

Journey from Joppa to Teach Cornelius

Acts 10



New Testament 7
Part 2: ABCs of Acts 7-12

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 7 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Acts 10

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized...?" (Acts 10:47a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.'" (Acts 10:34-35).

Also help the children memorize the ABCs of Acts.

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Cornelius, the Gentile"](#)
- ["Jesus Loves Me"](#)
- ["Jesus Loves the Little Children"](#)
- ["Jesus Loves Everybody"](#)
- ["God Loves People"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [ABCs of Acts 1-12](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "N.T. 7 Bible Facts")
- "Acts Chapter Summary" from "[Kids Prep 2](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Pictures/drawings from any books listed under 3rd-4th Grader Pre-Class Activities/ Learning Centers
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces



- **John the Baptist/Peter A Beka Flash-A-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book)**
- **[Map of Palestine](#) (provided in activity sheets)**
- **Large, white dish towel filled with “all kinds” (Acts 10:12) of toy or felt animals (clean: locust, cricket, grasshopper, cow, ox, sheep, goat, deer. Unclean: pig, camel, rabbit, eel, eagle, buzzard, vulture, raven, ostrich, owl, sea gull, gecko, mouse, lizard, snake. See for more information: Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14)**
- **Model of Bible times house with Bible character dolls to tell the story on tabletop or in sandbox**
- **See *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* on “clean and unclean” animals**

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I must treat everyone with love and respect, just as Jesus did, and understand that He died to save all people.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Last week we talked about two special people: Saul of Tarsus and a woman named Dorcas (or Tabitha). What do you remember about Saul of Tarsus? What happened to him after he saw a bright light? Who was Dorcas? What happened to her?

In Acts 10, we will learn more about the apostle Peter. Remember that in Acts chapter two he preached the very first sermon about Jesus after His death, and 3,000 people were baptized. In our lesson today, Peter learns a lesson about how much God loves everyone, and He wants us to do the same. Let’s find out how Peter learns this lesson about God’s great love.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week’s lesson.

God planned before He had even created the Universe and before Adam and Eve sinned to send a Savior. He chose Abraham (and his descendants, the Jews) to be the earthly family of Jesus. And He gave them the Law (often called the Law of Moses/the Old Law/the Old Testament). The purpose of the Law of Moses/the Old Testament was to prepare the Jews for the Savior who would come one day. Do we still live by the Old Testament today? No, not as a binding law code, though we can learn from its principles. Our binding law code, however, is the New Testament. The New Testament is for **everyone**, not just the Jews, or any other group. Peter and the other apostles had to learn that the Good News about Jesus is for everyone. Let’s find out how Peter learned this lesson.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review the ABCs of Acts covered thus far.
2. “J” is for Journey from Joppa to Teach Cornelius. At the end of chapter nine, we read about Peter being asked to go to Joppa, a city on the Mediterranean coast, because a very special woman named Dorcas had died there. He stayed for “many days” with a man named Simon, who was a **tanner**.



HISTORICAL NOTE: If Simon the tanner was a Jew (which is very likely), he had to work with the bodies of dead animals on a daily basis. According to Jewish ceremonial law, that would have made him “unclean.” Simon’s very nasty, smelly business was more than likely very close to the Mediterranean Sea because tanners needed access to large amounts of water for washing hides. Then, as now, the waterfront was a very ungodly environment in which to live. The fact that Peter lived with a tanner may indicate that he was willing to set aside at least some of his religious and cultural prejudices against other people, which probably helped to prepare him to change his way of thinking about the Gentiles.



HISTORICAL NOTE: In most Roman cities, tradesmen with the same crafts often lived near one another. So it probably was not hard to find Simon the tanner’s house. A **tanner** was a leatherworker. Leather was used for tents, bottles, belts, helmets, shields, slings, and sandals, and many other things. A tanner first had to take the skin off the dead animal, “then remove the hairs from the hide, make it supple for use, and sometimes dye it as well. The hairs were removed by a combination of scraping, soaking, and the application of lime. The hides were then soaked in water containing oak galls and sumac leaves, rubbed with dog manure, and hammered. The smell of the work was so bad that the tanner had to work outside the town in the direction of the prevailing wind, and it was so bad personally that it could become grounds for divorce.” [*The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, p. 160.]



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[The Bible and a Little Detail](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about the inspiration of the Bible as it relates to the account of Cornelius’ conversion.

3. About 30 miles from Joppa, in the city of Caesarea (not to be confused with Caesarea Philippi), lived a very good man named Cornelius. He was a Roman soldier in command of many soldiers (a centurion). Cornelius was not a Jew, nor was he a follower of Jesus, but he was very religious and believed in and prayed to God. He was also well known in the community for his kindness and generosity.



