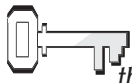


Welcome to the Family



References

Acts 10; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 132–142



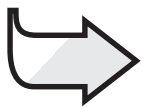
Memory Verse

“God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right” (Acts 10:34, 35, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that God wants everyone to be a part of His family.
Feel a desire to invite others to join the family of God.
Respond by actively sharing God’s love with someone today.



The Message

I invite others to join God’s family by sharing His love.

Monthly Theme

We are active in God’s family.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Cornelius and Peter had visions about the same time. Cornelius, a Roman centurion, respected and prayed to God and gave generously to those in need. He was told to send servants to Joppa to bring Peter back with them. In Peter’s vision he saw “unclean animals” and was told to eat. When he said No, God told him not to call anything that He had created unclean. Just then, Cornelius’s servants came for Peter. Reluctantly he went with them. When Peter and Cornelius compared their visions, Peter understood God’s message to him: God loved Gentiles too and wanted them to become His people. Peter spoke to all the people there. The Holy Spirit came upon them and many were baptized.

This is a lesson about community.

Just as Peter ministered to Cornelius and his community, we are called by God to actively seek others to be part of our community of faith. No one is to be excluded.

Teacher Enrichment

“Cornelius was a Roman centurion. He was a man of wealth and noble birth, and his position was one of trust and honor. . . .

. . . He was faithful to Jehovah in his home life and in his official duties. . . .

. . . He was not a member of the Jewish church and would have been looked upon by the rabbis as a heathen and unclean. . . .

. . . As yet none of the disciples had preached the gospel to the Gentiles. . . . for they had looked upon the Gentiles as excluded from the blessings of the gospel. . . .

. . . the conversion of Cornelius was to be the first of importance among the Gentiles. . . .

“How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter’s mind by his Jewish training! By the vision of the sheet and its contents He sought to divest the apostle’s mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentile are alike precious in God’s sight; that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel. . . .

“When the brethren in Judea heard that Peter had gone to the house of a Gentile and preached to those assembled, they were

surprised and offended. . . .

“Peter laid the whole matter before them. . . .

“On hearing this account, the brethren were silenced. Convinced that Peter’s course was in direct fulfillment of the plan of God, and that their prejudices and exclusiveness were utterly contrary to the spirit of the gospel, they glorified God, saying, ‘Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.’

“Thus, without controversy, prejudice was broken down” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 132–142).

Centurion. “The commander of a ‘century,’ that is, a hundred men, which formed the 60th part of a Roman legion. He was probably comparable to one of the top-grade noncommissioned officers in our modern military organization” (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, p. 184).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section

Minutes

Activities

Materials Needed

Welcome

ongoing

Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled

none

1

Readiness Options

up to 10

A. *Family Tree*
B. *Equal Value*
C. *A Special Family Member*

large sheet of paper, markers
coin of same value for each child
Bible, small mirror

Any Time

Prayer and Praise*

up to 10

Fellowship
Songbook
Mission
Offering
Prayer

none
Sing for Joy
Children’s Mission
offering container from Lesson 1
cloth sheet, pencils, paper

2

Bible Lesson

up to 20

Experiencing the Story

Memory Verse

Bible Study

variety of stuffed/plastic animals,
cloth sheet, Bible-times costumes
20 unclean animal shapes (see p. 140), cloth sheet
Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

up to 15

A. *God’s Friends*

B. *God’s Favorites*

large picture of church (see p. 141),
pencils/markers
pencils, paper

4

Sharing the Lesson

up to 15

An Invitation

blank cards, markers/crayons

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share an experience from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- large sheet of paper
- markers

A. Family Tree

In advance, draw a large tree with many branches on the paper. Make sure that there is one branch for each child in your group.

Say: **This morning we are going to make a combined family tree. Each person can use a branch. First draw your family—Mom, Dad, and any brothers or sisters. Then add aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents.**

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What do you notice about the different families when you look at our tree?** (Some are large and some are small.) **Did you know that you belong to two families? You belong to the family you have just drawn on the tree, but you also belong to God's family. Part of God's family is here in church today. Can you name someone else who belongs to your church family? Why is it good to belong to a church family? God wants everyone to be part of His family. Our message today tells us a way that we can help God's family grow.**



I INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN GOD'S FAMILY BY SHARING HIS LOVE.

Say that with me.

Put the family tree on the wall as a reminder that we are all part of God's family.

