



UNIT 32 | SESSION 3

# GENTILES BECAME PART OF THE CHURCH

## ACTS 11

### CHRIST CONNECTION

We can celebrate when others believe in Jesus.

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION

What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.

### MEMORY VERSE

The church has many people who help. 1 Corinthians 12:12



## LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Acts 11 recounts the first time people were called “Christians” because they were recognized as followers of Jesus. In this passage, Peter was criticized by some of the believing Jews for going into the house of Cornelius and eating with Gentiles; however, these same critics later realized that God’s power was at work even among the Gentiles.

How did the church in Antioch demonstrate God’s plan for all people to be saved through the gospel? What is the proper response of Christ followers upon hearing that the lost have been found through coming to faith in Jesus?

The church in Antioch displayed the power of the gospel as Gentile believers and Jewish believers became one body under the headship of Christ. It was the transforming power of the Holy Spirit that held these brothers and sisters together, allowing for differing customs and backgrounds to be overcome. In fact, when Peter defended the Gentile salvation to the church in Jerusalem, he recited Jesus’ words from Acts 1:5 on the baptism of the Spirit. He reminded the naysayers among them that if the Gentiles truly received the Spirit, why should the rest of them get in the way of God’s salvation at work? The evidence of the Holy Spirit among them, leading them to live in holy fellowship and bold proclamation, proved that God’s hand was working in the lives of those who were previously outside the faith.

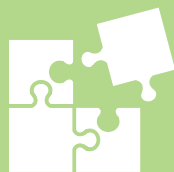
Turning away from their disapproval, the members of the circumcision party first became stunned into silence and then glorified God for the repentance of these new Gentile followers. May we, too, be quick to move to celebration and praise when anyone trusts in Jesus for salvation, rather than be unsure or prone to criticism. Let our own hearts seek to pray that the Spirit produces good fruit in the lives of those who proclaim His truth, encouraging and lifting them up as they seek and serve His name alongside us.

Highlight God’s goodness in bringing these new followers to Himself. Encourage children to share the gospel with those who may be different from themselves, trusting that the good news of Jesus brings us together for the good of His church and the glory of God.

## TERMS TO KNOW

**Gentiles:** people who are not part of God’s chosen family at birth. Jesus was a light to the Gentiles (Matt. 4:16-17; Luke 2:32). At the house of Cornelius, the Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles (Acts 10:45).

# OPENING & ACTIVITIES



Connect with children through games and activities

## WELCOME

Play music in the background as you greet children coming into the classroom. Help them transition in and feel welcome as they play games and interact with other children.

## ACTIVITY 1: STACKING CUPS

Set out several stacks of disposable cups. Show children how to stack them, and encourage children to build a church building with the cups.

Talk about the Bible story as children build. Explain that the church meets in a building, but the church is people — Christians around the world working together.

## CONNECT THE DOTS



I love how well you worked together to build such a big church building with the cups. It's nice that we have buildings to meet in with other Christians so we can worship God together. But it's important to remember that the church is not a building; it is all Christians around the world working together to tell others about Jesus.

## CONNECT THE DOTS



In our Bible story today, we're learning that the good news of Jesus spread from Judea all the way to Antioch, which was far away. It also spread from the Jewish community to the Gentile community. Telling others about Jesus is good. It allows many more people to come to believe in Him.

## ACTIVITY 2: JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH

Tape a line around the room. Label one end Jerusalem and the other Antioch.

Line up and let kids walk along the tape line, talking about how the road between Jerusalem and Antioch was long; it would have been a difficult trip to make in Bible times.

Upon arrival in "Antioch," tell everyone to sit down. Explain that in our story today, Barnabas took a trip on behalf of the church in Jerusalem.

# CRAFT & EXAMPLE



Help children with a craft connected to the Bible story

## CONNECT THE DOTS



Thank you for marching in the parade with me. The believers in Judea were excited about the new believers in Antioch. We can celebrate when more people choose to believe in Jesus. It is a party-worthy day when someone believes in Jesus!

## CRAFT: MARCH IN A PARADE

**Supplies:** paper, stickers, crayons/markers

Set out the provided supplies. Ask children to make a sign or a picture for a parade.

Talk about the reasons people have parades to celebrate events. Remind children of the Christ connection as they work.

March around the room with children while they hold their signs and shout, "Jesus is for everyone!"





## PREPARE

Open your Bible to **Acts 11** and tell the following story.

## GENTILES BECAME PART OF THE CHURCH

God told Peter to tell everyone the good news about Jesus. So Peter obeyed. He shared the gospel with people, no matter who they were or where they came from. He shared with Jews and also with Gentiles — people who were not Jews. The Gentiles heard Peter's message, and they believed in Jesus. God gave His Spirit to these new believers, and they were baptized.

Before long, Jesus' followers in Judea heard that the Gentiles had believed the good news about Jesus. They were surprised! Peter explained that the gospel is for everyone. Then Jesus' followers praised God!

Around this time, believers were living in places like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They had moved away from Jerusalem after Stephen was killed for loving Jesus. Most of them shared the gospel only with Jews, but some believers went to Antioch and told the Gentiles there about Jesus. When the Gentiles heard the good news, many of them believed.

The church in Jerusalem heard about these new believers, so they sent Barnabas to visit them. Barnabas was a good man who loved God. Barnabas saw that God was with the believers in Antioch, and he was glad. He encouraged them to keep following God. More people heard about Jesus and trusted in Him.

Then Barnabas left Antioch to find Paul. Barnabas and Paul went to Antioch and stayed with the church there for one year. They taught large crowds of people. Jesus' followers were first called Christians in Antioch.

## CHRIST CONNECTION

The gospel continued to spread even when people tried to stop it. The good news about Jesus is for everyone. God wants us to celebrate when others believe in Jesus.

# SNACK & CLOSING



Continue to engage children near the end of the morning

## SNACK TIME

**Wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Serve a snack. Show children the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions and retell parts of the Bible story as needed.**

1. What was your favorite part of today's Bible story?
2. What did you learn about God in today's Bible story?
3. In Antioch, what were Jesus' followers first called?
4. What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.

## CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Pick up toys and games from around the room and put them away. After the room is cleaned up, set out markers or crayons and let children work on today's Bible story coloring page or activity page until their parents arrive.

You can also choose a book to read to children as they work or for those who don't want to work. Please make the effort to have children quietly engaged in the last few minutes of the service. When parents arrive to pick up their child, share about something their child enjoyed doing or did well today.

## BEFORE YOU GO...

**Please clean up by doing the following:**

1. Spray down toys with disinfectant
2. Spot sweep if needed
3. Return toys to closet, close door
4. Throw away any trash left on counters and in room
5. Return storage cubes to Room 108

**THANK YOU FOR SERVING WITH US!**