HISTORICAL NOTE: Caesarea had been named in honor of Caesar, the Emperor of the Roman Empire, by Herod the Great. It was the home of the Roman governor of Judea. As a centurion, Cornelius would have been in charge of 100 soldiers (although it is thought that it might have actually been 80 soldiers) who were part of a larger regiment, or cohort (480 to 600 men). There were 10 cohorts in each legion. So, a legion was made up of around 5,000 men. Today Cornelius’ rank would have been something like a sergeant in the U.S. Army. He was probably one who worked his way up the ranks, rather than someone who bought his position or was appointed because of his social status.



NOTE: See Wayne Jackson’s article, “[Does the Case of Cornelius Prove the ‘Sinner’s Prayer’ Doctrine?](#)” on the Christian Courier Web site if the children have questions about God hearing the prayer of Cornelius, a non-Christian.

4. One day, at about **3:00 in the afternoon**, an angel suddenly appeared to Cornelius and told him that he should send for the apostle Peter in Joppa to find out what he should do to be pleasing to God. Cornelius immediately sent two servants and a soldier whom he trusted to Joppa to find Peter and bring him back. Cornelius showed his willingness and eagerness to obey God by obeying the angel’s message without questions or hesitation.



NOTE: It appears that Cornelius was observing the Jewish evening worship/sacrifice hour, which was 3:00 P.M. (cf. *Barnes Notes On the New Testament*, Acts 10:3; *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*, Acts 10:3).

5. The next day, about noon, Peter was praying on the flat rooftop of Simon the tanner’s house. He was hungry and waiting for food to be prepared. Meanwhile, he “fell into a trance” and had a **vision**. The vision was unlike anything he had ever seen before: three times a large sheet was let down from heaven full of “all kinds” of animals, apparently both “clean” and “unclean” under the Old Law. A voice from heaven told him to “kill and eat,” but he refused, saying that as a faithful Jew, he had never eaten anything unclean [see Leviticus 11]. “What God has cleansed you must not call common [unclean],” the voice from heaven said.



Vision: something seen in a dream or trance, sent by God to share a special message or revelation. Peter and Cornelius were given visions that went together, like those Saul of Tarsus and Ananias received in chapter nine.



NOTE: Peter saw a sheet with “all kinds” of creatures in it, descending from heaven (Acts 10:12), signifying a change in God’s definition of what constitutes “clean”/“unclean.” Though under the Old Law, the sheet would have contained only **certain kinds** of animals, now the sheet contained “all kinds.” According to commentators, the sheet of animals that Peter saw apparently contained animals that would have been considered both clean and unclean animals under the Old Law (*A Commentary on Acts of Apostles*, J.W. McGarvey; *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*, Acts 10:12; *Adam Clarke’s Commentary*, Acts 10:12). Under the Old Law, the Jews had specific instructions from God as to what they could eat (clean) and what they could not eat (unclean). According to Deuteronomy 14 and Leviticus 11, clean animals included oxen, sheep, goats, deer, gazelles, fish with both fins and scales, locusts, crickets, and grasshoppers. Unclean animals included camels, pigs, hares, eagles, buzzards, vultures, ravens, ostrich, owls, geckos, lizards, mice, moles, snakes, etc. God gave the Israelites these instructions because they were “a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Himself...” (Deuteronomy 14:2). Everything they did—even what they ate—would show the world that they were a different, set apart people.

6. While Peter was trying to understand this strange vision, the messengers from Cornelius arrived at Simon’s house. When he heard that a Roman soldier named Cornelius had sent for him, Peter went with them, taking six other disciples of Jesus with him to be witnesses. [Remember that Jews did not normally talk to Gentiles, do business with them, nor go into their houses. Disciples of Jesus were no longer Jews, but many tried to hold on to the Old Law and traditions. See note below.] Peter then understood what his strange vision had meant:

God expected him to preach to Gentiles as well as to Jews. The people who weren't Jews before becoming Christians could and should hear the Good News about Jesus.

7. Four days after the angel spoke to Cornelius, Peter arrived at Cornelius' house in Caesarea. The Roman soldier told Peter about the angel's message, and Peter responded with the key words of this chapter: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation, whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (vss. 34-35). Peter had preached the first Gospel sermon on the Day of Pentecost when the Church began with the 3,000 who were baptized into Christ. By chapter 10 (a few years later), Peter was learning exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to **every** creature"—not just the Jews.
8. When Cornelius heard the Gospel (good news) about Jesus, he and his household were immediately baptized into Christ. They were the first Gentiles to become Christians.



