

Everybody's Welcome!

Peter's vision and Cornelius
Acts 10

Character Trait: Acceptance

(Estimated Lesson Time: 90 minutes)

Objectives:

- Children will recall that God communicated that He accepts everyone.
- Children will explain why acceptance is important.
- Children will identify a specific way that they can practice acceptance towards others.

Supplies:

- *Everybody's Welcome!* loaded onto a tablet or phone in the *Bible App for Kids*
- Small pieces of felt *(one for each child)*
- Various animal stickers *(several for each child)*
- Yarn *(optional)*
- Plastic yarn needles *(optional)*
- Washi or other decorative tapes *(optional)*
- Glue

Welcome Activity:

(5 minutes)

Welcome the children.

SAY: I am so glad that each and every one of you are here today to learn more about God's Word. Take a moment to turn, smile, and welcome the people sitting around you. *(Provide a few moments for the children to do this.)*

In today's lesson, we will learn how God welcomes everyone to come to Him and how He sent Jesus to help people of all nations.

Review:

(5 minutes)

Guide the children in a brief review of the previous lesson by asking the following:

- **How did Saul (Paul) feel about Jesus' followers before he met Jesus?** *(Saul thought they were spreading a lies, should be put in prison, and even killed.)*
- **What happened to Saul (Paul) after Jesus spoke to him?** *(He became blind.)*
- **How did Saul change after Ananias prayed for him?** *(Saul regained his sight, was baptized, began telling others about Jesus, and changed his name to Paul.)*

Today's Bible Story:

(10-15 minutes)

Show *Everybody's Welcome!* from the *Bible App for Kids* or share the story aloud:

- Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army.
- He lived in a place called Caesarea.
- He and his family respected God.
- They weren't Jewish. They were Gentiles.

- Cornelius had a vision.
- An angel told him, "God hears your prayers and knows that you help the poor. Send men to Joppa to bring Peter here."
- So Cornelius did.
- In Joppa the next day, Peter was on the roof praying.
- In a vision, a huge sheet came from heaven.
- It was filled with animals.
- A voice said, "Kill something, Peter! Eat!"
- There were animals that Jews weren't allowed to eat.
- "I can't eat them," Peter replied.
- "If I say they're all right to eat," the voice replied, "then they're all right."
- That's when Cornelius' messengers arrived.
- So Peter and some others went with them to Caesarea.
- Cornelius' house was filled with his friends and family, eager to hear Peter speak.
- "God showed me, in a vision, that He accepts people from every nation. God sent Jesus to everyone. He is Lord of all. He healed the sick and freed the oppressed."
- "He was crucified, and then raised from the dead. Everyone who believes in Him will be forgiven of their sins."
- The Holy Spirit came upon them, just like Pentecost.
- Peter baptized them.



Discussion:
(15 minutes)

Encourage the children to think more about the story by asking the following:

- **What did the angel tell Cornelius?** *(The angel told him that God heard his prayers and knows that he helped the poor. The angel also told Cornelius to send men to Joppa to bring Peter to him.)*
- **What happened in Peter's vision?** *(A huge sheet came down from heaven that was filled with animals. Then, a voice told him to kill something and eat it.)*
- **What did God show through Peter's vision?** *(God showed that He accepts everyone, people from every nation. God sent Jesus to help everyone who will trust in Him.)*
- **What happened after Peter shared his vision with everyone gathered at Cornelius' house?** *(The Holy Spirit came upon them, just like Pentecost, and then Peter baptized them.)*
- **How does it make you feel to know that God sent Jesus to help people from every nation, not just a select few?** *(Answers will vary.)*
- **Peter shared with others what God had shown him. How can you follow Peter's example in your own life?** *(Answers will vary but may include sharing with others what they have learned about God through His Word and what God has done in their own lives.)*

SAY: Peter was a Jewish man, but Cornelius was not. Back then, anyone who was not Jewish was called a Gentile. God loves and welcomes anyone to come to Him, and He sent Jesus to help everyone who chooses to trust in Him. God used Peter's vision to share this message with everyone!

God's Bigger Story:

(5 minutes)

SAY: Just as Peter told Cornelius and his friends, God's love is not just for a select few. God sent His gift of the Holy Spirit to Jews and Gentiles alike. God's love and the forgiveness that Jesus offers is available to everyone who chooses to believe in Him. God welcomes everyone!

Memory Verse:

(10 minutes)

He *(touch your middle finger to the other palm, then switch)* **is the one all the prophets**
testified about *(cup hands around your mouth)*,
saying that everyone who believes *(bring hands together in heart shape)*
in him
will have their sins forgiven *(slide one hand across the other, flip and repeat)*
through his *(touch your middle finger to the other palm, then switch)* **name.**

Acts 10:43 (NLT)

Activity:

(10 minutes)

Begin by explaining that you will briefly retell the story. However, ask the children to listen carefully so that they can catch if you make an error. Ask them to stand up as soon as they catch an error. Call on one of the children to politely point out your error and provide the correct information.

Response Activity:

(10 minutes)

SAY: God gave Peter a vision, a picture in his mind's eye, to communicate a very important message: God welcomes everyone to come to Him!

Provide each child with a small piece of felt to represent the huge sheet that Peter saw come down from heaven. Then, provide a variety of different animal stickers for the children to place on the felt. Encourage the children to take their craft home and use it tell their family and friends about today's story, including how God's love is great enough for everyone.

For younger children...
To finish their craft, provide younger children with various, different decorative tapes. Then, invite them to decorate the edge of their felt pieces.

For older children...
Make the activity more challenging for older children by providing yarn and plastic yarn needles. Then, encourage the children to stitch a decorative border around the edge of their felt pieces.

Character Trait: Acceptance

(10 minutes)

SAY: Acceptance is the ability to love and respect others as they are. In a vision, God showed Peter that He welcomes all people. God loves everyone, and we should try to do the same.

Encourage the children to think more about acceptance by asking the following:

- **What does acceptance look like?** *(Answers will vary but may include being kind, using polite words, and being welcoming towards others.)*
- **What does acceptance feel like?** *(Answers will vary but may include feeling welcomed and included.)*
- **Why is practicing acceptance towards others important?** *(Answers will vary but should include that God accepts all people, so we should also.)*

Connect with Others:
(5 minutes)

SAY: What is one specific way that you can practice acceptance towards others who may be different from you? Turn to someone next to you and share. *(Provide a few moments for the children to do this. Then, call on a few volunteers to share aloud.)*

Closing:
(2 minutes)

SAY: Jesus was born on earth as a Jewish man, and all of His disciples were Jewish, too. But God's love is so great that it is for all people. God sent Jesus to help everyone who is willing to put their trust in Him.

Prayer:
(2 minutes)

SAY:

Dear God,
Thank You for welcoming and accepting everyone. Help us to show this same love and acceptance towards others, too.
Amen.

Notes