

LESSON 28

Lazarus

JOHN 11:17-44



BIBLE TRUTH

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 106)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 28—one for each child; markers or crayons

The Raising of Lazarus

SUPPLIES: an old sheet, cut into strips to use as grave clothes

Raising a Dead Flower

SUPPLIES: dried flower with stem; puppet (optional)

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In this lesson the children will learn that Jesus, who is God, has power over life and death.

Ask the children what it means to be raised from the dead. (someone who has died comes back to life)

Ask the children if they can remember anyone who was raised from the dead. (Jairus's daughter, Jesus, the widow's son in the Old Testament, and many people after the crucifixion of Jesus)

Teach the children how to put two fingers on their wrist—or on their neck—to feel their pulse. Tell them that what they feel is their heart pumping blood through their body. Ask them if they have to tell their heart to beat. Explain to them that Jesus sustains—keeps alive—each person, and that we don't even have to tell our hearts to beat because God is the one who keeps us alive. God is also the one who gave us life to start with. God has the power to give life, take life away, and then give life back again. Nothing is impossible for God!

Take time to pray and thank God for his gift of life. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 106, "Lazarus," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **Who was Lazarus?**
(Lazarus was Mary and Martha's brother and a friend of Jesus.)

- **What happened to Lazarus?**
(Lazarus became very sick and then died.)

■ **Why did Martha want Jesus to come before her brother died?**

(Martha was aware that Jesus had healed many people. She knew that Jesus would have healed her brother. What she didn't know was that Jesus' power was greater than she thought; Jesus was not just a healer of the sick but the creator of life itself.)

SNACK QUESTIONS **10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

■ **Why didn't the people want the stone rolled away from Lazarus' tomb?**

(Lazarus had been dead four days and they thought his body would have begun to decay and smell bad.)

■ **Why did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead?**

(He raised Lazarus so that the people standing around watching would believe that he was God.)

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.

■ **Did everyone believe?**

(Read John 11:45–48 to the children. Many believed in Jesus as a result of what he did with Lazarus, but the chief priests began to make plans to put Jesus to death.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 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.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 28—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

■ **What is happening in the picture?**

(Lazarus is coming out of the tomb alive after Jesus brought him back from the dead.)

■ **How are we who believe in Jesus going to be like Lazarus one day?**

(One day everyone who believes in Jesus will rise again from the dead. All believers know that after we die we will live again with Jesus.)

■ **What do you think Lazarus thought as people began to explain to him all that took place?**

(Lazarus was certainly amazed and filled with joy.)

■ **What other Bible story is this one most like?**

(This story is most like the story of Jesus' resurrection. Not only did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, he himself rose from the dead. That gives special meaning to his words to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life.")

The Raising of Lazarus

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ old sheet cut into strips to use as grave clothes

This is a great story to act out. Assign the roles of Mary, Martha, Jesus, and Lazarus. Wrap the strips of fabric around Lazarus. You can help the children through the dialogue by simplifying the language. Have some of the children play the role of the tomb by circling Lazarus and joining hands in a circle.

When Lazarus is called from the grave they can break hands and let him come out. Unwrap Lazarus and have him happily celebrate the grace of God.

Talk to the children after the skit and ask them what we learn about God from this story. Elicit the following points:

- God is all-powerful.
- God rules over death.
- God can raise dead people to new life.
- Jesus loves and cares for us just like he loved Lazarus.
- If we believe in Jesus, though he died, yet he lives.

Raising a Dead Flower

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ dried flower with stem
- ✓ puppet (optional)

After reading through the story, show the kids the dried flower. Ask them if it is alive or dead. When they say dead, ask them how they know it is dead. Ask for a volunteer to come up to the flower and command it to come back to life.

Tell them that in the story Jesus simply said, “Lazarus, come out” (John 11:43) and that was all there was to it. Explain that it should be easy to bring the flower back to life by saying, “Flower, live again.” Give your volunteer two tries and then ask for someone with a louder voice to try to bring the flower back to life. When nothing happens, act puzzled and ask the class to explain to you why we can’t seem to make the flower live again. You want them to understand that Jesus was no ordinary man; Jesus was God.

Alternatively, present this as a skit with a puppet. Have the puppet announce that he has the secret to bring things back to life; that all you need to do is say three words—“Flower, live again.” The puppet can then try to bring the flower back to life and you can explain to the puppet that only God can give back life. Explain that the reason Jesus could bring Lazarus back to life is because he is God.

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today’s lesson.

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