

# A CENTURION CONVERTS

Peter and  
Cornelius  
Acts 10  
AD 39

## OVERVIEW

### BIBLE TRUTH

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

### LEARNER GOAL

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

### 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.

## LESSON PREP

**BASIC** Read Acts 10 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

**MORE TIME** Read the article "Meals as Boundaries" in *TLSB*, page 300.

**IN DEPTH** Read Question 17 in the section on the Ten Commandments in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017) to review the different kinds of laws that God has given us.

## SUPPLY LIST

### FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Photos of and/or plastic animals listed in the student book
- ☐ White pillowcase or towel

### FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Device with downloaded music
- ☐ Pens or pencils
- ☐ Student copies of *Explore Bible Guidebook*
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Supplies for bonus activities
- ☐ [cph.org/digitalcontent](http://cph.org/digitalcontent)



### LEADER NOTE

Before class, collect pictures of the animals listed on the second page of this lesson in the *Explore Bible Guidebook*. If you can find plastic versions of them, even better. Let students look at and talk about all the animals as they arrive for class. You could even encourage younger students to make matching animal noises.



### GUIDEBOOKS

Hand out student copies of the *Explore Bible Guidebook* and turn to Lesson 3.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Check the back page for the “Peter’s Vision Diorama” activity for a hands-on way to review the narrative and to extend the learning.

## LAUNCH

**PRAY** Dear heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together around Your Word. Help us to learn more about how big Your love is for us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

**SING** “Holy Spirit, Light Divine”  
“I Was Baptized”  
Music can be found in the digital resource center.

**SAY** Look at the animals I brought for us today (photos, plastic, or both). Tell me what you know about any of them. Now let’s sort them. How should we sort these animals? (Let students spend some time deciding how to sort them and explaining their sorting. Then you sort them based on the clean and unclean categories listed in the student book.) Can you tell how I sorted them? In the Books of Moses, God gave His people laws regarding clean and unclean animals. Unclean animals were not acceptable to be used as sacrifices in the temple. People were not to eat unclean animals either. When Jesus came, He fulfilled those laws. Today we are free to eat meat from any animal. Listen to our Bible narrative today for these animals to make an appearance. When you hear about the animals, raise your hand.

## LEARN

### READ “A CENTURION CONVERTS”

Use the *Explore Bible Guidebook* to read the Bible narrative aloud to your students.

### DO SOMETHING

**FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS** As you read this narrative, use your most dramatic voice of wonder. When you get to Peter’s vision, use a white pillowcase or towel filled with the animals you brought for the opening.

write each one on its own sheet of paper. Have students work in pairs to illustrate each event. Then together have students put them in the correct order on the wall or board. For students who aren’t yet strong readers, read the sentences for them.

**FOR MIXED AGE LEARNERS** Using the events of the narrative numbered below,

### KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Cornelius was a devout Jew, but he didn’t yet know Jesus. Because he had converted to Judaism, he would have been expecting a Messiah.
- The events of this narrative are a little complicated. Following is the sequence of events: **1.** Cornelius is in Caesarea and sends his soldiers to Joppa to get Peter after having a vision from God. **2.** Peter is in Joppa, also having a vision from God. **3.** The men come to get Peter, and he returns with them to Caesarea. **4.** He encounters Cornelius and shares the Good News about Jesus with him: that the love and forgiveness of Jesus is for everyone. **5.** The Holy Spirit falls on all who hear about Jesus. **6.** Peter baptizes them all.
- Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament laws.
- All people are equal in God’s eyes through the work of Jesus on our behalf.
- As God’s people, we are called to share the Good News of salvation in Jesus with all people.
- The common response to hearing God’s Word was Baptism (Acts 10:48).

# LIVE

## EXPLORE THE CONTEXT

Before you start the discussion questions, use the *Explore Bible Guidebook* for further details about centurions and clean and unclean meat, found on the second page of Lesson 3.

## TALK ABOUT IT

Choose from the following questions. For a few helps, encourage students to look in the *Explore Bible Guidebook*.

