



THE GOOD NEWS IS FOR EVERYONE – PETER'S DREAM

BIG IDEA

There are no favourites in God's family! God has made us all different – with different colour hair, eyes, skin. But God loves us all. God does not love one person more than another.

PREP *(Kids can help!)*

Get a bundle of sticks and tie together with some string

Find a sheet

Find some plastic or stuffed animals e.g. camel, pig, alligator, rabbit, snake, lizard, giraffe etc. (If you don't have plastic or stuffed animals, cut out pictures of animals instead.)

Have kids help collect the following objects from around the house – bolt, nut, nail, pencil, pen, needle, pin, nut, seed, leaf, toothbrush, toothpick, fork, spoon, apple and orange. (It won't matter if you cannot find all of them.)

Put everything into the Faith Box before you start

INTRO

Remember Peter, who was one of Jesus' closest friends? He was bold and outspoken and sometimes put his foot in it, but Jesus loved him anyway. Peter gave up his job as a fisherman to follow Jesus and he learnt so much and changed on the inside as he spent time watching and listening to him. Peter even walked on water with Jesus! But when Jesus was on trial and about to be killed, Peter lost his courage and failed to stand by him.

Even after that Jesus still loved him, and after he had risen from the dead Jesus came and gave Peter a new beginning so he could be a leader of the new church.

So on the Day of Pentecost, it was Peter who spoke to the crowds and explained how Jesus is God and had come to change them on the inside. Then God used Peter to heal many people and the church grew and grew. Today we are going to read about how God spoke to Peter to challenge what the early church was doing.

Jesus and his disciples were all Jews, and after Jesus had returned to heaven the Christians thought the good news



was only for one particular group of people – the Jews. But God had a much bigger plan than that. He wanted the whole world to know Jesus and know how much He loved them. God chose Peter to make this clear to everybody.

TAKE OUT THE BUNDLE OF THIN STICKS TIED TOGETHER and ask everyone to have a try holding them and breaking them. Then untie the bundle, hand a stick to each person and ask them to break the sticks.

The bundle tied together was strong but when the sticks were separated from the group they broke easily. When we are all together as the body of Christ, no matter how different we all are, we are strong. But when we isolate someone else we make them weak. And we are weaker too. All Christians are in the family of God, no matter how different they are from us.

READ

Read the story, and when you get to the part about Peter's dream, lower a sheet filled with plastic (or stuffed or pictured) animals. Let the children take turns making the sounds each creature would make as they peek out of the sheet.

C Peter went from place to place, visiting Jesus' followers. He stayed in the town of Joppa for a long time and lived at the home of Simon, a man who made things from leather. During that time, an angel told a man named Cornelius about Peter. Cornelius who lived in the city of Caesarea, was an officer in the Roman army. Even though he wasn't Jewish, he taught his family about God. He gave many gifts to poor people, and he prayed to God often.

One afternoon God let Cornelius see an angel coming toward him. Cornelius was afraid. "What do you want, sir?" he asked.

The angel answered, "God has heard your prayers, and he has seen your gifts to poor people. Now send men to Joppa to find Peter, a man who is staying by the sea in Simon's house. Ask him to come and see you."

So Cornelius sent two servants and a soldier to Joppa to find Peter.

The next day Peter went up to the flat roof of Simon's house to pray.

As he was praying, the sky above him seemed to open. In his mind God showed him something like a large sheet coming down. On this sheet were all kinds of wild animals and snakes and birds. A voice said, "Kill them and eat them, Peter." Peter said he couldn't do that. He was thinking about the laws that God had given to Moses many years before. The laws said that God's people could not eat those kinds of animals, snakes, and birds.

Then Peter heard the voice again. "When God says it is all right, don't say it isn't!"

This happened three times.

Just then the three men sent by Cornelius came to the house where Peter was staying. The Holy Spirit said to Peter, "Three men are looking for you. Don't be afraid to go with them, for I have sent them."

Cornelius, his family and some good friends were waiting for them. As Peter walked into the house, Cornelius got down on his knees and started to worship him. But Peter said to the people inside, "You know about the laws of the Jewish people. Those laws say it is wrong for Jews to visit people like you who aren't Jewish. But God has let me see that it's all right."

Then Peter said, “I understand now that God doesn’t love people from one nation more than another. In every country there are people who worship God and do what is right. God lets them be part of his family.

“God sent Jesus into the world, and he went around doing good. The religious leaders put him on a cross to die. But God brought him back to life on the third day and let many of us see him. Jesus will forgive the sins of all who believe in him.”

While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit came to Cornelius, his family and his friend. Peter asked the Jewish friends who came with him, “Shouldn’t they be baptised? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So Cornelius and the others were baptised in the name of Jesus. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for several days.))

Acts 9:32-10:48; Classic Bible Story Book, Kenneth Taylor (pages 245-247) Tyndale Publishers

EXPLORE

Peter had always been an observant Jew, keeping the Jewish rules about what to eat and what not to eat. So this vision made Peter very uncomfortable.

TAKE OUT THE ANIMALS FROM THE SHEET AND ASK THE CHILDREN IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO EAT THEM.

