

Note: Peter's story about Cornelius and his family becoming believers changes perspectives in the church in Jerusalem. Barnabas brings Saul back from Tarsus, and they develop and begin teaching in Antioch (in Syria) the first year-long catechetical program for a large group of adult converted Hellenists. Hellenists are Jewish Christians who speak Greek and know only the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

1. Before Peter returned from Caesarea, word of his extended visit with Gentiles in a Gentile's home had already reached Jerusalem. How did the apostles and brothers who were in Judea respond? (Acts 11:1-3)
2. Luke spends the entire chapter 10 on the story of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48), and proceeds to repeat most of its details again in chapter 11. Why do you think Peter repeats and reinforces the entire story of Cornelius? (Acts 11:4)
3. What did Peter's detailed explanation achieve in his listeners? (Acts 11:18)
4. From Peter's example, how did the early Church grow in numbers? (Acts 11:18-21)
5. How did Peter defend his actions in Caesarea with a final question? (Acts 11:17)
6. After the death of Stephen, how did the situation for the believers in Jerusalem change? (Acts 11:19)
7. Who were the "great number of believers" that came to Antioch and spoke to the Hellenists, and where did they come from? (Acts 11:20-21)
8. The church in Jerusalem hears about the great number of new believers in Antioch, and sends Barnabas to Antioch. (Acts 11:22)
 - a. Why did they choose Barnabas for this mission? (Acts 11:24; See Handout Gamaliel)
 - b. What do you think was his mission? (Acts 11:23)

Note: Both Saul (Paul) and Barnabas were fluent Greek speakers. Both were Hellenists, that is, brought up using the Greek Scriptures. Both men came to Jerusalem to become proficient in Hebrew and the Hebrew Scriptures. We know that Saul's teacher in Jerusalem was Gamaliel. It is likely that Barnabas might have also been a student of Gamaliel at the same time as Saul, so each knew the qualifications of the other and trusted one another.

9. What did Barnabas do after he found Saul in Tarsus? (Acts 11:25-26)
10. Barnabas and Saul brought a relief collection for the Judeans and gave it to the presbyters for distribution. How is this charitable giving and social justice continued in the Church today? (CCC2443-2449 & 1928-1933)