- ▶ **In Peter's time, Jews didn't associate with non-Jews. Other groups didn't associate with each other either. But Jesus came for all people. This was a very new idea at the time and one that sometimes people had a hard time understanding. Today, different groups of people still sometimes have a hard time getting along. How can we share the love of Jesus with all people?** (This might be a delicate subject in some places, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't talk about it. Help your students understand that Jesus is for all people and that He wants us to love all people too.)
- ▶ **The Jews considered the Romans who were ruling Israel to be their sworn enemies. The fact that Cornelius was so well accepted by the people was very unusual. Cornelius's interest in the Jewish faith was fairly uncommon for a Roman centurion. What does God's Word tell us about how we should deal with our enemies?** (We should pray for them and love them.)

## SAY THE BIBLE VERSE TOGETHER

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

## KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Calling on the name of the Lord is an old practice of God's people.
- God's name is powerful.

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Ask students to describe today's narrative from the point of view of the soldiers that Cornelius sent to get Peter. Perhaps they can start by pretending to be one of those devout soldiers who is telling their family about their day, starting with "You won't believe what happened to me today. . . ."

# LEAVE

**SAY** God's love in Jesus is for everyone!

**SING** The Doxology, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"  
"The Lord's Prayer"  
Music can be found in the digital resource center.

**PRAY** Dear Lord, You used people like Peter to share the Good News of forgiveness in Jesus with everyone. Thank You for sending Jesus for everyone, including me! In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.



### DOWNLOADABLE PAGE

Extend learning by printing the downloadable activity page found in the digital resource center. See the back page of this guide for details.



### CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ came to offer forgiveness to everyone.

## DOWNLOADABLE PAGE HELPS

Make copies of the downloadable activity page found in the digital resource center. Use the helps below as a guide.

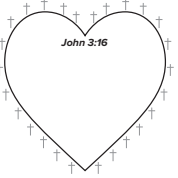
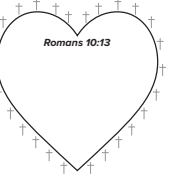
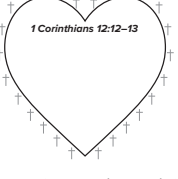
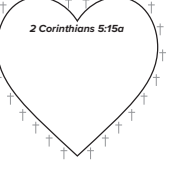
**John 3:16** states that God sent Jesus because He loves the whole world. **Romans 10:13** reminds us that everyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. **1 Corinthians 12:12–13** says that God’s love is for all who are united into one body of believers. **2 Corinthians 5:15a** reassures us that Jesus died for all. God’s love in Jesus is for *everyone*.

Not all students have the skills to look up Bible passages quickly. Help students by bookmarking these verses in your classroom Bible and highlighting them with a yellow marker. Read passages aloud while students follow along in their Bibles. For students for whom writing is a struggle, have them dictate their responses for you to write.

**A CENTURION CONVERTS—PETER AND CORNELIUS**  
Unit 9, Lesson 3

**God's Love in Jesus**

**Directions:** Look up the Bible passage contained in each heart below. Write a few words in each heart to describe what the verse says about whom God's love is for.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <br><b>John 3:16</b>               | <br><b>Romans 10:13</b>         |
| <br><b>1 Corinthians 12:12–13</b> | <br><b>2 Corinthians 5:15a</b> |

God's love in Jesus is for \_\_\_\_\_.



### 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.

## BONUS ACTIVITIES

### GOOD NEWS SONG

5 minutes

Sing these lyrics to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know.”

We can call on Jesus’ name,  
For He loves us all the same.  
He will take away our sin.  
He will make us right within.  
Yes, Jesus saves us. (*Repeat 2 more times.*)  
Good News for everyone!

### PETER’S VISION DIORAMA

Times may vary

Bring in supplies like a shoe box, construction paper, white washcloth, play dough, and so forth to build a diorama of Peter on the rooftop. Go online for examples. If you have some male action figures or male dolls, use these to act out the narrative on your diorama.

### PRAYER CLOCKS

Times may vary

Cornelius prayed at the ninth hour, which is 3:00 p.m., a traditional time for prayer. Make clocks out of paper plates (look online for instructions) or draw a page of clockfaces (also found online). Then draw in the times when one might pray. Label each clockface with the type of prayer you might say at that time, such as mealtime and bedtime.