

## Leader Devotional

### Equip

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In the narrative of the death of Lazarus, we see Jesus feel our pain and empathize with our sufferings in a unique way.

Jesus' emotions came in different forms in this situation. In John 11:33 we see that when Jesus arrived on the scene, He was "deeply moved." We can easily mistake that for empathy for His friends, but the Greek word used refers to more of a deep, indignant displeasure. The passage doesn't clearly state why Jesus was upset, but the focus of His anger seems to be the group of Jews who accompanied Mary while loudly and demonstrably weeping and wailing. Oftentimes funerals in the ancient Near East were accompanied by professional mourners who were paid to loudly weep. This hypocrisy evidently didn't sit well with Jesus, who was genuinely moved by the suffering and emotions of His friends. The hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders is what drew the anger of Jesus more than anything else.

This anger quickly gave way to empathy in the revelation of Jesus' heart for their sadness. If brevity is the soul of wit, then this, the shortest verse in the Bible, most aptly captures the pathos of the scene in two simple words: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Through this brief utterance we can grasp the love Jesus has for us. Jesus knows our weaknesses and struggles, and that's because He has shared them.

Jesus knew how this would end because He has power over life and death. He knew Lazarus would be reunited with his family. And He knew the glory that would come to the Father. This was a necessary preview of Jesus' power over death that His friends would need to see as His own demise approached.

## Support

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Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:14–16).

In John 11, we see a clear picture of how Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses. He feels anger on our behalf, and He feels sadness along with us. Through His empathy, Jesus offers us a picture of what it means to care for others. Though He is God and we are merely human, He loves us enough to come and be one of us—to feel our pain, to be tempted, and to take away the bondage of sin and death.

Take a walk or find a quiet place and think about Jesus as the One who not only saves us from death but also empathizes with our weaknesses. Boldly ask Him to give you life and help in the places where you are struggling this week.

## Kinder - 3rd Grade Lesson

**Date:** May 9th

**Series:** God Is

**Topic:** Jesus if Life

**Intro:** 15 Minutes

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Welcome kids as they arrive. They are allowed to play with toys, color, or play group games.

- **1st Service:** Begin at 9:30
- **2nd Service:** Begin at 11:15

**Worship Focus:** 10 minutes

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Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds. Then, have the students spread out and take some time to close their eyes and invite the Holy Spirit into the room themselves. Have them put their hands on their heart. Encourage them to picture a throne on their heart. Ask them who is sitting on it? Remind the students that when we worship, we are removing ourselves from the throne of our heart and putting God in His rightful place - King of our Heart. Encourage them to express their worship with their voices and give them permission to raise their hands as they feel led.

When you feel they are ready, play the two worship songs:

- This is Living - Hillsong Young & Free
- You Came (Lazarus)- Bethel Music

**Bible Focus - Main Lesson:** 10 minutes

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**Intro:**

**Ask:** Have you ever put food into a container and left it in the car for a few days? What happens to it? Pause for responses. Right—it starts to smell bad.

**Say:** Today during The Big God Story we are going to hear how Jesus has power over death. He is life! He showed that by going to a man who had been dead for four days—and that dead man didn't smell too great! His name was Lazarus.

### **Main Bible Story:**

**Say:** Let's watch this video to see how Lazarus relates to the Big God Story! **Play Video** (*Saddleback Kids: Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead*)

### **Review:**

In the beginning of today's Bible Story, a man named Lazarus got sick while Jesus was in the midst of traveling around, teaching large crowds, and healing people—even restoring the sight of the blind, like we heard last week.

**Ask:** Who was Lazarus? Who were his sisters? (He was Jesus' friend. His sisters were Mary and Martha. Jesus loved them very much)

After Jesus learned that Lazarus was sick, he told His disciples, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

**Ask:** Isn't that similar to what he said about the blind man we learned about last week? That his sickness would bring glory to God? Then, Jesus and His disciples stayed where they were for how many more days? (2 days) Why do you think Jesus waited to see Lazarus after he had already died?

After two days, Jesus told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." Jesus knew Lazarus was dead, but Jesus also knew that He is life. He has power over death! When Jesus arrived, Martha ran to Him and said, "Lord ... if you had been here, my brother would not have died" . Martha probably felt hurt that Jesus hadn't come in time to heal her brother. But God had a different plan. Jesus reassured Martha her brother would "rise again."

At this point, Lazarus had already been dead for four days!

