
“Peter’s Vision & Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit”

Sunday School Lesson from
Acts 10:1-48; 1:1-18



Loving and sharing with all people

Being modern-day Christians, kids today may take for granted how radical it once was for non-Jews to get attention or hear the gospel. But we still at times might consider some things off-limits or “taboo,” or we think some types of people to be better than others. In this story, we see how God transformed Peter’s heart to realize how important it was to share the good news. The fun and special lesson here will remind kids to accept and share with everyone.

Lesson focus: God wants us to share the good news of Jesus with everyone, because He made us all the same and loves us.

Passage: Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18

Target Audience: K-6th Grade (adaptable)

Materials Needed: Blanket/sheet, stuffed animals, candies, aluminum foil, clay, decorations

Peter's Vision Bible Lesson for Kids

Lesson Opening: Whose turn is first? Start off with a little lesson in favoritism...have small prizes or treats available for students. Select one or two children based on certain criteria, perhaps based on eye color or on a question ("Have you ever flown on a plane?").

Allow each student to pick a sticker/treat/prize, but make sure to have the special chosen ones pick first, giving them opportunity to pick the best ones. Does this seem fair? Why not?

Explain that before Jesus came, people thought that only members of the Jewish faith could be part of God's family. They showed favoritism and didn't want to let people in to hear the good news. The story that we explore today is a funny one that explains how some of the first church founders learned that the Good News is for EVERYONE! And it's a good thing, too, because we are not Jews, and the Good News is for us!

Bible Lesson:

What kind of strange food combinations do you like to eat? Most of us enjoy things like peanut butter and jelly, mashed potatoes and gravy, macaroni and cheese...but what about French fries and chocolate? Or carrots with ketchup? Ask kids if they have any unusual interests. In the regulations of Jewish faith, there are certain types of food that were considered "unclean" and not allowed in the diet. That is an important part of today's story. It has to do with someone who was very hungry, and had a strange dream...

About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by

its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds.13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." -Acts 10:9-13

Review who Peter was (one of the disciples of Jesus), and how he wanted to continue the work of Jesus after the Ascension took the Lord to Heaven. Peter was resting at a friend's house praying when this image came to him. Perhaps he thought his hunger and fatigue had brought on a strange hallucination of sorts. But it happened again, and again!

"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." 15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." 16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. -Acts 10:14-16

Make the story interactive by encouraging audience participation. Depending on numbers, you may have everyone take a role in the tale, or simply have a few volunteers serve as "prop people." Have students act out roles, and have a few in particular stand up in an elevated area and lower a blanket or sheet full of stuffed animals. If you have a child playing "Peter," you may consider raining the animals down on his head! Explain the significance of this by talking about old customs. People who were Jewish (the religion before Jesus) were not allowed to eat certain things. The animals in Peter's vision were not allowed, but the voice was telling him to eat them! When Peter refused, it happened again and again. Do the lowering three times, and then continue the story, using more student parts if applicable:

While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter

was staying there. 19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three[a] men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” 21 Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?” 22 The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. –Acts 10:17-22

Back track slightly in the story (or set up beforehand the action of verses 1-8) to explain that Cornelius was a soldier who prayed and wanted to do the right thing, but had not heard about Jesus. An angel told him to send people to Peter for a special message. So he did so, and his messengers brought Peter back to Cornelius. Peter went along with the soldiers and met Cornelius, who explained that an angel had come and instructed him to find Peter. Peter realized that the vision he had been having was about this. God wanted to show that He had made all things, and it wasn't for Peter to decide what was good or bad, pure or impure. Just as he could eat all sorts of foods, all kinds of people should be able to hear about Jesus. So Peter shared this with Cornelius:

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. 36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around

*doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil,
because God was with him.*

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues[[b](#)] and praising God. Then Peter said, 47 “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days. –Acts 10:34-38; 44-48

So what happened here? Peter listened and obeyed God’s directions, and amazing things took place. Lots of people heard about Jesus! However, there was still one more tricky part that came up when other people heard about Peter’s actions. Explain that some of the Jewish people still did not understand and only wanted certain people hearing the good news.

