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Peter and Cornelius , God Shows No Favoritism

Scripture: Acts 10:1-48

Theme: The Gospel is for every nation and every person

4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will explore how God's love breaks down barriers, just as He did with Peter and Cornelius. In Acts 10, we see a dramatic shift when God commands Peter to go to a Gentile home, a group of non-Jewish believers, where a Roman officer named Cornelius prays earnestly for God's help. Peter's initial hesitation reveals the cultural divide between Jews and Gentiles, but the Holy Spirit falls on all who are listening, proving that salvation is not tied to ethnicity but to faith and repentance. This passage challenges students to think about how God's love is universal, not limited by race, religion, or status. The lesson will help them understand that Jesus came to save everyone, including those who seem far from God, and that true unity comes when hearts are open to His gr Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

One day, Peter was staying at the home of a Roman centurion named Cornelius, who lived in Caesarea. Peter had been warned by God in a vision about not judging people by their background, but he had been confused about what to do. Suddenly, a man named Cornelius and his household, including his friends, servants, and even his family, appeared at Peter's doorstep, all eager to hear the message of Jesus from the apostle.

Cornelius, a devout man who feared God and gave generously to the poor, had asked the apostle Peter to come to his house. 'Why don't you invite me?' he had asked, 'I and my whole family are waiting to hear the words of the Lord.' Peter, still hesitant because he had never eaten with Gentiles before, hesitated at first. But then, as he looked around at the many men and women of different backgrounds gathered there, he remembered God's command: 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' Peter's heart softened, and he said to the group, 'You yourselves know

that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile.' But Cornelius interrupted, 'Then why are you standing there? Get up and go with us!'

Peter, finally convinced, climbed the steps and entered Cornelius's house. There, he was surrounded by a diverse group, some Jewish, some Greek, all eager to listen. As he began to speak, Peter explained the love and mercy of God, showing how Jesus had died to save everyone, not just Jews. One of the men in the crowd, a man named Barnabas (who Peter recognized as one of Jesus' early disciples), spoke up and said, 'This is what God has shown me in a vision: Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' Peter nodded, and the group listened attentively.

As Peter continued, a loud voice from heaven boomed, 'Look, I am sending the Holy Spirit to you as I did on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you will receive power to preach the Good News to all nations.' The crowd was so amazed they fell to the ground. Then, just as Peter had seen in his vision, the Holy Spirit descended upon them in tongues, speaking in different languages! A Gentile, a man named Peter's friend, named Peter, stood up and declared, 'Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?'

The crowd agreed, and that night, Cornelius's family and friends, Gentiles from all over the region, were baptized in the name of Jesus. Peter stood there, amazed, as he realized God was breaking down the walls that separated people. 'God does not show favoritism,' he reminded them, quoting his earlier vision: 'He accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right.' The men who had once been strangers to Peter now became his brothers in faith, proving that God's love was for everyone, no matter their background, language, or culture.

The next morning, Peter left with his disciples and returned to Jerusalem, where the apostles were shocked to see Gentiles among them. They questioned Peter, 'How could you come to join us?' Peter replied, 'I was with people who had received the Holy Spirit just as we did.' The apostles listened, and God confirmed Peter's words by sending angels to strengthen them. This moment changed everything: now, the Gospel was no longer just for Jews, but for everyone who would accept it. Cornelius and his household became the first Gentile believers, showing that God's love was for all nations, just as He had promised!

Key Verse

Acts 10:34-35 , 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right.'

The key verse (Acts 10:34-35 , 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right.')

>> Missions Spotlight

The caste system in India has divided people for thousands of years. Missionaries share Peter's vision and the story of Cornelius to show that in Christ, there is no caste. The Gospel is breaking down barriers across India.

-> To the Cross

Peter learned that God doesn't show favoritism , the Gospel is for everyone. The cross broke down every wall: Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female. Because of the cross, we are all one in Christ Jesus.