

LESSON 7

MARY AND MARTHA SEEK HELP

BEFORE YOU TEACH

From Perea to Judea

At one point, Jesus was preaching in the region of Perea on the east side of the Jordan River. He traveled to Perea to escape the Jews in Jerusalem, who were plotting to kill Him (Jn 10:39-40). It was in Perea that Jesus learned of Lazarus' sickness.

Lazarus, Martha, and Mary lived in the town of Bethany. Bethany was two miles from Jerusalem, in the region of Judea. The proximity of Bethany to Jerusalem—and to the Jews who wished to kill Jesus—made traveling to Bethany very dangerous for Jesus. Despite this, Jesus' love for Lazarus, Martha, and Mary compelled Him to go to Bethany and resurrect Lazarus.

Instead of leaving for Bethany immediately after receiving news about Lazarus, Jesus remained in Perea for two days because He knew that He would resurrect Lazarus (Jn 11:4, 14). In the meantime, Martha, Mary, and the people in Bethany waited anxiously. According to Jewish belief, after a person died, his soul remained near his body for three days, giving hope that it would return to the body. By resurrecting Lazarus four days after he died, Jesus demonstrated God's glory and power over life and death.

Burial Customs

During Jesus' time, tombs were caves of limestone rock carved in hillsides. The entrances to these tombs were large enough for a person to walk through. At times, more than one body would be buried in a tomb. A large rock would be placed at the entrance to seal the tomb.

Raising the Dead

In addition to Lazarus, Jesus also resurrected other people: Jairus' daughter (Matt 9:18-26; Mk 5:41-42; Lk 8:52-56) and a widow's son (Lk 7:11-15). Lazarus' resurrection was important because through it, Jesus demonstrated to His disciples and the world that He had power over death. Through this miracle, many believed that Jesus was the Son of God and placed their faith in Him. Jesus also delivered an important teaching: Whoever believes in Him receives eternal life that physical death can never take away.

BIBLE TEXT

John 11:1-45

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus can resurrect our physical body. More importantly, He gives us eternal life.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that Jesus loves and cares for us, even in difficult circumstances.
2. To recognize that Jesus has power over life and death.

MEMORY VERSE

"He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."

(John 11:25b)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord Jesus, thank You for the opportunity to learn Your words and to worship You at Your church. Help us to listen attentively to learn Your teachings. We know that You care for and love us deeply, Lord. You created us. You heal our sicknesses. You also give us eternal life. You are the almighty God. Help us to trust and believe in You completely. May all glory be unto Your name. Hallelujah! Amen.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Though they are young, your students will still face many different trials. Like Martha and Mary, they may experience a close friend, parent, or beloved pet suffer from an illness or die. They may be too young to cope with the emotional pain and may question God's motive and love.

Such moments are opportunities to discuss death. On the simplest level, we can point out to our students the cycle of birth and death. We can see it all around us, in nature and in men. Point out how the flowers first bloom,

then die, and how autumn and winter follow spring and summer. Discuss the aging process by observing the differing physiology between the old and the young. Explain that although seeing loved ones suffer illness or die may be painful and difficult, God allows these things to happen so that we can learn from them and draw closer to Him. By doing this, we can glorify and honor God. We can remind our students to seek comfort from the Bible and through prayer at such times.

VOCABULARY

mourn: to grieve, feel sad for

tomb: a place where dead people are placed or buried

resurrect: to raise from the dead, bring to life again

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about four friends who demonstrated great faith in Jesus by bringing their paralyzed friend to see Him, even if it meant that they had to uncover a roof and lower their friend through it to do so. How did they show their faith? (They didn't turn back when they saw the huge crowd and instead went through all the effort to lower their paralyzed friend through the roof to see Jesus.) What did Jesus say to the paralyzed man after seeing his friends' great faith? ("Son, your sins are forgiven you.") Then, to show His power on earth, He healed the man so that he could walk again. We learned that we should also be good friends to others like those four friends were to the paralyzed man, and that only Jesus (and therefore, God) has the power to forgive sins.

Today's lesson is about how Martha and Mary turned to Jesus for help when their brother Lazarus became ill.

