

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead



Overview

Materials You'll Need

- no extra materials are needed for this lesson



Scriptures

Jn 11:1-45

Bible Truth Objective(s)

Jesus performed a miracle and raised Lazarus from the dead.

Behavioral Objective(s)

To teach the children to feel confident that life is in the hands of God

Memory Verse

"I am the resurrection and the life."
(Jn 11:25a)



Bible Knowledge

Lazarus' Resurrection

Lazarus and his sisters lived in Bethany. Bethany is located at the foot of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem.

Lazarus, whose name means "God has helped," was a close friend of Jesus, as were his two sisters Mary and Martha (see Lesson 5; Mary's anointing of Jesus happened after Lazarus was raised from the dead; the lessons are not sequential). Jesus must have had great love for this particular family because the messengers who brought the news to Jesus referred to Lazarus as the one whom Jesus loved (Jn 11:3).

Jesus knew the sisters' pain, but He did not respond immediately. His delay had a specific purpose. Sometimes, God's timing may make us think He is not answering our prayers or is not answering the way we want Him to. But He will meet all our needs according to His perfect plan and purpose. Although Jesus was capable of healing Lazarus immediately, He chose to resurrect Lazarus a few days after his death. Through this great miracle many came to believe in Him, and a greater

good was accomplished.

From the dialogue Jesus had with Mary and Martha, it is apparent that their understanding of the power of Jesus was imperfect. Their faith no doubt would have been strengthened from witnessing their brother's resurrection.

Tombs at that time were usually caves carved in the limestone rock of a hillside. A tomb was often large enough for people to walk inside. Several bodies were usually placed in one tomb. After the burial, a large stone was rolled across the entrance of the tomb to seal it.

Only the Gospel of John mentions the resurrection of Lazarus. The Synoptic Gospels do record Jesus' resurrection of Jairus' daughter and the widow of Nain. But both of these miracles occurred no more than a day after their respective deaths. Jewish custom held that the soul of the deceased hovered around the body for three days after death. When Jesus reached Lazarus' tomb, Lazarus had been dead for four days. As He stood before the tomb, Jesus commanded, "Lazarus, come out!" (Jn 11:43). To everyone's amazement, Lazarus was brought back to life. Thus the resurrection of Lazarus after four days clearly demonstrated to the Jewish witnesses that Jesus was the Author of life.



Understanding Your Students

The students at this age don't have a real grasp of death. Some may have experienced the death of a family member or a pet. But unless they were extremely close to that person or animal, it would not likely have impacted them very much. Therefore, it is our job to stress that death is permanent, so they can see how great God's power is, but at the same time, not to scare them with the profoundness of death.

If the students do express fears and concerns about death, admit to them that death may seem scary because we don't know what will happen to us. But explain that Jesus gives life after death to all who love and believe in Him. That is why we are called Christians. We believe that Jesus is God and can give

us eternal life. No one but Jesus is great enough to do something as wonderful as that.

When we explain the death and resurrection of Lazarus to the students, we want them to see that Jesus was no ordinary person. He is God Himself. Emphasize the fact that because Jesus was sent from God, He had power from God even though He was human. It is also possible that the students might see Jesus as some kind of superhero. Don't be surprised if they start to talk about favorite fictional superheroes from television and compare them to the power of Jesus. Children today are fascinated by these fictional characters, who supposedly possess incredible powers. Gently explain to them that these characters are not real, but that Jesus is and His power is real. He is the only one who has lived and resurrected. He is the only one who has overcome death.



Vocabulary

Miracle

something amazing and great that only God can do

Tomb

a cave where a dead person was buried

Linen

a kind of cloth that dead people were wrapped in before they were buried

Resurrect

to be alive again after you have died



Before You Teach

The Bible records that when Jesus heard Lazarus was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was before heading to Bethany. This may have seemed strange because the Bible also records that Lazarus was someone whom the Lord loved. It would be reasonable to expect Jesus to rush to Lazarus' side and help him. Why did Jesus stay away for several days? The purpose was to glorify God. If Jesus had gone immediately, He might have reached Lazarus before he died. Then many would not be able to witness the miracle of bringing the dead back to life again. The people who knew Jesus, including the disciples, did not understand this. Even Mary and Martha both said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Clearly, they did not have a mature understanding of God's power and timing. They assumed that because Jesus had come four

days later, there was nothing that could be done.