Cornelius was a good man and had been praying – even though he wasn’t a Jew and didn’t know Jesus yet. God answered him by sending Peter to him. God did not look at Cornelius’ skin colour or nationality, He looked at his heart. God wants all nations to know Him. This was God’s plan from the beginning. He promised

Abraham that his blessings would extend to all nations. And now it was really happening. Peter learned that Gentiles (anyone who is not Jewish) are just as important to God as Jews are.

GAME

PEOPLE BINGO

Part A

EVERYBODY STAND UP AND MUM OR DAD READS OUT A LIST

*Everyone with blue eyes is to hop on one foot
Everyone with brown eyes is to jump with two feet
If your thumb bends back, twirl around
If you have blonde hair, do star jumps
If you have curly hair, stand on tip toes
If you have straight hair, jump in a circle
If your birthday starts in a month beginning with J twirl around three times, etc.*

Part B

Ask everybody to think of a trick that they can do, that they think no one else in the family can. (Everyone has to try). For example do a handstand, wriggle your nose, roll your eyes back, touch your nose with your tongue, wriggle your ears, do the splits.

SORTING GAME

TAKE THE OBJECTS OUT OF THE BOX AND SPREAD THEM ON THE TABLE. Ask the children to sort them into piles according to what they are made of – plastic, metal, or a natural product.

Then ask them to re-sort them according to their shape – circles, long and thin, and other shapes. You may want to re-sort them again in terms of their size or if they are edible or not. We often see things in a particular way at first, and notice certain differences. But if we keep looking we notice other ways in which

they are similar. We say some people are different because they are from a particular country, or they speak with a certain accent. But there are probably also lots of similarities we haven't noticed at first. Though things may appear very different, if we look again, there will be some things they have in common.

QUESTIONS

God has no favourites, but have you ever felt like someone you know did have favourites?

Does it feel different for those who are the favourites and those who aren't?

Can you tell us about a time when you stood up for someone else who was being picked on because they were different?

When we are left out we can feel quite weak, like those sticks that were so easy to break by themselves.

Remember that God is never like that. He loves you as much as He loves everyone.

Cornelius was welcomed into God's family. God makes it clear that whoever says yes to Jesus in their heart is welcome in his family, and we should never judge others by the colour of their skin or what they do for a job or where they live. Jesus is like a door for us to enter into God's presence and anyone who wants to can walk through.

PRAY

God please show me people I know who are feeling left out and not accepted because they have different coloured skin or different ways of doing things. Please give me ways I can show Your love to them.

OTHER IDEAS

1 Try eating some food from another culture this week – it might be different but really yummy!

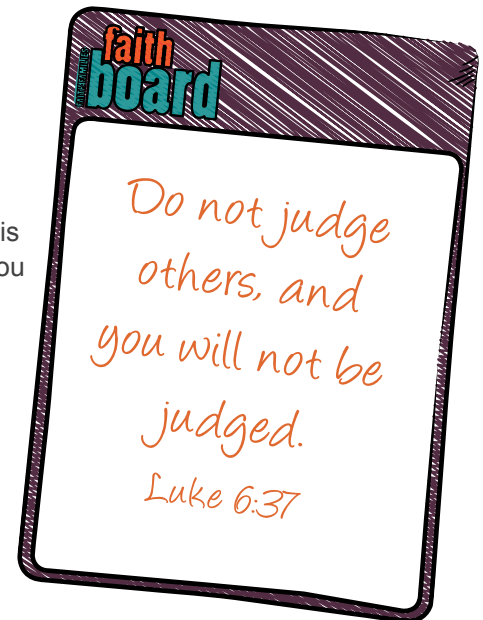
2 Cut an A5 piece of card for each child along three sides 1cm from the edge to form a door that opens leaving a door frame. Draw a cross on the door. Give each one a cut out shape of a child to colour in as themselves and attach it to a craft stick. Talk about Jesus as the door that opened the way to God for everyone. Walk their paper people through the door.

3 Photocopy the Cornelius Word Find from the appendix and let everyone try to find all the words. Talk about the story as you do this.

LIVE

This week you could invite someone over for a meal who is different from you in some way.

FAITH BOARD





CORNELIUS WORDFIND

C	X	S	Q	D	L	E	S	M	J	D	N
H	O	D	U	O	E	D	X	I	S	E	O
R	J	M	R	I	N	Z	G	Z	S	T	I
I	F	D	M	E	L	E	A	E	Q	P	T
S	Z	A	I	A	N	E	S	M	R	E	I
T	J	R	M	T	N	S	N	E	A	C	D
I	F	E	I	I	E	D	T	R	D	C	A
A	K	L	W	N	L	E	E	U	O	A	R
N	E	O	T	S	P	Y	X	D	B	C	T
S	W	I	A	S	S	E	M	B	L	E	D
R	W	D	E	Z	I	T	P	A	B	S	O
T	O	N	G	U	E	S	J	O	P	P	A

ACCEPTED

BAPTIZED

CORNELIUS

GENTILES

LORD

TONGUES

AMAZED

CHRISTIAN

FAMILY

JEWS

PETER

TRADITION

ASSEMBLED

COMMANDED

FRIENDS

JOPPA

SIX

WITNESSES