

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: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other. —Acts 1:8

- Welcome Question: What is your favorite food?
What is your least favorite food?
- Curiosity Questions
- Word of Wonder Activity
- God's Big Story
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- LARGE GROUP
- Elementary Responding in Worship: Reflect and Create
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Dove Origami



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: 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 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Small Group

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: Acts 1:8

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

[Games & Activities Guide](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious"

questions to engage kids. Say "I'm curious.." before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **What are some of your family's favorite foods? Do any of them come from a specific culture or part of the world?**
- **Do you have any friends, neighbors, or family members who are from a different culture or part of the world than you? What new things (like foods, activities, or holidays) from their culture have you tried?**



Word of Wonder Activity

WORD OF WONDER

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other.

—Acts 1:8 (NIV)

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), timer

Our Word of Wonder for the Power of the Spirit series talks about how the Holy Spirit helps us to share about Jesus. Let's say the verse together. Open your Bible to Acts 1:8. If possible, display the Word of Wonder Slide or watch the [Elementary Word of Wonder Video](#). Invite kids to read Acts 1:8 several times together.

Have your group gather in a circle. After reading the verse several times together, invite kids to sit in a squat position, ready to pop (or jump) for a popcorn-style recitation of the verse.

Now that we've practiced our Word of Wonder a few times, let's see how we do when we say it together as if we're jumping kernels of popcorn. When I point to the first person, that person will pop up by jumping up out of his squat and saying the first word of the verse. The next person will pop up and say the next word in the verse. We'll continue to go around our circle, popping up and saying the words of the verse until we finish. Let's get ready to pop! Indicate which direction around the circle you want kids to recite the verse; then have them jump up and say one word of the verse, one after another, until they have recited the whole verse. For a bigger challenge, have kids try to go around the circle as fast as possible. Time the group and see if they can beat their own time!

Leader Tip: For kids who might be intimidated by this activity, consider this modification: Ask for volunteers who can recite the verse to sit in an inner circle. The rest of the group can form an outer circle and help determine if those in the inner circle say the verse correctly.

Make It Inclusive: If any kids have limited mobility, invite everyone to simply take turns saying the next word of the verse while remaining seated.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Explain to your kids that they're going to read a story from the Bible, God's very Word. This story can be found in the book of Acts in the New Testament. Have volunteers help kids find Acts 10.

Acts 10 introduces us to two important people: Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, and Cornelius, a Roman officer who feared God but was not Jewish. At this time, many Jews believed God's message was mainly for their own people. While Peter is praying, God gives him a vision that challenges what he has always believed. At the same time, God is also working in Cornelius' life, bringing them together. As you read, pay attention to what God is teaching Peter and how this changes the way he sees other people.

Ask for volunteers to read the following set of verses aloud from the Bible while everyone follows along: Acts 10:1–5, 9–17, 34–35. Then do one or both of the following:

Elementary Questions

- **Who did God send to Cornelius to tell him to send men to get Jesus' disciple, Peter?** (*an angel*)
- **What did Peter see on the sheet during his vision?** (*all kinds of animals that were considered impure and that Jews weren't allowed to eat*)
- **What did the Holy Spirit tell Peter to do after he had the vision?** (*The Spirit told him to get up, go downstairs, and go with the men who were looking for him.*)
- **Whose house did Peter go to?** (*Cornelius'*)
- **When Peter got to Cornelius' house, he understood the vision! What did the vision mean?** (*Possible answers: God doesn't play favorites! God wants everyone to be in a relationship with Him, even non-Jewish people!*)
- **God wants to be in a relationship with you! How does that make you feel? What do you want to say to God in response?**

It's amazing to know that the God of the universe wants a relationship with each of us! He sent His powerful, wise, and loving presence—the Holy Spirit—to Cornelius, and He continues to send His Holy Spirit to anyone who believes in Him so that His followers will always have God to guide them. Let's talk to God in prayer, thanking Him for sending His Holy Spirit.

Leader Tip: Be ready to talk with kids about what it means to have a relationship with God through Jesus! Tell them your own story of how you came to faith in Jesus and what walking with Him looks like in your life. Consider referring to the Salvation Path resource and inviting your ministry leader and kids' parents into the conversation!

Preteen Questions

- **God sent an angel to Cornelius! Who was Cornelius? What did the angel tell Cornelius?**
(Cornelius was a Roman military officer who was not Jewish. The angel told him God was pleased with his generosity and devotion to God. The angel also told him to send men to bring Jesus' disciple Peter to his home.)
- **What did Peter see in his vision?** (An enormous sheet coming down from the sky. On it were all kinds of animals that were considered impure and that Jews weren't allowed to eat.)
- **What did the Holy Spirit tell Peter to do after he had the vision?** (The Spirit told him to get up, go downstairs, and go with the men who were looking for him.)
- **When Peter got to Cornelius' house, he understood the vision! What did the vision mean?**
(Possible answers: God doesn't play favorites! God wants everyone to be in a relationship with Him, even non-Jewish people!)
- **Do you think Peter was surprised by the vision and by what it meant? Why or why not?**
- **God gives the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes! What does this tell us about God and what He is like?**

Our God is kind and wants a relationship with everyone! He gives His Holy Spirit—who is God—to live with and in every person who follows Jesus! Just like God sent His Holy Spirit to Cornelius, He will send His Spirit to all who believe. Let's take a moment to pray, thanking God for His Holy Spirit.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to brainstorm the different ways the Holy Spirit works in the lives of those who believe. Encourage those who would like to pray to thank God for sending His Holy Spirit to everyone who believes and for the Spirit's work in our lives. Then encourage kids to share their own prayer requests and to pray for one another.

