THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

**CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE:** January 14, 2018

**SUBJECT:** **GOD’S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**: **In Acts—Cornelius**

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18

**AIM:** The God who calls us is not a respecter of persons. His salvation in Christ is not only to the Jewish people, but to everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus.

**SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES:** Acts 10:34b (...in truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons,); Acts 10:43 (To this One all the prophets testify that through His name everyone who believes into Him will receive forgiveness of sins.); 1 Timothy 2:4 ([*Our Savior God,*]Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.)

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** 9527 *BSS Vessels Unto Honor Song #7* (No One Likes to be Left Out); 9524 *BSS Vessels Unto Honor Song #4* (What Kind of Sharer); 92 (Jesus Loves Even Me); 93 (Jesus Loves the Little Children); 9522 *BSS Vessels Unto Honor Song #2* (Everything We Do and Say); 2508 (For God So Loved the World); 178 (Through Me); 4300 *BSS Matthew Vol. 2* (Learn How to Be Faithful Today); 171 (Whisper a Prayer); 9116 *BSS Acts Song #16* (Clean, Clean)

**CRAFT IDEAS:** 1) Cut out a smaller white paper for the “sheet”. Glue white “sheet” onto larger colored paper. Print and cut out various types of animals to glue onto white sheet. Have children draw Peter praying. 2) Design a “God loves everyone” coloring sheet or paper plate wheel.

**VISUAL AID SUGGESTION/APPROACH:** Bring a white pillow case or small white fabric and small wooden or plastic animals, reptiles, and birds for props.

**CONTENT:** There was a man in Caesarea, a city in Samaria, named Cornelius. He was a centurion, a commander or officer of a Roman army, and he was a Gentile (a non-Jew) but was well respected among the nations of Jews. He was a righteous man who sought after and feared God with his whole family. He gave alms to the people (i.e., gave money or perhaps food to the poor), and he prayed to God continually. One day, around three o’clock, as Cornelius was praying, he saw a vision. In the vision, an angel of God came to him and called his name, “Cornelius”. Cornelius looked intently at the angel and became terrified. He said, “What is it, Lord?” The angel answered him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa (a nearby city) and send for a certain Simon, who is surnamed Peter; this man is lodging with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” When the angel went away, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier who was under him. He told them what happened and sent them to Joppa.

The next day as the three men were traveling and getting close to Joppa, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. It was about noontime. He became very hungry and wanted to eat, and while food was being prepared, a trance came upon him. He saw heaven opened and a vessel that looked like a very big sheet coming down to earth being let down by its four corners. Inside the sheet were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and birds of heaven. A voice came to Peter, “Rise up, Peter; slay and eat!” But Peter said, “By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything common and unclean.” And a voice came again a second time, “The things that God has cleansed, do not make common.” This happened three times and then the vessel was taken up into heaven.

Now as Peter was completely perplexed as to what the vision might mean, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, who had been diligently looking for Simon’s house, stood at the gate. They called out and asked whether Simon, surnamed Peter, was living there. While Peter was pondering over the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, there are three men seeking you. But rise up, go down and go with them, doubting nothing, because I have sent them.” So Peter went down to the men and told them he was the one they were looking for and asked them why they had come. The men told him about Cornelius—that he was divinely instructed by an angel to send for Peter to come to his house and listen to what he said. Peter invited the men to stay overnight and on the next day, he and some brothers from Joppa went with Cornelius’ men. On the following day, when they came to Caesarea, Cornelius was waiting for them, along with his relatives and intimate friends whom he had called together. Being a Jew, Peter would normally not have had anything to do with Gentiles but he obeyed the Holy Spirit and went to Cornelius’ house.

When Peter came in, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, “Rise up; I myself am also a man.” As Peter talked with Cornelius, he entered and found many who had gathered together. He said to them, “You understand that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to join himself to or come near one of another race; yet God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Hence, even without objection I came when I had been sent for. I ask therefore, For what reason have you sent for me?” Cornelius told him what had happened four days earlier when the angel appeared to him. He told Peter that they were all there to hear all the things that had been commanded to him by the Lord.

So Peter began to speak. He told them that he realized that God was not a respecter of persons (i.e. God is not partial and does not show favoritism), but in every nation, he who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. He began to tell them about Jesus Christ. While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those hearing the word. The brothers who had come along with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had now also been poured out on the Gentiles! They heard them speaking in tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone forbid the water so that these would not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we?” So he charged them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for some days. Cornelius and his household were the first Gentiles to believe and be baptized. Many more Gentile believers were to follow.

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:** *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It is sufficient to cover just* ***one or two*** *applications which are appropriate for the age group of the children you are serving.*

* **God’s Heart is for All People.** Peter eventually understood that since the Lord Jesus had died on the cross for all men, God would save whoever believed in Him—not only Jews but Gentiles also. Peter realized that the animals in the great sheet represented men and he should not call any man common or unclean (RV Acts 10:28, Footnote 281). The Lord showed Peter that His heart was for all people to know Him, believe in Him, repent and receive Him. He did not intend to exclude anyone. We, like Peter, also should realize that God’s heart is for all people. We should not have a heart of exclusion.

1. **Concerning the gospel.** We should have a heart for all people, not just the people we get along with or the ones we like. We should not exclude others who may be different than us, (quiet, shy, or outgoing), or even from a different culture or country. Just as Peter allowed the Lord to broaden his heart, we should allow the Lord to broaden our hearts to include all people in the gospel.
2. **Concerning friendships.** We should be a true friend to all people. We should be aware that many times we might be in danger of excluding others in our activities and our conversations. When others are left out, feelings can be hurt. We should be kind and receptive to all people.
3. **Concerning children’s meeting.** When visitors, gospel friends or new children come to children’s meeting, we should make an extra effort to include them and make them feel welcome. We should also be careful not to exclude others. We often like to be with our friends—we want to sit next to them, talk to them, eat snack with them and do the craft together with them. This is normal, but we need to remember to include the other children—quiet ones, shy ones, girls and boys, and especially new ones. When someone feels welcomed and included, they will want to come back again. We should try to make everyone feel welcomed.

* **Praying to Know God** **and Obeying God.** Only when we pray and spend time with the Lord can we know God’s heart and have our hearts broadened. Both Peter and Cornelius had a set time to pray every day. God spoke to Cornelius during his 3 o’clock prayer time and God showed a vision to Peter during his noontime prayer. Both Cornelius and Peter had the habit to pray and were faithful to pray at those set times. We also need to set apart some time every day to pray (some good, set times for prayer are when you rise in the morning, breakfast, lunch, dinner and before you go to sleep). After God appeared, Cornelius obeyed God by sending men to find Peter. Peter obeyed God by returning with the men to meet Cornelius.
* **Cornelius, an upright, godly Gentile pattern.** God called Cornelius, a centurion, who was responsible, upright and righteous. Cornelius was disciplined in his daily prayer times with God. He was also generous; he gave alms to the poor and cared for other people. He was well respected by the Jews. Cornelius and his household were devout and God fearing. God was able to use Cornelius to enlighten Peter and as a result, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Gentile believers.
* **Cornelius wanted his relatives and close friends to know the Lord.** On the following day, when Peter and others came to Caesarea, Cornelius was waiting for them, along with his relatives and intimate friends whom he had called together. Cornelius did not wait to hear the Word of God only by himself. In anticipation, he had gathered those closest to him. We should also desire and pray that all of our family and close friends would come to the Lord.

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ in God’s Economy*, Volume #4, Lesson #14, and the Church in New York City Children’s Meeting Lessons: 3/19/95; 1/21/01; 1/21/07; 1/20/13