BIBLE STORY

Lazarus Is Sick

In a town called Bethany, there lived two sisters and a brother. They were Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They loved and took good care of one another. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus had a special friend who came to visit them. Does anyone know who their good friend was? Yes, it was the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus loved this family very much.

One day, Lazarus became very sick and did not get better. His sisters became very worried. How could they help their brother?

Mary and Martha Send for Jesus

Martha and Mary loved Lazarus very much. They were worried because Lazarus was so sick. They thought that if Jesus were there, He could perform a miracle and heal Lazarus. Jesus had performed many wonderful miracles. He healed the sick, made the blind see, made the lame walk, and made the deaf hear. Jesus had the power to heal

Lazarus. Martha said to Mary, "We can send messengers to tell Jesus that Lazarus is sick. He will come to heal him."

Jesus Goes to Bethany

The messengers traveled as fast as they could. They went to a place called Perea, which wasn't too far from Bethany. They found Jesus teaching people the word of God. The messengers told Jesus that Lazarus was sick and that He needed to go to Bethany to heal him. When Jesus heard the news, He did not go immediately. Instead, He told His disciples that Lazarus would not die, and that this happened so that God would be glorified.

Lazarus Dies

Back in Bethany, Martha and Mary were waiting anxiously for Jesus to arrive. They prayed every day, hoping that Jesus would arrive that day. But, Lazarus was so sick that he died.

What happens to a person when they die? The person stops breathing. His heart also stops beating.

Does anyone here have a family member or a pet that died? How did you feel? Yes, when we lose someone or something we love, we feel a lot of pain and sadness. Lazarus' death also made Martha and Mary very sad. They missed him very much. Jesus did not come to Bethany to heal him. Jesus did not come and save Lazarus.

When Martha and Mary's friends heard about Lazarus' death, they came to their house and mourned with them. They also helped Mary and Martha wrap Lazarus' body in cloth, bury him in a big cave, and cover the mouth of the cave with a huge stone.

Jesus Arrives in Bethany

Jesus finally arrived in Bethany, but Lazarus had been dead for four days. When Martha heard that Jesus had come, she ran to Jesus and said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Let's turn to John 11:25 and read this aloud together: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.'"

Jesus said that He was the resurrection and the life. Jesus has the power to raise people from the dead, and He gives life to all things.

When Mary heard that Jesus had arrived, she came before Him, fell at His feet, and began crying. "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw the sadness of Martha and Mary, as well as the grief of the Jews who were mourning with them, Jesus also cried with them.

Jesus then asked, "Where is Lazarus buried?"

"Come and see," said the people. "We'll take you there."

Jesus Raises Lazarus

When Jesus, Martha, Mary, and the Jews arrived at Lazarus' tomb, Jesus told them, "Take away the stone."

"But Jesus, Lazarus has been dead four days now; there will be a very bad smell," Martha said.

Jesus looked at her and said, "If you believe, you will see the power of God."

Upon hearing this, the people immediately rolled the stone away. Then Jesus stood in front of the cave and cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

Mary, Martha, and all the people who were with them looked with very wide eyes toward the opening of the cave. Would Lazarus really live again? Did Jesus have the power to make a dead man live again? Was it possible? If you had been standing with Mary and Martha by the cave, would you have believed that Jesus had the power to raise Lazarus from the dead? Raise your hand if you would have believed.

They all waited anxiously to see what would happen. Suddenly, a man still wrapped in linen cloth walked out from the cave. Lazarus was alive! Lazarus had been raised from the dead! Praise be to God! Jesus is the resurrection and the life! [Have students repeat this phrase with you.]

Mary and Martha were so happy that their brother had been given back to them. Lazarus was really alive again. Mary and Martha thought that Jesus had arrived too late to save their brother, but now they realized that Jesus purposely came late because He wanted to show the power of God to glorify His name. Many of the people who did not believe in Jesus before believed now that He was God and that He was the resurrection and the life. Hallelujah!

