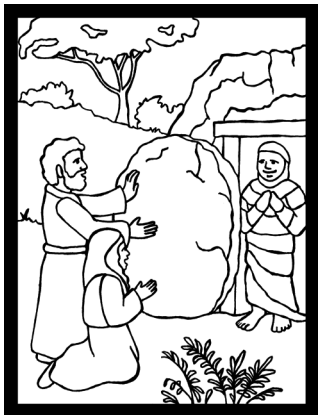

LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

John 11:17-44

Romans 6:11-14

Session Theme:

Confidence

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Warm Up: True Confidence

Ask kids to name the most confident person they know. Why did they choose that individual? Often, we think of confidence as something that comes only from special abilities or achievements, and we feel bad if we don't have enough of those things. But what if the word can also refer to our belief in someone else's character and abilities? What if we placed our ultimate confidence in our Lord, and not in ourselves or other people?

In today's story, two sisters were very sad. They were facing a terrible situation and knew they could do nothing about it. But they had confidence in Jesus! What happened? Let's begin our lesson and learn more.

c. Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, you comfort those who are sad and give true hope in even the hardest of situations. Help us to place our confidence in you above all else, for you love and care for us. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- *"Rise and Shine" (children's song)*
- *"I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord Forever" (children's song)*

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the New Testament
- Scripture Section: Miracles

Throughout his ministry among the people, Jesus demonstrated the active power of God by performing miracles and signs, such as healing the sick, casting out demons, commanding the elements, and raising the dead to life.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help students think about details of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

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Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: John 11:17-44

1. How long had Lazarus been in the tomb when Jesus arrived to visit him and his sisters? What did Martha say to him about this? Do you think she said this in a confident or accusing way?

   Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days when Jesus got to Bethany. Scripture says that Jesus had purposely delayed coming (John 11:6).

   Martha expressed her confidence that if Jesus had been there, Lazarus would not have died. She knew of Jesus' divine power and trusted that Jesus cared for her (and Lazarus). She does not doubt that Jesus could have saved him.

2. What did Martha mean when she said, "I know that [Lazarus] will rise again in the resurrection on the last day"? Do you believe that all the dead will rise in the end, and you will see your loved ones again?

   Martha believed in the biblical promise of the resurrection on the last day and trusted that her brother was securely in God's care. Scripture promises that even though dead is dead, God has the power to raise us from death. For example:

   • Daniel 12:2: "Those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above…"

   • Isaiah 26:19: "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy!"

3. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (v. 25). Why does Jesus want us to focus our faith on him rather than on the circumstances we are facing?

   Our hope does not rest in mere optimism or our own ability to succeed. In spite of everything around us, Jesus is the one who gives us hope. To say Jesus is the resurrection and the life is a present-tense promise. Those who trust in Jesus have nothing to fear in death. He gives us life (through hope and faith) even in the midst of death. Even death has no power over us, because it has no power over Jesus. If we live each day trusting him, we can rest and be at peace.

4. What was the first thing Mary said when Jesus came to her? Do you think she said this in a confident or accusing way? How was Mary's response different from Martha's?

   It is interesting to note that Mary used the same exact words that Martha did: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:32). But she did so in the midst of exhaustion and tears. This might indicate a subtle difference in tone and meaning. Mary does not seem to have the same confidence and peace that Martha had — and yet Jesus had compassion for her as well.

5. How did Jesus react when he saw Mary crying? Why? Did anyone else notice his response?

   Scripture says that Jesus "was deeply moved in his spirit," when he saw how upset Mary and her friends were. He shared their sadness and he wept with them. Those who saw this knew that Jesus loved Lazarus and his family.

   Note: Some commentators explain that the word "moved" here has the connotation of "angered." Jesus was angry at the enemy death and the suffering that death causes. Jesus will defeat his enemies, and as the Bible says, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26).

6. When Jesus went to the tomb, Martha didn't want to remove the stone. Why not? Did she stop Jesus from opening the tomb?