Today, when we pray to God, we also expect Him to respond to our requests in a certain way. Like Mary and Martha, we place our human reasoning onto God. We give God a timeline; we give God ultimatums; we tell God to do things our way. But through this miracle, Jesus has shown us two things: God has power over all things and is capable of anything, even resurrecting the dead, and God's timing is the best timing. When God makes us wait or doesn't answer us the way we expect Him to, we must believe that God has His purposes. We may not be able to see the reasons right away, but we need to trust that God only wants what is best for us. In due time, we will see His good purposes.

When Mary and Martha saw their brother pass away, they probably had lost all hope. Even when they saw Jesus, they probably thought He had come to mourn with them. Yet, Jesus showed them the greatest miracle of all. Let us be encouraged to trust in God and know that He can do anything, at the right time.



Bible Story

Jesus Performs Great Miracles

In the last lesson, we learned that Jesus healed a man who had been born blind. That means this man could not see anything. He spent most of his life begging for food and money because he could not work. One day, Jesus passed by where this man was sitting and Jesus wanted to help him. First He spat on the ground. Then He mixed the saliva with the dust until it became muddy. Jesus put some of the mud onto the man's eyes. Finally, Jesus asked the man to go and wash the mud off in a pool. The man obeyed and did exactly what Jesus told him to do. When he washed the mud off, he found out that he could see things he had not been able to see before. What might some of those things be? (Allow students to share their ideas.) The man was excited and happy. He never thought he could see, but Jesus gave him a new life. We know from this lesson that Jesus can do wonderful things. Today, we are going to hear about another story where Jesus performed a great miracle. He did something that no one thought anyone could ever do.

Jesus' Friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

Jesus had three friends named Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. We might remember Mary from a previous lesson. She was the one who poured the expensive perfume onto Jesus' feet because she loved Him very much. We might also remember that Mary and Martha were Lazarus' sisters. So they were part of the same family. They lived in a village called Bethany, which is in Judea. Jesus loved them all very much.

One day while Jesus was teaching some people, a messenger came to him from Mary and Martha. A messenger is a person who tells people news. This messenger didn't have good news.

"Jesus, I have sad news to tell you. Your friend Lazarus is very sick."

Jesus loved Lazarus very much and He was sad to hear that he was very sick. The people thought that Jesus would go to see Lazarus right away. But Jesus did not. Even though Jesus loved Lazarus and wanted to see him, He had a very special plan in mind. He wanted to show people that He was sent by God. So

Jesus decided not to go to see Lazarus and heal him right away. He decided to wait two days.

After two days Jesus said to His disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

Jesus knew in His heart that He had to go to see Lazarus now. He knew that Lazarus was already dead. No one needed to tell Him because He is God and He knows everything.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus is dead. I want to see Him. I' have something special to show you."

The disciples obeyed and followed Jesus to Judea.

Lazarus Is Dead

Jesus and His disciples went to Judea where Martha and Mary lived. When Jesus arrived in the town, He found that Lazarus had already been in his tomb for four days. Many people came to the house of Mary and Martha to comfort them. They came to visit because they knew Mary and Martha were sad their brother was dead. These people wanted to make Mary and Martha feel better.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she ran to meet Him.

When she saw Him she said, "If You had been here You could have healed Lazarus and he would not have died!"

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will be made alive again." Martha didn't really understand Jesus. She thought Jesus meant Lazarus would be taken up to heaven one day.

Jesus asked her, "Everyone who believes in Me will live. Do you believe this?"

Martha said, "I believe You are the Son of God."

She still didn't really understand what Jesus meant. She still thought Jesus meant Lazarus would be taken up to heaven. After this, Martha went back to the house and called her sister. There were many people in the house at that time. They were trying to make Mary feel better. Martha said to Mary, "Mary! Come quickly! Jesus is calling for you."

Mary ran to see Jesus. The people who were in the house followed her. They thought she was going to visit Lazarus' tomb to cry there. When she saw Jesus she fell down at His feet and cried. She was so sad!

She said, "Jesus, if You had come here sooner, Lazarus would still be alive!"

When Jesus saw all the people crying, Jesus cried too. Jesus was sad that His friend Lazarus was dead. He felt sad that Mary and Martha missed Lazarus their brother so much. All the people who followed Mary saw Jesus cry and how much He loved Lazarus.