You Need:

- coin of same value for each child

B. Equal Value

Give a coin to each child. Allow response time as you ask: **Who has the oldest coin? Help the children look at the dates on their coins. Who has the newest? Which coins are most valuable, the shiny ones or the tarnished ones? How much is your coin worth? What could you buy with it? If we put all our coins together, could we buy [insert something that costs more than the amount of money you have]?**

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Why are the new and shiny coins not more valuable than the old? People are like coins. Some are old and some are young. Some people can move about while others sit in wheelchairs. What kind of people does God value most?** Accept answers. **God places the same value on everyone. He loves us all. He wants everyone to be a part of His family. He needs you**

and me to invite people who don't know about Him to join His family. Our message today tells us one way to invite others.



I INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN GOD'S FAMILY BY SHARING HIS LOVE.

Say that with me.

C. A Special Family Member

Place the mirror in your open Bible so the children cannot see it from their seats.

Say: **In my Bible I have a picture of someone very special, someone who belongs to God's family. Who would like to see who it is? I'll show you if you promise not to tell anyone.** Have the children come one by one and see themselves in the mirror.

You Need:

- Bible
- small mirror

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **When you looked in the mirror, whom did you see? Did you all see the same person? Whom do you think is God's favorite child?** Help the children see that God does not have a favorite. God loves them all the same. **God wants everyone to be a part of His family. He needs you and me to invite people who don't know Him to join His family. Our message today tells us one way to invite others.**



I INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN GOD'S FAMILY BY SHARING HIS LOVE.

Say that with me.

Note: Prayer and Praise appears on page 37.

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- variety of stuffed/plastic unclean animals
- cloth sheet with a knot in all four corners
- Bible-times costumes

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Peter, Cornelius, angel, Cornelius's two servants and friend, Cornelius's family, friends, and neighbors, Simon's servant. Have adults hold sheet.

Setting the Scene

Dress the children in Bible-times costumes. Identify three areas: Simon's house; Cornelius's house; small groups representing Cornelius's family and friends.

Give each child a plastic "unclean" animal to put into the sheet at the appropriate time. Prompt Cornelius, Peter, and the angel to repeat their lines after you say them.

Read or tell the story.

Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army. He was also a man who loved God. Because he loved God so much, he often talked to Him in prayer.

One day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Cornelius was praying. *[Cornelius kneels in prayer.]* Suddenly an angel stood before him and called his name. "Cornelius!" *[Angel calls Cornelius.]* Cornelius was surprised and a little afraid. *[Cornelius shows surprise.]*

"God hears your prayers," the angel said. "And He sees that you love Him so much that you share with the poor. God wants you to send for a man named Peter. He is staying in the home of Simon who lives by the sea. You are to listen to what Peter has to tell you." Then the angel was gone.

Cornelius immediately called two servants and a trusted soldier friend and sent them to find Peter. *[Cornelius calls ser-*

vants and a friend and sends them to Peter.] While they were gone, Cornelius invited everyone in his household, his neighbors, and his friends to come to his house to a special meeting with a message from God. *[Call friends and invite them to come and sit and wait for Peter.]*

About the same time, Peter was praying on the roof of his friend Simon's house. *[Peter kneels in prayer.]* He was very hungry, but dinner was not ready yet. He had gone up to pray while he waited. Suddenly *[Angel stands by Peter.]* an angel showed him a sheet with all kinds of animals in it. *[All come and place their animals in a sheet at the front.]* The angel said, "Eat, Peter." Peter was very hungry, but he knew that the animals in that sheet were unclean and were not good for food.

"No, I can't do that," he said.

Then a strange thing happened. The angel said very clearly, three times, "What God has made clean, don't call unclean." Peter knew then that the message was not about eating unclean animals. Peter was trying to figure out the meaning of the vision when he heard the three men sent by Cornelius knocking on the gate to Simon's house. *[Knock on door.]*

"Is there a man here named Peter?" they were asking the servant at the door.

Up on the roof the angel said to Peter, "Three men are downstairs looking for you. Go with them. God is sending you to them."

Then Peter knew what God was trying to tell him in the dream: Jesus died for everybody. Peter knew that he needed to tell the good news about Jesus to people even if they were from another country.

Peter went downstairs. He asked the men to spend the night. In the morning he went with them to Cornelius's home. *[Walk to Cornelius's home.]* Cornelius had

all his friends and relatives there waiting for Peter. He didn't have any doubts that Peter had been sent by God. Peter didn't have any more doubts about whether Jesus had died for everyone. Everyone must hear the good news. No one must be left out!

