

Peter and the Gentiles

Acts 9:32-43; 10;
11:1-18; 12:1-19

Storyline

Peter came to the town of Lydda and healed the man Aeneas who was paralysed. Many there turned to the Lord. At nearby Joppa, he healed Tabitha (also called Dorcas). Many believed on the Lord there also. In Caesarea there was a Roman centurion called Cornelius who believed in God. One day, in a vision, an angel told him to send for Peter. The next day Peter, in Joppa, also had a vision but he didn't understand it. Peter visited Cornelius and preached to his relatives and friends. Peter realised that his vision meant he had to stop keeping himself separated from people who were not Jews (ie. Gentiles). While he was preaching, the Holy Spirit came upon the people and Peter told them to get baptised. Later in Jerusalem he explained to the apostles why he had eaten with Gentiles. When he had explained what had happened they praised God. They realised that God had given eternal life to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. A little later, King Herod persecuted the Christians and killed John's brother, James. He also put Peter in prison, but an angel let him out during the night.

Suggested Teaching Approach

1. Tell the story stressing the chosen theme.
2. Discuss with the children their experiences as witnesses.

Theme One

“God looks on the heart”

Peter had to unlearn some of his ways, so that he could accept the Gentiles that God had accepted. God demonstrated that He had accepted the Gentiles, as a result He gave them the Holy Spirit. We can, due to our background, be very quick to judge and condemn at times. We need to understand the heart of people and their attitudes and be slow to judge.

Key Thought

We need to see, love, and accept as God does.

Aim

For the children to learn to be slow to judge and make assessments based on their own thinking. They should try to think as God thinks.

Memory Verse

“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Theme Two

“God wants all to be saved”

Peter had to learn that God was just as interested in saving the Gentiles as the Jews. God wants His word to be heard by all people no matter what country they come from. We must not think that some people are not important.

Key Thought

God does not distinguish between people but provides salvation for all who will trust in Him.

Aim

To have the children realise that God is no respecter of persons. He wants everyone to be saved.

Memory Verse

“God ... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

Activity A - Word Search

Materials

- 1 Activity Sheet per child.
- Pens/pencils.
- New King James Bibles.

Steps

- Children use the Bible to find the answers to the questions, then find the word in the Word Puzzle.

Use your Bible to find the answers to the questions, then find the word in the Word Puzzle.

1. Name the gate of the temple where the lame man was placed. (Acts 3:2).
Beautiful
2. In whose name were Peter and John asked not to preach? (Acts 4:18).
Jesus
3. How did they speak after they had received the Holy Spirit? (Acts 4:31).
With Boldness
4. What two things happened through the hands of the apostles. (Acts 5:12).
Signs and Wonders
5. Who opened the doors of the prison? (Acts 5:19) Angel
6. What was the name of the soldier who had a vision? (Acts 10:3)
Cornelius
7. Whose house was Peter staying in at Joppa? (Acts 10:32) Simon
8. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. (Acts 11:26)
9. Name of the king who put Peter in prison. (Acts 12:1-4) Herod
10. Whose house did Peter go to when he had been let out of prison? (Acts 12:12)
Mary

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

Activity B - Role Play

Materials

- Rope, torch, white sheet for the angel.
- Table, chairs, etc. to make the prison room.
- Any old coats, belts, hats, etc. for dressing up children. NB. ice cream buckets make good helmets.
- Cardboard crown for Herod.

Steps

At Home

- Write short speaking parts for each child according to their abilities.

In Class

- Make a mock prison using tables and chairs to form a room.
- Choose children to be King Herod, Peter, the angel and Rhoda.
- The rest of the children to be guards at the door of the prison and disciples praying at Mary's house.

Directions

- Herod:** Seizes Peter and hands him over to the guards.
- Guards:** Tie Peter up and put him in prison and stand guard at the door.
- Peter:** Kneels down to pray, then falls asleep on his side.
- Angel:** Comes into prison, shines the torch on Peter to flood the room with God's light.
Touches Peter on the side, wakes him and tells him to get dressed and follow him.
- Guards:** Pretend not to see Peter and the angel pass by. (Get guards to keep looking straight ahead as if nothing were happening.)
- Rhoda:** Answers the door when Peter knocks and runs to tell the others.
- Peter:** Peter comes in and talks to the disciples.
- Herod:** Searches for Peter, judges guards and has them put to death.

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2. In whose name were Peter and John asked not to preach? (Acts 4:18).

3. How did they speak after they had received the Holy Spirit? (Acts 4:31).
With _____
4. What two things happened through the hands of the apostles. (Acts 5:12).
_____ and _____
5. Who opened the doors of the prison? (Acts 5:19) _____
6. What was the name of the soldier who had a vision? (Acts 10:3)

7. Whose house was Peter staying in at Joppa? (Acts 10:32) _____
8. The disciples were first called _____ in Antioch. (Acts 11:26)
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D	E	L	Y	U	E	A	V	F	H	B	H
F	I	A	T	W	O	N	D	E	R	S	K
H	C	M	U	Q	F	G	W	H	I	D	L
A	P	N	S	T	G	E	J	E	S	U	S
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R	M	A	R	Y	O	T	C	L	R	V	S
C	O	R	N	E	L	I	U	S	A	B	M
M	N	X	M	B	O	L	D	N	E	S	S