But some of them said to themselves, "Jesus has done so many great things. He has made so many sick people better again. Couldn't Jesus heal Lazarus when he was sick so he wouldn't die?"

Even though Jesus was sad He knew that something great was going to happen.

Jesus asked them, "Where is Lazarus now?" They led him to the tomb where Lazarus was. The tomb was a big cave with a big stone covering the front of the cave.

Jesus said, "Take away the stone".

But Martha answered, "But, Jesus, Lazarus has been dead for four days! His body is going to smell."

Lazarus Is Brought Back to Life

Jesus said, "Martha, believe in Me. You will see the glory of God."

So they took away the stone and Jesus prayed

out loud. "Father, I thank You because You hear when I pray. There are so many people here. I am praying to You because I want the people here to know that You have sent Me."

Everyone who was standing near the cave wondered what Jesus was going to do next.

Then Jesus spoke in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

What do you think happened next? That's right! A great thing happened! What do you think it was? The people couldn't believe their eyes. Lazarus came out from inside the cave. He was alive! He walked out and he was still covered from top to toe in strips of linen. That's how dead people were wrapped. There was even a cloth around his face!

Jesus said, "Take off the linen and let him go."

Mary and Martha could hardly believe what had just happened. Jesus had done a great thing! Jesus had brought their brother back to life! The people who were there were also surprised. They knew that Lazarus had been dead for four days. But they saw how Jesus brought him back to life again. How amazing! They knew that only someone with God's power could do this. Many of them came to believe that Jesus was sent by God. They believed that Jesus had power over everything.



Check For Understanding

1. **Who was very sick?** (Lazarus.)
2. **How many days did Jesus wait before going to see Lazarus?** (Two days.)
3. **What did Mary and Martha say to Jesus when they saw Him?** ("If You had come sooner, then Lazarus would not have died.")
4. **What did Jesus say after the stone was rolled away from the tomb?** (He told Lazarus to come out of the tomb.)
5. **What happened after Jesus spoke those words?** (Lazarus came out of the tomb, still wrapped in linen cloth.)
6. **How long had Lazarus been dead before**

Jesus brought him back to life again?

(Four days.)

7. **Why did Jesus wait until Lazarus was dead before He came?** (He wanted to show everyone the kind of power God has. God has power over life and He can also bring back to life those who are dead.)
8. **What did many of the people who saw this miracle do?** (They came to believe in Jesus because they believed that Jesus was sent by God.)
9. **God is the only one who can resurrect the dead. What does it mean to resurrect?** (It means to come back to life after you have died. If someone in your family believed in the Lord but has died, do not feel sad.)

Jesus promised us that He is the resurrection and the life, meaning that He will make the dead come back alive in the

future. He is the greatest on earth and in heaven. We should really thank God because He loves us and gives us life.



Life Application Story

A Special Visit

The Marsh family was going to take a special trip on Sunday. They were going to visit Mr. Cox in the hospital because he was very sick. Mr. Cox was an old friend, and the caretaker of the church. Mr. Cox had watched Michelle and John grow up.

"Hurry up kids. It's time to go!" shouted Mr. Marsh from outside. John and Michelle gathered their things and rushed outside to put them in the car. John had drawn a picture for Mr. Cox. Michelle brought a handful of colorful flowers she had picked from the garden. They looked great and smelled just wonderful. Soon, the family was off.

"When will Mr. Cox get to leave the hospital?" Michelle asked from the backseat. "He's been there for a long time."

"Mr. Cox has been pretty sick, Michelle," replied Mrs. Marsh. "We've just got to keep praying for him. He has wonderful doctors and nurses looking after him, but what he really needs is for Jesus to take care of Him."

"Why don't we pray for him now?", John chipped in.

"That's a great idea," said Mr. Marsh. "Why don't we ask Mom to lead the prayer?"

They all prayed together in the car. In the prayer, they all hoped that Mr. Cox would get better soon. Mr. Cox was a good family friend and he looked after the church so well.

When they got to the hospital, a nurse showed them to Mr. Cox's room. Mr. Cox looked like he was sleeping, but when they walked in, he opened his eyes.

"Why, hello! I'm so glad you came to visit," Mr. Cox said.

The whole family crowded into the small hospital room.

