

## set the scene

This session focuses on Jesus' power over death.

- Display pictures of graveyards and cemeteries, tombs and tombstones on dark paper or cloth. Above them, put a picture of a sunrise or a similar triumphant image.
- Add a black scarf or tie, a sympathy card, and, if your church has one, a funeral service book.



## be active

### Jesus, son of God

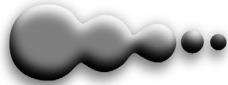
Make a bubble-chart with Jesus' name in the centre. Write in one colour around it all the actions and characteristics from this story that help us to recognise him as human, and use another colour for those that help us see the divine nature.

### Make it

Make a scene of the raising of Lazarus. You need a large piece of cardboard, some modelling clay, coloured paper, fabric scraps, pipe cleaners, and paints or felt-tip pens. Fold the card in two, scoring along the centre line to get a neat straight fold. Shape most of the modelling clay into the shape of a rocky cliff with a cave in it, and roll the rest to be the boulder that closed the cave tomb. Put these features into position against the back-board. Then use coloured paper and paints to create trees, grass and bushes around the tomb, and pipe cleaners and scraps of cloth to make figures for Jesus, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, the disciples and the bystanders.

### Victory over death

See if you have any budding songwriters in your midst. Invite the group to write songs about today's stories, working individually, or in small groups to share talents. They can start with writing some lyrics – like writing a poem – and then put a tune to them.



## get started

### Lazarus race

Lighten the atmosphere! Divide into teams of four – giving each team several cheap toilet rolls. The teams race against the clock to completely bandage one person so nothing can be seen of them except their nose. They should still just be able to walk!

### Creepy places

Have the young people ever been potholing or caving? Have they ever visited a church crypt or graveyard at night? Were they frightened? How did it feel? Can they imagine such places before electric light and tourism? Today's story is about sisters visiting their brother's cave-like tomb, not pleasant at all.



## make connections

- The two parts of the story may seem at first to have little to do with each other. But Jesus asks all the people in the story to understand that God-in-him is constantly in control. Things do not happen at random, or in frustration of God's purposes, for those who believe. All the people in the story are led to experience more fully the way Jesus is in touch with his Father's purposes. But that means they, and we, have to learn to wait on God's time. Can the young people think of times when they have been impatient of God's choice of time?
- Talk, gently and sensitively, about death and bereavement. Remind everyone that Lazarus would have to die again. Try to bring out the wonder of Jesus' authority over death. Does knowing Jesus make a difference to the way we feel about death?



## use the bible

### Drama

Give out copies of the text for everyone. Divide the material up into scenes for different groups to act out.

- The grieving sisters.
- Jesus' reaction to the message.
- Jesus deciding to go and the disciples being afraid.
- The encounters with Martha and Mary.
- Jesus' tears over the situation.
- The command at the tomb and Lazarus' emergence.

### Recollections

Ask volunteers to pretend to be the main characters present that day, talking about it afterwards. The others ask questions. What did they think about what Jesus was doing? How did Lazarus feel about coming back to life? After all, this wasn't resurrection. He would still have to die again.



## pray it through

### In life and death

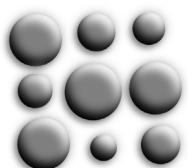
Invite everyone to name anyone known to them who is grieving for someone who has died, or is concerned for someone seriously ill. Remind everyone that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

### Trusting

Lord Jesus, you who went to Bethany and wept with Mary and Martha, weep now with those who grieve for loved ones. You who glorified God by giving Lazarus back to his sisters Mary and Martha, help us to glorify you whatever life brings, caring for others in sickness or grief and accepting your will for us.

Amen.

## RESOURCES



- All heaven declares (TS)
- I believe in Jesus (TS)
- Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice (TS)
- The Spirit lives to set us free (JP)