**Ask:** What happens to a body after it dies? *Pause for responses.* Right—it starts to decay.

Invite the kids to grab a Bible and look up John 11:25. Invite one child to read it out loud and proud. Repeat the verse: **"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die"**.

**Ask:** What does resurrection mean? Invite responses. Resurrection means rising from the dead. What is Jesus saying to us through this verse?

Martha's sister Mary was weeping—crying very hard—and other people were with her and weeping too. Jesus did something really amazing: He cried with them! Even though Jesus knew Lazarus would live, He cared for Mary and Martha by feeling the sadness they felt and crying along with them. Then Jesus walked with the people to Lazarus' tomb, a cave with a stone across the entrance.

**Ask:** What happened next? *Pause for response.*

Before the stone was removed, Jesus said to Martha who worried about the smell of the tomb, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So while they went to take away the stone, Jesus looked up to heaven and thanked His Father for the miracle that was about to take place.

**Ask:** What miracle? (Raise a dead man to life!) Why did Jesus do this? He did this so that everyone else would know He came from God.

### **Closing:**

Later in the Big God Story, Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins. He was placed in a tomb, and three days later He rose from the dead, proving once and for all that He has power over death. By doing this, Jesus made the way for us to live forever with Him.

The Bible says, **"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins ... But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ" (Ephesians 2:1, 4–5)**. In Lazarus' life and in our lives, God has power over death, and He uses that power in our lives because He loves us. Repeat after

me! Jesus is life! Tell about when you became a Christian and how God gave you life in Him.

*Close in Prayer. (During this time, invite the kids to close their eyes. Then, ask them if any of them want salvation, to no longer be dead to sin, but ALIVE in Christ. Have all the kids pray this prayer together with you: Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' Name. Amen.)*

**At this time, split the children into two smaller groups: Kinder & 1st, 2nd & 3rd. Bring one group upstairs to the empty classroom closest to the main exit of the hallway (what used to be the old nursery). The other group will remain in the K-3rd classroom. Focus on Activity #1 first. After 10 minutes, switch locations and focus on Activity #2.**

### **Activity #1: 10 Minutes | Tunnel Tag**

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**Relate:** In The Big God Story, Jesus told His friend Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die." (John 11:25–26). After that, when Jesus told a man named Lazarus to come out of the tomb, Lazarus got up and walked out alive! Let's play a game of tunnel tag and remember, every time someone crawls out, that Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.

#### **What To Do:**

1. Select one person to be "It."
2. Encourage them to move around and tag the other children as they try to get away from him/her.
3. Whenever someone is tagged, he has to stand still with his feet wide apart and cannot move until someone else crawls through his legs.

4. Repeat with various people taking turns being "It".

## **Activity #2:** 10 Minutes | **New Life For Me**

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**What You Need:** *construction paper, colored pencils, crayons, scissors*

**Relate:** Let's make something to help us remember that if we answer Jesus' question, "Do you believe this?" as Martha did, we can have new life, too! Martha said she believed that Jesus is the Son of God. If we believe that, too, we have new life forever with Jesus!

When a butterfly comes out of its cocoon, we could say that it has new life because then it's beautiful and free. That's sort of how it was when we first believed in Jesus and made Him our Lord and Savior. We were once dead to sin, but now we are ALIVE in Christ (Romans 6:11). Let's make butterflies to remind us that Jesus gives us hope and that He is life!

### **What To Do:**

1. Give each child a sheet of colored construction paper and a pencil, and set out the scissors.
2. Show kids each how to trace their two hands on the paper in such a way that the fingers are pointing away from one another, with their thumbs aligned.
3. They can color the handprints to look like butterfly wings, write their names on the butterflies, and then cut them out.
4. Encourage children to write on their butterflies the name of someone they will tell about new life in Jesus this week.
5. **Say:** Use this butterfly to remember that just as a butterfly has new life when it emerges from its cocoon, so will we have new life when we believe in Jesus. You can make your own butterfly come to life by rolling up your paper with the blank side out. *Pause for kids to do this.* Now unroll it to let your butterfly come out of the cocoon!

## Ending:

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*Return to the K-3rd classroom and let kids play until parents arrive. K-3rd is **not** allowed on the playground at this time.*

*As parents pick their children up, tell them the main points we talked about today and the activities we did. Please make sure kids take home all the things that they came with (ex. Jackets or toys) and any crafts they made in class.*

*After children are gone, please wipe down the chairs and tables and put supplies back so they can be ready for the next service.*