Mr. Marsh asked, "Are you doing better, Mr. Cox?"

"We've been praying for you," said John.

"Praise the Lord, I'm doing better," Mr. Cox said. Michelle gave Mr. Cox the flowers she had picked and said, "These are for you, Mr. Cox. I'll put them by your window," Michelle said.

"Thank you, Michelle. They are so colorful and smell so good. These will really brighten my room," Mr. Cox said. "I was just thinking about you all. I'm so glad to see you again."

John also gave Mr. Cox the picture he drew.

"John, did you draw this yourself?" Mr. Cox asked.

"I sure did. This is a picture of you. You are standing in front of the church, taking care of the grass and flowers like you always do," John said.

"This is a wonderful picture," Mr. Cox said. "I'm going to ask the nurse to put it up right over there so I can see it. This will remind me of how much Jesus loves me and takes care of me because He gives me such good friends."

Then John asked, "When Jesus makes you better, will you plant some more flowers in the front of the church with me, like you promised?"

"Of course," Mr. Cox said. "Actually just this morning the doctors said I should be out of hospital in a week. We could go and buy some flowers then."

Michelle excitedly turned to Mrs. Marsh and said, "We just prayed in the car this morning for Mr. Cox, and the doctors say he can go home soon."

"Jesus loves Mr. Cox very much and has looked after him," Mrs. Marsh replied. "Jesus loves all of us. He listens to us when we pray, and heals us when we're sick, just like He did in the Bible stories."

Mr. Cox said, "Why don't we pray now to thank God for good friends and for helping me get better?"

Everyone bowed their heads and began to pray softly to thank God.

Questions to Think About

1. **What were Mr. Cox and the Marshes thanking God for?** (They were thanking God for taking care of Mr. Cox.)
2. **What can Jesus do that no one else can do?** (Allow students to brainstorm ideas.)



Activity 1

Jesus Raises Lazarus

Look at the pictures. They are in the wrong order. Which picture comes first, second, third, and last? Write the numbers in the boxes to tell how the story went.

1. Mary cries to Jesus.
2. Jesus tells the people to roll away the stone.
3. Jesus prays to God.
4. Lazarus comes out of the tomb.



Activity 2

Life Is In God's Hands

We know that God controls everything. Below are some things that God made and controls. What are they? How does God take care of all these things? We know we can trust God to watch over all His creation.

1. water and mountains
2. animals
3. trees and plants
4. people



Activity 3

Action Rhyme

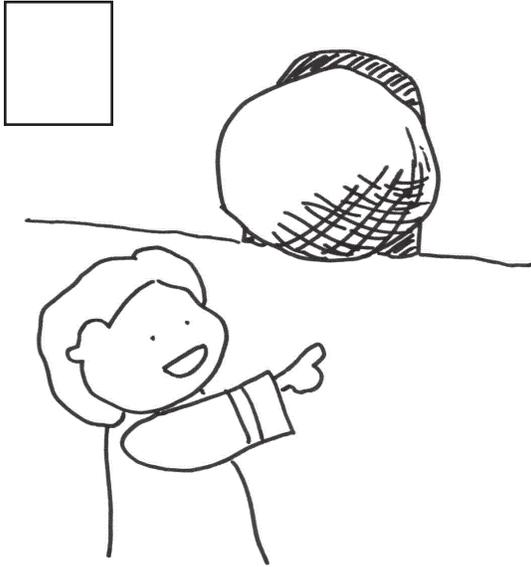
To help your students review the Bible story, have them sing the following lyrics to the tune of "London Bridge." As your students sing the song, have them act out the verses.

1. Lazarus was feeling sick,
Feeling sick, feeling sick. (Rub hand on tummy.)
Lazarus was feeling sick,
Jesus could help him.
2. Mary and Martha were very sad,
Very sad, very sad. (Use hands to rub eyes.)
All their friends were very sad.
Jesus could help them.
3. Jesus went to help them all,
Help them all, help them all. (Extend arms out.)
Jesus went to help them all
Because He loved them.

Activity 10:1

Jesus Raises Lazarus

Look at the pictures. They are in the wrong order. Which picture comes first, second, third, and last? Write the numbers in the boxes to tell how the story went.



Activity 10:2

Life Is In God's Hands

We know that God controls everything. Below are some things that God made and controls. What are they? How does God take care of them?

