD'S BIG STORY VIDEO**