   Martha knew that after being in the tomb for four days, Lazarus' body would have an odor from decay. But Martha also believed that Jesus could and would do something great. She trusted Jesus enough to let him open the tomb anyway.

7. What did Jesus do when he went to the tomb? How does this story show that the Word of God has the power to give life? In what way does God's Word give us eternal life?

   Jesus prayed to the Father, out loud, for all to hear — making sure everyone knew that God was the source of this miracle. Then he called, "Lazarus, come out!" By the power of Jesus' word alone, Lazarus, bound in linen strips, walked out of the tomb. To everyone's shock and amazement, he had risen from the dead!

8. Read Romans 6:11-14. Is there anything a living person can do to make themselves dead? On the other hand, is there anything a dead person can do to make themselves alive? How does this describe our sin as well as our need for a Savior?

   There are many things a person can do that can cause their own death. But dead people can't do anything. In the same way, we who are dead in sin cannot give ourselves life; only Jesus can do that. As Paul says in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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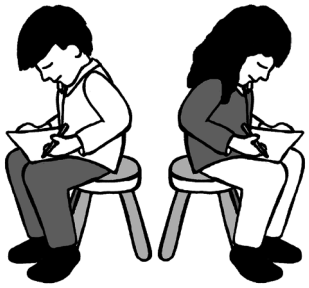
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Lazarus Brought to Life Activity

Materials Needed:

- White paper
- Pencils
- Area for kids to sit back to back



Instructions:

Divide the class into pairs (a group of three could work if there is an odd number of students in the class.)

Give each person a paper and pencil.

Have pairs sit back to back on the floor (or on chairs), so they cannot see what their partner is drawing. (If three are in a group, they can still sit back-to-back in a little circle.)

Explain that the task is to draw Lazarus when he came out of the tomb. But there is a twist! No one can draw independently — they must take turns telling each other what part of the picture to draw, and then follow those directions.

For example, the first person may say, "Let's draw Lazarus' head; make it long with a pointy chin." The partner might then say, "Done. Now let's draw his eyes and have them be small and squinty." And so on.

Each person will draw a complete picture on his or her own individual paper until both kids in the pair feel like they have enough detail to show Lazarus brought to life.

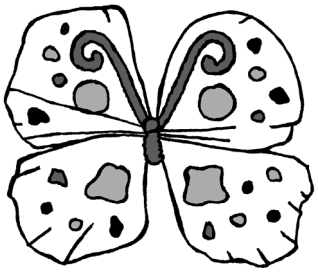
When they are done, each pair can face each other and show their pictures to each other. Generally, the drawings will look quite different from one another, even though they followed the same basic directions.

Spend a few minutes talking with kids about this, noting that we all imagine things differently, even based on the same description. That's why various artists' depictions of Bible characters can look so different. Regardless of any artistic differences, the stories and truths behind the pictures are what matter most. We can have confidence in that!

Activity 2: Flying Butterfly Craft

Materials Needed:

- Round basket-style coffee filters (two per person)
- Chenille sticks
- Fishing line
- Markers
- Scissors
- Removable tape



Instructions:

Historically, butterflies have been used as symbols of new life. In today's story, Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb and gave him new life as well! Just as a butterfly emerges from a cocoon, Lazarus emerged from a tomb. Explain that today, the class will decorate their room with reminders of this idea.

Give each student two coffee filters, several markers, one chenille stick, and about a foot of fishing line.

To make this craft, direct kids to follow these directions:

Flatten out both coffee filters. Decorate them with bright markers, covering as much of each coffee filter as possible. Kids can use stripes, shapes, designs, or whatever they like as they color their coffee filters.

Show kids how to fold a coffee filter back and forth, accordion style. Then, direct them to fold each of their own coffee filters this same way. When they have done this, they will have two long, narrow coffee filter strips.

Put one flat strip on top of the other, folds facing outwards. Pick up the two strips, holding them together.

