

20. Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life



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## 20

# Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life

**Leader Notes:**

- View [this session's focus](#), faith nurture goals, leader devotional, and story symbol (click on the story symbol to download or print).
- For the full set of DWELL Flex story symbols use the link in the sidebar.
- Need this as a PDF? Just [print this page](#) and choose to save/print as a PDF.

*Take a few moments to greet the children and let them know how glad you are to see them.*

**I love exploring God's story with you. Let's get ready to do that together.**

## Breathe

*Use this time to focus your attention on God.*

**Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.** *(Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.)*

## Tell and Wonder

**Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear?** *(Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.)*

**Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.**

*Read "Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life" aloud (below), pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions. NOTE: It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.*

*You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.*

## Pray

Teach children about the “hugging prayer” as a way to remind themselves of Jesus’ love when they’re upset or feeling sad. Invite them to put their arms all the way around themselves and really hug themselves—as though they are cuddling a baby. With their arms wrapped around their bodies in a big hug, encourage them to close their eyes and rock slowly as they think about how much Jesus loves them. Explain that this is like getting a big hug from Jesus! Encourage them to use this “hugging prayer” at home when they’re worried or sad or just want a reminder that Jesus loves them so much.

Close in prayer, thanking Jesus for loving and caring so much for Mary and Martha, and for us when we’re sad. Ask Jesus to help those who are sad to feel his love too. Conclude by singing the classic song “Jesus Loves Me.” (If this song isn’t familiar to you, an Internet search will yield both the lyrics and the tune.)

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

## Respond

Select and do one or more of the response activities from God’s Big Story card #98\* or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.

\*God’s Big Story cards can be ordered from [FaithAliveResources.org](http://FaithAliveResources.org).

## Easy Extra

Ask the children to name all the different ways people felt during this story. Then invite them to tell about times when they have experienced feelings like that. Don’t try to fix difficult situations or solve the kids’ problems as they share; just listen and empathize.

Conclude your conversation by telling the kids that Jesus knows all our feelings—he knows when we are happy and when we’re sad, when we’re angry and when we’re scared. Jesus had those same feelings when he lived on Earth. And still today Jesus cares about how we feel.

## Story: Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life [John 11:1-45](#)

Mary and Martha were worried. Their brother Lazarus was very, very sick. They did everything they could to try to make him well. **What kinds of things do you think they might have done to help him get better?** (Pause for responses.)

Mary and Martha were friends of Jesus, and they knew Jesus had the power to make their brother well again. So they sent a message to Jesus, asking him to come quickly because Lazarus was very sick. **I wonder how the sisters’ faces looked as they waited for Jesus to come. Can you show me?** (Pause for responses.)

But the Bible tells us that Jesus didn’t come . . . and that Lazarus didn’t get better. Instead he became worse. **How do you think Mary and Martha felt when they saw Lazarus getting sicker and weaker?** (Pause for responses.)

Mary and Martha sat by their brother’s bed, just watching and waiting and praying, until at last Lazarus died. There was nothing left for Mary and Martha to do but cry. Their friends came to cry with them and to help them carefully wrap their brother’s body to be placed in the tomb.

A few days later the sisters were still crying for their brother. You can imagine how sad they were feeling. They missed him so much and wished he could be there to laugh and smile and talk with them. Their friends were still there with them, trying to cheer them up. But their tears kept coming too. In the middle of the crying, a friend knocked on the door. "Jesus is coming. The Lord is here!" their friend shouted through the door. **How would it make you feel if you heard Jesus had arrived?** (*Pause for responses.*)

Martha didn't even dry her eyes; she rushed out of the house to meet Jesus. But Mary waited. She wondered why Jesus hadn't come earlier, when there was still time left to make Lazarus well. She wondered if maybe Jesus didn't care about their sadness. Just then Martha burst through the door to tell Mary that the Lord was asking to see her.

Mary and her friends came out and saw Jesus waiting. When Mary saw his sad face, she knew that Jesus cared about her sadness. She could tell their sadness made him sad too. Quietly he asked Mary, "Where have you laid him?" And he followed Mary and Martha to the cave where Lazarus's body had been placed.

Jesus was filled with sadness, and his eyes filled with tears. Jesus wept. Then he asked the sisters to open up the cave where Lazarus's body was.

What Jesus did next was very surprising! He looked up to heaven and prayed to God. Then he called out to Lazarus, whose body had been lying in the cave for four days. "Lazarus, come out!" **How do you think everyone's faces looked when he did that?** (*Pause for responses.*)

What happened was amazing! Lazarus came out—alive and well again! **Can you imagine the look on everyone's faces? Can you show me how your face would have looked?** (*Pause for responses.*)

A wonderful feeling of happiness spread through the crowd. Everyone at the grave that day—and the people who heard about it later—knew that Jesus is God's Son. Only God could do such a powerful and wonderful thing!

But before the story ends, I have one more question. **How do you think Mary and Martha felt when they knew Jesus loved them and cared about their sadness?** (*Pause for responses.*) Mary was feeling many things that day—happy, surprised, joyful (*include any others emotions the kids may have mentioned*). She was also feeling something else—thankful! Thankful because she knew that Jesus cared so much about their sadness and thankful that Jesus did a miracle and brought her brother back to life.

## Looking for More Activities for This Story?

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- [Kindergarten-1st Grade: Comforting a Friend](#)
  - [6th-8th Grade: Life Goes On](#)
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