

ADULT STUDY GUIDE

This is the adult component of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum. This piece follows the **same scope and sequence** as the other levels: **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Youth**. This alignment presents some amazing opportunities.

- First of all, it helps all ages speak a **common theological language**.
- Second, it helps God's people build an understanding of the **lifelong nature of learning God's Word**—that we don't just learn the narratives once or twice before moving on to other matters.
- Third, and critical to this curriculum, it helps **equip households** to teach the faith at home.

If parents and other adults spend time meditating and discussing the narratives of the Bible while the younger generations in the congregation study the same narratives, then there will be greater opportunity throughout the week to **reflect together** upon what the narrative says and what it means. In other words, studying the narratives of the Bible as adults is a blessing in and of itself, but it also helps **equip parents and faith leaders** to be more confident and feel empowered to extend those conversations into the household.

FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

This study guide is meant to provide some guidelines and springboards for discussion in your Bible study groups.

- The **first page** of each lesson provides the central focus statements, not only for the Adult level, but also for the other levels. Use this as a way to orient yourself to the **main themes and goals** of the lessons across all levels. You'll also find helpful **tips for preparation**.
- The **middle two pages** begin with an introductory **"Launch"** section, which provides prompts for beginning the study and an open-ended reflection question to kick off group discussion. The following **"Learn & Live"** section breaks down the text into three to five narrative sections. Each one of these sections has some additional commentary, a reflection question, and some helps to better understand possible answers to the reflection question. The **"Leave"** section provides prompts for a final reflection question and some other considerations to close the lesson. The **sidebars** include leader tips and bonus activities to help you think through options for extending the lesson.
- The **final page** of each lesson is the student piece. Copy one lesson handout per learner, and distribute this at the beginning of class.

TIPS FOR USE

This study guide is designed primarily to help give you, the leader, some thoughts and prompts to help guide and assist facilitation of the class. Below are some tips for how to use it.

- This is meant to be a Bible study, so each learner will need access to a Bible. Encourage your learners to bring their own to class.
- Don't neglect the lesson handout. The primary reason for this page is to create some space for each learner to reflect and engage the questions on his or her own. Often, any given group will have one or two vocal learners and others who may not speak up. Consider using techniques to help engage all learners in the process, such as having each learner write down his or her reflection privately before sharing, having each learner share with a partner before opening up discussion, or changing the seating arrangements to create small groups.
- Use the opening reflection question as a time to build community. Adult learners, generally speaking, desire to share their experience with one another, and this lesson starter provides an opportunity for this.
- For each narrative section, ask volunteers to read the text aloud while the rest follow along. Don't force anyone; adults, like children and youth, may be self-conscious about their reading or public speaking ability.
- Download the Enduring Faith Page from the online digital resource center and hand out copies to your learners. Near the end of the lesson, talk through the prompts, which help the learners extend the lessons in their households throughout the week. Encourage learners to take this page home along with the lesson handout to be used throughout the week.

A CENTURION CONVERTS

Peter and
Cornelius
Acts 10
AD 39

BIBLE TRUTH

God's love in Jesus is for everyone.

LEARNER GOAL

I can analyze the text for insights into what it means that God's love in Jesus is for everyone.

BIBLE VERSE

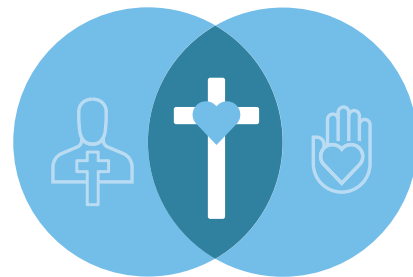
Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
Romans 10:13

LAW & GOSPEL

I sinfully deny that the Gospel is for all humankind. God forgives me and helps me share the Gospel with others.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

A faithful and generous centurion named Cornelius has a vision of God's angel telling him to bring Peter to Caesarea. In Joppa, Peter sees a vision of a sheet descending from the sky, filled with all kinds of animals. The instruction to "kill and eat" confuses Peter since many of the animals on the sheet are considered unclean. The Spirit tells Peter to go to Caesarea. At Cornelius's home, the Holy Spirit descends on the Gentiles as Peter preaches the Gospel to them. Peter commands the Gentiles to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God calls all people to Himself through His Word.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can share the Word of God with others in my life, no matter their background or past.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can analyze the text for insights into what it means that God's love in Jesus is for everyone.

YOUTH

I can show from the text that God's love in Jesus is for all people in every time and every place.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God's love in Jesus is for everyone.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know Jesus loves everyone and wants everyone to be saved.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Read the article "The Israelite Diet" in *TLSB*, page 236.

IN DEPTH Read Questions 15–23 for a review on the Law in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).



LEADER NOTE

Experiences will differ, as will different contexts as the culture is constantly changing. That said, there are some likely barriers to witnessing that emerge regardless of the setting. These include fear of being called a bigot, fear of being called a hypocrite by those who do not understand how the Law works in the Bible, and simply not knowing people outside our social groups. Encourage your learners to share in pairs or small groups before bringing the question back to the large group. Then, prompt your learners to look at the text, where we see God breaking down barriers so the Gospel can be shared.



BONUS ACTIVITY

To many, the ceremonial dietary laws of the Old Testament are confusing. If you have time, consider reviewing these laws and their meanings in “The Israelite Diet” on page 236 in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group, and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests and pray, either now or at the conclusion.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Bible Verse, and Learner Goal. Then, begin with the opening question.

OPENING REFLECTION

In your experience, what are some of the greatest barriers the Church runs into when witnessing to people?

