

Bible background

Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-45

Aim of lesson

To show that Jesus has compassion and can raise the dead.

Preparation required

Make one set of puppets from the activity book. They can be formed into tubes with sticky tape but are easier to handle if taped to small cardboard tubes.

Learn the rhyme or write it out and place it where you can see it during the class. You will need scissors, sellotape, colouring materials and four cardboard tubes per scholar.

Make a 'tomb' for Lazarus, perhaps using a shoe box.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Describe briefly the sort of life Jesus lived. He had no home and no property of his own, but relied on the kindness of his friends for food and somewhere to sleep. Tell the children how sometimes he would stay out in the open all night, praying to God. Get the children to imagine how tired he must often have been, and how grateful he would be for a special home he could go to and feel comfortable there.

Talk about the family at Bethany, using the account in Luke 10 to describe the sisters.
2. Introduce the four puppets, and make sure the children are familiar with which is which.

Explain that one day Lazarus became ill and died (if Lazarus and Simon the leper are the same person we may understand the reason for his death). The children may have experienced the death of an elderly relative and they may appreciate how sad Martha and Mary would be. Put 'Lazarus' in the 'tomb'.

Jesus would have been just as sad himself, but he waited for two days because he wanted to show that he could even raise from the dead someone who had been dead a long time. (Note that Jesus would not have arrived in time to prevent Lazarus dying.)
3. Tell the rest of the story, describing briefly the faith of the sisters and the reply of Jesus. Make sure the children understand that Jesus can bring back anyone to life, even people who die today. What's more, if they have believed in him they will live for ever.
4. Tell the children about the way Jesus brought Lazarus back to life, and how his tears showed how much he loves everyone. Bring Lazarus out of his tomb.
5. Now give one puppet to each child and let them act out the story as you say the rhyme. The first time the rhyme will have to be said slowly with a lot of prompting, explanations and stage directions. As the performance improves you can change the cast.
6. The class can make other puppets by colouring and cutting out their own activity sheets, and taping them to the tubes. These can be the same four characters when each child moves his puppets as you say the rhyme, or they can form the crowd for a class performance.

Alternative activities

1. Make sad/happy masks out of paper plates or card. Use elastic or stiff card or dowel to hold them up.
2. Make Plasticine models of the tomb, Mary, Martha, Jesus, the crowd. Wrap the figure of Lazarus in some strips of cloth or tissue paper.

Relevance to the children's lives

Jesus was sad when his friends were sad, and he wanted to help them. Ask the children if any of their friends are sad. How could they help them?

Prayer

Ask if anyone wants to pray for a sad friend, or to tell God that we are glad that he and his Son, Jesus, can raise the dead.

Verse

'God comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble.' 2 Corinthians 1:4.

Rhyme

Lazarus was very sick
His sisters sent for Jesus quick
But Jesus found when he arrived
His poor friend Lazarus had died.
Martha went to Jesus then
He said 'Your brother will rise again.'
Then Mary came and wept and cried
'Our brother never would have died
If only you'd been here,' she said
'Lazarus would not be dead.'
Then Jesus prayed and with a shout
He called to Lazarus, 'Come out!'
Then the dead man came out from the grave
He was alive! They were amazed
How happy then they would be
As they went home again for tea.