The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3 and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”
Acts 11:1-3

Pause for a moment and ask students about experiences where people they know might judge or criticize someone just for being different. Are we allowed to make up the rules for who is acceptable to God? Of course not. Now, this doesn’t mean that everything people do is always okay. But we cannot decide who we should love or pay attention to. Everyone needs God’s love. Peter explained to the scoffers all about his encounter with Cornelius, and finally they understood:

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life." -Acts 11:18

Talk about customs in different cultures and countries. Hand out information on strange customs, as well as pamphlet with "Jesus Loves You" in various languages...Obviously we do not have concern with Jew versus Gentile, but invite students to consider who we are sometimes tempted to leave out or ignore. How might God want us to change our attitudes about these people??

Close with prayer and reminder of God's work in our lives. Ask that God would help us pay attention for how we can love and share the good news of Jesus with everyone around us.

Craft Idea: God Loves Them All!

Hand out verse captions with a reminder note that says:

“God made all creatures and people...He loves them the same and so can I!”

Decorate the note and along with it, attach a small plastic critter, like a bug or snake. Have students take them home as reminders that nothing is too “ugly” for God.

If time allows, have children also shape their own “people” out of foil and/or play-doh. Explain how they made the creations, and remind them that God made each of us specially crafted.

Acts 11:1-18 NIV

The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³ and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

⁴ Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: ⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. ⁶ I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. ⁷ Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’

⁸ “I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

⁹ “The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

¹¹ “Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. ¹² The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. ¹⁴ He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

¹⁵ “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?”

¹⁸ When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.” -Acts 11:1-18

John 13:31-35 NIV

When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, ^[c] God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³³ “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” -John 13:31-35

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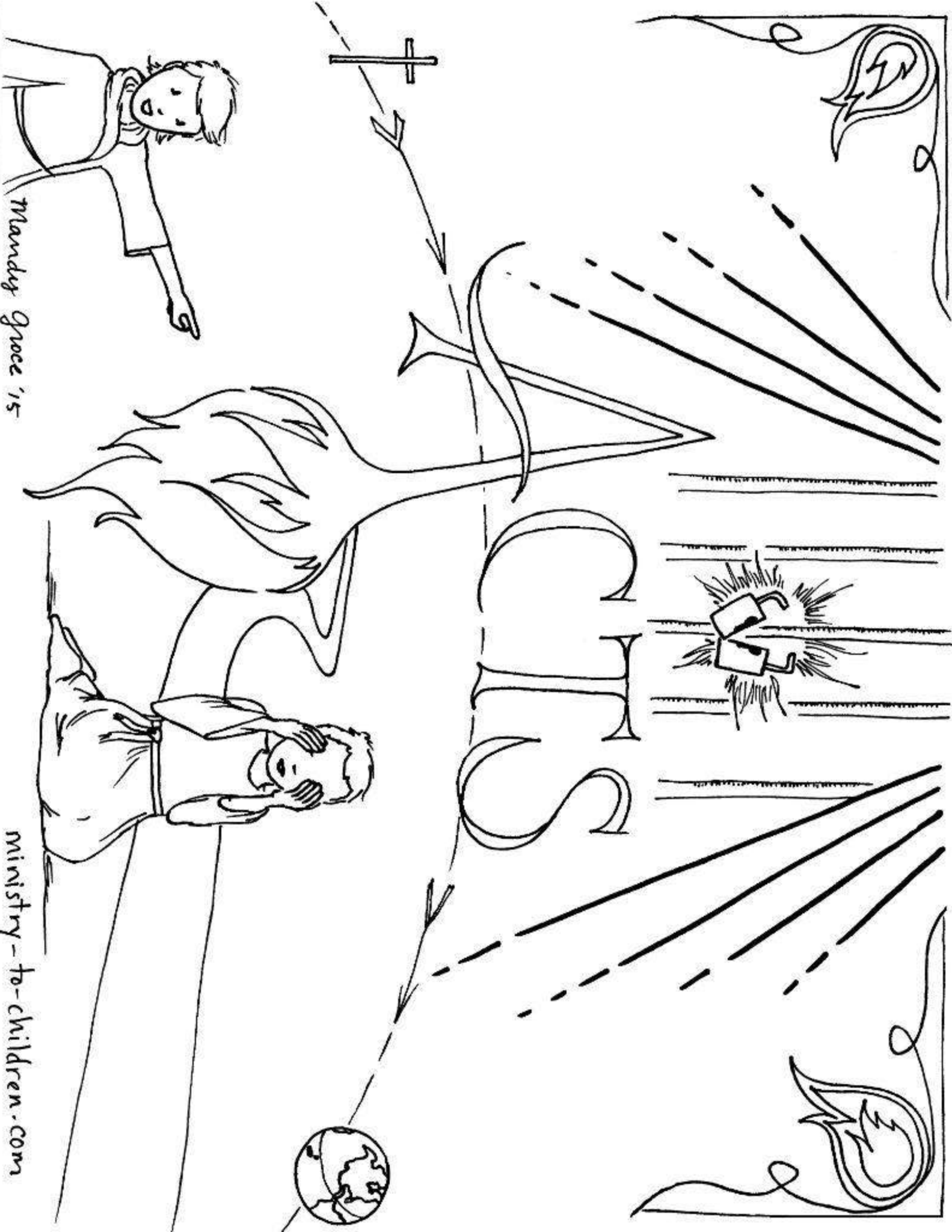
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Divisions of the Bible

