

LESSON 28

Lazarus

JOHN 11:1-53



BIBLE TRUTH

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read John 11:17–45 from the Scriptures or read story 106, “Lazarus,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

God Alert

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Jesus Is the Life!

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencils for the class

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Lazarus Drawing

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 30 MIN

A Large Class Drama

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ several costumes for children—flat sheets and towels and rope belts

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

God planned Lazarus' death for the glory of the Son—Jesus received word that his friend Lazarus was very ill. But rather than hurry, Jesus delayed his departure for Bethany for two more days, announcing that the sickness would not lead to death (John 11:4). After the delay, Jesus announced they would go see Lazarus, but the disciples objected because the Jews were threatening to stone him. Jesus remained steadfast and explained that Lazarus had died. This time there was no courier with the news—Jesus, the Son of God, simply knew. Again we see the Lord's power in knowing all things. No one had to tell Jesus that Lazarus had died; it was part of God's plan. Jesus also knew that Lazarus would not be dead for long.

Jesus is the resurrection and the life—When Jesus arrived, Martha went to meet him. She was upset and disappointed because Jesus had not arrived in time to save the life of her brother. Martha, like many of the Jews, believed in a future resurrection. So when Jesus said that Lazarus would rise again, she agreed, thinking Lazarus would rise on the final resurrection day. But Jesus meant he would rise that very day. In a vivid description of his divinity, Jesus tells Martha that he is the “resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). No mere man has control over life and no human has ever created life. Jesus, who was fully man, was also fully God, the creator of all that is (John 1:3–4). God was about to display the fullness of his power over death.

Jesus is Lord over death—When Jesus saw Mary and all the Jews weeping and thought about Lazarus' death, he also wept. Of all our actions in life as sinners, perhaps the purest of all our motives is grief. Death is such a wicked enemy of life that those who grieve are pitted resolutely against it. Life is so precious that when it is gone, those who are close can't help but suffer its loss. When our hatred for death and our love for life come together in grief, it is beautiful in the sight of the Lord. But the grief would not last for long. Jesus directed that the stone covering Lazarus' tomb be moved. He then called into the blackness of the tomb and commanded death to give up his friend with three short words, “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43). Death fled and Lazarus obeyed, the breath of life once again filling his lungs. Though many people believed Jesus was the Messiah, some were not so happy, taking word of the day's events to the religious rulers. While news of this great miracle spread quickly, the religious leaders began plotting how to kill Jesus (John 11:53).

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Grave Clothes

The dead in Jesus' day were tightly wrapped with cloth strips and a face cloth was wrapped around their heads. The body would be placed in a tomb, at which time spices would be added to cover the smell of decomposition. Even so, after a few days the body would begin to smell. Bodies would be left in tombs in the outward chamber for a year or so, and then the family would reclaim the bones and place them in a cavity in the wall. This helps explain why tombs would have stones that could be moved in front of the opening.

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

"I am the resurrection and the life." With these words, Jesus revealed that he is the author of life, God over all creation, and the object of our faith. He had already explained to the disciples that he was glad he was not in Bethany to heal Lazarus so that Lazarus might rise again. Now, Jesus declares that he is the one who rules over life itself. Martha, who had earlier complained that her sister, Mary, was wasting time at the feet of Jesus, declared her faith with two simple words: "I believe." These two simple words are all that God requires. "I believe" is the statement of faith that God requires of us all. It forces us to submit to God's Word and points us to his saving plan through the death of his Son. The raising of Lazarus is a picture of the gospel. Death looks to claim people, but the plan of God through Jesus conquers death and brings salvation from its grasp. Jesus told his disciples that he would lay down his own life that he might "take it up again" (John 10:17). Jesus would soon die, but like Lazarus, he would be raised again to new life.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW **5 MIN**

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read John 11:17–45 from the Scriptures or read story 106, “Lazarus,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

God Alert

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

The object of this exercise is to help the class see how wonderfully this story points to Jesus.

Explain to the class prior to reading the story of Lazarus that you want them to be on a “God alert” as you read. If they hear anything that indicates that Jesus is God they are to immediately raise their hands. Make a list on the whiteboard of the things they suggest. If they miss an obvious one, read that section again with some voice inflection that will serve as a clue that you are reading some important information. When you have finished the story, review the list and talk about why each item was placed on the list.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Jesus Is the Life!

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencils for the class

Compare the following three Scriptures and write a paragraph explaining how they are similar: Hosea 13:14; John 11:25–26; 1 Corinthians 15:55–58. Once you give the students an opportunity to examine the Scriptures and write something down, talk about it as a class.

Having the students do their own analysis forces all of them to think. If you would like, you can divide the class into groups of four and then gather them back together to discuss what they found.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Lazarus Drawing

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Have the children draw a picture of Lazarus coming out of the tomb wrapped in grave clothes. Tell them to write the words, “Lazarus, come out” on their paper. Have them draw different responses in the faces of the crowd. Talk about what the different people thought about this miracle. Mary and Martha would have been excited to see their brother alive; the crowd would have been astonished; and the religious leaders would have been upset, jealous because now people would want to follow Jesus instead of them (John 11:45–53).

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 30 MIN

A Large Class Drama

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ several costumes for children—flat sheets and towels and rope belts

Tell the children in advance that you are going to do a large class drama and have each child bring in a costume for a character from biblical times (a flat sheet and a rope belt; even a large bathrobe will work fine). Provide extras for those who don’t bring one.

This is a great passage for the entire class to act out. The story has many characters and the impact of raising Lazarus can wonderfully affect your students. Don’t worry about memorizing lines. Just perform the drama as a pantomime with a narrator.

Divide the front of a large classroom—the stage—into thirds. (If your room is smaller, use three separate corners.) The far left is the tomb in Bethany, the center is the road where Martha greets the Lord, and the far right is where Jesus and the disciples first learn that Lazarus is ill. Act out the Bible story.

When the drama is complete, ask the children the following questions:

- **Why did Jesus say he was glad that he was not in Bethany?**
(Jesus was glad for the sake of the disciples so that they might believe he is God. Jesus knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead and that he would use it to help his disciples and those who love him to believe.)

- **Why do you think Jesus waited so long?**
(Jesus said he waited so that his followers might believe. After four days, no one would doubt that Lazarus was truly dead. When Jesus called Lazarus out from the tomb, they would all see it as a resurrection, and Jesus would be glorified.)

- **How did the raising of Lazarus affect the people watching?**
(Many Jews who were present believed, just as Jesus had predicted.)

- **How did the raising of Lazarus affect the Pharisees?**
(They became upset. They were afraid that so many following Jesus would result in trouble with Rome. They made plans to put Jesus to death.)

- **How should the raising of Lazarus affect us?**
(The ministry of Jesus affects people today the same way it affected the people of Jesus' day—either we believe, or we don't. God, through Jesus, is calling all of us to believe.)