Elementary Responding in Worship: Reflect and Create

SUPPLIES: whiteboard, dry-erase marker, black construction paper or cardstock (1 sheet per kid), white crayons or chalk (1 per kid), paper (optional), marker (optional)

RESOURCES: “Spirit Move” from the [Power of the Spirit Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, write “Holy Spirit” on the whiteboard (or a sheet of paper).

Gather the kids together and give each kid a sheet of black construction paper or cardstock and a white crayon or piece of chalk.

Make It Inclusive: Ahead of time, write “Holy Spirit” with a white crayon or chalk on several sheets of black construction paper or cardstock. Give these prepared sheets to any kids who struggle with writing.

Today we learned how God was pleased with Cornelius, a man who was not Jewish but loved God. God showed Peter that Cornelius could have a relationship with God. God invites each of us to have a relationship with Him too! And when we follow Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit, who is His powerful, wise, and loving presence. The Holy Spirit is God! And the Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes.

Each of you has a sheet of black cardstock and a white crayon (or a piece of chalk). First, write “Holy Spirit” in the middle of your paper. Show kids the words “Holy Spirit” on the whiteboard (or hold up the paper with them on it).

Now let’s spend some time thinking about the gift of the Holy Spirit. How amazing it is that God gives each of us the Holy Spirit! If you trust and follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit is within you at this very moment! Around the edges of your paper, you can draw or write what comes to mind when you think about the Holy Spirit. After a few minutes, we’ll pray together.

Play “Spirit Move” from the [Power of the Spirit Elementary Spotify playlist](#) while kids write and draw. After a few minutes of creating and reflecting, invite kids to stand up and hold their pictures close to their hearts as you say a response prayer together.

Leader Tip: Kids love sharing their artwork! You can use the differences you see in their pictures to illustrate the Wonder Truth. We are all different, but God wants to send His Holy Spirit to everyone who believes.

While you hold your pictures over your hearts, I’m going to say a few words reminding us of what we learned today. After each statement, you’ll reply, “Come, Holy Spirit, come.”

God, we thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to everyone who believes.

Help lead kids in saying, “Come, Holy Spirit, come.”

Your Holy Spirit helps us tell others of Your goodness and love.

Kids reply, “Come, Holy Spirit, come.”

You will never leave us; You are always with us.

Kids reply, “Come, Holy Spirit, come.”

What an amazing truth: God wants a relationship with us and will never leave those who trust and follow Jesus!

Leader Tip: Some kids may have questions about what it means to follow Jesus! Invite their families to join you as you talk and pray together. The Salvation Path resource also includes helpful Bible references and information!

Preteen Responding in Worship: Dove Origami

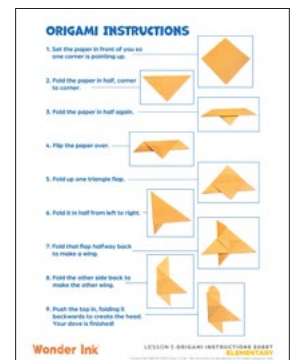
SUPPLIES: 8" x 8" squares of paper (1 per kid, plus 2), colored pencils or crayons

RESOURCES: Origami Instructions Sheet (1 per preteen), "Spirit Move" from the [Power of the Spirit Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, prepare 8" x 8" paper squares, one per kid (plus two). Print copies of the Origami Instructions Sheet, one per kid. Take one paper square and practice making an origami dove by following the steps on the Origami Instructions Sheet.

Set out coloring utensils and gather the kids together. Give each kid an 8" x 8" paper square.

Today we learned how God was pleased with Cornelius, a man who was not Jewish but loved God. God showed Peter that Cornelius could have a relationship with God. God invites each of us to have a relationship with Him too! And when we follow Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit, who is His powerful, wise, and loving presence. The Holy Spirit is God! And the Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes.



Make It Inclusive: Write "Holy Spirit" on a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper for kids who need a little extra help spelling.

To start, you're going to write "Holy Spirit" in the middle of your paper. Take a few minutes to think about the gift of the Holy Spirit. As you do, write or draw whatever comes to mind. Play "Spirit Move" from the [Power of the Spirit Elementary Spotify playlist](#). After a few minutes of drawing and writing, invite kids to share some of the things they reflected on.

The disciple John writes in the Bible about a time when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven "like a dove" to be with Jesus (John 1:32). The Holy Spirit is not actually a dove, but sometimes a dove is used as a symbol to represent the Holy Spirit. We're going to turn our papers into doves to help us remember the amazing gift of the Holy Spirit God has given us.

Give each kid a copy of the Origami Instructions Sheet. Walk kids through each step, folding your own square into the shape of a dove as they follow your lead.

Now, you can keep this dove with you to remember how God has given the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes. If you trust and follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit is with you at this very moment! Think about a friend or family member you could teach how to make a dove this week. As you teach them, tell them all about the Holy Spirit.