

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

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*.

MORE TIME Read "Apologetics Helps" on the back page in preparation for the "Live" section.

IN DEPTH Read the article "The Israelite Diet" on page 236 of *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

SUPPLIES

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Whiteboard or large sheet of paper
- ☐ Dry-erase marker or marker
- ☐ Map: paper, digital, or a globe

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Shareable images from digital resource center
- ☐ Supplies for bonus activities
- ☐ cph.org/digitalcontent



LEADER NOTE

Option: Do this intro activity as a whole group. As people call out things that are alike and different within the group, write them on a whiteboard or sheet of paper. Discuss.



DEFEND JOURNAL

Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 3.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Have a tasty talk about differences and similarities with “Unfamiliar Food Feast.”



LEADER NOTE

Option: In addition to or instead of reading these sections, use a Bible app to listen to some or all of Acts 10 as youth follow along in their Bibles.

LAUNCH

WALK-IN QUESTION

What is one thing that all people have in common?

ALIKE, DIFFERENT

Set a timer for three minutes. Have youth get in pairs to find out as many ways as possible that they are alike and different. After three minutes, let willing pairs share.

SAY We are all alike in some ways and different in others. In today’s narrative, Peter learns that though people and cultures may be different, God loves all people the same.

PRAY Dear Jesus, You came for all people. Help us to share the Good News of Your love with everyone, alike or different. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

READ “THE BIG PICTURE” AND TALK IT OUT

► Peter was a Jew, and Cornelius was a Gentile. Jews usually didn’t associate with Gentiles. Imagine Peter’s thoughts as he headed to Cornelius’s house.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Peter was likely thinking about his vision and what God was telling him. He may have been beginning to understand that the Good News of Jesus was for all people.

LEARN ABOUT “A CENTURION CONVERTS”

Divide the group in two: Jews and Gentiles.

Ask volunteers from the “Gentile” group to read **Acts 10:1–8** as others follow along in their Bibles.

- How did God prepare the Gentile Cornelius to receive the Gospel? How does God prepare unbelievers today to hear the Gospel?
- Cornelius had been living among the Jews and had heard about the coming Messiah.
- God places unbelievers among believers like us so that they have the opportunity to hear the Gospel as well.

Ask volunteers from the “Jews” group to read **Acts 10:9–33**.

► How did God break down the barriers between Jews and Gentiles?

- God gave visions to both Cornelius and Peter and instructed them to come together.
- God removed the “clean and unclean” foods barrier and the societal barrier between Jews and Gentiles.

Read **Acts 10: 34–48**.

► How did the Holy Spirit work among both Gentiles and Jews in this section?

- As Peter spoke God’s Word, God sent the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles in Cornelius’s house.
- Peter accepted that the Gentiles were people called by God to believe in Him.
- Peter directed that the Gentiles be baptized in the name of Jesus.

LIVE

DISCUSS “CHRIST FOR ALL”

Show a map of the world—paper, digital, or a globe. Ask the group to name various countries, people groups, and languages. Then point to your location on the map. Talk about the people who live around you. On a whiteboard or large sheet of paper, make a continuum line. On the leftmost side, write “Easy to share the Gospel”; on the rightmost side, write “Challenging to share the Gospel.” Ask learners to write all along the continuum line (friends, family members, strangers, refugees, other cultures, classmates, teammates, etc.). Then discuss the following question. See “Apologetics Helps” on the back page of this leaflet for additional support as you discuss.

► **How can we share the love of Jesus with all people?**

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Encourage youth to think about ways that they can talk about their faith with the people closest to them: family, friends, classmates, and teammates.
- What are some ways that youth can be witnesses of Christ in their schools and community? When people see Christians who are kind and caring toward others, they see Christ through their actions.
- Talk about opportunities to serve God and others through professional church work as a missionary, pastor, DCE, deaconess, Lutheran teacher, and so forth.

CONSIDER “JEWS FOR JESUS”

The earliest believers in Jesus as their Savior were Jews. The apostles preached in the Jewish synagogues and the Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of many Jews to believe. Today, Gentiles, or non-Jews, make up the majority of Christians living in the world. But God hasn’t given up on the Jewish people, and neither should we.

► **Take a few minutes to pray for the Jewish people and the organizations that minister to them, that God would open the hearts of the Jewish people to the Gospel.**

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Check for understanding by asking youth to tell you how they know that God’s love in Jesus is for everyone.

LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse, written in the *Defend Journal*:

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

Ask for prayer requests. Offer to pray, or invite a student to pray for everyone.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God sent His Son, Jesus, to bring forgiveness and new life to all people.



LEADER NOTE

Help youth think through the continuum line with prompts such as these: What makes it more challenging to share the Gospel with some people? Language or culture differences? What makes sharing the Gospel easier? Location or relationships?



BONUS ACTIVITY

Give some musical encouragement to share the Gospel with “Music and Mission.”



SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD

Connect with youth before and after the lesson by using the shareable images from the digital resource center.

APOLOGETICS HELPS

DEFEND THE FAITH

God had begun to give laws about clean and unclean foods as early as the time of Noah (see Genesis 7:1–3). These laws reminded the Israelites that they were God’s people, set apart from the pagan nations around them. These and other laws helped preserve the Israelite nation, from which the Messiah would come. After Jesus came, God showed His people that these laws were no longer necessary. Peter told the other apostles that God had said to him: “What God has made clean, do not call common.” God was showing the early Christians that His love is for all people.

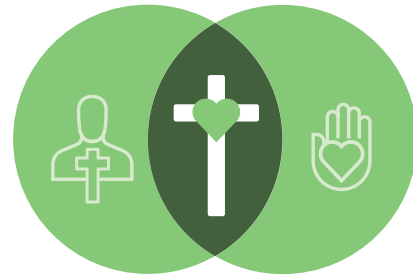
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

► **I don’t want to be a missionary in another country. Is that wrong?**

God has given to His people, the Church, the command to “go . . . and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19)—but that doesn’t mean that you need to go to another country. There are many people in your own community, maybe even in your own family, who do not know the love of God in Jesus Christ. You can share the Good News wherever you go—to another nation, or in your own backyard.

► **Does God really love everyone?**

We might wonder if God really loves people in every culture, language, and nation. Some of the Jews in Jesus’ time wondered this as well. Jesus showed His disciples that God’s love is for everyone. One example of this is when He spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well. God showed Peter through a vision and a visit to Cornelius that the Gospel is for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. In the Book of Revelation, the apostle John wrote that he saw “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages,” praising the Lamb of God in heaven (Revelation 7:9). God’s love and salvation is for all (John 3:16).



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

MUSIC AND MISSION

5–10 minutes

Look online or in *Lutheran Service Book* for the words to “Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying” (LSB 826) or look online for the song “O Church Arise” (by the Gettys). Read, listen to, and sing these songs. Talk about our mission to share the Good News with people everywhere.

UNFAMILIAR FOOD FEAST

10–15 minutes

Bring in some foods that may be unfamiliar to your group: hummus and pita bread, mango or papaya, or an ethnic food. Be aware of any food allergies. Talk about differences in food choices among people groups. Despite differences, all people are in need of the Savior, Jesus.

THE CHURCH WORLDWIDE

15–20 minutes

Look online to find Lutheran churches in other countries. How many can you find? Are there any countries your group is surprised there are Christians in? Talk about the Church being made of people from every nation, tribe, people, and language. Read Revelation 7:9–10.