HISTORICAL NOTE: Roman military personnel were discouraged, or even forbidden, to marry (*Bible Background Commentary*, p. 350). The conversion of Cornelius' "household" (Acts 10:2; 11:14) would likely have included servants and/or freed-persons, siblings, as well as relatives (and possibly close friends—Acts 10:24).



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article "[Do the 'Household Baptisms' Justify Infant Baptism?](#)" by Caleb Colley on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about that subject as it relates to the conversion of Cornelius' household. See the article "[Dying Before Baptism?](#)" by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to the argument that baptism must not be essential for salvation since God would not condemn someone who died on the way to be baptized.

9. God gave them the ability to speak in foreign languages ("tongues") that they had never studied—just like the apostles had done on Pentecost. This was a sign to all the Jewish Christians that Cornelius and his household, as well as all other Gentiles, were to be welcomed into the Church without any prejudice.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article "[Modern-Day Miracles, Tongue-Speaking, and Holy Spirit Baptism: A Refutation](#)" by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion of the Holy Spirit baptism that occurred on this occasion.

10. Cornelius was a very good man, but he was not part of the Church (not a Christian) until he was baptized. This is an important lesson for our kids—and for us—because this is not the message we are getting from many inside and outside the Church today. Cornelius, like Paul, was searching for the Truth—searching for how to obey God. God provided a teacher, just as He did for the Ethiopian in Acts eight. Cornelius listened to Peter, and then he had to decide what he would do; he had to decide whether or not he would be baptized and be saved. Not only Cornelius, but also "all his household" decided to become followers of Jesus and were baptized.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[If Cornelius Had the Holy Spirit, Doesn’t That Mean He Was Saved?](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to the argument that baptism must not be essential if Cornelius had the Holy Spirit before being baptized.

11. This was a time of great rejoicing for Cornelius and those with him. It was a very happy time for Peter, too. He had learned a very special lesson: every soul is important to God, and everyone needs to know about Jesus. Help the children to understand the significance of this, explaining that most of the world had rejected God until this point. The Law of Moses was given to the Jews, alone. The Gentiles were still living under the Patriarchal Law, like those who lived prior to Moses, but most of the Gentiles had rejected God. So the Jews were expected to be set apart from them so that they would not be made unclean. The Gospel being for everyone meant that the Jews alone were no longer “God’s chosen people.” Now, the Church is God’s chosen people, and we have the same responsibility to share the Gospel with everyone that Peter did.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Cornelius’ Family is Baptized](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 10 provided in activity sheets)
- Write “Peter teaches Cornelius” on a piece of construction paper (one for each child). Then glue a piece of white fabric on each paper (around the edges to form a pocket). Have cutouts of various “unclean” animals for the children to color and glue inside their fabric pockets. (“[Peter Teaches Cornelius Activity Sheet](#)” provided in activity sheets)
- Show the children pictures of different kinds of plants in their native environment (roses in a garden, cacti in the desert, tropical flowers in the rain forest, etc.). Talk about the beauty and uniqueness of each plant. Each one looks different (color, shape) and grows in a different environment, but each one was created by God, and each one is special to Him. Have a box or basket of things from nature that are different colors and shapes. As you show the children each item, ask them, “Who made this? Who gave it this special color and special shape?” Make the point that each living thing in nature, though different, is special to God—and specially created by God. [Bags of snakes or frogs of varying sizes and colors are often available at dollar stores. These are excellent visuals for this illustration.]
- Let the children look in a mirror and tell what they see; not only should they realize that each one is different—each one is special to God, no matter what he/she looks like. Show them pictures of children around the world, discussing how they’re different and how they’re the same.
- “Journey to Find Cornelius” review game: In the top right-hand corner of a piece of poster board, draw a house with a male figure (“Cornelius”) standing in front. In the bottom left-hand corner, draw some buildings and write “Joppa.” Draw a road from Joppa to Cornelius’ house. Put Velcro® dots or pieces of magnetic tape in at least 10 places along the road. Make a cutout of Peter, and put a corresponding Velcro® dot or piece of magnetic tape on the back. Ask each child a question about the story. As each child answers his question correctly, he can move Peter

along the road, one dot or magnet per question, until Peter arrives at Cornelius' house. (The children can make the return trip to Joppa as well.)

- Write “God’s Word is for everyone!” on pieces of construction paper, one for each child. Let the children color pictures of people from different countries and glue them onto the papers.

