

Review the flow of the series by pointing out that God's plan was to change not only Jewish people like Saul but also others.

Remind them of Jesus' words in Acts 1:8. Where has the good news spread thus far? Point these out on the Map provided in the Media section of this webpage.

You could then ask older children to find Caesarea and Joppa on the map. This fits perfectly as Joppa (where Peter the Jew was) is in Judea, while Samaria (where Cornelius the Gentile was) is in Samaria. Samaria is the milestone that marks the gospel going beyond the Jews.



Introductory Idea - Option 1

For younger children – play 'In and Out'. Come up with a range of categories that allow everyone to answer "yes" or "no". You might ask:

- Do you wear glasses?
- Have you ever been to France?
- Do you like cabbage?
- Is pink your favourite colour?
- Have you ever done ballet?

Draw attention to the fact that every question caused the group to split into two; those who could say "yes" and those who could say "no".

In today's true story, Peter finds out that some people he never thought could say "yes" to Jesus, did. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]



Introductory Idea - Option 2

Make a series of statements. If the statement is true for the children, they stand. If it's not true (false), they sit down. Each time, the difference between those who are 'winning' and those who are 'losing' will be obvious.

Or you could start with the whole class standing and have children sit down if the statement is not true of them. Eventually, after a few questions, you will be left with one or two children standing.

In today's story, Peter finds out that there are two groups of people in the world, but not in the way he thought. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]



Introductory Idea - Option 3

Play the popular "Guess Who?" game. Start with a large number of faces spread out on a board or wall. These can be faces from a magazine or some celebrities or popular television characters.

A volunteer picks out one, without telling the rest of the group. The group have to find out which one he has chosen by asking questions that can only be answered with "yes" or "no". So, questions like, "Does he have a beard?" or "Is it a woman?". These questions eliminate faces from the group until you're left with one person who should be the one the volunteer chose. You could turn the faces over or cover them with blank paper as the volunteer answers the questions.

You could also play with the children in your group; the leader picks a child (in their mind without showing who it is) and the group asks questions to work out who it is. Perhaps they all start by standing and when people are eliminated, they can sit down.

In today's true story we meet a man who Peter never expected to be chosen by God. Peter learned something very important about who God chooses. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Bridge Questions

The children must listen carefully to discover the answers to the following questions:

- Who did Peter think could never be chosen? [Cornelius – Acts 10:1]
- What did God use to show Peter he was wrong? [Vision of a sheet with unclean animals – Acts 10:12-13]



Teaching Plan

This story appears complicated as the Bible text cuts back and forth between Peter and Cornelius until they eventually meet.

To make it clear, tell the story using two locations in your room; one for Joppa and one for Caesarea. Label these places. The children need to be able to see both places at the same time.

Consider going through the following episodes, to work through this story:

1. Introduce Peter in Joppa and Cornelius in Caesarea (two pictures, stick figures or volunteers will be helpful). How are they different from each other? Consider putting labels on each man to make these differences clear. If using volunteers, you can dress one of them to be Peter and the other as Cornelius. Two leaders could also dress up, introduce themselves and act out the story.
2. God sent an angel to Cornelius in Caesarea with a message (10:3-6).
3. Cornelius sent three friends from Caesarea to Peter in Joppa (10:7-8). While they were on their way...
4. God sent a dream (or vision) to Peter in Joppa while he was praying (10:9-20). Consider using a picture or a real sheet that is full of animals, birds and reptiles. You could use fluffy toys, or lego figures, or just cut-outs. You will need to simplify the words God said, but the children should be able to understand the simple idea. Just as the dream finishes, Peter is told to go downstairs and meet...

5. The three men from Cornelius arrived in Joppa with a message (10:21-22). God's timing is absolutely perfect!
6. Peter, with some of his friends and Cornelius' friends, leave Joppa to go to Caesarea (10:23-24). They arrive in Caesarea. Cornelius is expecting them.
7. Peter explains that he now realises that even people who are not Jews need to know about Jesus. He tells them the good news about Jesus' life, death, resurrection and his call for all people everywhere to trust him (10:25-43).
8. Cornelius and his household receive the Holy Spirit, become Christians and are baptised (10:44-48).

For younger children – it requires a little care to make the link clear between Peter's vision of the animals and Cornelius' need to hear the Gospel.

Consider repeated words to make the link. Perhaps 'In' and 'Out' or 'Yes' and 'No'. You could get the children to say a chant or rap to help them understand that anyone can be 'In'. This lesson is one repeated idea explored in different ways.

For older children – in just the same way as for younger children above, older children need to have the one idea fixed throughout the lesson. Who is excluded and who is included? Who is banned and who is invited? Build up this idea through the introductory idea and through the story.

Into this framework come the key verses in this story (10:28 and 10:34-35). For these verses to have the right impact, the children need to understand how Peter used to understand God's plans.

- How did God help Peter to understand that his thinking was wrong?
- How does Peter's changed thinking, change what he did?

What parts of this story show that God is in control and working to bring Cornelius to know and trust Jesus as King?



Game Idea - Option 1

For younger children – play a simple game that gets children to huddle together in groups determined by what they have in common. For example, 'Find everyone who has the same colour eyes as you', 'Find everyone with the same colour hair as you', 'Find another boy/girl', 'Find another person wearing green' etc.

Pause the game and remind the children that Peter thought he should only be telling Jewish people about Jesus because they were the same as him.

Now play the game again, but this time the children need to huddle in groups of people who are different from themselves. For example, 'Find someone who has different colour eyes to you' etc.

Remind the children how God showed Peter that he also needs to tell people who are different from him about Jesus.





