

Being friends with people different to us

You can do this session with your children any time you like. The story is taken from Acts 10:1-48. If you want to read it online just go to this link: <https://www.biblegateway.com> and type the passage in the search engine.

Start

Have you ever become friends with someone you didn't think could be your friend?

In our story today, we see how Jesus asked Peter to become friends with someone that Peter never thought he could be friends with.

Bible story

There was a man called Cornelius. He loved God and wanted to know more about him. He was kind to people as well. But Cornelius was a Roman and people from Israel didn't like Romans. They would be unkind to people and make them feel scared, but Cornelius was different. He was so different that even people from Israel liked him. One day, Cornelius saw an angel. The angel called his name and Cornelius said, "I'm listening." The angel replied, "Send some people to find a man named Simon who is called Peter." This Peter was the same Peter who was a disciple of Jesus. Cornelius did as the angel said and sent 2 of his servants and a soldier he trusted to go and find Peter.

The next day, whilst these people were on their way to find Peter, Peter was praying. When he finished praying, he felt hungry. Then something strange happened. Peter saw what looked like a sheet being lowered from Heaven with all kinds of animals on it. A voice said to him, "Eat whatever you like." But Peter wasn't sure. He knew that people from Israel didn't just eat whatever food they wanted. He said, "I can't do that Jesus, I'd be breaking the rules." Jesus said to him, "I have told you, you can eat whatever you want, so you have my permission." This was strange, but Peter knew he could trust Jesus.

While Peter was still thinking about what this all meant, Cornelius' servants and soldier arrived at where he was staying. Jesus said to Peter, "Three men are looking for you, make sure you go with them because I sent them." So Peter went to see the men and said, "I'm the person you are looking for. Why are you here?" They told him about Cornelius and how God sent an angel to him telling him to find Peter. Peter invited the men to be his guests for the evening. The next day, Peter and the men went to see Cornelius. When Peter went into his house, Cornelius bowed down to him, but Peter said, "You don't need to do that, I'm just a person like you are." Cornelius explained to Peter why he wanted to see him and how he wanted to know more about Jesus. Peter said, "I have learnt something really important because I now know that Jesus loves everyone, not just people from Israel. It doesn't matter where we are from, Jesus loves us all." Peter then explained to Cornelius who Jesus is and Cornelius and his family

decided to become Jesus' friends that day too. This was an amazing story, because Jesus had shown Peter that he loves everyone, even the Romans.

How do you think Peter felt when Jesus told him to see someone who was a Roman?

How do you think Cornelius felt when Peter came to his home?

What to do next

Below are some suggestions:

- You could chat about your favourite part of the story.
- You could re-create the story with lego/plasticine.
- You could act out the story.

You could pray together. Below are some ideas for prayer:

- Thank Jesus that he loves all of us wherever we are from.
- Pray for groups of people who are different to each other and don't like each other. Ask Jesus to show them he loves all of them.
- Ask Jesus to show you how you can be friends with people who are different to you.



Peter went to see Cornelius, a Roman soldier and told him all about Jesus.