

Jesus Raises Lazarus

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He has power over death, He weeps with us when we hurt, and His timing serves the glory of God.

Bible passage: John 11:1–44. Students read it out loud themselves.

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)* and "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" *John 11:26 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.

Before class: read John 11:1–44. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Agree or Disagree (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "agree" and the other "disagree." Read each statement, and students walk to the side they choose: 1) If God loves me, He will always answer right away. 2) It's okay for a Christian to cry. 3) Jesus understands how I feel. 4) When God says wait, He means no. Ask a few students on each side why they chose it. Say: "John 11 speaks to every one of these."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: John 11:1–27. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **behold** (11:3): look; **he whom thou lovest** (11:3): the one You love
- **not unto death** (11:4): this will not end in death; **the Son of God** (11:4, 11:27): God Himself who came as a man in Jesus (Luke 1:35; 1 Timothy 3:16)
- **abode two days still** (11:6): stayed two more days; **thither** (11:8): there
- **sleepeth** (11:11): is asleep; Jesus' gentle word for death, because He would wake him
- **to the intent ye may believe** (11:15): so that you will believe; **Didymus** (11:16): the twin
- **nigh** (11:18): near; **fifteen furlongs** (11:18): about two miles
- **hadst been here** (11:21): had been here; **the last day** (11:24): the day when the dead will rise
- **the Christ** (11:27): the anointed one God promised to send

Read out loud: John 11:28–44. Old words in this passage:

- **secretly** (11:28): quietly; **hastily** (11:31): quickly
- **groaned in the spirit, and was troubled** (11:33): was deeply moved and grieved inside
- **wept** (11:35): cried; **he stinketh** (11:39): Martha means his body has been in the grave so long it will smell
- **lifted up his eyes** (11:41): looked up toward heaven to pray
- **come forth** (11:43): come out; **graveclothes** (11:44): strips of cloth wrapped around a body; **napkin** (11:44): a cloth over the face
- **loose him** (11:44): unwrap him, set him free

Teach the key moment. Write John 11:25 and 11:35 side by side on the board. Say: "Look at both. In verse 25 Jesus says, 'I am the resurrection, and the life.' Not 'I will pray for a resurrection.' He is the life. That is God speaking. In verse 35, 'Jesus wept.' He cried with His friends, even though He knew Lazarus would walk out soon after. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16): all the power of God, and a real man who weeps with us. And notice why He waited (11:4, 11:15): so they would see the glory of God and believe."

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. John 11:5–6 says Jesus loved them, *therefore* He stayed two days. How can a wait be part of God's love?
2. Martha and Mary said the same sentence (11:21, 11:32). Jesus answered Martha with truth (11:25) and Mary with tears (11:35). What does that show about how Jesus meets different people?
3. Martha believed in a resurrection "at the last day" (11:24). Jesus said, "I am the resurrection" (11:25). What is the difference?
4. Jesus asked Martha, "Believest thou this?" (11:26). How would you answer Him?
5. Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone" and "Loose him" (11:39, 11:44): He let people help. Who could you help this week?
6. Why do you think Jesus prayed out loud "because of the people which stand by" (11:42)?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **resurrection** means rising from the dead; **believeth** means believes; **though he were dead, yet shall he live** means even if a believer dies, he will live again; **whosoever liveth** means anyone who is alive; **shall never die** means will have life with God that never ends. **Believest thou this?** means "Do you believe this?"

Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say John 11:25 this week; keep working on John 11:26 next week too.

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus called a dead man out of his grave. Then He went to the cross Himself. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."

Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where am I waiting on God right now? What does John 11:4 and 11:15 tell me about His timing?
2. Jesus asked Martha, "Believest thou this?" (11:26). Write your honest answer to Him.
3. Write a short prayer telling Jesus something that makes you sad, and thanking Him that He cares.
If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: when you are waiting on God, tell Him so and keep trusting Him. Find one person who is hurting and be with them, the way Jesus was with Mary and Martha.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are the resurrection and the life. Thank You that You weep with us when we hurt and that You are never late. Help us believe You while we wait. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student 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 that thou hast sent me" (John 11:42).

If a student is grieving: let them talk. Jesus wept (John 11:35); grief is not a lack of faith. Don't guess about any person; let the parents know.