1st-2nd Graders:

- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 10 provided in activity sheets)
- Play Tic-Tac-Toe with review questions from this and previous lessons. (“[Tic-Tac-Toe Instructions](#),” board, and [N.T. 7 Review Questions](#) available on curriculum Web site)
- Show the children pictures of different kinds of plants in their native environment (roses in a garden, cacti in the desert, tropical flowers in the rain forest, etc.). Talk about the beauty and uniqueness of each plant. Each one looks different (color, shape) and grows in a different environment, but each one was created by God, and each one is special to Him. Have a box or basket of things from nature that are different colors and shapes. As you show the children each item, ask them, “Who made this? Who gave it this special color and special shape?” Make the point that each living thing in nature, though different, is special to God—and specially created by God. [Bags of snakes or frogs of varying sizes and colors are often available at dollar stores. These are excellent visuals for this illustration.]
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3rd-4th Graders:

- Continue working on ABCs of Acts booklet. (“[ABCs of Acts Booklet](#)” page 10 provided in activity sheets)
- Show the children pictures of different kinds of plants in their native environment (roses in a garden, cacti in the desert, tropical flowers in the rain forest, etc.). Talk about the beauty and uniqueness of each plant. Each one looks different (color, shape) and grows in a different environment, but each one was created by God, and each one is special to Him. Have a box or basket of things from nature that are different colors and shapes. As you show the children each item, ask them, “Who made this? Who gave it this special color and special shape?” Make the point that each living thing in nature, though different, is special to God—and specially created by God. [Bags of snakes or frogs of varying sizes and colors are often available at dollar stores. These are excellent visuals for this illustration.]
- Bible Jeopardy: Make categories corresponding to all the lessons in this and the previous quarters. Examples of categories: Apostles, Who Said...?, The Cripple Cured, Taught in a Chariot (the Ethiopian), etc.
- Write events from this story (not in order) on the board. Let the kids take turns writing a number

beside each event to indicate the order in which each one took place. **Or** write events on index cards, shuffle the cards, and let the kids put the cards in chronological order.

- Have the children read the following:
 - Acts 10
 - *Discovery* magazine articles: “Cornelius Becomes a Christian,” [December, 2008](#)
 - *We’re Different, We’re the Same*, by Bobbie Jane Kates (Random House)

SONGS:

“CORNELIUS, THE GENTILE” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook
(Tune: “Love Lifted Me”)

Let us sing about a man, very devout was he;
He loved God with all his heart, praying continuously.
Peter told this good Gentile that Jesus was God’s own Son.
Then Cornelius knew that God loved every one.

CHORUS:

God loves the Jew, and He loves you;
God loves the Gentile, too, God loves the Jew.
God loves the Jew, and He loves you;
God loves the Gentile, too, God loves the Jew.

“JESUS LOVES ME” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Anna B. Warner

Jesus loves me this I know.
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong.
They are weak but He is strong.

CHORUS:

Yes Jesus loves me.
Yes Jesus loves me.
Yes Jesus loves me.
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus love me when I’m good.
When I do the things I should.
Jesus loves me when I’m bad,
Though it make Him very sad.

(CHORUS)

“JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Traditional

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world,
Red and yellow, black and white,
They're all precious in His sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus died for all the children...
Jesus rose for all the children....

“JESUS LOVES EVERYBODY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Sarah Richey

(Tune: “Give Me That Old Time Religion”)

CHORUS:

Jesus loves everybody,
Jesus loves everybody,
Jesus loves everybody,
And Jesus loves ME too!

VERSE 1:

He wants us to live for Him,
He wants us to live for Him,
He wants us to live for Him,
While we're here on Earth.

(CHORUS)

VERSE 2:

He will take us home to heaven,
He will take us home to heaven,
He will take us home to heaven,
If we obey His word.

(CHORUS)

“GOD LIKES PEOPLE”

Author: Joel Hemphill

(Tune: See Internet)

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE
“SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE
CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



Journey from Joppa to Teach Cornelius

Acts 10



New Testament 7
Part 2: ABCs of Acts 7-12

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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Acts 10

MEMORY WORK:

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- Model of Bible times house with Bible character dolls to tell the story on tabletop or in sandbox
- See *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* on “clean and unclean” animals

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I must treat everyone with love and respect, just as Jesus did, and understand that He died to save all people.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [N.T. 7 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 7 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

Briefly review Sunday’s lesson (See [N.T. 7 Review Questions](#) for example questions), as well as other ABCs covered to this point.

Talk more about what prejudice is and how Jesus wants us to see others as **He** sees them. (Remember that Jesus was not a “Southern white man”!)

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- See Sunday morning’s lesson.

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