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

True or False

1. **Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived in Jerusalem.** False; they lived in Bethany.
2. **Lazarus had been dead for 6 days when Jesus arrived.** False; he had been dead for 4 days.
3. **Mary and Martha wanted Jesus to come quickly because they believed that He had the power to heal Lazarus.** True.
4. **After witnessing Lazarus' resurrection, the Jews believed in Jesus.** True.
5. **Jesus delayed in coming to Bethany because He did not like Lazarus.** False; He delayed in coming to glorify God.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." (John 11:25b)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. He Is the Resurrection and the Life

When Jesus was on earth, He loved and cared for the people who were sick and suffering. He performed many wonderful miracles. Can you name some of the miracles that Jesus performed? [Let students think and share. Some miracles have been listed below.]

He allowed the deaf to hear.
He caused the blind to see.
He healed the leprous.
He made the lame walk.

Today, we learned that the Lord Jesus had the power to raise people from the dead. No one can resurrect the dead except Jesus. That's because Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Only He can raise people from the dead and give them life.

Not only is Jesus powerful, He is also merciful and kind. We can pray to Jesus when we have problems or are sick. He is able and willing to help us because He loves us. Not only will Jesus heal our sickness, He will also give us eternal life so that we can be with Him in heaven. He can do wonders in our lives, just as He did in the family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus!

[Using the provided template, cut out the tree and leaves to use as templates. You may want to enlarge the tree or shrink the leaves accordingly. Then, trace the tree and the leaves onto colored construction paper, ensuring that each student has leaf. Have the students complete the following sentence on the leaves: "I can trust in God because He is..." Then, glue the leaves to the tree and pin the tree onto a bulletin board.]

2. Jesus Cares

[Ask the students to share something about which they have been praying. Then, ask the students whether God has answered their prayers.]

If God has not answered your prayers, do you still believe that He loves and cares for you? Does God still love you when He does not give you what you ask for? Does God love you even when He allows bad things to happen to you? [Allow students to share their thoughts.]

[Prepare a woven throw or picture. Have the students look at the back of the throw or picture, which exposes only the messy threads. Ask the students to guess what is on the front. When they finish guessing, show them the actual picture so they can see if they guessed correctly.]

Oftentimes, we do not understand God's plan, just like when we could not see the picture clearly when we looked at the back of the throw. Mary and Martha prayed and hoped that the Lord Jesus would come on time to save Lazarus so that he would not die. They waited and waited, but Jesus arrived in Bethany four days after Lazarus had died. They did not understand why Jesus was late or why He had allowed Lazarus to die. They did not understand the big picture.

Similarly, we may not always understand why God has not answered our prayers. Sometimes, it is difficult to believe that Jesus loves us when we are forced to endure hardships and difficulties every day. We do not know why God has not rescued us, and everything seems messy and confusing, like the threads at the back of the throw.

We need to have faith that God loves us and that He knows what is best for us. Mary and Martha eventually understood this. When Jesus finally arrived, He displayed His power over not only sickness, but also death. Due to this great miracle, many more people came to believe in Him and glorify God.

In the same way, God wants us to learn to wait patiently for His time. He wants us to trust Him and believe that He will answer our prayers and give us what is the very best. Let's hear a testimony of a mother's faith!

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we testify.

"It's cancer." These words have struck fear in countless families. Now, it was our family's turn to battle with cancer in a loved one. Our mother had been experiencing discomfort in her intestinal area for a while. She underwent a colon examination in Scotland and was told there were no problems. Still, she felt something was not right. So when she and our father had their annual stay in Hong Kong in January 2012, we persuaded her to seek another doctor's opinion.

A gastroenterology specialist arranged an endoscopy to investigate her entire intestinal tract. Our mother originally opted to test only the upper intestine but was persuaded to undergo a complete examination. A three-centimeter mass was found in her colon. Luckily, our mother had agreed to the full examination, the specialist said, otherwise they would have missed the tumor.