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

What do you think Peter would have done if Cornelius's men had come to Simon's house before God showed him the animals? (He probably would not have gone with them.)

What did Cornelius and his friends and family learn? (God loved them and wanted them to be part of His family.) **What did Peter learn by visiting Cornelius's house?** (God loves everyone and wants them to be part of His family.) **We can be like Peter and share God's love with people in our community.**

Remember:



I INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN GOD'S FAMILY BY SHARING HIS LOVE.

Memory Verse

The memory verse is: "**God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right**" (Acts 10:34, 35, NIV).

In advance, write the memory verse on shapes/pictures of unclean animals, one word per animal/shape, and place

You Need:

- memory verse written on shapes/pictures of unclean animals (see p. 140)
- cloth sheet

them in the sheet. Let the children take the shapes out of the sheet and put the words in the right order. (Large class, form groups of five or six and make a set for each group.) After each child reads the verse, remove one of the animals. When all the animals have been removed, the children should be able to recite the verse.

Bible Study

Say: **Sometimes God uses special ways to talk to people to tell them to invite others to become part of His family.** Form three groups and assign each a text. Have each read and report their findings to the class.

Acts 8:26–35 Philip and the Ethiopian

Acts 9:10–18 Ananias visits Saul

Acts 16:6–10 Paul's call to Macedonia

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Does God send dreams or visions today to tell us to invite people to be part of His family?** (Sometimes, but mostly He does not.)

God has given an invitation to everyone to be part of His family. We can read it together in John 3:16. Read or say the verse.

What did Jesus tell His disciples before He went back to heaven? Read aloud Matthew 28:18–20. **God is looking to us to invite others to join His family. Here is one way to do it:**



I INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN GOD'S FAMILY BY SHARING HIS LOVE.

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- large picture of a church (see p. 141)
- pencils/ markers

A. God's Friends

Ask each child to name their best friend. Ask: **Do your best friends sometimes visit you at home? Do they like to visit your family? God wants everyone to be part of His family. Each week when we come to church, we have a "family" gathering. If you want to be part of God's family, come and write your name on the church.**

Debriefing

Ask: **Do you think what we look**

like or where we come from makes any difference to God?

In our memory verse it says that God "accepts" everyone. What can we do to accept other people into God's family? Accept answers.

Sharing God's love with others helps them feel accepted and welcome in God's family. This is something everyone can do. Let's say our message together:



I INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN GOD'S FAMILY BY SHARING HIS LOVE.

You Need:

- pencils
- paper

B. God's Favorites

Have the children draw their favorite food, then show it to the person next to them and see if they can guess what it is. Ask some children to tell about their favorite food.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Is it all right to have favorite foods? What about favorite places to visit? What about favorite people? Would it be all right if I only talked to [name one child]? How would you feel if I treated**

him/her better than the rest of the group?

Peter thought that God wanted to tell the good news only to the Jews. God sent His angel to show Peter that he was wrong. He wants everyone in His family. We can play a part in inviting people to belong to God's family by showing His love to them. Let's say our message together:



I INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN GOD'S FAMILY BY SHARING HIS LOVE.

4

Sharing the Lesson

You Need:

- blank cards
- markers/ crayons

An Invitation

Let the children make their own invitation to invite someone to Sabbath School. If some children cannot write, help them, but let them sign the cards themselves.

Debriefing

Ask: **Whom are you going to invite to come to Sabbath School? What can you say that will encourage them to come? What can we do to make them feel welcome? Let's say today's message together:**



I INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN GOD'S FAMILY BY SHARING HIS LOVE.

Closing

Pray for the children and for the people they invite. Ask that each child will show God's love to others.

Prayer and Praise

Any Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements.



Suggested Songs

- "We Are His Hands" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 129)
- "I Will Make You Fishers of Men" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 135)
- "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 139)
- "Anywhere With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 45)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize community in the story.



Offering

Say: **Bringing our offering is just one way of helping our community. We can also give our time and talents as offerings to God.**

You Need:

- offering device from Lesson 1



Prayer

Give each child a piece of paper. Let them write or draw their prayer request and put it in the sheet to be used for Experiencing the Story. Ask the children to kneel in a circle and pray together for the people named on the papers.

You Need:

- cloth sheet
- pencils
- paper

Welcome to the Family

References

Acts 10; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 132–142

Memory Verse

“God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right” (Acts 10:34, 35, NIV).

The Message

I invite others to join God’s family by sharing His love.

