

# Jesus Raises Lazarus

## GRIEF

John 11:1-45

### What's happening in this story?

After a two-day delay, Jesus and his disciples travel to Judea. By this time, Lazarus has been in the tomb four days. When he finally arrives, we hear one of the most poignant moments in all of Scripture. Famously, Jesus weeps. For all his confidence in God's glory shining through the resurrection of Lazarus (for clearly this is what Jesus always anticipates), Jesus nevertheless joins all those gathered in their grief. In other words, even his power over death and his faith in God don't keep Jesus from fully identifying with us in our humanity.

### What does this story mean for kids?

Kids will hear a story about a man who died and was brought back to life. It will be very literal for them, and they will understand that his sisters were sad, that Jesus was also sad, and that Lazarus came back to life. A few may wonder if someone can really be brought back to life. They may wonder why a pet or grandparent was not brought back to life when they were sad. Above all, this is a very poignant moment: Jesus displayed his very human feelings and cried. This is a story that simultaneously focuses on the divinity and the humanity of Jesus.

### Why this theme?

Kids grieve. Events like a favorite show ending or a friend moving to a different school might have little weight in an adult's eyes, but they can be life-shaking for kids. Allowing kids to understand—and process—grief is a healthy part of their development.

### TEACHING TIP

Kids may be confused by the miracle of resurrection, but you can reassure them that no one completely understands how it happened. Even though we don't understand every detail, we can believe it because we know and trust Jesus.



#### GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pens
- Markers

#### LESSON SUPPLIES

- ~~Candle and lighter, or~~  
~~battery-operated candle~~
- ~~Bubble solution and wand~~
- Play dough (various colors)

# WELCOME 15

## DO SOME KIDS ARRIVE EARLY? TRY THIS.

Invite kids to take turns making emotion faces and trying to guess what emotions others are making.

## Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Today we're talking about a very sad day in Jesus' life. Someone he loved very much died, and Jesus was in grief. Grief is a feeling of deep sadness. But when Jesus is involved, there is hope even in the hardest times. Have you ever experienced grief or deep sadness? How does it feel to know that Jesus has felt this way too? Put your hand over your heart if you'd like to share. Invite volunteers to respond.

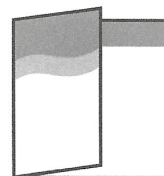
Pray together: **Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us hope, even during times of grief. Please help us feel your peace and love during sad times. Amen.**

*Be still and know that I am God...*

## Pass out leaflets and pens.

~~Light a candle and place it in the center of your circle.~~  
In church, when someone experiences loss, we sometimes light a candle. The candlelight reminds us that Jesus is a light in our darkness, and that

Jesus is with us when we feel sad. On the candle on your leaflet, write the name of someone or something you would like to remember. This could be someone you love who died or moved away, a pet who died, or a special lovey or toy that was lost. Offer to help with spelling, if necessary. **Let's pray together. When I pause, say the name you wrote down out loud or in your head: Dear God, thank you for your hope and comfort. Help me remember (pause). When we are sad, remind us of your love. Amen.** ~~Extinguish the candle.~~ Collect their leaflets until Respond.



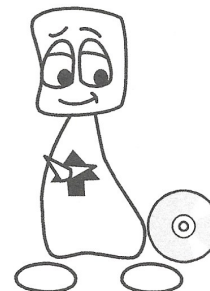
## Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The kids get some bad news when they arrive in the Sunday school room, and they deal with the news in different ways. While you're watching, think about how you would feel if this happened to you.

View Episode 11, "Handkerchief Holdout," on the Year Blue Winter DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- Why did Victor think he shouldn't show his sadness?
- What things did Victor's friends tell him about grieving for his hamster?
- What did Monty tell Victor about Jesus?
- Have you ever felt sad but didn't want to show it? Why?
- Who comforts you when you're feeling sad?