LEARN & LIVE

ACTS 10:1–8

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Something critical now happens in God’s epic plan of salvation, an episode to which Luke devotes an entire chapter in Acts. In this event, we not only see a Roman officer being brought to faith in Christ, but also Christ’s prompting to actively and vigorously go to, witness to, and engage the Gentiles with the Gospel. The scene begins with Cornelius, a centurion from the Italian Cohort. This likely means he was originally from the Italian peninsula, stationed in Judea to keep the peace. Though we do not have all the details, we are told that somewhere along the line, this Roman Gentile had converted to Judaism, both him and his household, and likely had witnessed to other soldiers who likewise had converted. Because of his Gentile heritage, Cornelius would always be something of a second-class Jew, being barred from fully entering the temple to worship. Nevertheless, Cornelius is a devout man, and consistently offers prayers and alms like the most pious of Jews. One day, an angel of the Lord appears to him, giving very direct instructions to Cornelius to find Simon Peter in a nearby town. Cornelius gathers two servants and a devout soldier, all three converted Jews, to seek out Peter. The angel points them to the messenger, who will deliver the Gospel in Christ’s name.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What can we learn from this section about the opportunities God provided for the Early Church in proclaiming the Gospel? What can the Church today learn from this?

REFLECTION HELPS

Though likely not common, this section reveals how a Roman officer from Italy, stationed in Judea, had converted to Judaism. This included himself, his family, his slaves, and even at least one other soldier. It seems that they had first come to faith through the witness of the Jews, and this provided a great opportunity to witness the Gospel. God’s people have always been called to witness our faith to others, and to look for opportunities to witness to those who are both familiar and unfamiliar with the Christian faith.

ACTS 10:9–33

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Meanwhile, Peter is in Joppa, and he is hungry. Jesus will use this hunger, accompanied by a vision, as an illustration of His great purpose. While Peter prays on the roof of Simon the tanner's house, God grants him a vision in a trance, much like the visions of the great prophets of the Old Testament. In this vision, Jesus shows Peter a wide variety of animals, both clean and unclean by the standards of the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14), and commands Peter to rise, kill, and eat these creatures. Peter understandably replies that he has never eaten unclean things, to which Jesus replies "what God has made clean, do not call common" (v. 15). This same pattern cycles three times, likely cementing in Peter's mind that this came from the Lord (hearkening back to John 21:15–17). At this moment, the men who had been sent from Cornelius arrive, and Peter follows them to Cornelius's house. When Cornelius sees Peter, Cornelius falls at Peter's feet, likely believing Peter to be another supernatural messenger. The apostle, however, calls Cornelius to stand as Peter is only a man. Peter, seeing the crowd that Cornelius has assembled to meet him, perceives Jesus' greater purpose in the visions, to show that lack of adherence to the ceremonial law does not make anyone unworthy of hearing the Gospel.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Note the different barriers that Christ does and does not break down in this section. What do these reveal for us about Christ's mission and our calling as His people today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Christ breaks down the ceremonial law between clean and unclean, but not the moral law of what is right and wrong. He also breaks down societal barriers between Jew and Gentile and moves Peter to go into a Gentile's home, something he had never yet done. Christ did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it for us.

ACTS 10:34–48

BIBLE COMMENTARY

In this Gentile's home, Peter simply and clearly preaches Christ, His life, death, and resurrection. At this, the Spirit falls on those who hear, manifesting Himself in special ways to reveal His presence. These special signs of speaking in tongues are meant to show the particular nature of these conversions and should not be expected at all times. Peter then declares that all should be baptized, and they are. Jesus has worked behind the scenes to arrange this meeting, and here the Great Commission is being realized in a special way as God is making Gentile people clean through the Means of Grace.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How did the Holy Spirit work in this section? What should we in the Church today learn from this in our own witness?

REFLECTION HELPS

The Holy Spirit used the Means of Grace, the preaching of the Word and the administering of the Sacrament, to create and sustain faith. It is not our power or skill but God's that does His work.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

Analyze the text for insights into what it means that God's love in Jesus is for everyone.

TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Pages.

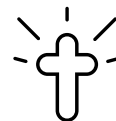
CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven't yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray as you prepare to leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

The topic of how we are to understand the different types of Old Testament laws is often a contentious one for Christians facing hostility in the culture. This usually stems from a lack of understanding the different categories of laws. If you have time, consider reading over Question 17 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017). Discuss the difference between moral, ceremonial, and civil laws, and how being able to differentiate them is so critical in understanding the Scriptures.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ came to offer forgiveness to everyone.



LEADER NOTE

Jesus broke down ceremonial barriers, prompted Peter to engage the Gentiles, called the Gentiles to follow Him, and worked through the Means of Grace to offer forgiveness, life, and salvation to all.

A CENTURION CONVERTS

BIBLE TRUTH

God's love in Jesus is for everyone.

LEARNER GOAL

I can analyze the text for insights into what it means that God's love in Jesus is for everyone.

BIBLE VERSE

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10:13

ADULT
Unit 9
LESSON HANDOUT
Lesson 3

Peter and Cornelius

Acts 10

REFLECTIONS

OPENING REFLECTION In your experience, what are some of the greatest barriers the Church runs into when witnessing to people?

ACTS 10:1-8 What can we learn from this section about the opportunities God provided for the Early Church in proclaiming the Gospel? What can the Church today learn from this?

ACTS 10:9–33 Note the different barriers that Christ does and does not break down in this section. What do these reveal for us about Christ’s mission and our calling as His people today?

ACTS 10:34-48 How did the Holy Spirit work in this section? What should we in the Church today learn from this in our own witness?

FINAL REFLECTION Analyze the text for insights into what it means that God's love in Jesus is for everyone.

NOTES

This image shows a full page of dot grid paper. The background is a very light blue color. Overlaid on this background is a grid of small, solid blue dots. The dots are arranged in perfectly straight horizontal and vertical rows, creating a series of small squares across the entire page. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.