

# 53. Good News



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

### Acts 10:1-48

Peter has a vision from God and goes to visit Cornelius.



## AIMS

To help the children understand that God does not show favouritism and that the Good News about Jesus is for all people.

**Peter had a vision from God and went to see Cornelius. He realised that the Good News of Jesus was not only for the Jews, but for all people everywhere.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passage for this session and reflect:

- What did God teach Peter through his vision and the meeting with Cornelius?
- What difference does knowing that the Good News is for everyone make to the way we witness?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

### ► Farmer, Farmer Game

Choose one child to be the farmer. Get them to stand at one end of the hall while all the rest of the children form a long line along the opposite end of the hall. The farmer and the line of children face one another and the children in the line call out together: "Farmer, Farmer, may we cross your golden river?"

The farmer responds; "Only if..." and adds something to complete the sentence, e.g. "Only if you ate cereal for breakfast", "Only if you have glasses", "Only if you like playing football," etc.

All the children who fit the description the farmer has given can cross the river safely (walk to the other end of the hall). The children who don't fit the description then

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ► Find The Foods Wordsearch

*You will need: copy of the wordsearch for each child (from additional document: Find The Foods), pens or pencils*

Let the children complete the wordsearch, finding as many of the foods listed as they can. This activity could be used to occupy the children who arrive early at the group while they are waiting for the others to arrive.

have to try to cross the river too, but the farmer will try to catch them. If they are caught by the farmer they have to stay at the farmer's end of the hall and help with catching people on the next round.

### ▶ Parachute Game

*You will need: parachute*

Have the children standing round the parachute holding on to the edge. Together raise the parachute as high as you can and then allow it to drop. Tell the children that whenever you raise the parachute you will call something out, and, if it applies to them, they must run under the parachute and find a new space before the parachute drops.

Some suggestions for phrases to call out are: people wearing blue, people in P6, people who like dancing, people who play a musical instrument etc.

### J or G

*You will need: small pieces of paper each marked with either a J or a G - one for each child, small treat for each child (e.g. a small sweet or lollipop, some grapes or raisins, a small gift such as a pencil or a sticker)*

Prepare the pieces of paper beforehand by writing a letter on each one. Put the letter G on most of them, but have the letter J on a few. Fold them so that the letters cannot be seen. Allow each of the children to choose a piece of paper and open it; tell them that those who have the letter J on their paper can have a special treat.

Make sure you have enough for all the children in the group because the others will also get a treat at the end, but don't tell them this yet. Simply give a treat only to those children who have the letter J on their paper.

If they ask about the significance of the letters, you

can tell them that it links with the Bible teaching for today and you will explain later.

## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ▶ Intro/ Recap

**Over the last couple of weeks, we have been thinking about what happened to Jesus' followers after he went back to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to them. They faced lots of challenges, but they continued to tell people about Jesus and many people believed. Last time we heard about a man called Saul, who was dramatically changed from being someone who wanted to stop the message about Jesus from spreading to being someone who believed it for himself and wanted to tell others.**

**We'll learn more about what happened to Saul next time, but today we're going to look at a story about Peter.**

### ▶ Peter and Cornelius

*You will need: words for Peter and the angel (from additional document: Peter and Cornelius words), sheet, variety of toy animals, any other props you have available - such as wings for the angel/sword and helmet for the soldier (optional)*

Choose some children to be Cornelius, Peter, an angel, two servants and a soldier. If you have a very small group, you can leave out the servants and the soldier and/or get leader(s) to take part. If you have a large group, you could involve the rest of the children as Cornelius's friends and relatives.

Give out words to Peter and the angel. Position Peter at one side of the room (representing the house in Joppa) and everyone else at the other side

of the room (representing Cornelius' house). The angel can be waiting at the side, ready to appear.