The next step was to determine if the tumor was malignant or benign. One week later, the results came in. Our parents encouraged us to pray silently and to accept the results, no matter what they were. The specialist reported that the tumor was malignant and they would have to check if there were more cancerous cells. On the taxi ride home, no one spoke as we tried to come to terms with what the future might hold for her and our whole family. We called our brother, anxiously waiting back in Scotland. Saying aloud that it was cancer finally made it real to us, and we all broke down in tears. Our father went into his room and closed the door. Yet our mother just went into the kitchen and started preparing dinner as usual. When we checked on our father, we found him sitting on the bed, sobbing silently. That was only the second time we had ever seen him cry. Our mother put her arms around him, telling him, and us, to be strong, for there was still hope.

By the quiet power of her faith, our mother was the comforter instead of the one who needed comfort. She was the one facing cancer, and yet she was the one with the most hope and serenity. We always knew our mother's faith in God was strong and steadfast, but now seeing it in action was touching, remarkable, and inspiring. She set a wonderful example for us as a parent and as a Christian. Her faith in God was so steadfast that she did not cry once over her illness. If she could be so positive, how could we be anything less? She stated that nobody wanted this illness, but it now fell to us to face it with faith. Where was her faith if she murmured against God, asking, "Why me?" If she were to doubt now, in what had she believed all these years? She wanted us to accept that whatever the future held for her, it must be according to God's will. Was she scared? She said she couldn't and shouldn't be afraid if she trusted God and had her family behind her.

STRENGTH THROUGH GOD'S SPIRIT AND WORD

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Ps 46:1)

As the news of my mother's illness spread, we received much encouragement from the prayers, concern, and good wishes of our brethren around the world. A preacher suggested we hold family services to strengthen us. We would sing a hymn, read and share a chapter from Psalms, and then pray. When we reached the famous Psalm 23, the beautiful words were particularly poignant and relevant to us:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." (Ps 23:4)

Our mother was experiencing this walk herself and, by extension, our whole family was too. Yet God's words told us to keep walking without fear, for our loving, almighty Lord was with us every step of the way. Through God's word and our long prayers, it seemed that we were actually doing something constructive to deal with our ordeal.

It was also comforting to know that many people were walking along with us. In our parents' home church in Elgin, the members prayed for our mother and some members even fasted. Each day, our parents would join Elgin Church's morning service by reading the same chapter from the Bible and praying for the same duration. The brethren and our family may have been separated by distance and time, but they were together in spirit and united in the same cause.

Our mother had to undergo further tests and scans to see if there were more tumors in her body. Each time she underwent a procedure, she would ask God for courage and the will to endure. Each time, we dreaded the results. We wavered between thinking the worst and trying to remain optimistic. Throughout all this, our mother was her usual calm self, maintaining her habit of morning Bible reading and prayer.

Thank God, we were told that the cancer had not spread to other parts of her body. The tumor in her colon, however, had to be removed and the surrounding tissue had to be checked. We were told that, as with all surgeries, there were risks with recovery and infection.

We knew that there were long public hospital waiting lists and that if we opted for private care, the potential costs could be astronomical. There was much to consider and organize. Where should we start? As we faced each new hurdle, we could only keep praying and hoping for God's mercy and guidance.

GOD'S GUIDANCE AND GRACE

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (Prov 3:5-6)

At every stage, we found that our loving Lord did not fail us. Surely, it must have been God's arrangement that the old primary school teacher on our parents' home island, Ap Chau, had a son who was a doctor in Hong Kong. After talking to him in the morning, he arranged for our mother to see the doctor in a well-known hospital.

The following week, the doctors examined our mother. She was then approved for surgery and placed on the waiting list. Furthermore, they said that only a keyhole surgery was needed, which was much less dangerous. We had heard that local patients in our mother's situation could wait up to two years for surgery. Yet, we were told to expect a surgery date within the next four to six weeks!

Everything proceeded well, beyond our expectations. In our weakness, slight doubts started to arise when we did not receive a confirmed operation date. Once again, though, when we started to become anxious, our mother remained quietly patient and faithful that God would arrange.

God's grace is indeed great and more than we deserve. It turned out that our mother went into the hospital on the day that one of us began a two-week Easter break from school. We could make the long daily trips between home and the hospital with our father, keep him company, and help our mother before and after the surgery. God's wonderful arrangement enabled us to do this without the added stress of balancing work and our sick mother.