Take a chenille stick and center it in the middle of the strips. Twist it around to secure the two strips together. Leave enough of the chenille stick so the ends point upwards. Curve the tops of the antennae down a bit and around like butterfly antennae *(see illustration).*

Unfold the coffee filters and shape them like butterfly wings. Tie the fishing line around the head of the butterfly to allow it to be suspended for display. Using removable tape, tape the other end of the fishing line to a doorway, window or the ceiling so each one hangs down and decorates the classroom.

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Worksheet Answer Key

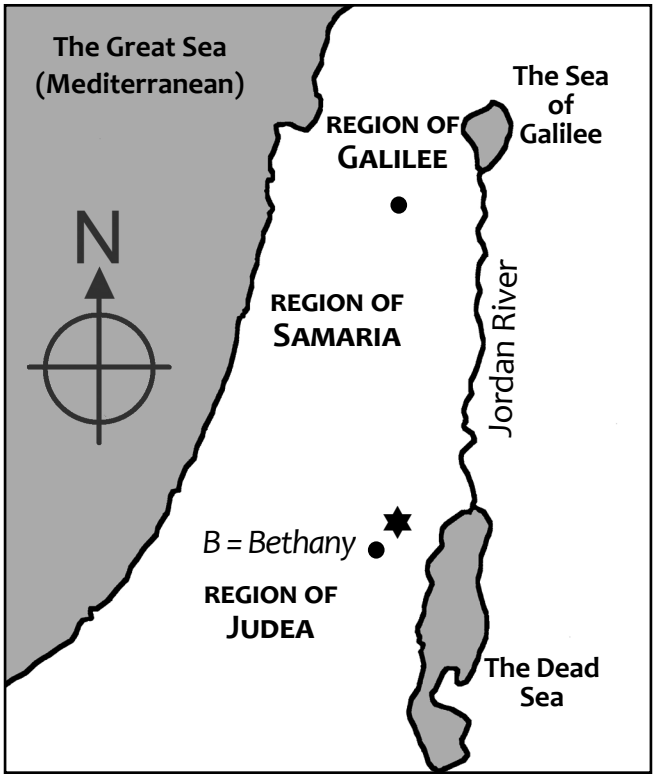
Below are the answers to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE."
(John 11:25)

Discussion Question Responses:

1) Their friend Lazarus was dead. Jesus wanted the disciples to trust and believe in him.
2) Four days had already gone by, in the tomb, Lazarus would have had had no food and water. That's dead!
3) Lazarus was already decomposing; there was smell.
4) Lazarus did not come back in a different body; he was the same person still wrapped in burial cloth.
5) Jesus had the disciples touch him to see that he was real; he also ate food, to prove he was a live person.
6) Human beings have one life, then they die. On the last day, Jesus will raise all the dead to stand before him.
7) The promise of this story is that Jesus has the power to overcome death — even for us. We need not fear death, because we trust that we will be with him forever.

Map Answers (from the youth pages)



Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Confidence

trust and belief in someone or something

Martha had confidence that Jesus could do anything, even raise her brother from the dead. And he did!

Reflection for the Week Ahead

When someone we love dies, we are filled with sorrow and grief. Jesus understands what this is like. He was very close to his friends Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus, and the Bible tells us that when Lazarus died, "Jesus wept." Jesus knows what it feels like to be very, very sad.



Yet for Christians, death is not the end of the story. God remembers us, God remembers our loved ones, and one day, God will bring us back together again in heaven. Until that time, we still may feel sad and miss the person who has passed away. But we can be comforted in knowing that in the end, death does not win — God does. And God is the one who will give us and our loved ones new life in Christ. We can place our confidence in him.

Have you ever lost a special person in your life, as Jesus did? What gave you comfort as you were going through that time? What gives you comfort now?

The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer giving thanks to God for people who mean or meant a great deal to you. If these people are living, ask God to bless them. If they have passed away, ask him to comfort those who miss them here on earth.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

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