**In Caesarea there was a man called Cornelius. He was an officer in the Roman army and he was a good man. He prayed to God regularly and he gave to the poor.**

**One afternoon, about 3 o'clock, he had a vision in which an angel spoke to him.**

*(Get the angel to go to Cornelius and read their words.)*

Angel: "**Cornelius, God has heard your prayers and seen all your gifts to the poor. Send some men to Joppa to find a man called Peter. He is staying with a man called Simon who lives by the sea.**"

**Cornelius called his two servants and a soldier and sent them off to Joppa to find Peter.**

*(Get them to head in the direction of the house in Joppa.)*

**The next day, about noon, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He also had a vision. He saw the sky open and something like a large sheet was being let down by its four corners.**

*(Lower the sheet with the animal toys in front of Peter.)*

**The sheet was filled with all kinds of animals, reptiles and birds. Then he heard a voice say, "Get up, Peter! Kill and eat them."**

Get Peter to read his line: "**No, Lord. I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws say is unclean.**"

**The voice spoke again: "Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean."**

**The same vision was repeated three times, and then the sheet was suddenly pulled up**

to heaven. Peter was very confused about what it all meant.

Just then, the servants and the soldier arrived from Cornelius looking for Peter.

The Holy Spirit said to Peter, "Three men have come looking for you. Go with them, for I have sent them."

Peter went down and spoke to the men. Get Peter to read his line: "I am the one you are looking for. Why have you come?"

The men told him about what had happened, so Peter invited them to stay for the night and the next day all of them travelled to Cornelius's house.

Cornelius was waiting for them and he had gathered his family and close friends together to meet Peter. When Cornelius saw Peter he started to bow down and worship him.

Get Peter to read his line:

"Stand up! I'm just a human being like you."

The vision Peter had had was beginning to make sense to him. The Jewish laws said that, since he was a Jew, he wasn't allowed to go into the house of someone who wasn't a Jew. Cornelius wasn't a Jew, so if Peter was following the law, he shouldn't go into Cornelius's house, but he knew that God had told him to go to Cornelius.

He remembered the words from the vision: "Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean," and he knew it was ok for him to go in to speak to Cornelius.

Cornelius told Peter that he had sent for him because of what the angel had said and that he was eager to hear Peter's message, so Peter began telling him, and the others there, about Jesus.

Peter realised that God's message was for everyone. In the Old Testament of the Bible God's people were the Israelites, sometimes known as the Jews, but Peter realised that the message about Jesus wasn't only for them. It was for everybody else as well. He told Cornelius and the others about what Jesus had done and how he had died on the cross so that people could be forgiven and have peace with God. They listened and many of them believed and put their faith in Jesus.

### ► Gospel Project Video

*You will need: equipment to play video*

This video could be used as an alternative way to tell the story, or as a recap: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKU9MyuGriQ>



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ► Reflection/ Discussion

*You will need: treats for the children who didn't receive them in the activity earlier*

Refer back to the activity from earlier where the children picked a piece of paper, and those who had a letter J got a treat while those who had a letter G didn't.

Ask the children with the letter G how they felt about the others getting a treat. Ask the children with the letter J how they felt about getting a treat while others didn't.

**The letter J stands for Jew and the letter G stands for Gentile – the word Gentile means anyone who is not a Jew.**

**In the Old Testament the Israelites, or the Jews, were God's people. They were the**

**ones who received all the promises that God was going to send a Messiah to rescue them, so when Jesus came, many of them thought that he had only come for the Jews.**

**The vision God gave Peter was to teach him that it wasn't only for the Jews.**

Read Peter's words in Acts 10:34-35, 43:

**"I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right... He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name."**

**He realised that God sent Jesus for everyone, and that anyone who trusts in him can be forgiven, no matter whether they are a Jew or a Gentile. The Good News is for everyone.**

Give the children who had the letter G on their paper the treat they missed out on earlier.