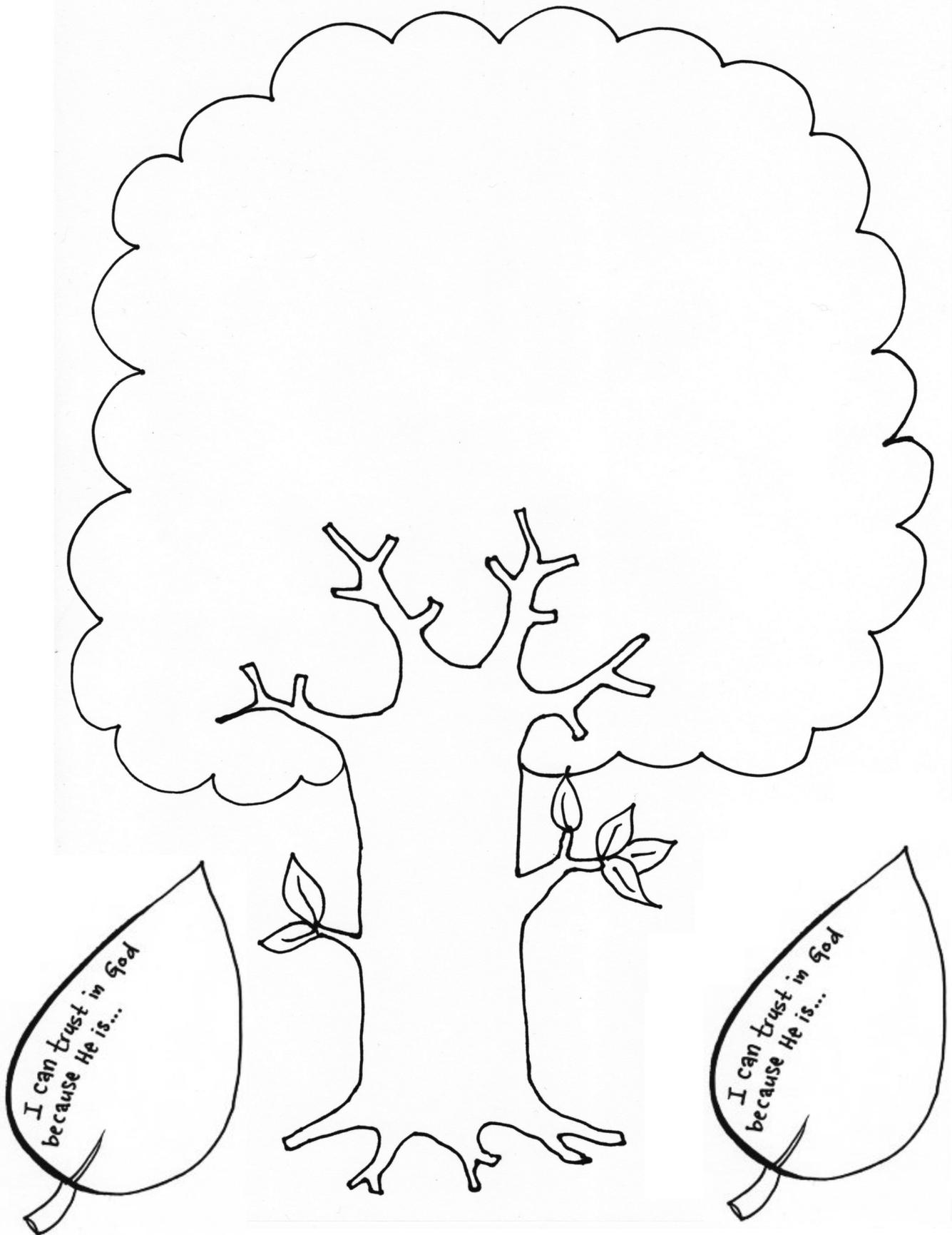
Thank God, after a successful operation and a week's recovery, our mother was discharged. We decided to have lunch in the hospital canteen before taking a taxi home. Whenever we got up to leave, she would tell us to wait a little longer. Later, she told us that she had a feeling she should not leave. Then, on our way out, she suddenly collapsed and fainted in the hospital lobby. Thankfully, we were supporting her at the time, so she did not fall and hurt herself. Our mother had to check back into the hospital, but, by God's arrangement, she had collapsed in the same hospital, so her records were on file for the doctors to follow. If she had fainted in the taxi, we would not have been able to get her help straightaway. If she had collapsed at home, she would have been admitted into a different district hospital, which would not have her medical history.