New Testament – History

Acts

The full name of the book of Acts is “The Acts of the Apostles.” This means the things that Jesus’ followers did after he went back to heaven. It was written by Luke, who wrote the book of Luke.

The Day of Pentecost

Work the math problems at the right, and use the answers to complete this story.

Pentecost was **(A)** _____ days after Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus had **(A)** $35 + 15$ already gone back to heaven. Jesus’ **(B)** _____ disciples and all his other **(B)** $24 \div 2$ followers were together in one place. The Holy Spirit came to them and made them able to speak in different languages, so they could talk about Jesus to **(C)** 30×100 all the people who were visiting Jerusalem from other countries. Peter **(D)** $9 - 7$ preached a sermon, and about **(C)** _____ people became Christians that day. This story is found in Acts chapter **(D)** _____.

An Important Missionary

Most of the stories in the book of Acts are about the most important missionary in the New Testament.

To see his name, color each square that has an X in it.

	X	X	X	X				X				X				X	X				
	X				X			X		X			X			X	X				
	X				X	X				X	X			X		X	X				
	X	X	X	X				X		X	X			X		X	X				
	X					X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X				
	X					X				X	X			X		X	X				
	X					X				X	X			X		X	X				
	X					X				X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	

Bad and Good

Paul had many adventures as he traveled around as a missionary.

Read each sentence. If something bad happened, color the frowning face. If something good happened, color the smiling face.



Before Paul became a Christian, he was mean to the Christians and tried to kill them. (Acts 8)



Paul saw a bright light and heard Jesus speaking to him, and Paul became a Christian. (Acts 9)



The Holy Spirit chose Paul and Barnabas to become missionaries. (Acts 13)



Barnabas and Paul traveled to Cyprus and other places to tell people about Jesus. (Acts 13)



God helped Paul to heal a crippled man in Lystra. (Acts 14)



Some people who didn't want Paul to preach tried to kill him. (Acts 14)



Paul went on another missionary trip with Silas. (Acts 15)



In Philippi a woman named Lydia became a Christian. (Acts 16)



Paul and Silas were thrown in jail for preaching about Jesus. (Acts 16)



In Ephesus Paul healed many sick people. (Acts 19)



Paul was arrested and taken on a ship to Rome. (Acts 27)



Even in prison Paul kept telling people about Jesus. (Acts 28)