### Prayer Activity

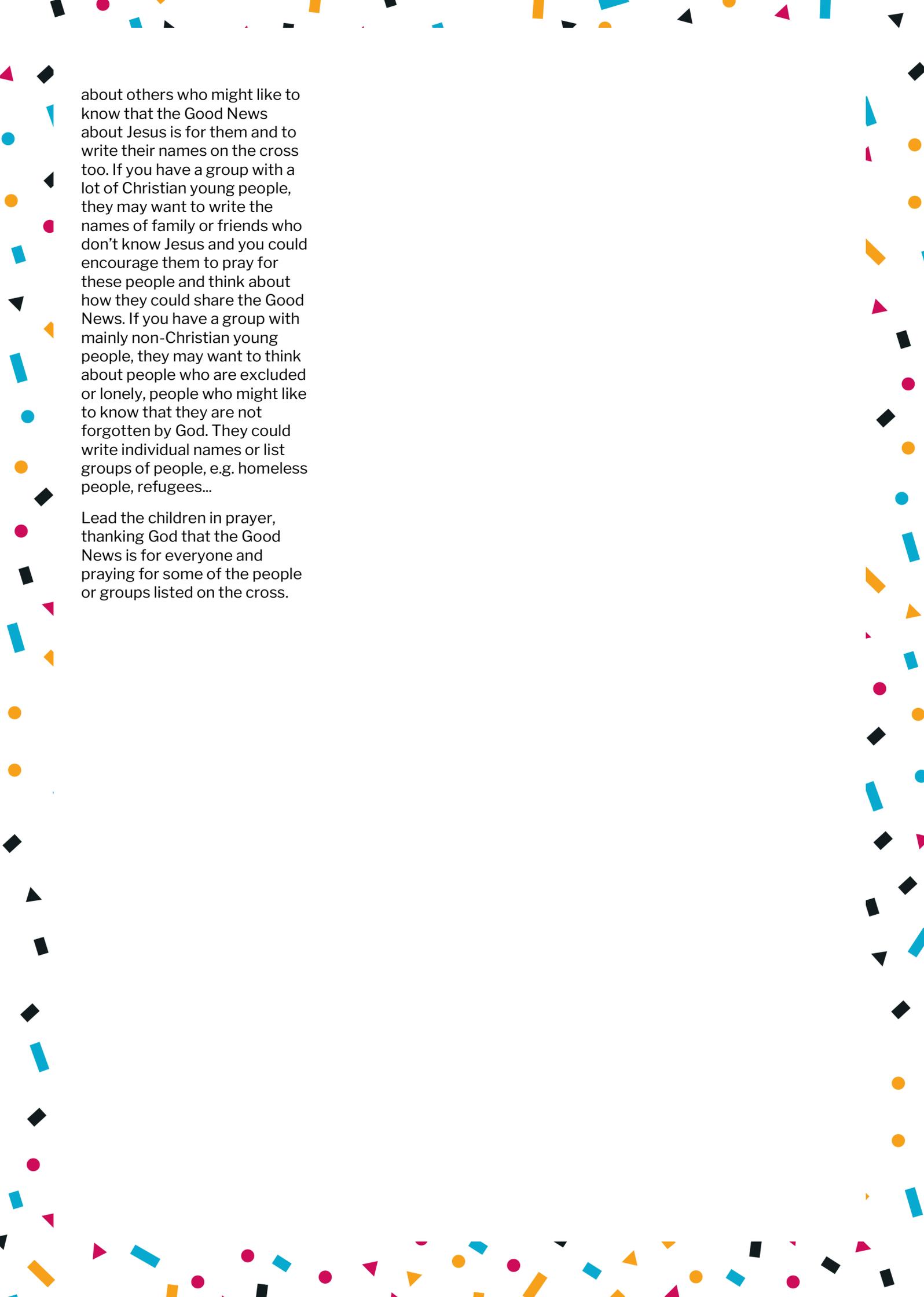
*You will need: large sheet of paper with the outline of a cross drawn on it, felt pens/markers*

Encourage the children to reflect on the fact that the Good News about Jesus is for everyone. People have to decide whether or not to accept it, but God's offer of being forgiven and knowing him is for everyone.

Get each of the children to write their names in the cross and to think about how they feel about the Good News being for them.

Point out that, even if we are left out by others at times, no-one is forgotten by God. He cares for each one of us and wants us to know him and to trust him.

Then encourage them to think

A decorative border of colorful geometric shapes (circles, squares, triangles, rectangles) in shades of blue, orange, pink, and black surrounds the text.

about others who might like to know that the Good News about Jesus is for them and to write their names on the cross too. If you have a group with a lot of Christian young people, they may want to write the names of family or friends who don't know Jesus and you could encourage them to pray for these people and think about how they could share the Good News. If you have a group with mainly non-Christian young people, they may want to think about people who are excluded or lonely, people who might like to know that they are not forgotten by God. They could write individual names or list groups of people, e.g. homeless people, refugees...

Lead the children in prayer, thanking God that the Good News is for everyone and praying for some of the people or groups listed on the cross.