Have you ever had a dream that made you wonder about something? Some dreams are strange. Some are silly. But some make us think.

Peter had a “dream” that really wasn’t a dream at all. It was a vision, and it made him think about something important.

Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army. He was also a man who loved God. Everyone in his house worshiped God. Because he loved God so much, he often talked to Him in prayer.

One day, about three o’clock in the afternoon, Cornelius was praying. Suddenly an angel stood before him and called his name. Cornelius was surprised, and a bit afraid.

“God hears your prayers,” the angel said. “And He sees that you love Him so much that you share with the poor. God wants you to send for a man named Peter. He is staying in the home of Simon,

a man who lives by the sea. God wants you to listen to what Peter has to tell you.” Then the angel was gone.

Cornelius immediately called two servants and a trusted soldier friend and sent them off to find Peter. While they were gone, Cornelius talked to everyone in his household, to his neighbors, and friends.

He invited them to come to his house to hear a special message from God.

About the same time, Peter was on the roof of Simon’s house. Peter was hungry, but dinner wasn’t ready yet. He had gone to the roof to pray while he waited. Suddenly he was having a vision too. The angel had left Cornelius’s home and come to bring a message to Peter too. Peter’s message was an unusual dream about all kinds of animals in a sheet. The sheet was being let down in front of him. The angel told him to eat one of the animals. Peter was very hungry, but he knew that the animals in that sheet were all unclean animals. And unclean animals were not good food.

“No, I can’t do that,” he said.

Then a strange thing happened. The angel said very clearly, three times, “What God has made clean, don’t call unclean.” Peter knew then that the message was not about eating unclean animals. Suddenly he heard knocking on the gate to Simon’s house.

“Is there a man here named Peter?” three men asked the servant at the door.

And the angel said to Peter, “Three men are downstairs looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Go with them. God is sending you to them.”

Then Peter knew what God was telling him—Jesus died for everyone. Peter knew that he should tell the good news about Jesus to all people. To everyone—even if they did not look or act just as he did. Even if they were from another country.

Peter went downstairs and asked the men to spend the night. In the morning he went with them to Cornelius’s home. Cornelius had all his friends and relatives there waiting for Peter. He believed that Peter had been sent by God to teach them about Jesus. Peter didn’t have any more doubts. Jesus had died for everyone. Everyone must hear the good news. No one must be left out!



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- God spoke to Peter when he was on a rooftop praying. If possible, go with your family to a point where you can look out over your neighborhood. When you are there, say a prayer that the people living there will hear the good news about Jesus.
- Cornelius was known for helping people in need. Talk together as a family and decide how you can help someone this week.
- One way to invite people to join God's family is by giving them literature. Give some away today.

Sunday

- Write each word of your memory verse on a separate small piece of paper. Hold a dish towel by the four corners and put your memory verse words in it. Shake them up and then try to put them in the right order.
- Look in a dictionary or encyclopedia and see how many different nations there are in the world. How many can you name?
- Say a prayer that God's good news will spread around the world.

Monday

- Ask an adult to help you see how many different combinations of coins you can use to make a dollar. Does the value change because it is made up of different coins? Does God put a different value on each of us?
- Look in a dictionary and find the meaning of *centurion*. Did God place the same value on Cornelius as on Peter?
- Pray that you will always treat everyone as a child of God.

Tuesday

- At family worship read and discuss Leviticus

11:1–22 to discover why Peter thought the animals in the sheet were unclean. Clean and unclean animals are also mentioned in Genesis 7:1–3. Why do you think there are more clean animals?

- Make a poster showing some clean animals and unclean animals.
- Pray that you will be kind to everyone.

Wednesday

- Look at a Bible map and measure the distance from Joppa to Caesarea. How do you think Peter and the servants would have traveled from Joppa to Caesarea?
- Ask an adult to help you measure the same distance from your house to a place you know.
- Pray that God will protect your family as you travel to school and work.

Thursday

- Cornelius invited his family and friends to hear the good news. Make a list of your family and friends with whom you want to share the good news about Jesus. During family worship talk about ways you can do so.
- Make an invitation from Cornelius to his friends. Can you use it to invite your friends to Sabbath School?
- Pray that your friends will learn to love Jesus too.

Friday

- During family worship have someone read Acts 10 as the rest of the family acts out the story.
- Say your memory verse for your family.
- Light a candle. Turn out the lights. How much light does the candle give? Light more candles. What happens with each candle you light? How is this like sharing the good news with others?
- Sing a favorite praise song before prayer.