Story for home

Use this story as part of a God-time at home, or as a bedtime story. It can also be used alongside this month’s Together sessions. Encourage the children to do the sounds and actions of all the animals as you tell the story.

# Pigs and camels and hares and bats

Jesus was Jewish.

His disciples were Jewish, too. Along with all the people who first followed him.

As a part of their religion, Jewish people had to obey certain rules.

There was a list of animals, for example, which they were not allowed to eat:

Pigs. *Everyone pushes the end of their nose up with their finger and makes an ‘oink’ sound.*

And camels. *Everyone makes a ‘p-tooey’ spitting sound.*

And hares. *Everyone holds their hands to their head like ears and bounces up and down.*

And bats. *Everyone sticks their arms out like wings and makes a squeaking sound.*

And a lot of other birds and insects and animals as well.

There were also certain people they were not supposed to hang out with or whose houses they weren’t supposed to enter. And at the top of this list were people who were *not* Jewish. Those people were called Gentiles.

Some Gentiles, however, were quite interested in the Jewish religion. They would pray to God and give money to the poor. And one of those Gentiles was an officer in the Roman army called Cornelius.

Cornelius was praying, one day, when an angel appeared to him in a vision.

“Send your men to Joppa,” the angel said, “to fetch a follower of Jesus called Peter.”

Cornelius did what the angel told him to do. And the next day, as his men approached the house where Peter was staying, Peter was praying, too.

He was up on the flat roof. He was hungry. And then, suddenly, in the midst of his prayers, Peter also had a vision.

He saw a big sheet, coming down from heaven. And on the big sheet were all the animals he was not supposed to eat.

Pigs. *Everyone pushes the end of their nose up with their finger and makes an ‘oink’ sound.*

And camels. *Everyone makes a ‘p-tooey’ spitting sound.*

And hares. *Everyone holds their hands to their head like ears and bounces up and down.*

And bats. *Everyone sticks their arms out like wings and makes a squeaking sound.*

And all the other forbidden animals, too.

Then he heard the voice of God saying: “Get up, Peter! Kill and eat!”

“No, Lord,” Peter replied. “I have never eaten…

Pigs. *Everyone pushes the end of their nose up with their finger and makes an ‘oink’ sound.*

Or camels. *Everyone makes a ‘p-tooey’ spitting sound.*

Or hares. *Everyone holds their hands to their head like ears and bounces up and down.*

Or bats. *Everyone sticks their arms out like wings and makes a squeaking sound.*

Or any other forbidden animal!”

“But if I say it’s OK to eat those animals,” God answered. “then it’s okay!”

This happened three times and then the sheet disappeared.

Peter found the vision puzzling. But while he was trying to figure out what it meant, Cornelius’s men came knocking at his door.

The Holy Spirit told Peter to go down and meet the men and go with them. So that’s what Peter did. And the next day, there he was, in Cornelius’s house, surrounded by Cornelius’s family and friends.

And suddenly, his vision of…

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And bats. *Everyone sticks their arms out like wings and makes a squeaking sound.*

Made sense.

God was trying to teach him about something more than accepting food. He was trying to teach him something about accepting people.

“You know that the Jewish law says that I shouldn’t even be in this Gentile house,” Peter said. “But God has shown me that if he says something is OK, then it is. And I believe that God is the one who has brought us together.”

So Peter told them all about Jesus. And while he was speaking, the Hoy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his family and his friends, and they spoke in other languages, just as Peter and his friends had done, when the Spirit came upon them.

“This is the same thing that happened to us!” Peter exclaimed. “Surely this means that all God did for us through Jesus is not just for Jewish people, but for Gentiles, as well!”

So Cornelius and his friends were baptised and became followers of Jesus, too.

And, from then on, Peter knew that Jesus came for everyone. Absolutely everyone. Even people who ate…

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**BOB HARTMAN**

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