# HEAR 15

## Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles and Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Have older kids find a younger buddy. Invite them to find "Jesus Raises Lazarus" on page 306 of the Whirl Kids Story Bible. **Jesus had many friends and followers when he lived on earth. In this story, one of his friends, named Lazarus, died. Jesus was sad. Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha, were also sad. Everyone was sad that Lazarus was gone. But this was not the end of the story. Out of grief and sadness, Jesus did something amazing.**

Invite kids to give themselves a hug, and explain that hugging is one way to offer comfort to people when they feel sad. Tell kids to listen for the name "Lazarus" as you read the story aloud. Each time you read the word "Lazarus," pause for kids to give a self-hug. **Jesus gives us hope in difficult times, and a community of people to comfort us when we need it.**

Read Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page. ~~Then read John 11:32-36 and what Ruby says about that passage on page 1288 of the Whirl Kids Study Bible.~~

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- What did Jesus do that the disciples had never seen him do before?
- What was Jesus' prayer to God?
- How did the crowd react when they saw Lazarus walk out of the tomb?
- What helps you feel better when you're sad?
- When have you helped someone else feel better?

## Play together!

~~Gather kids in a seated circle. What does sadness feel like? Give kids time to respond. Sadness can feel like tears running down our faces, a stomachache, or even a tightness in our chest that makes it hard to breathe. One way to help our bodies feel calmer when we are sad is to take slow, deep breaths. Hold up the bottle of bubble solution and wand. We're going to pass around these bubbles to practice taking deep breaths. When it's your turn, take a deep breath, then slowly breathe out, blowing bubbles. The rest of us will breathe with you, and when we breathe out, we'll say, "Jesus, be near." Go around the circle, giving each kid a chance to breathe and blow bubbles, while everyone else breathes along and asks Jesus to be near. When we feel sad, we can take deep breaths and ask Jesus to be with us. We can always know that Jesus hears us.~~

### BIBLE BIT

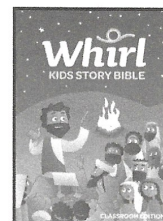
The name "Lazarus" is the Latinized version of "Eleazar," which means "God is my help."

### WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, keep track of all the different feelings the kids experience. Is there one right way to respond to sad news? Why or why not?

### OUR CHURCH

Find out how your church cares for those who are grieving. Work together to do something kind to help bring comfort to someone who has experienced the loss of a loved one.



# RESPOND 10

## Pass out leaflets, Whirl Kids Story Bibles, and play dough.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

→ can work together in small groups or the whole class

1. Help younger kids find an older buddy. **We've been talking about when Jesus felt grief because his friend Lazarus died. On your leaflet, you can see four pictures from the story, but something is missing from each picture.**
2. **Using your play dough, fill in the missing parts of the story. Look at your Bible to help you remember the story, if you need to.**
3. Give kids time to create the missing pieces of the story.
4. **Now that you've filled in the rest of the story, take turns telling the story of Jesus raising Lazarus to your buddy.**
5. Allow time for each kid to tell their buddy the story.
- \* 6. **When we retell the story of Lazarus, we remember how Jesus cried and felt grief and sadness. But we also remember that this story gives us hope!**

# LAUNCH 10

## Circle up with kids for a quick review.

We feel sad when we lose something or someone. Jesus felt sad when Lazarus died. But we can also remember that Jesus is with us and brings us hope. What is something surprising you learned today?

## \* Pass out leaflet panels and markers.

A teardrop is pictured on your leaflet. Teardrops remind us of grief. When Jesus was grieving for Lazarus, he made something amazing happen that brought people hope and joy. Use markers to turn the teardrop into something joyful. Kids might draw a person they love, a butterfly, a flower, etc.

## Send kids out with a blessing. → Help and Thanks prayers

~~Circle up with kids. God blesses all of us. And that means me (place a hand on your chest). And that means you (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, Go and bless the world.~~

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet. \*