

# Jesus Raises Lazarus

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

**Main point:** Jesus has power over death, and He cares about us. When Jesus seems late, He is still working for the glory of God.

**Bible passage:** John 11:1–44. Read it before class.

**Memory verse:** "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" *John 11:25 (KJV)*

**You need:** a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, paper and pencils, and one take-home sheet for each child.

**Before class:** write the memory verse on the board.

## 1. Opening game: Say It Plainly (5–10 minutes)

Read a saying, and kids race to tell you what it really means: "It's raining cats and dogs." "I'm all ears." "Hold your horses." "That test was a piece of cake." Ask: *Did anyone take one of these the wrong way at first?* Say: "In today's story, Jesus said something His disciples took the wrong way, so He had to say it plainly."

## 2. Bible story: I Am the Resurrection (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to John 11. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

**A sick friend.** Lazarus lived in **Bethany** with his sisters Mary and Martha (John 11:1). **Look up John 11:3.** The sisters sent word to Jesus: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Jesus answered, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God" (11:4). **Look up John 11:5–6.** Jesus loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus, and yet He stayed where He was two more days. Say: "That seems strange, but keep watching."

**Our friend sleepeth.** Jesus said, "Let us go into **Judaea** again" (11:7), the land where Bethany was. **Look up John 11:11.** "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples thought He meant normal sleep, so "then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead" (11:13–14). Jesus said He was glad He had not been there, "to the intent ye may believe" (11:15), which means so that they would believe. Thomas said, "Let us also go" (11:16).

**I am the resurrection.** When Jesus came, Lazarus had been in the grave four days already (11:17). Bethany was about **fifteen furlongs**, about two miles, from Jerusalem, and many people came to comfort the sisters (11:18–19). Martha went out to meet Jesus: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (11:21). Jesus said, "Thy brother shall rise again" (11:23). Martha said she knew he would rise "in the resurrection at the last day" (11:24). **Look up John 11:25–26.** Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life." **Look up John 11:27.** Martha answered, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Say: "**The Christ** means the one God promised to send. **The Son of God** means God Himself came as a man in Jesus (Luke 1:35; 1 Timothy 3:16)."



**Jesus wept.** Martha called Mary, who came quickly and fell at Jesus' feet with the same words: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (11:28–32). When Jesus saw her weeping, and the people weeping with her, He **groaned in the spirit, and was troubled**, deeply sad inside (11:33). **Look up John 11:35–36.** "Jesus wept." The people said, "Behold how he loved him!" Say: "Jesus knew He was about to raise Lazarus, and He still cried with His friends. Jesus cares when we hurt."

**Come forth. Look up John 11:38.** The grave was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone." Martha said, "he hath been dead four days" (11:39). Jesus answered, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (11:40). They took away the stone. Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me," and He said He prayed out loud for the people standing there, "that they may believe" (11:41–42). **Look up John 11:43–44.** Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with **graveclothes** (strips of cloth wrapped around a body), his face bound about with a **napkin** (a cloth). Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go."

### 3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

**Thinking questions** (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jesus loved Lazarus, and yet He waited two days (John 11:5–6). What does that teach us when God's answer seems slow?
2. Martha and Mary both said, "if thou hadst been here" (11:21, 11:32). Have you ever wished God had done something sooner?
3. Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus, but He still wept (11:35). Why do you think He cried with them?
4. Jesus said, "if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God" (11:40). What did the people see?
5. Who do you know who is sad right now? How could you show them Jesus' kindness this week?

**Recall questions**

1. How many days had Lazarus been in the grave? (*Four, John 11:17, 11:39*)
2. What lay upon the cave? (*A stone, 11:38*)
3. What did Jesus say after Lazarus came out? (*"Loose him, and let him go," 11:44*)

## 4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **resurrection** means coming back to life from the dead; **believeth** means believes; **though he were dead, yet shall he live** means even if a person dies, Jesus gives life. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

## 5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus raised Lazarus, and later Jesus Himself rose from the dead. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

*Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.*

**This week:** when you are waiting on God for something, tell Him about it and keep trusting Him. Be kind to someone who is sad.



## 6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. John 11:1: What town did Lazarus live in? (*Bethany*)
2. John 11:6: How many days did Jesus stay where He was? (*Two days*)
3. John 11:16: Which disciple said, "Let us also go"? (*Thomas*)
4. John 11:17: How long had Lazarus been in the grave? (*Four days*)
5. John 11:20: Who went out to meet Jesus? (*Martha*)
6. John 11:35: What did Jesus do? (*Jesus wept*)
7. John 11:38: What was the grave? (*A cave, with a stone upon it*)
8. John 11:43: How did Jesus call Lazarus? (*With a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth"*)

## 7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Thank You that You care when we are sad, and that You are never too late. Help us trust You while we wait. In Jesus' name, amen."

**If a child asks why Jesus prayed:** Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, fully God and fully man (1 Timothy 3:16). As a man, He prayed. He said He prayed out loud for the people standing there, "that they may believe" (John 11:42).

**If a child is sad about someone who died:** let them talk, and say it is all right to be sad: Jesus wept (John 11:35). Don't guess about any person; let the child's parents know.