Our mother had to stay overnight in the general ward. Although it was sad to see her undergo more discomfort, it was yet another part of God's amazing arrangement. After various tests, the doctors said our mother's collapse was due to her medication. As a result, her medication was adjusted. Our mother had been worried about her medication levels, and now, through God's blessing, her worries had been resolved.

The final hurdle was whether our mother needed chemotherapy. We were told that the tumor had been caught early. It was only on the surface of the colon wall but not beneath, so no chemotherapy was required. She was now clear of cancer, although she would need regular check-ups in the future. We praised and thanked God.

After years of training her faith, our mother had succeeded. When tested, she prevailed and was not found wanting. We thank God for the blessing He gave our mother and for her example of faith in times of difficulties. Our family experienced God's power and grace, and learned to entrust. We also thank everyone who sustained us through their prayers and words of encouragement. May all glory be given to our almighty Lord Jesus, who holds not only life and death in His hands, but also mercy and grace.

Students, today, we are learning about Jesus—the Resurrection and the Life! He has power over everything we see and cannot see; even life and death are in His almighty hands. There is nothing we need to worry about in this world. He said in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” HE HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD! In life, we all experience trials and tribulations. But, as long as we place our trust in Him and rely on His power, He will make everything beautiful in His timing for us (Eccl 3:11). We need to have faith like the mother in this testimony, and to remain in peace during times of adversity, knowing that there is nothing Jesus cannot do for us.



ACTIVITY

The Gift of Life

Objective: To remind students of God's gift of life.

Materials

- Shells (alternatives: beads, buttons, or stars)
- Terra-cotta plant pot or plastic plant container, one per student
- Colored paint
- Paintbrushes
- Glue
- Potting soil
- Plant seeds or cuttings
- Varnish
- Water

Instructions

1. Begin decorating the pots by painting them. This may require two coats of paint.
2. After the paint is dry, use strong glue to attach the shells or other decorations.
3. When the glue has set, apply a layer of varnish to the shells to secure them.
4. Have students put potting soil into the pots and plant the seeds or cuttings.
5. Water the plants regularly and place them on a sunny windowsill or by a window.

Note: You may choose to spread this activity out over several weeks to allow for drying.

HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. B
2. C
3. C
4. True
5. False; we should not lose faith and instead continue praying.
6. True
7. True
8. Answers may vary.
9. He is an almighty, kind, and compassionate God.

E1 Year 2 Book 4 Lesson 7—Mary and Martha Seek Help

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: Jesus can resurrect our physical body. More importantly, He gives us eternal life.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To understand that Jesus loves and cares for us, even in difficult circumstances.
2. To recognize that Jesus has power over life and death.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(John 11:25b)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Multiple Choice

1. _____ : In a town called Bethany, there lived _____.
 - a. Miriam, Martha, and Lazarus
 - b. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus
 - c. Mary, Martha, and Moses

2. _____ : Jesus delayed going to Bethany because _____.
 - a. He did not care about Lazarus.
 - b. He got lost on the way.
 - c. He wanted to glorify God by raising Lazarus from the dead.

3. _____ : Lazarus had already been dead for _____ days when Jesus arrived.
 - a. 6
 - b. 3
 - c. 4

True or False

4. Jesus had the power to raise Lazarus from the dead. _____
5. When God has not yet answered our prayers, we should just give up. _____
6. Jesus glorified God by showing that He had power over life and death. _____
7. Those who witnessed Lazarus's resurrection glorified God and believed in Jesus. _____

Short Answer

8. Write about a time when God answered your prayers.

9. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. What does this tell you about Him?
